

Functions of Code-Switching Strategies among Iranian EFL Learners and Their Speaking Ability Improvement through Code-Switching

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of code-switching on speaking ability of Iranian low proficiency EFL learners. Moreover, it was an attempt to show what functions existed behind code-switching strategies used by the EFL learners. To this end, 60 male and female Iranian EFL learners age-ranged between 20 and 30 participated in the study. Data collection instruments which were used were the Interchange Objective Placement Test, a pretest, a teaching material, and a posttest. The speech of 60 Iranian EFL learners was recorded while they were performing some picture-description tasks. Then, their speech was transcribed and analyzed. The collected data were subjected to independent-samples *t*-test. The results indicated the two main functions of code-switching were equivalence and floor-holding. Furthermore, the findings of the *t*-test demonstrated that code-switching was an effective strategy among low proficiency level EFL learners and it could increase their motivation and interaction in the class discussions. Thus, they can speak in a positive environment and speaking is not an inhibitory factor anymore in their English learning.

Keywords: Code-switching, Speaking ability, Functions of code-switching, Language proficiency, EFL learners

Introduction

Numan and Carter (2001) defined code-switching as a phenomenon of switching from one language to another in the same discourse. Usually the languages that are switched are the mother tongue and a foreign language. Cook (2001) referred to code-switching in the classroom as a natural response in a bilingual situation. Coulmas (2005) affirmed that both bilingual speakers and speech community differ as to the extent they practice code-switching in the everyday life. Code-switching can take on several forms which include alteration of sentences, phrases from both languages and switching in a long narrative (Kasperczyk, 2005).

When there is no clear unmarked language choice, speakers practice code-switching to explore possible language choices. Speakers make those choices with the expectation that the addressee will recognize choice with a particular intention (Rose, 2006). Rose further mentions that when a speaker makes a marked choice, the message makes more than just the semantic content of the words; it also conveys an intention to question or change aspects of the interaction. Since in most of the EFL classes especially classes with low proficiency level students, when L2 teachers try to instruct learners merely in English, they show deep misunderstanding towards the issue, it seems that if the instruction can be provided in the learners' L1, some of such problems could be removed. Most of the L2 learners usually nag about difficulty in learning abstract words, or some grammatical structures which are different from their L1; thus, the researchers

assumed that code-switching might assist such learners in their better understanding of the instructional material. The research questions formulated in the current study are:

- 1) What are the functions of code-switching among Iranian EFL learners?
- 2) How does code-switching improve speaking ability of Iranian EFL learners?

The results of this study can illuminate the strategies that Iranian low proficiency EFL learners apply when they are involved in situations where they cannot make themselves understood to the addressee(s). Moreover, the findings may reveal the impact that using code-switching strategies can have on the improvement of the speaking ability among low proficiency EFL learners who have problems while speaking.

Review of Literature

Code-Switching, Its Types and Usage

According to Azlan and Narasuman (2013), code-switching is a shift occurring between two or more languages simultaneously or interchangeably within one conversation. Youkhana (2010) claimed that language learners often turn to their native language in the foreign language classroom, i.e. they code-switch.

Concerning the types of code-switching, Lipski (1985) claimed that code-switching takes a variety of forms. It can occur within or at the end or beginning of sentences. In inter-sentential code-switching; the language switch is done at sentence boundaries. This is seen most often between fluent bilingual speakers. In intra-sentential code-switching, the shift is done in the middle of a sentence with no interruptions, hesitations, or pauses. On the other hand, Brice and Brice (2000) identified the use of complete sentences, phrases and borrowed words from language other than the primary language as different types of code-switching.

Also, Hammink (2000) and Poplack (1980) classified code-switching strategies into two types: borrowing and calque literal translation. By borrowing, they meant, using a single word from a language different than the primary language, which is similar in grammatical usage, but is a term that is not available in the primary language. Calque translation means translating an expression from another language without use of appropriate syntax. It is the literal translation of each element of a phrase from one language into another without the use of the second language's grammar. Rather than borrowing the phrase from the first language, the second language translates the phrase.

