

Code-Switching in Iraqi EFL Classrooms: Causes and Communicative Functions

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Abstract

The current study seeks to examine the phenomenon of code-switching among Iraqi EFL learners, with particular reference to first-year students at the Department of English, College of Arts, University of Tikrit. The study seeks to achieve this goal by identifying the most frequently occurring types of code-switching, the main reasons for code-switching, and the communicative role of code-switching during classroom interactions. Finally, the study seeks to examine the differences between teachers and learners' code-switching. For the current study, the sample consisted of 40 first-year students at the Department of English, College of Arts, University of Tikrit. Data collection for the study took two weeks, during which the data were collected through observation and audio recording. The findings of the current study revealed that the most frequently occurring type of code-switching among Iraqi EFL learners was inter-sentential code-switching, followed by intra-sentential and tag switching. The findings also revealed the main reasons for code-switching, which were mainly due to learners' limited English proficiency, the need to clarify the message, and affective factors.

Keywords: Code-switching, EFL classrooms, Iraqi students, communicative functions, causes, classroom discourse.

التناوب اللغوي في صفوف تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق: أسبابه ووظائفه التواصلية
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المخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في ظاهرة التنقل بين اللغات (Code-switching) في صفوف اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق، مع الإشارة بشكل خاص إلى طلبة المرحلة الأولى في قسم اللغة الإنكليزية في كلية الآداب بجامعة تكريت. وتركز الدراسة على تحديد أكثر أنواع التنقل بين اللغات شيوعاً، ودراسة الأسباب الرئيسية التي تؤدي إلى استخدامه، وتحليل الوظائف التواصلية التي يؤديها أثناء التفاعل الصفّي. كما تسعى الدراسة إلى الكشف عن الفروق بين استخدام المدرسين والطلبة للتنقل بين اللغات داخل الصف الدراسي. تكونت عينة الدراسة من 40 طالباً من طلبة المرحلة الأولى. وقد جُمعت البيانات خلال مدة أسبوعين من خلال الملاحظة الصفية والتسجيلات الصوتية، والتي تم تفرّيغها لاحقاً وتحليلها. وأظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن التنقل بين اللغات بين الجمل (Inter-sentential code-switching) كان النوع الأكثر استخداماً أثناء التفاعل الصفّي، يليه التنقل داخل الجملة (Intra-sentential code-switching).

(sentential switching) التثاقل باستخدام العبارات القصيرة (Tag switching) كما أظهر التحليل أن الأسباب الرئيسية لاستخدام التثاقل بين اللغات تمثلت في ضعف الكفاءة في اللغة الإنجليزية، والحاجة إلى التوضيح، إضافة إلى عوامل إدارة الصف أو العوامل الوجدانية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التثاقل بين اللغات، صفوف اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، الطالبة العراقية، الوظائف التواصلية، الأسباب، خطاب الصف.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Code-switching has traditionally been identified as one of the most important aspects of language that occurs in the speech of bilingual or multilingual speakers. Code-switching can be defined as the change between two or more languages within one discourse or communicative situation (Gumperz, 1982, p. 59). In the educational field, especially in a learning situation where English is a Foreign Language (EFL), code-switching can be identified as a communicative practice between the students and the teachers.

Code-switching in EFL learning situations, especially in a situation where English is not commonly used outside the classroom, can be identified as a practice where students make use of their first language as a way to compensate for their lack of proficiency in their second language. However, this practice must not be identified as a casual occurrence. On the contrary, it can be associated with a complex array of educational, cognitive, and sociolinguistic processes that occur between the students and the teachers (Macaro, 2009, p. 239). Code-switching has thus become a prominent practice in EFL learning situations.

In terms of the Iraqi academic context, Arabic is considered the dominant language of communication, while English is considered a foreign language taught in academic institutions. In the Iraqi academic context, especially in English departments in Iraqi universities, students often tend to switch between Arabic and English during classroom discussions and explanations. This can be seen among undergraduate students who are still developing their academic competence in English.

In terms of the Department of English, College of Arts, University of Tikrit, students often tend to use code-switching during explanations and discussions in English classes. This is considered an indication that code-switching is considered an important tool in academic communication among students and teachers.

Although code-switching is often considered a common phenomenon in EFL classrooms, it is still considered an important debated issue in EFL classrooms. Some researchers consider it a barrier to language immersion and exposure to the target language, while others consider it an important tool in EFL learning and teaching that facilitates learning and communication in EFL classrooms (Lin, 2013, p. 198).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that although English is considered a primary medium of instruction in English departments in universities, communication in English and in learners' first language is a common feature in many contexts of English language learning and teaching in EFL contexts worldwide. In Iraqi universities, especially in English departments, it is common to notice Iraqi learners using English and their first language in their interactions during class. Such linguistic behavior warrants a number of questions in relation to code-switching in the language learning process (Sert, 2005, p. 5).

Nevertheless, the factors underlying code-switching in first-year students in the Department of English in the College of Arts, University of Tikrit, Iraq, have not been investigated in detail so far. Similarly, there is limited understanding of communication functions of code-switching in English language learning and teaching.

