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CODE-SWITCHING : A PEDAGOGIC STRATEGY IN EFL CLASSROOMS



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ABSTRACT

Code-Switching (CS) is alternating from one language to another within the same conversation. It is a normal every day practice among people in bilingual communities including Cameroon. Code-switching is done for various reasons and is usually an unconscious activity. It occurs not only in whole sentences, but also in phrases or words. This study focuses on the use of code-switching as a pedagogic strategy in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Meanwhile, the attitude of students and teachers towards CS, the effects of CS on students' learning ability and understanding the target language were investigated. The data for this study was collected through audio recordings of classroom observation and interviews. The results revealed that the students code-

switched due to insufficient vocabulary knowledge. In informal contexts, the students use the two languages freely for different purposes. Thus code-switching was used for clarification, checking understanding, and socializing. On their part, the teachers also code-switched to clarify concepts or points that were difficult for the students to understand. They also did this to translate into the students' second language, French when necessary. The results also suggested that both teachers and students had positive views towards the application of CS. As such, code-switching enhances the learning of the target language.

KEYWORDS

code-switching, bilingual education, EFL classroom instruction

RESEARCH PAPER

Introduction

Owing to the importance of English as a world language, an increasing number of French-speaking Cameroonian students (from the French sub-system of education), continue to enroll in schools in English speaking regions of Cameroon. These schools are faced with meeting their academic needs. These students enter into the classroom with varying levels of mastery of the English language. While some of these students begin school with fluency or competency in both English and French (the official languages used in Cameroon), others are French-speaking Cameroonians who have mastered just minimal vocabulary in the English language. This situation has puzzled educators, causing them to re-examine the strategies used for teaching this increasing number of French speaking students in English as a foreign language classrooms.

As the field of language learning has shifted focus from grammar to communication, foreign language teachers and researchers have attempted to also shift their teaching methodologies. With the continued expansion of English use as a foreign language, code switching has become an ever-increasing norm within English language societies and throughout the increasingly globalized world of speakers using English as part of a multiple language repertoire (Greggio & Gil, 2007).

Code-switching is a common occurrence in Cameroon due to its multilingual nature. Researchers have different views about the concept of code-switching. It is generally defined as a nonstandard use of L2 within an L1 situation by bilinguals or even those who speak two or more languages in the same conversation (Muysken, 1995). On his part, Zentella, (1981) sees code-switching or language alternation as the ability of bilinguals to alternate between the languages in their linguistic repertoires. In Cameroon, people communicate in different languages such as English, French, Pidgin English, Ewodo, Duala, Fe'fe'e, Bafut, Fulfulde, Arabic etc. The official languages are English and French; hence, Francophone Cameroonians learn French as a second language and English as a foreign language, whereas Anglophone Cameroonians learn English as a second language and French as a foreign language. In this case, the francophone students' use of English is rare, as real exposure to English language outside the classroom is limited. Thus, the tendency is for these students with French background to code-switch to French in English as a foreign language classroom.

However, many teachers of English as a foreign (EFL) have relied on the principle of English Only in the classroom setting, strongly disallowing the use of the English learners' first language (L1) or first official language in case of Cameroon for any purposes. Yet code switching is a normal practice among bilingual and multilingual speakers in relation to situational factors, such as setting and social relations, as well as speaker motivations (Wolfram & Schilling, 2015). Code switching has thus become an ever-increasing reality within English language societies, throughout the world, and thus inside the classroom as well. It is envisaged that, the use of code switching in English medium classrooms in Cameroon might enhance French speaking students' understanding of the subject content and create grounds on which they can build their learning of the English language and other languages. Thus, the switching of codes from students' second language (French) to the foreign language (English) could provide the support needed, while the French speaking students continue to develop proficiency in English as a foreign language.

1.2. Background of the Study

Cameroon Language policy is well embedded in Cameroon History. Before the arrival of Europeans in Cameroon and Africa as a whole, Cameroonians paid much respect to their languages. This is because these languages were common media of communication which fostered learning, since the natives were able to learn their language (MT) without necessarily going to school. This informal education was effective till the arrival of the Europeans with English and French.