The reasons for code-switching are primarily social. Olmedo-Williams (1983) described categories of code-switching from her study of language mixing in classroom settings. These categories include: emphasis, sociolinguistic play, clarification, accommodation, lexicalization, attracting attention, regulating behavior, and miscellaneous switches. She believed that lexicalization and clarification are related to the ability to express oneself better in the other language on a given topic. Goodman and Goodman (1979), in a study on writing in bilingual classrooms, found that students often use language switching in spoken language, but rarely in written language. Since spoken language is less formal than written language, this seems to support Olmedo-Williams' conclusion that students code switch less in formal situations. Although code-switching is considered as one of the involving features of bilingual speech, still some people think it is a disparaged form of conversation.

Usually teachers' beliefs and attitudes influence code-switching. Apart from their personal understanding of this concept, the educational policies affect teachers' language use (Liu et al., 2004). Further, there is students' attitude towards code-switching, which is defined by Eagly and Chaiken as a "psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor" (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p.1)

Meiring and Norman (2002) showed, by distributing a questionnaire to 45 language teachers that teachers tend to use the target language (TL) more extensively if the students are at a higher level. In Macaro's (2001) case study, it was suggested that code-switching is a language strategy that needs to be acquired since it is a natural form of communication. On the other hand, Xiaoli (2009) proposed, through a quantitative research, that maximum exposure of the TL is important. For example, students' different usage of code-switching seems to be related to proficiency level: interviews conducted by Evans (2009) revealed that some students feel hesitant using the L2 if they are not certain about the correct usage of the TL. Additionally, Bateman's (2008) qualitative findings also suggested that proficiency level influences both the students' and the teachers' usage of code-switching.

Studies have been conducted on code-switching and researchers are not in agreement on whether or not code-switching is beneficial and when it is supposed to be used. A group of scholars (Burden, 2001; Cole, 1998; Critchley, 1999; Greggio & Gil, 2007; Schweers, 1999; Tang, 2002) have argued that code-switching can be a useful tool in assisting English language teaching and learning process. Also, Macaro (2005) discovered, through classroom observations that teachers' and students' code-switching in the language classroom can be considered to be a helpful language strategy. This would be in line with Ahmad's (2009) investigation who suggested that teachers' code-switching in the language classroom is a valid asset for low proficiency learners and that teachers' code-switching is connected to learners' support. Harmer (2007) also discussed the usage of students' L1 in the classroom in comparison with an English-only approach. One example of when the usage of students' L1 is a benefit is when it is used to create a better group dynamic.

Nonetheless, Harmer (2007, p. 134) also mentioned detriments in using the students' L1. One of the disadvantages discussed is the fact that the usage of students' L1 limits target language exposure. Xiaoli's (2013) also noticed this, though a qualitative research and came to the conclusion that when possible it is preferable for teachers and students to use the target language.

Functions of Learners' Code-Switching

Goodman & Goodman (1979), in a study on writing in bilingual classrooms, found that students often use language switching in spoken language, but rarely in written language. Since spoken language is less formal than written language, this seems to support Olmedo-Williams' conclusion that students code switch less in formal situations. Although code-switching is considered as one of the involving features of bilingual speech, still some people think it is a disparaged form of conversation.

As it is the case for teachers' code-switching, the students also are not always aware of the reasons for code-switching as well as its functions and outcomes. Although they may unconsciously perform code-switching, it clearly serves some functions either beneficial or not. Eldridge names these functions as: equivalence, floor-holding, reiteration, and conflict control (1996, pp. 305-307).

