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## THE LANGUAGE FUNCTION OF CODE-SWITCHING IN THE PRACTICES OF EDUCATORS TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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### ABSTRACT

Code-switching is the phenomenon occurring for affective and pedagogical reasons. The main speculation is how attuned teachers are to applying code-switching. This study aims to disclose the pedagogical and affective practices of teachers performing code-switching in EFL classrooms at a private university in Gaziantep, Turkey. The present study tried to explain the affective and pedagogical reasons for teachers' code-switching in the language learning context. Similarly, it made a clear statement on the affective and pedagogical factors influencing teachers' code-switching in the EFL context. Another light of this study is to elucidate teachers' decision-making processes, whether consciously or unconsciously, and their purposes of usage during stimulated recall interviews. This study help teachers better understand how they expressed and reflected their opinions about their code-switching practices. Data were gathered through classroom observations with video and audio recording, semi-structured teacher interviews. The findings indicated that teachers' code-switching frequently served to support students' understanding of unfamiliar concepts, where the pedagogical focus was on the subject matter rather than language itself. It also involved managing students' behavior and engaging in interpersonal and affective interactions with them

**Keywords:** social interaction, code-switching, language function

## INTRODUCTION

In order to analyze the uniqueness and complexity of the classroom environment, these two factors should be taken into consideration. To understand what is going on in the language classroom, generally from the teachers' perspective, there have been analyzed in three ways, conversation Analysis, Discourse Analysis, and interaction analysis. Since the beginning, there has been proliferated various kind of observation techniques in language classes. Using English in the classroom is linked to the language input and skill development of the students. Maximizing the utilization of the target language aids students' language development. Nevertheless, whether the quantity of their talk or the way their talk shapes their input. The alternation between two or more languages is called code-switching.

In the language learning process, teachers play a significant role as well as the context, learner, and background knowledge of the learner. A relevant question in the context of teaching a target language is whether the teacher integrates the mother tongue into the language learning environment when the learners and the teacher communicate the precise same language. If so, it is critical to look at the underlying causes and the frequency of the teacher's transitions between her native language and the target language. As the important point here is that language learners should be sufficiently exposed to the target language so that when they leave the settled environment, they will find enough opportunities to use their mother tongue in their daily lives. In many instances, language teachers switch codes in interaction with students, but without paying attention to the purpose of it. Hoffman (1991) proposed ten different reasons for code-switching. Later on, Poplack (2002) and Hoffman (1994) divided code-switching into three distinct groups. When two independent sentences, one in a particular language and the other in another, are switched between, this is known as intersentential code-switching. When two languages are effortlessly blended inside a single phrase or clause, it is known as intra-sentential code-switching. Bullock (2014) defined tag transferring as the process of adding tags or fixed phrases from one language into a sentence that would otherwise be in another language.

Various studies have been carried out about code-switching in several domains (Akinyi, 2017; Gritsenko, 2016; Yuliana et al., 2015). English has been studied concerning other languages in terms of lexicons, borrowings, and combinations. Code-switching has been seen on various platforms such as media, textbooks, professions, or in classroom environments. While most asserted code-switching is observed purposively, some of them could be observed as unintentionally. Gritsenko (2016) asserted that switching to English in Russian communication was an example of the bridge to lexical gaps or convention of socio-cultural expressions. In a different study, Yuliana et al. (2015) analyzed the significantly different frequencies of code-switching in celebrities whose parents were native speakers and those who could speak multiple different languages. Both groups observed that they made inter-sentential code-switching, which meant occurring grounded at sentence boundaries. Vizcaino (2011) asserted that inserting Spanish advertisements to foreign language patterns (English humor) showed the effect of changing trends in advertisement to the language itself. Code-switching patterns changed based on gender, culture, and context.