After the defeat of the Germans in 1917, Cameroon was partitioned between Britain and France. In 1960 French Cameroon obtained its independence and called itself The Republic of Cameroon. The first legislator of independent Cameroon decided to adopt French, the ex-colonial master's language as its official language. In 1961, part of British Cameroon which had adopted English as its official language obtained its independence by reuniting with The Republic of Cameroon. The country was renamed the Federal Republic of Cameroon with French and English as its joint official languages. In 1972, the country's name was change to United Republic of Cameroon with French and English as its official languages. The nation strives toward bilingualism and it was believed that these two languages will promote bilingualism. French and English were taught and written in schools as compulsory subjects and also used as the main languages of communication.

In bilingual communities like Cameroon, where two or more languages co-exist, speakers frequently switch from one language to another in order to meet communication needs. This phenomenon of alternation between two languages is known as code-switching. In Cameroon, English is taught as a compulsory subject in the French sub system of education and is used as the medium of instruction in schools in the English sub system of education up to the university level. On the other hand, French is taught as a compulsory subject and in the English sub system of education and is used as the medium of instruction in schools in the French sub system of education up to the university level. With this view in mind, this study investigates incidences of code-switching from English to French and back to English, among students from French speaking background, and teachers of English in GBHS Bayelle-Nkwen Bemenda in an English medium classroom.

Concerning Language and alternation, Martin-Jones (1995) asserts that “We need to know how code-switching in bilingual discourse is shaped by the social conditions operating in different types of classrooms and how differing views about the values and purpose of bilingual education are manifested in bilingual discourse practices”.

Muysken (2000) defines the term ‘code switching’ as “all cases where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentence”. On his part, Wardhaugh (2000) believes that ‘code’ is a natural term, compared to terms such as style, Creole and Pidgin in a language. Besides, it can also be referred to as any kind of system where two or more persons comply for communication.

Currently, the term ‘code-switching’ is most commonly used to describe the use of two languages within one conversation or a text, (Benson, 2001). Cook (2008) refers to code-switching as the process of “going from one language to the other in mid-speech when both speakers know the same language”. Using two Languages within one conversation is an attempt to facilitate communication and ease understanding. After all, Metila (2009) argues that the pedagogical and communicative functions of classroom code-switching justify its use in teaching and learning contexts.

Researchers have opposing views on the use of CS, based on various theoretical models. The sociolinguistic approach has been used to explore languages in contact with bilingual or multilingual communities and has examined the social and political motivations for its use.

Meanwhile, little has been done on the attitude of students and teachers, and the effects of CS in a foreign language classroom, perceptions and situations in which CS occurs. Moreover, there is insufficient literature on code-switching as a teaching tool in a foreign language classroom with the aim to determine the role of a second language in the linguistic development of the target language.

1.3. Aim of Study

This study set to examine how the use of code-switching as a teaching tool could enhance the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language. It also aimed to study the attitude of students and teachers in the classroom, with the aim to determine the role of a second language in the linguistic development of a foreign language.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This section examines the theory that has been adopted for this study. It also reviews studies that have been carried out in our scope and its surroundings.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

A theory guides and organizes empirical knowledge. Canale and Swain (1980) proposed a theoretical framework, on their article communicative competence in relation to second language pedagogy. The purpose was to first outline the underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for communication. Canale, (1983), set out the contents and boundaries of three areas of communicative competence: grammatical, sociolinguistics and strategic competence. He further divided sociolinguistic competence into two separate components: sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence.

Canale and Swain's intention was to find out the kind of knowledge and skill that an L2 learner needs in order to develop the theoretical basis for a communicative approach in second language teaching which could be based on an understanding of the nature of human communication (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Besides these, their framework indicates Code-Switching in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) the rules that an L2 learner must learn for accumulation of knowledge and skills to become communicatively competent in the use of the target language. These rules are also applied to *all* aspects of a language.

Whereas second language teaching methodology has moved from a sole focus on grammatical competence and justifiably incorporated sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence as a framework to develop actual L2 communication in and by second language students, this development has been coupled with disfavor of L1 language use by both teachers and students for classroom purposes.