The first function of student code switch is equivalence. In this case, the student makes use of the native equivalent of a certain lexical item in target language and therefore code switches to his/her native tongue. This process may be correlated with the deficiency in linguistic competence of target language, which makes the student use the native lexical item when he/she has not the competence for using the target language explanation for a particular lexical item. So "equivalence" functions as a defensive mechanism for students as it gives the student the

opportunity to continue communication by bridging the gaps resulting from foreign language incompetence.

The next function to be introduced is floor-holding. During a conversation in the target language, the students fill the stopgap with native language use. It may be suggested that this is a mechanism used by the students in order to avoid gaps in communication, which may result from the lack of fluency in target language. The learners performing code-switching for floor holding generally have the same problem: they cannot recall the appropriate target language structure or lexicon. It may be claimed that this type of language alternation may have negative effects on learning a foreign language; since it may result in loss of fluency in long term.

The third consideration in students' code-switching is reiteration, which is pointed by Eldridge as: "messages are reinforced, emphasized, or clarified where the message has already been transmitted in one code, but not understood" (1996, p. 306). In this case, the message in target language is repeated by the student in native tongue through which the learner tries to give the meaning by making use of a repetition technique. The reason for this specific language alternation case may be two-folds: first, he/she may not have transferred the meaning exactly in target language. Second, the student may think that it is more appropriate to code switch in order to indicate the teacher that the content is clearly understood by him/her.

The last function of students' code-switching to be introduced here is conflict control. For the potentially conflictive language use of a student (meaning that the student tends to avoid a misunderstanding or tends to utter words indirectly for specific purposes), the code-switching is a strategy to transfer the intended meaning. The underlying reasons for the tendency to use this type of code-switching may vary according to students' needs, intentions or purposes. Additionally, the lack of some culturally equivalent lexis among the native language and target language—which may lead to violation of the transference of intended meaning—may result in code-switching for conflict control; therefore possible misunderstandings are avoided.

Factors that Cause Speaking Difficulty for EFL Learners

EFL learners' reluctance to speak English in the classroom is a problem commonly found in EFL contexts. Consequently, students have fewer opportunities to learn from speaking. Research shows that they develop more negative attitudes to school and are likely to lack motivation to put more effort in it (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991). Unfortunately, EFL learners in intermediate levels and even some of them in advanced level cannot speak English as well. They used to think in their mother's tongue. Moreover, some teachers do not use academic words in their class. This issue causes that the learners cannot improve speaking skill in a correct way and talk fluency and accuracy. In Iran, we have many problems and difficulties with this matter. The learner's motivation and interaction are low in the classroom too, and any researcher did not research about it in terms of teacher's role. This weakness about speaking can be related to teachers, because the role of them is crucial in the classroom and if they don't pay attention to their types of speaking, student's interaction, student's motivation, classroom interaction, etc., their learners cannot speak as well (Jahanbakhsh & Amiri, 2013).

Zhang (2009) argued that speaking remains the most difficult skill to master for the majority of English learners, and they are still incompetent in communicating orally in English. According to Ur (1996), there are many factors that cause difficulty in speaking, and they are as follows:

1. Inhibition. Students are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism, or simply shy.
2. Nothing to say. Students have no motive to express themselves.

3. Low or uneven participation. Only one participant can talk at a time because of large classes and the tendency of some learners to dominate, while others speak very little or not at all.
4. Mother-tongue use. Learners who share the same mother tongue tend to use it because it is easier and because learners feel less exposed if they are speaking their mother tongue.

In addition, Rababa'h (2005) pointed out that there are many factors that cause difficulties in speaking English among EFL learners. Some of these factors are related to the learners themselves, the teaching strategies, the curriculum, and the environment. For example, many learners lack the necessary vocabulary to get their meaning across, and consequently, they cannot keep the interaction going. Inadequate strategic competence and communication competence can be another reason as well for not being able to keep the interaction going.

Considering what went above, this study is an attempt to explore the functions of code-switching strategies used by Iranian EFL teachers and learners and the improvement of the speaking ability of the EFL learners through using code-switching in the classroom.