### ***Code-switching***

Code-switching is the ability to use two different language systems simultaneously, switching between them to facilitate conversation more fluently. This can be seen as learned behaviour and it is most typically used in a situation of communication. Code-switching is quite common in many other contexts, primarily in language acquisition or bilingualism. Learning how to code-switch helps with speaking skills and finding one's place within the individual language community. There have been debates on the correlation between the input of students' target language and the usage of L1 in foreign language classrooms. Moreover, Cook (2001) discusses the usage of L1 should be dragged to a minimum in language classes and usage of the target language should be promoted as a communication tool in the learning environment. Some language behaviors shape the interaction and flow of communication in language classes. One of the behaviors is alternating between the languages intentionally or incidentally. Wei (2005) describes this behavior as "code-switching", which is known as the shifting from one language to another. It is a precisely frequent incident in bilingual language classrooms. Sanchez, Gabriel & Anderson (2018), and Bhatti, Shamsidun & Said (2018) identified code-switching in language classes as an advantageous classroom practice to help construct meaningful communicative strategies. Furthermore, Simasiku et al. (2015) asserted that when code-switching practices in the classroom, students learned the target language successfully.

### ***Code-switching in Language Classroom Practices***

In classroom contexts, Code-switching (CS) has been placed in various debates. The ideas that created these discussions are; whether code-switching should take place in the classroom, even to what extent it should take place, and the effects of some of the results that these measures may cause on the student in the language learning process. It has been also debated that intensive usage of the target language may constrain language teachers' behavior like CS. Moreover, according to most policy-makers, the common language model is seen as L2 only classroom model. Existing literature resists the pedagogical value of CS in language classes (e.g. Ferguson, 2003).

### ***Language Functions of Code-switching***

The language function of CS has been interesting in various studies (Toribio, 2009; Bullock and Toribio, 2009; Gonzales, 2016). There are different kinds of CS. A pattern of CS may not violate the grammar of both languages. In incongruent lexicalization, the same grammatical patterns are shared by two languages. In insertion, the sentence pattern includes both the first language- the target language and the first language again (A-B-A). In bilingual utterance, three kinds of integration (phonological, morphological, and syntactical). Two languages can borrow lexical, phonological, morphological, and syntactical structures from each other. So, borrowing in two languages is interrelated with CS. Some scholars discuss the function of CS, as it may be seen as a lack of linguistic control. Bernardo (2005) claims that CS is specific functional language learner behavior having personal, functional, or even cognitive goals. These specifications may include word-level, intra-, or

inter-sentential sections. It requires the investigation of culture, identity, and belongingness sense of community. In this sense, the language functions of the code-switching model are divided into two main subcategories. In the very beginning, pedagogical functions and affective functions take place in the reasoning of code-switching. When the teacher introduces new vocabulary, it is not been known before or explains grammar rules she/he switches the language. Teachers should carefully choose when to switch between languages and make sure it supports teaching methods that focus more on engaging with the language meaningfully and developing fluency. This approach helps create an environment, for learning and mastering the language. Instructors placed a great focus on encouraging pupils to actively produce language while proactively minimizing errors in terms of pedagogy and effect. This study tried to find answers for the following research questions;

Research Question 1: What are the reasons and functions of code-switching in EFL settings and usage of foreign language instruction?

Research Question 2: From the teachers' point of view, what is the role of code-switching in their classroom instruction efficacy/ effectiveness of teaching?

#### **METHOD**

Conversation Analysis (CA) and Stimulated Recall Interview (SRI) were utilized in this research to shed light on teachers' language use in the language learning context, code-switching patterns, functions, and reasons behind code-switching preferences. SRI was used to see the gap between the perception of the teacher's code-switching performance and classroom observation. For the conduction of the interview, the researcher attained two online lessons' video recordings for analyzing classroom interaction/teacher-student verbal interaction. These online lesson video recordings provide a rich sample of teacher code-switching and teacher talk. After completion of the recordings, SRI with the teacher was done. Before the implementation of the interview, the teacher was given pre-information regarding their reflection on their practices during the classes, (Meade & McMeniman, 1992). It was stated that they were free to stop the video and provide comments on their verbal interaction. In viewing the online lesson recordings, the researcher used a Zoom Video call with the teacher to obtain her permission. By watching video recordings, the teacher asked them to recall their practices and provide comments on micro/ moments they watched.

In the present study, 25 students who were in their second year in a Turkish medium university were included as participants in the classroom environment but not the interviewee.