However, code switching has resurfaced as many researchers, continue to show benefits which indeed can be obtained by its use. These uses range from explanation, checking, assuring and testing comprehension to helping students feel more comfortable and confident in the classroom setting.

2.2. Literature Review

There has been a debate in literature on the use of the first language in a foreign language classroom. Few studies have investigated this phenomenon of code-switching in a classroom setting. Nevertheless, researchers are not in agreement on whether or not code-switching is beneficial and when it should be used. Although research on this phenomenon has been carried out in different countries, the context is quite different from the one existing in the classrooms in Cameroon. To determine its potentiality, this study critically reviews literature relevant to the practicality of the pedagogical relevance of code-switching in a foreign language classroom.

2.2.1. What Is Code Switching?

Street, J. H. (2011), relates the concept of code-switching to the way an individual who is bilingual alternates between two languages during his or her speaking engagement with another bilingual. (Isaac, A. 2011), looks at code-switching from a classroom perspective. According to him, code-switching is mainly practiced as a tool for communication, both offering opportunities for students to understand the taught concepts well, and enhancing a smooth continuity of the classroom instruction. This implies that code-switching in the classroom helps to bridge the gap of miscommunication between the teacher and the students.

From the societal point of view, Modupeola, R. O. (2013), highlights that code-switching oftentimes occurs not only because of people's deficiency in the target language but because people want to get involved in conversation and make their opinions known to others. In this case, code-switching is performing a socio-linguistic function.

These definitions indicate that, code-switching is practiced for various reasons.

2.2.2. Advocates of the Use of Monolingual Approach

Despite its benefits, there are a handful of scholars with the idea that code-switching should not be employed in the foreign language classrooms. They believe in the exclusive use of the target language. According to them, employing the target language exclusively as a learning tool habituates students to building their own language system through communication practices while code-switching prevents students from listening to the target language.

Kavaliauskienè (2009) argues that the state-of-the-art of language teaching is based on the communicative method, which emphasizes the teaching of English through English. Xiaoil (2013) suggests that if the teacher code-switches frequently in the classroom, this will lead to the risk of students limiting their use of the TL. This is justified by the assumption that extensive exposure to the target language will not only help students to achieve a native-like command of the target language, but will give room for the target language to be the students' primary source of exposure.

2.2.3. Advocates of Cross-lingual Pedagogical Strategy

Meanwhile, advocates of cross-lingual pedagogical strategy argue that the use of students' first language significantly enhances target language development and should therefore be incorporated in the foreign language teaching and learning encounters (Cook, V. 2001, Butzkamm, W. 2003, Creese, A. 2010).

Confronted by these conflicting views, this study seeks to investigate the use of code-switching in English as a foreign language classroom to ascertain its support as an instructional strategy and how it enhances the development of students' target language competencies.

3. Methodology

Following the qualitative research design, the present study aims to explore code switching qualitatively from teachers of English and French speaking students learning English as a Foreign Language in GBHS Bayelle-Nkwen Bamenda.

3.1. Research Instruments

Two research instruments; interviews guide and observation checklists were used to collect data for this study. Interviews focused on the perceptions of teachers on the use of code switching in

English medium classrooms, while the observation checklist with audio recording assessed the use of language in teaching.

Prior to the study proper, an observation checklist and an interview guide were piloted. The reliability of the instruments was approved by colleagues. Participant observation was done through the most unnoticeable way possible to determine how CS as a teaching strategy could enhance the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language. Participant observation was in order to monitor students' reaction towards CS application, and how they integrated CS during classroom interaction. This enabled the researcher to be closed to the subjects while keeping a professional distance that allows acceptable data collection (Fetterman, 1998).

3.2. Data Collection Procedure

The data consists of naturally occurring conversations among students and teachers. Conversations among the students were observed to find out how students with French background communicate with each other. Since the observer was a participant and could not take comprehensive notes, she made use of audio recording during observations for the purpose of analyzing the data effectively. Also, this was in order not to influence the behavior of those involved.

3.3. Participants

The population of this study consisted of all form one teachers of English in GBHS Bayelle, Nkwen Bamenda. Purposeful sampling was used. Eight form one French speaking students were chosen on the basis of purposive sampling. The age of the students ranged from 11 to 14 years. All the 8 students spoke French as a second language (L2).