Methodology

Participants

Participants of this study were sixty male and female Iranian EFL learners studying English at Sadr Language Institute in Isfahan, Iran who were randomly selected. Two equal numbers of male and female learners were selected; that is, thirty male and thirty female learners. The participants formed two groups: one experimental and one control. Fifteen male and fifteen female participants were included in the experimental group and fifteen male and fifteen female participants were included in the control group after they took the Interchange Objective Placement Test. The participants were studying English and they were in low proficiency level. All the participants in this study were of Iranian nationality. Their age ranged between 20 and 30 years.

Low proficiency EFL learners were selected for this study since it seemed that they would benefit more from code-switching rather than learners with higher levels of proficiency. Ahmad (2009) also suggested that teachers' code-switching in the language classroom is a valid asset for low proficiency learners and that teachers' code-switching is connected to learners' support.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study to collect the data included the Interchange Objective Placement Test, a pretest and a posttest on speaking proficiency, and a teaching material which was used as the treatment for the experimental group.

The Interchange Objective Placement Test claimed to be validated in Interchange series (Richards, 2008) was administered to the participants. The aim was evaluating their language proficiency in order to determine the low proficiency learners. The test comprised three sections: listening comprehension, reading comprehension, and language use. The listening comprehension section included nine conversations, followed by multiple choice items, in which participants had to read the questions carefully before they listened to the conversations and then they had to listen to the conversation and answer the questions after the conversation ended. They had 15 minutes to complete this section. The second section, reading comprehension, comprised 5 short reading comprehension passages, in which the participants had to read each passage and select the correct answer for each question. They had 20 minutes to complete this section. Section three, called language use, included thirty multiple choice items, in which the participants had to select the correct word for each item and fill in their choice on their answer sheets. They had 15 minutes to complete this section. To measure reliability, for the sake of

convenience, the KR Cronbach formula was employed and the reliability coefficient was 0.78. Those whose scores fell within one standard deviation below and above the mean served as the participants of the study.

In the pretest, the participants in both groups were asked to describe a picture that was chosen by the students themselves. Each participant had five minutes during which s/he could think and describe the picture as s/he was asked to. Two types of picture-description tasks with two sets of ten picture cues were prepared for this study. The topics of the picture-description tasks corresponded to the topics used in the treatment. Since each set of picture cues was in random order, they were asked to first discuss and determine the order of pictures in pairs without any language specification (i.e., English/Persian) and then create a story based on a set of ten picture cues. The tape-recorded speeches of the participants during the pretest were scored by two scorers empirically based on the general spoken English marking scale proposed by Nakatsuhara (2007).

At the end of the term, i.e. after 40 hours of instruction, the participants took part in the posttest which was another speaking test with the same characteristics as the pretest. Indeed, an oral test of picture description similar to the pretest which was scored systematically by two raters was administered.

Data Collection Procedure

Firstly, an Interchange Objective Placement Test was administered to 100 Iranian EFL learners. After scoring the tests, 60 learners were selected for the purpose of the study. The participants of this study were randomly assigned to two different groups: an experimental group and a control group. Each group consisted of 15 male and 15 female learners who had taken English as a second language during an educational year.

Next, the participants of both groups were given an oral test of picture description—the pretest—which was scored systematically by two raters. The oral picture descriptions tests were recorded and transcribed; then they were given to the raters to score them. After the pretest, the treatment started and lasted for 10 sessions. Indeed, each session for each group lasted for 90 minutes. During each session, the participants in both groups took part in picture description tasks. A series of pictures was distributed among the participants. The teacher herself chose a picture and described it for the whole class. In the control group, she did not use code-switching; while in the experimental group she used code-switching. Then, she gave a picture to each pair and asked them to describe it. It is worth mentioning that it was forbidden for the participants in the control group to use their L1; while the students of the experimental group were permitted to code-switch, as a correspondence technique, at whatever point they were supposed to miss the score concerning vocabulary. As the number of the students in each class was 30 and all of them could not describe the pictures each session, the teacher asked them to describe the pictures in a controlled way so that everyone could describe a picture at least once during the treatment. It is worth noticing that the pairs were allowed to have a look at the picture and practice describing it before they were asked to describe it for the whole class. After the treatment, another picture description test—the posttest—was administered. These oral picture description tests were also recorded and described. The two scorers scored the posttests systematically in view of Nakatsuhara's (2007) checking scale for general speaking ability in English which was also used for the pretest. The collected information was dissected to identify whether there was any significant difference between the speaking performances of the two groups in terms of code-switching strategies use.