One teacher was chosen as the participant for the Stimulated Recall interview and CA. In this respect, a criterion sampling procedure was applied while choosing the interviewee.

The teacher-researcher, working at the Department of Basic English in a foundation university as an instructor. The researcher who conducted the interview was not one of the teachers at the institution where the data were collected. The interviewer's condition as being an outsider in the study environment, and her

participation in a few classes as an observer, enable the researcher to better understand the context and teaching process.

The data were collected from February till the end of March of 2019, during the Spring semester of the academic year. To understand the reasons, and pedagogical and affective functions of EFL teachers' code-switching performance more deeply, SRI lasting about 45 minutes was conducted with the teacher. The interview was conducted after classes at a predetermined time.

After the data collected through interviews and CA were analyzed, the participant was consulted to check whether the interpretations of the researchers reflected their views or not. In addition, "Prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field" were achieved by the researchers who were active participants during the term and the researcher who was only an observer just before the interviews to establish the reliance of the participants (Creswell, 2013) Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. No personal identifying information was collected from the participants. All collected data remained confidential and was accessible only to the researchers for evaluation purposes.

To obtain meticulous analysis, CA and SRI were used in the study. For capturing vital moments for reasons of code-switching preference. CA enabled us to understand micro-moments in the complex nature of classroom interaction (Sert, 2015). Line-by-line unfolding of the functions of code-switching in a vital moment, responses of the teacher to the mistakes, and pedagogical and social functions of code-switching preferences in the language learning environment hold significant importance in teachers' reflective practices in their experiences. With CA, excerpts are provided to shed light on the examination of these functions in the study. In the second phase, SRI was content analyzed and the functions were attempted to be figured out with the precious reflections and comments of the teacher. Based on this interview and conversation analysis, it was aimed to report teachers' code-switching preferences, and functions of code-switching during interaction with students. The excerpts and the content analysis of SRI are the representatives of the functions, teacher's performance, and comments during micro-moments of classroom interaction.

In CA, lesson transcripts were coded, and then necessary information regarding classroom observations was the key factor in determining teachers' code-switching functions. In the excerpts, lesson transcriptions were used as the leading way of determining the functions and the researcher used the transcriptions and extractions from the classroom interaction moments of teacher and students. Then, audio recordings of the SRI with the teacher was transcribed. The data analysis process constitutes the code-switching performances of the teacher, functions, and the teachers' comments and awareness regarding their code-switching experience.

## **FINDINGS**

This part aimed to present the findings referring to two research questions. The first research question aims to unfold the reasons and functions of code-switching in EFL settings and the usage of foreign language

instruction. The second question aims to disclose the role of code-switching in their classroom instruction efficacy/ effectiveness of teaching from the teachers' point of view.

### **Reasons and Functions of Code-Switching**

The first phase of the study intended to determine the reasons and functions of Code-switching in classroom instruction. The findings of this study disclose the teacher's talk in Turkish and English. There are two languages in the repertoire of the students participating in the language classroom. The Turkish language is the native language of the participant students and English is the target language in the classroom context. Even though mainly used the target language, the teacher code-switches during the activity stages most of the time.