3.4. Data Analysis

Based on the transcripts of the conversations during observation, instances of CS from English to French were identified. Students' attitudes and experiences were studied. In the students' writing, some external factors influencing CS that was not anticipated by the observer were also identified.

The data analysis followed a qualitative perspective. The selected data were analyzed, described and discussed in the following section.

5. Results and Discussion

During observation, the researcher noticed that CS by the teacher and the learners was more frequent in checking understanding, clarification, translation, and socializing. This is illustrated using the data below.

5.1. A Lack of Fluency or Minimal Vocabulary in English

Teacher A: Student A, what day is today?

Student A: aujourd'hui?

Teacher A: Yes. Today!

Student A: emmm... [He leans over to another French speaking student], C'est mercredi

Teacher A: 'What is mercredi in English student A?

Student A: I don't know.

Since Student A was within a classroom where only English was spoken, a lack of vocabulary in the foreign language (English) prevented him from expressing his thoughts and ideas. He knew what the day was in French. When his French speaking classmate provided the answer he needed in French (C'est mercredi), instead of English, Student A was disappointed because that was not what he expected. Since he was unable to effectively communicate his knowledge of the day of the week to the teacher in English, he made no further attempt. Instead, he claimed, "I don't know."

In another example observed by the researcher, the students made no attempt to share subject matter knowledge with peers and teacher but later shared this information among themselves in French, their second language as they were not afraid of any penalty. A lack of fluency or suitable a term in English prevented students from voicing their ideas in English even when they had knowledge on the subject. Code switching into French would not have been effective as a majority of peers and the teacher did not understand French. This is seen in example (2) below.

Teacher A: Student B, what month is it?

Student B: Nothing.

Teacher A: How do we call this month; the month before December?

Student B: month ... emm...emm, Novembreemm I don't know.

Student B could not share information that she had learned about months of the year in French with the English teacher. Meanwhile, she later volunteered this information to the researcher in

French, her second language. This information was previously withheld within the classroom setting for obvious reasons. This was due to insufficient vocabulary in English. Code switching to French may have been beneficial to the student but was not allowed in the foreign language (English) classroom.

On the contrary, effective code switching was noted in classrooms where the teachers were bilingual. In these classrooms, students were able to clearly communicate their knowledge of the subject matter to a teacher or peers through the use of two languages. Based on the dialogues, it was determined whether these instances of code switching were helpful or harmful to the students' acquisition of subject matter.

5.2. Code-switching in Bilingual Classrooms

Code-switching was a common occurrence within the classroom taught by bilingual teachers, as students often switched freely between French and English during lessons in order to communicate with teachers and peers. In all instances of code switching, students accurately conveyed meaning and were understood by the listener. Within the English-only classroom, students did not accurately communicate their subject matter knowledge to the listener. Numerous examples of effective code switching also took place in conversations between the bilingual teacher and the French students, out of the classroom.

5.3. The Efficiency of Code-switching in a Foreign Language Classroom

This category sought to investigate the efficiency of code switching in the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language. French speaking students who code switched freely within the classroom had fewer language barriers when discussing subject matter. Thus, they were better able to communicate information that they had learned to teachers and peers because of the language freedom code switching provides.

Conversations of students who were not allowed to code switch or code switched non-effectively were often fragments and came to an end prematurely. These students were not able to accurately convey their knowledge of subject matter to teachers or peers due to language barriers. The researcher realized that the grades scored by these students were not an accurate reflection of their subject matter knowledge. Rather, the grades were simply a reflection of their grasp on the English language. Students were able to discuss subject matter with peers in French but were

faced with insufficient terminology when they were asked to relay the same information in English.