Data Analysis

The posttest scores of the experimental and control groups were analyzed using the independent-samples *t*-test. The data were initially described and summarized using descriptive statistics. The independent-samples *t*-test compares the mean scores between the control and experimental groups on the same settings. Then, the tape-recorded conversations were transcribed so that the functions of the code-switching strategies were figured out.

Results

The recorded data were transcribed so that the type and frequency of the code-switching used during picture description tasks were identified. Then, the data were coded and different forms of code-switching were calculated. The following table shows the type, frequency, and percentage of the code-switched forms observed in the transcribed picture descriptions.

Table 1. *Type, frequency, and percentage of the code-switched forms in the experimental group*

Type of code-switched form		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inter-sentential	Complete phrases	24.00	4.96
	Borrowed words	58.00	11.98
Intra-sentential	Complete phrases	29.00	5.99
	Borrowed words	354.00	73.14
Complete sentences		19.00	3.93
Total		484.00	100.00

It was shown in Table 1 that intra-sentential borrowed words were the most frequent type of code-switched form (73.14%) which was followed by inter-sentential borrowed words (11.98%) and intra-sentential complete phrases (5.99%), respectively.

To explore the impact of code-switching on speaking ability of the experimental and control groups, an independent-samples *t*-test was run on the data and the results are shown in the following tables. Before running the respective *t*-test, the inter-rater reliability was calculated to measure the proportion of agreement among the speaking ability scores presented by the two raters. The Cohen's kappa (*k*) was run on the data and it was shown that the *k*-value was 0.572 and the *p*-value was 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). It indicated that there was a moderate strength of agreement between the two raters.

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics related to the effect of code-switching on speaking ability of the experimental and control groups*

Group		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Speaking	Control	30	12.03	1.67	.31
	Experimental	30	16.87	1.80	.32

As can be seen in Table 2, the mean score was 12.03 for the control group and 16.87 for the experimental group. The standard deviation reported for the control group was 1.67 while that of the experimental group was 1.80.

To indicate the effect of code-switching on speaking in experimental and control groups, the results which were obtained from the independent-samples *t*-test run on the data will be presented in Table 3.

Table 3. *Independent samples t-test of the effect of code-switching on speaking ability in experimental and control groups*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference		Lower	Upper
Speaking	Equal variances assumed	.047	.829	-10.79	58	.000	-4.83	.448	-5.73	-3.94
	Equal variances not assumed			-10.79	57.70	.000	-4.83	.448	-5.73	-3.94

According to the results of the *t*-test shown in Table 3, the *t*-value was reported to be 10.79 and the *p*-value was 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). It was indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the control and experimental groups and code-switching had a significant effect on the speaking ability of the low proficiency Iranian EFL learners.

To visually represent the results of the independent-samples *t*-test run on the data in terms of the impact of code-switching on speaking ability of the participants in the experimental and control groups, the related bar chart was drawn as shown in Figure 1.