### **Role of Code-Switching in Classroom Instruction Effectiveness**

#### **Excerpt 1**

1 R: Tamam:: ıı:: şimdi(.) burada(.) grammar instruction verdin  
[değil mi?]

**You give grammar instruction here [Right?**

2 T: [Verdim:: Galibaf, verdim(.)].

**Yes, I think, I did**

3 R: .ıhh Instruction vermeden önce(.) İngilizce  
başladın? (3.2)

**e::r Before giving instruction, you started in English**

4 R: Değil mi? sorusunu sordun ve (.) Türkçe'ye geçiş  
yaptın.= (3.2)

**you asked 'Isn't it? question, you switched to Turkish**

5 R: Buradaki:: Türkçe'ye geçme(.) sebebin neydi? (2.1)

**What is the reason of your switch here?**

- 6 T: S:oruyu sorarken (0.2) >↑What do you call< sorusunu,  
**while I am asking the question 'what do you call'**
- 7 Aranmak olarak .ihh switch etmesinler = yani kafada  
**not for translating as 'phone call'**
- aramak olarak (.) ÇEvirMEsinler. =
- 8 What do you ↑call? Phrase'i ne demek demektir?'i  
**do the students know this phrase, having in their mind**
- 9 Öğrenciler acaba biliyor mu(.) hani: kafalarında ↑var mı?
- 10 bunu oturtmuşlar↑ mı? (.) Onu check etmek ↑için TÜRKçeye  
geçtim. (1.2)  
**to check their understanding:.I have switched to Turkish.**
- 11 T: Daha sonra da: (.) bu şeylerin: isimlerin arkasından↓  
**then, as they should be careful, I have emphasized it.**
- 12 gelen >relative pronoun'lara dikkat etmeleri için< altını  
[çizdim. (0.7)
- 13 R: [Evet burada .hhh grammar instructioni ↑verirken(.)  
**while you are giving grammar instructions here**
- 14 ↑yani:: önemli noktaları belirTİRken türkçeye geçis  
**Even underlining the important points**
- Yaptın ((Soru sorar bir ses tonuyla))  
**you code-swithed to Turkish?**
- 15 <Neden burada İngilizce kullanmadın>  
**why didn't you use English for this?**
- 16 Aynı cümleleri (.) önemli olduğunu (0.3) ↑neden İngilizce  
**why didn't you emphasize the importance in English?**
- [vurgulamadın? (2.3)
- 17 T: [Çünkü daha öncesinde instruction tam verirken grammar  
**because we told before while I was giving grammar**
- 18 partta İngilizce açıkladık ↓ondan sonra:: ihh: ↑o yüzden  
**instruction then, because of this**
- 19 ↓Bu da aktivitesi yani(2.4)  
**this is its activity part**
- 20 ↑Aktivite acaba doğru oturdu mu?(.) Öğrencilerin

- did the activity go well? Can the students understand*
- 21 kafasında cümleleri anlayabiliyorlar mı? >A  
person WHO?< (1.2)  
*the sentences. In order to repeat that person  
pronoun*
- 22 Person'ın Kisi olduğu için (.) 'WHO' aldığını  
*takes 'who' for being person, it is important here*  
anlamalarını (0.3) tekrar etmek için: burada önemli (3.2)
- 22 R: Yani: gramer noktasının öneminDEN bahsederken  
*well:: while you are mentioning about the importance of  
grammar structures*
- 23 ANadillerini kullandın (.) Öyle mi?  
*you used the mother tongue*
- 24 R: Öğrencilerin İngilizce >anlamacaklarını mı düşündün?  
*did you think that they don't understand English*
- 25 burada İngilizce söylediğinde<  
*when you tell in English here*
- 26 T: İngilizce söyle:., İngilizce de aynı şekilde söyledikten  
*err:: after telling in English*
- 27 sonra(.) kesinlikle sadece Türkçe değil (0.3)  
*then, not only Turkish*
- 28 >İngilizce söyledikten sonra<  
*After telling in English*
- 29 KESİNLİKLE tüm sınıfın anladığından (.) bir kere daha  
*absolutely, to be sure of students' understanding*
- 30 emin olmak için bir kere Türkçeye geçiş yaptım. (0.4)  
*I switched to Turkish once*
- 31 R: hm hım: Kisi anladıklarından (.) emin olmak için mi? (0.7)  
*to be sure that they understand?*
- 32 R: Bu yüzden mi Türkçeye geçiş yaptın yani?  
*Did you switch to Turkish for that reason?*
- 33 T: Evet (.) hım:hım:.  
*Yes, .hh*