Student C, in the same class often had the same difficulty with a lacking vocabulary in English language. As the researcher entered the classroom one afternoon, she observed him leaned over his desk. His English language exercise book that lay before him was almost blank. As the researcher approached him, she saw that he was attempting to complete a page which was almost blank. Number 1 said simply the words: hundred...hundred. Student C was to construct sentences in relation to the numbers one hundred, two hundred, three hundred... to one thousand. The researcher asked Student C if he knew what these numbers were. He shook his head at her. “*cent, deux cent, trios cent, quart cent, etc.* One hundred, two hundred, three hundred,etc),” the researcher told him. Student C’s eyes quickly lit up and a small "ohhh" escaped his mouth. "I know them now (cents). Student C turned back to his work and began to construct his sentences.

Student C was unable to use the French numbers he knew (*cent, deux cent, trios cent, quart cent... etc*) to construct sentences in English because he was unfamiliar with the English vocabulary. After the meaning of the numbers had been translated into his second language French, by the researcher, he was able to effectively code switch, acknowledging to the researcher that “I know them now (cents)”. If this student had not been given the opportunity to code switch by the researcher, he would not have been able to accurately convey his knowledge of the subject matter in English. As such, the assessment of Student C’s knowledge of the subject matter would only have reflected his level of vocabulary in English, not his understanding of the subject.

5.4. Students Attitude in the Classroom

Difficulty with the acquisition of subject matter and accurate portrayal of this knowledge was displayed by the students’ attitude in the classroom. The disadvantage of not allowing code switching within the classroom was displayed through students’ silence.

Student A sat at the back of the classroom, looking frustrated, avoiding eye contact with the teacher. Student C had the same posture and was gazing without direction around the back of the classroom. Student D and Student E whispered occasionally to each other in French but did not readily contribute any information to the classroom discussion in English. Students F looked

suspiciously like he could fall asleep at any moment. Shortly after this observation was noted, a brief dialogue occurred between Student C and the teacher.

Teacher A: Student C, can you conjugate the verb to have?

Student C: I don't know.

Teacher A: Don't you know anything, not even to say "I have" in English?

Student C: Yes.

When observing these French-speaking students in English as a Foreign Language classroom, the researcher noted that they seemed uninterested and uninvolved. They responded to classroom discussion only when asked a question directly by the teacher. If not, they sat silently, detached from the lesson, and removed from the rest of the class. They seldom participated in classroom discussion as did their English speaking peers. This is seen when Student C responded with disinterest in (5) as she stated to the teacher, "I don't know" when asked to conjugate the verb 'to have' in English.

Nevertheless, these students showed great interest in the subject matter when discussing it with teacher B in both English and French as shown in 6 below.

Teacher B: What time is it? I l'heure? 'Time?'

Student D: *Il est dix heures du matin*; 'yes, the time is ten am'

Student A: *Dix heures en Anglais c'est 'ten o' clock?'*

Student C: Oui, '*dix heures*' c'est '*ten o' clock*.'

Student D: yes, '*ten am*' c'est dix heures du matin.'

Because they are allowed to code switch, the same student (Student D) who appeared disinterested and seemed to have minimal knowledge of the verb *to have* in (5) above relayed information about the time of the day to Teacher B, (that the time was ten am) in a group discussion. By allowing code switching, she told the teacher that, '*ten am*' c'est dix heures du martin'. This information may not have been volunteered minutes before in the classroom due to her lack of fluency in English. By allowing Student D to code switch, she was able to communicate her knowledge of subject matter accurately.

Within the English as a foreign language classroom where code switching was accepted, there were no examples recorded where students had to cut their conversations short due to language

barriers. Students switched freely between English and French in order to convey meaning. Below is an example of another effective code switching.

Student G: Look, '*monsieur*' (teacher), I am conjugating the verb.

Teacher B: 'Which verb? *Quel verbe?*'

Student G: *Le verbe avoir*. Yes, it is the verb to have.

This is an example of effective code switching, in which Student G was able to clearly communicate her knowledge of the subject to the teacher. The conversation in French and English resulted in Student G saying *Le verbe avoir*. Yes it is the verb to have. It is unclear why Student G switched from her French explanation into English. Nevertheless, her sentence was spoken without hesitation and her knowledge of the subject matter was accurately conveyed to the teacher.

In example (8), below, both the teacher and the students switch without hesitation between English and French in order to convey meaning in the best way possible. The following example is a teacher led discussion regarding the conjugation of the verb "to have".