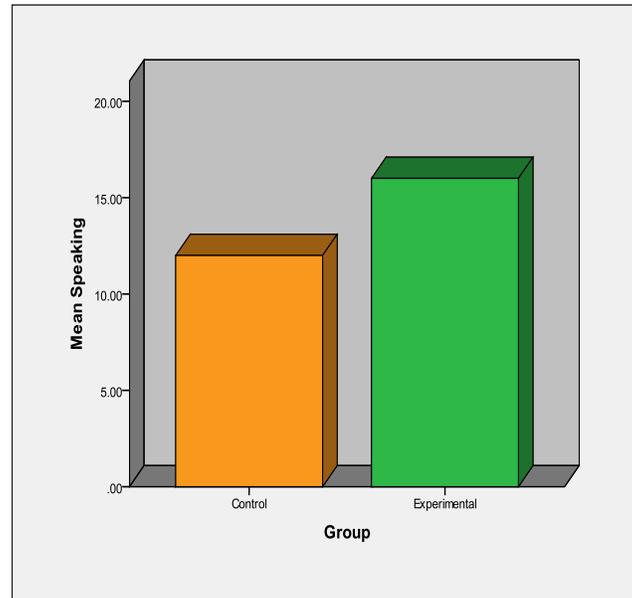


Figure 1. *Impact of code-switching on speaking ability of the participants in experimental and control groups*

Discussion and Conclusion

Analyzing the transcriptions of picture description tasks done by the participants, the researchers found that most of the code-switching occurred was intra-sentential, the shift was done in the middle of a sentence with hesitations or pauses, and some was inter-sentential, at the end or at the beginning of the sentences. In fact, the former was in line with Lipski (1985) who claimed that code-switching can be both inter-sentential and intra-sentential. The results indicated that the scope of code-switching in this study was limited to borrowed words and complete phrases from the mother tongue. Brice and Brice (2000), Hammink (2000), and Poplack (1980) also identified the use of borrowed words and complete phrases from a language other than the primary language as different types of code-switching.

In addition, two functions were observed in the code-switching used by the learners. They were: 1) equivalence and 2) floor-holding. These two functions are among the four functions identified by Eldridge (1996). During their descriptions, there were situations where used the Persian equivalent of a certain word in English and thus code switched to his/her mother tongue. The reason why the learner code-switched was two-fold. It was because either at that moment s/he forgot the very word which was required or s/he had deficiency in his/her linguistic knowledge. Therefore, "equivalence" was looked at as a defensive mechanism for learners. When the learners faced a situation in which they did not know or remember the English word, they paused so that they could find the respective word. The pauses were both short and long. They thought as long as possible; indeed, the length of pauses depended on the learners' personality. Those who seemed to be hasty immediately switched to Persian, but the patient ones spent time thinking of the English word. In case they figured out that using the Persian equivalent was the last resort; they code-switched. It was noted that those who preferred to think more to recall the word at last, reiterated the last word or asked their partner to let them look for the word. Two examples are shown in the following extract of one of the descriptions:

(1)a. In the picture, there is a man. He is...¹ he is...he is... *dāndanpezeshk* and works in a hospital. (*Intra-sentential borrowed word*)

b. In the picture, there is a man. He is...he is...he is... *dentist* and works in a hospital.

(2)a. I see a woman. She is (sæbr kon ye læhze), she is *mibore* the potatoes. (*Intra-sentential borrowed word*)

b. I see a woman. She is (wait a moment), she is *cutting* the potatoes.

(3)a. There are two boys in the picture, theythey are playing *too-ye park* at night. (*Intra-sentential complete phrase*)

b. There are two boys in the picture, theythey are playing *in the park* at night.

(4)a. I see... *ye doxtær-e xoshgel* in the picture. (*Intra-sentential complete phrase*)

b. I see... *a beautiful girl* in the picture.

(5)a. A ... *khanom* is here. (*Inter-sentential borrowed word*)

b. A ... *woman* is here.

(6)a. I see three chickens. They (sæbr kon ye læhze), they *bazi mikonæn*. (*Inter-sentential borrowed word*)

b. I see three chickens. They (wait a moment), they *play*.

(7)a. ... *too-ye æks*, I see a girl. (*Inter-sentential complete phrase*)

b. ... *in the picture*, I see a girl.