In this extract, it was shown how stimulated recall interviews focused and help the teacher critically evaluate the language teaching process, functions, and reasons for tag switching practices. As part of the CA and SRI of this study, it leaned some questions regarding the functions of code-switching. In Line 2 and 3, the Researcher asked the Teacher whether she aimed at giving the grammar instruction. At the beginning of the recall section, the researcher requested the teacher to answer the question in Line 1 (regarding the clarification of giving grammar instruction. Following T's answer to the question (yes, I did), the researcher elicited further reflective questions in Line 5 (reason for code-switching to Turkish). T examine the question first, and T answered to avoid misunderstanding by the students (phone call), he/she stated that the reason for the code-switching (see Figure 1) was the concept and understanding check (Line 10). In Line 11, the teacher emphasized the



importance of giving the grammatical rules in the native language of the students. For that reason, T stated (Line 11) that she directly switched to Turkish for giving instruction and grammatical rules as being the pedagogical reason for code-switching. The researcher restated her question and asks if the teacher is switching while stating important points and rules (lines 13, 14). It was asked whether she was afraid that if the same rules were emphasized in English, students would have difficulty in understanding. T explicitly stated that she has already given the grammar instruction and significant parts of the lesson in the previous part, this was the activity part (lines 17,18). In what follows, T's intended effective function (see figure 1) was comprehension check. She claimed that an effective and sufficient way of that was giving statements in Turkish, for that reason she switched to Turkish (line 29, 30).

### Excerpt 2:

- 1 R: burada- ne demek(.) istediğini .hhh Türkçe sordun: =  
**you asked What do you mean? in Turkish**
- 2 R: >öğrenciye neden İngilizce sormadın< †burada?  
**why didn't you ask in English here?**
- 3 T: .hh kafasında(.) çünkü(.) cümleyi: türkçe çeviriyor (2.3)  
**because he is translating the sentence to Turkish in his**
- 4 kafasında anlamlandırdığı(1.2) Türkçe † cümlelerin (0.8)  
**that he made in is wrong**
- 5 >İngilizceye çevrilmiş hali< yanlış =  
**the English translation of the Turkish sentence**
- 6 demek ki türk(.)çe(.)si(.) zaten † kafada oturmamış (2.2)  
**it means that he didn't understand the Turkish, as well**
- 7 relative clause(0.7) aslında(.) biraz (.)  
°bununla çok alakalı ° =  
**Relative clause is so related to it**
- 8 kafasında † oturTAMAMış, cümleyi tam olarak =  
**he didn't exactly understand the sentence**
- 9 <subject verb object>who(.) dan sonra † yerleştirememiş=  
**He didn't put 'who' after subject-verb-object**
- 10 bu yüzden(0.2) bana:: türkçesini  
çeviremiyor(.) o cümlesinin =  
**he couldn't translate to Turkish because of this**
- 11 onu:: Türkçe: çevirebilirsin diye(.) çeviremediğini görsün  
**so that he can translate it into Turkish, and he can see that he cannot translate it**

- 12 °türkçe° anlamadığımı da belirtmek için=  
**to indicate that he did not understand Turkish**
- 13 <tekrar edecekti cümlevi> bana =  
**He would repeat the sentence to me**
- 14 ↑ama ben meaning'e: vurgu yapmayacaktım = (2.3)  
**but I would not emphasize the meaning**
- 15 ↑ama:: >NE demek istedin< diyerek: (1.7)  
**by saying what did you mean**
- 16 ↑o cümlenin kendi dilinde de bir karşılığının olmayacağını  
**it wouldn't be the same as in his mind**
- 17 ↑fark etmesini istedim  
**I wanted him to realize**

In this excerpt, the researcher starts by questioning the reason behind the teacher's Turkish use in this context (lines 1,2). There are two functions of code-switching in language classrooms, pedagogical and affective functions in order to maintain effective communication in the context (Canagarajah, 1995). Sert (2005) unfolds the affective functions as the service of affective function.

In lines 3 and 4 teachers reported the students' translation to the mother tongue, at that point, T stated that she realized the underlying reason for it and served guidance with the grammar rules as the pedagogical function of the code-switching (Zainil and Arshad, 2021). T stated that the students' comprehension check and asking questions led a way to it, when the T understood that the students didn't grasp the structure, T accommodated the students' limited understanding of the grammar rule. Realizing that the student did not understand the question, the teacher chose the method of intervening by asking a question to the subject. The teacher was trying to determine if the student was able to follow the process and complete the task. The teacher would then use that information to advise on what they could do next. Following the activity part, T elaborated on the grammar activity and following her claim that the student's understanding of the grammatical structure, she assessed the students' grammar production (lines 7, 8). She built a link between the assumed language production of the students with the current effort of the students to translate the sentences wrong in their minds (lines 12,13). She, therefore, built a connection by anticipating the students to learn the grammar structures, and collocations and hindering the fossilization by switching to Turkish by making the students realize (line 17) that the two language systems were different.

## CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

Many teachers apply communicative strategies and techniques in their classroom regarding enhancing communication and facilitate interaction in the language learning environment. Some support the usage of the native language for fostering and fastening the language learning process, while others oppose giving place to the native language in the learning environment.

The conversational analysis perspective guided and helped us to understand the reasons and functions of code-switching performance in language classrooms. The teacher tries to use the L1 switch regarding her wish to make her students produce the target language.

Cook (2002) discussed the subject by giving an example of a multilingual classroom, as a small number of students who don't share the same language with the rest of the class may feel neglected as not sharing the common ground with peers. In this study, conversation analysis and Stimulated Recall interviews were conducted in the English Language teaching setting. In this setting, during SRI, the teacher mentioned the reasons and function of code-switching in her classroom interaction. This study found that the main reasons for code-switching were pedagogical and affective. Harbord (1992) related the incomprehension and failure at getting the meaning in excessive use of the target language. As supporting of this, it was founded that the teacher most of the time leads to the pedagogical function (see Figure 1) regarding explaining the grammar rules and introducing new vocabulary.

Atkinson (1993) listed the main roles of code-switching in four incidents. When the teacher exploited the L1 in order to check the students' comprehension of the current situation, eliciting the target language, necessary clarification of the classroom instruction giving procedure, written or oral feedback, and to check whether the students grasp the word or phrase. The findings of this study supported this previous research in terms of the functioning of code-switching practices. This study produced the results of teachers' use of code-switching in checking the students' comprehension, and elicitation of the target language.

This study aimed to unfold the reasons and functions of code-switching practices, as well as the place of code-switching in the classroom instruction giving process from the teacher's point of view in a Turkish university English Language Learning setting. Teachers' choice, affective, pedagogical focus, and reasons for code-switching were the main components to be uncovered. Permanent L2 use was not the case in the classroom context, it was found that the most common preference and function of code-switching is the pedagogical function (Zainil and Arsyad, 2021). Moreover, Kelilo (2012) discussed one of the notable reasons for code-switching is checking the student's understanding. The interview data revealed that pre-assumed understanding of the teacher may create a significant stimulus in producing the target language and hinder the error in production. As Walsh (2012) suggests, a teacher's ability determined the classroom language use, maintenance of target language use and switch, as well as professional control of selecting appropriate methodologies.

The teacher agreed in this study agreed that students' exposure to the target language, as well as necessary control of code-switching in the requisite incidents. The teachers' pedagogical and affective focus was mainly on encouraging learners to produce and hindering their making mistakes beforehand.

Finally, when the generalizability of the study was taken into consideration, this micro-interaction in an institutional goal and perspective were organized based on these criteria. More studies on a larger scale should

be implemented in code-switching strategies in fluid and complex classroom interaction contexts. Moreover, how these functional code-switching preferences of teachers and the efficacy of classroom interaction are related to teaching other languages are needed to be explained. Bu bölümde bulgular kısmında elde edilen verilerin tartışması yapılır.

### SUGGESTIONS

Exploring the potential impacts of regulated code-switching on language learners' abilities and acquisition could be a valuable area of future research. This research could how varying degrees of code-switching moderation affect long-term language production error-correction strategies, and overall linguistic competence. Additionally, investigating the transferability of findings to other language learning environments and educational settings could provide valuable insights into the general applicability and efficacy of code-switching techniques. Examining how teachers' pedagogical approaches and code-switching practices intersect could also shed light on ways to enhance language learning outcomes and classroom dynamics in multilingual educational contexts.

### ETHICAL TEXT

This study was conducted in February-March 2019. The data collection process ended at the end of March and the study was completed.

"The research complies with scientific research ethics. The writing guidelines, publication standards, research and publication ethics guidelines, and journal ethical guidelines are all complied with by this paper. The author is responsible for any violations that may occur in relation to the article."

**Author Contribution Rate:** The author's contribution rate is 100%.

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