Teacher B: What verb are you conjugating? *Le verbe?*

Student H: The verb to have. *Avoir*.

Student I: *Au passer?* In the past?

Student J: No! In the present. *Au present*.

Student H: *Le verbe avoir* in English.

In this discussion, each student is understood by his or her peers and the teacher. Language barriers do not get in the way of effective communication. Assessment of this discussion by the teacher will accurately show what each student knows about the verb to have.

6. Interviews

Interviews were conducted with both English language teachers and French speaking students for the purpose of comparing teachers' code-switching behavior and students' code-switching preferences. On the one hand, the interviews investigated teachers' attitude towards code-switching in the classroom and out of the classroom. On the other hand, students were asked about their attitudes towards the use of code-switching in the English as a foreign language classroom.

Before conducting the interviews, the researcher informed the respondents that the purpose of the study was to investigate the use of code-switching in English as a Foreign Language classroom. The researcher prepared an interview guide with a set of open-ended questions which allowed teachers and students to speak freely. The language used to conduct the interviews was English language, whereas the researcher switched to clarify the interview questions in French. Each interview took approximately 8 minutes. The interview results are presented below.

6.1. Results of Interviews with Teachers

This section presents the analysis and results of the interviews with teachers.

6.1.1. Teachers' Views on and Use of Code-switching

The researcher sought to find out when and why teachers code-switch. The teachers' responses have been subdivided into two; first, their general views on code-switching and secondly when and why they code-switch.

Two (Teacher A and C), out of the 5 teachers (40%) had the same opinion regarding code-switching when teaching English; namely that French should not exist in the English language classroom. However, they gave an explanation as to why they held that view. According to them, *English is the target language, and should be the only language allowed*. They explained that the students can speak French during break and in French classes.

Teacher B was the most positive towards code-switching. She acknowledged that English should of course be spoken as much as possible but that, since the French speaking students could understand very little English, they can never be as clear in English, a foreign language as they are in French, their second language.

Consequently, teacher A's and C's views of code-switching was that it should be avoided, while Teacher B and C explained why they would code-switch. They differed from Teacher A and C in that their attitude towards code-switching was much more open and they code-switched to a much larger extent than the other teachers.

6.1.2. When and Why Teachers Code-switch

Teachers also gave their thoughts on when and why they code-switch. Teacher B's reasons for code-switching was for the students to understand. This teacher explained that there is no reason using English throughout while the French speaking students do not understand. This makes the

class boring and teachers keep repeating lessons for the students to understand. For this reason, code switching is for students to understand.

The result here shows that, all the teachers' code-switch in grammar teaching even though 2 of them (Teacher A and C) initially said they do not. This indicates that French is functional in some situations although they try to avoid code-switching in general. According to Teacher B and D, grammar functions in English are very much like those in French. As such, they make use of the grammar knowledge and terminology that the students possess in their second language (French), rather than for the students to learn a completely new set of terminology.

Teacher B code-switches when teaching grammar, but tries to say everything first in English, and then explains a few concepts in French to make sure that everyone has understood. Teacher E explained that she sometimes code-switch to explain grammatical terms that the students seem not to understand, otherwise she does not have specific topic areas where she deliberately code-switches.

When it comes to informal context outside the classroom, all teachers code-switch but overall, they do this as little as possible. Teacher C explains that when she is outside her classroom she always speaks French. Teacher B finds the students uncomfortable if she tries to speak English with them in an informal situation. Therefore, she chooses to speak both English and French. Teacher A also points out that he speaks French, where necessary to clarify something to the weak students. Teacher E also pointed out that she switches codes out of the classroom, but without giving any reason.

When asked the purpose of their code-switching, the researcher found out that; 4 teachers had a clear purpose of code-switching and only one of the teachers (Teacher A) pointed to her personal shortcomings, of not being able to express herself well in French. Teacher B's code-switching is never planned but when she does switch it always fills a purpose.

Teacher C is the only teacher who emphasized that she tries to code-switch as little as possible. She thinks it is important for the students to hear and speak English as much as possible. If the students do not understand, she then switches for them to understand. She thinks that the students can learn from this method.