(8)a. It is night. I see a moon and a star ... *too-ye asemoon*. (*Inter-sentential complete phrase*)

b. It is night. I see a moon and a star ... *in the sky*.

(9)a. *ye noonva tooye æks hast*. (*Complete sentence*)

b. *there is a baker in the picture*.

(10) a. *ye asemoon-e siyah too æks mibinam*. (*Complete sentence*)

b. *I see a black sky in the picture*.

The next function was floor-holding. During the descriptions, sometimes, the learners switched to their mother tongue since they probably wanted to have a smooth stream in their description. As a matter of fact, their goal of using the Persian equivalent was to fill the gap which would be caused. It seemed that their reason of code-switching was to pretend that they were fluent since this way they tried to avoid the gaps. The reason why such learners code-switched would be not recalling the appropriate English word or deficiency in linguistic competence. However, as floor-holding was preferred, they did not put time thinking and looking for the English word, they instantly appealed to the Persian equivalent to make the description as smooth and fluent as possible.

Considering the effect of code-switching on speaking ability of the participants, the results indicated that code-switching had effects on the speaking ability of the participants with

low level of language proficiency. These findings are in line with the results of some previous studies. Macaro (2005) discovered that teachers' and students' code-switching in the language classroom can be considered to be a helpful language strategy. This is also in line with Ahmad's (2009) investigation who suggested that teachers' code-switching in the language classroom is a valid asset for low proficiency learners and that teachers' code-switching is connected to learners' support. Harmer (2007) also discussed the usage of students' L1 as a benefit when it is used to create a better group dynamic.

Considering the studies above, using code-switching strategies is effective particularly in classrooms with students at low level of proficiency. Code-switching can be a kind of support for such learners and it can increase their self-confidence. Usually, when students do not know a word or forget a word while speaking, it might hinder what they want to say next. Sometimes, thinking about that specific word probably results in stopping the conversation or preventing the learners to continue. When learners are permitted to use their L1 as code-switching strategies, the learning atmosphere will become a dynamic one. Every student prefers to participate and cooperate in classroom activities and this will, in effect, help develop and improve their speaking ability.

The first conclusion that is drawn from the findings of this study is that low proficiency EFL learners have positive attitudes towards speaking in classroom. Furthermore, it has positive effects on the speaking ability of the participants. Speaking is one of the skills that EFL learners are not competent at; hence, their attitudes are often negative towards this skill. Code-switching can be considered as a medium to alter the attitudes of the learners even among intermediate and advanced learners. However, as intermediate and advanced learners are able to speak, it may be suggested that they can use code-switching to a smaller extent.

The next conclusion is pertained to the fact that code-switching can increase EFL learners' motivation and interaction. When they can communicate in the classroom and they are not afraid of repetitive pauses in their speech, their motivation will increase. This increase in their motivation will lead to more interaction. Indeed, those students who have preferred to keep silent are now seen among the active students.

As Ur (1996) pointed out, inhibition and uneven participation are observed in the classes where speaking is a difficult issue for the students. Through code-switching these two factors that might cause difficulty in speaking among learners will presumably decrease. In a positive environment that is created, the students will not be worried about making mistakes or forgetting the words while they are speaking. Moreover, the class time is not devoted to those students who have always been dominant. Everyone can thus participate in class discussions and speaking exercises.

Finally, according to Liu et al. (2004), usually teachers' beliefs and attitudes influence code-switching. When teachers show positive attitude towards code-switching and let their students use it, the students will tend to apply their mother tongue equivalents in their speaking. Further, the students will reveal a "psychological tendency that is expressed by some degree of favor" as Eagly & Chaiken (1993, p.1) maintained. So, as a pedagogical implication, it is recommended that English teachers and professors do not consider code-switching as a taboo in their classrooms and permit it particularly in the classrooms where the number of low proficiency EFL learners exceeds that of proficient learners.

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