6.2. Results of Interviews with Students

This section will present the results of the interview. The main purpose of the interview was to find out if students do code-switched in class, when and why they code-switched and what language the students preferred in specific classroom situations.

Out of 8 French speaking students, a majority of them (6) giving a percentage of 75% said yes to practicing code-switching in the English language classroom especially for clarification when students are lost. The few (2) who did not code-switch explained that they could speak both English and French. According to all the 8 students, code-switching is beneficial to them because French is the language they understand better. Code-switching a little would help clarify difficult concepts and enable them participate in the lesson.

The result showed that, many French speaking students preferred a combination of French and English in many situations, particularly the more complex ones. Grammar instructions and test instructions were examples of such situations while more general instructions were preferred in English. However, these students prefer that teachers should code-switch to French, their second language as little as possible. A majority of the students, 6 out of 8 (75%), especially those who understand very little English wanted their teacher to make them to speak more English. Nevertheless they agreed that code-switching a little would help them understand English better.

7. Conclusion

Code switching was used by the teachers and students to fill linguistic and conceptual gaps, as well as to aid communication and to complete sentences when the speaker falls short of vocabulary in the foreign language. Observation showed that, students code-switched whenever they came across concepts that were difficult to understand. As such, they would ask their peers to clarify them in French. This was the case with example (1) above. Grosjean (1982) states that people switch when they cannot find the suitable term or when the language being used does not have the appropriate translation. The reason of CS is to fill this linguistic gap.

The researcher also found that both teachers and students switch their code to translate or elaborate significant messages while explaining new vocabulary or instructions instead of proceeding in the foreign language. This was the case with student C, when he was struggling to construct sentences using numbers in English. When the researcher translated the French numbers into English, Student C's eyes quickly lit up and he said "I know them now (cents), as

he quickly turned back to his work and began to construct his sentences. This facilitates comprehension.

It was also observed that the students switched from the target language, English to their second language, French, while expressing their feelings of pleasure and displeasure. Flyman-Mattsson and Burenhult (1999) define the affective functions of CS in the domain of classroom, as the automatic expression of emotions in interacting with students. Within a less formal setting, the probability of using CS was high as students and teachers made use of French freely. The majority of the EFL teachers argued that the students' second language, French aided them to attach meaning to newly acquired vocabulary in English.

When learners are able to compare sentence structures in the second language to those of the foreign language, learners learn similarities and differences. Therefore, the use of the second language in foreign medium classrooms should be encouraged to help learners compare the second language structures to those of the English language.

Code-switching in the classroom affects the learning environment by increasing student understanding, and application of the material. With regards to student-teacher relationship, it helps foster a better relationship with the students. It was recognized that the students follow instructions easily when presented in both French and English, the target language. During interviews, the students expressed their positive views towards CS.

Cole (1998) argues that the strict exclusion of L1 in the classroom can lead to unusual behaviors, such as "trying to explain the meaning of a language item where a simple translation would save time and anguish." However, language teachers should keep in mind that there might be certain times, when the best choice would indeed be to avoid the use of the first language. In this study, both students and the teacher tried to make use of L1 whenever needed.

Thus, CS allows for effective communication between students and teachers in a natural and comfortable way. Code-switching is therefore an important technique to highlight the significance of a specific piece of information. It is useful technique in classroom interaction, specifically if the goal is to clarify and convey the information to students in an efficient manner. In conclusion, code-switching enhances learners' performance both in content and language learning. Meanwhile, code switching should be treated by teachers and curriculum designers as a

resource that facilitates collaboration between learners and teachers in foreign medium classrooms.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

- Male () Female ()

1. Do you teach English?
2. How many years have you been teaching English?
3. What do you think about speaking French in the English classroom, in general?
4. In what situations do you choose to speak French?
5. Are there times and situations when you speak French? When and why?
6. Are there advantages in switching from English to French in your teaching?
7. Are there times and situations when you never speak French? When and why?
8. Are there times when you switch to French without planning ahead?
9. When does this occur?
10. In what situations do you switch to French?
Why do you use French in those situations?
11. What are the advantages when students switch to French when you teach?
12. What are the disadvantages when students switch to French when you speak?