This study aims to fill this gap in existing knowledge by investigating the factors underlying code-switching in first-year students in Iraqi EFL university contexts, with a focus on English language learners in the Department of English in the College of Arts, University of Tikrit. By examining communication in English language learning and teaching in a university context, this study aims to provide a clearer understanding of code-switching in communication and language learning processes.

1.3 Aims of the Study

The main goal of the current research study is to explore the practice of code-switching in EFL contexts within Iraqi university classrooms, with special reference to first-year students at the Department of English in the College of Arts at the University of Tikrit.

Another important aim of the study is to examine the underlying causes that lead students to switch between languages in the classroom. Previous research suggests that code-switching may occur due to limited language proficiency, the need for clarification, or the desire to maintain interaction and participation within the learning environment (Macaro, 2009, p. 242).

In addition, the study aims to analyze the communicative functions that code-switching serves during classroom discourse. These functions may include clarification, emphasis, interactional support, and the facilitation of understanding between teachers and students.

Finally, the study intends to examine whether there are noticeable differences between the use of code-switching by teachers and students within university EFL classrooms. Such analysis may contribute to a better understanding of the pedagogical role of code-switching in higher education language learning contexts.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to achieve the aims of the present study, the research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most frequent types of code-switching used in EFL classrooms among first-year students in the Department of English at the College of Arts, University of Tikrit?
2. What are the main causes that lead first-year university students to use code-switching during English classroom interaction?
3. What communicative functions does code-switching serve in classroom discourse among students in Iraqi EFL university contexts?
4. Are there noticeable differences between teachers' and students' use of code-switching in English language classrooms at the university level?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of the present study lies in its attempt to provide a clearer understanding of the role of code-switching in Iraqi EFL university classrooms. Investigating language alternation among first-year students in the Department of English at the College of Arts, University of Tikrit can contribute to expanding the existing knowledge about classroom discourse and bilingual interaction in higher education contexts.

From a pedagogical perspective, the study may offer valuable insights for English language instructors regarding the appropriate use of code-switching as a teaching strategy. Understanding when and why students switch between Arabic and English may help teachers design more effective instructional practices that facilitate comprehension and encourage participation in classroom activities (Macaro, 2009, p. 241).

Furthermore, the study may assist educators in identifying the communicative functions that code-switching serves in academic interaction, such as

clarification, explanation, and reinforcement of complex linguistic concepts. Such understanding may contribute to improving classroom communication and reducing potential learning difficulties faced by first-year university students.

Therefore, the study may serve as a reference for future researchers who intend to explore language interaction, bilingual discourse, or classroom communication within Iraqi university contexts.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The target population of the present study is limited to first-year students in the Department of English at the College of Arts in the University of Tikrit. The sample of the study consists of 40 students of the undergraduate level who are currently studying English as a foreign language in their first year of academic study. The data collection of the study is conducted in the regular English language classes in the academic environment of the Department of English.

The scope of the present study is limited to the occurrence of code-switching between the two languages, i.e., Arabic and English. Moreover, the investigation of the study is limited to the identification of the types of code-switching, the reasons for code-switching, and the communicative use of code-switching in the classroom environment.

It is worth mentioning that the study is limited to the occurrence of code-switching in the classroom environment. Consequently, the study is not concerned with informal interactions that may take place outside the classroom environment. Furthermore, the study is limited to students of the first academic stage. Consequently, the study cannot be generalized to students of other academic stages or to students of other departments.

Another limitation of the study is the linguistic scope of the study. The investigation of the study is limited to the occurrence of code-switching between two languages, i.e., Arabic and English. Other linguistic varieties or the use of dialects in code-switching are not included in the scope of the study.

1.7 Operational Definitions of Key Terms

For the purpose of clarity and consistency throughout the study, the following key terms are defined operationally as they are used in the present research.

Code-Switching: Code-switching refers to the alternation between two languages within the same discourse, sentence, or interaction. In the context of this study, it specifically refers to the switching between Arabic and English by

students or teachers during classroom communication in English language lessons (Gumperz, 1982, p. 59).

EFL Classroom: An EFL classroom refers to a formal educational environment in which English is taught as a foreign language to learners whose first language is different from English. In the present study, the term refers to English language classes attended by first-year students in the Department of English at the College of Arts, University of Tikrit (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 196).

Communicative Functions: Communicative functions refer to the pragmatic purposes that language serves during interaction. These purposes may include clarification, emphasis, explanation, classroom management, or facilitating understanding among participants in the classroom discourse (Halliday, 1978, p. 23).

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

2.1 Concept and Definition of Code-Switching

Code-switching is one of the most widely discussed phenomena in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics. It is defined as the use of two or more languages in the same communicational situation. Linguistic code-switching is the behavior that is commonly found among bilingual or multilingual speakers who have the ability to communicate in more than one language. (Gumperz, 1982, p. 59)

Previous studies on code-switching have shown that the behavior is social and communicational in nature rather than being a random use of two or more languages. Code-switching is a strategic communicational behavior in which speakers use their linguistic repertoire to communicate. It is the ability of speakers to use their entire repertoire in the process of communication. (Gumperz, 1982)

From another point of view, code-switching is defined as the systematic switching between two languages in a single conversation or sentence or clause depending on the communicational situation. (Myers-Scotton, 1993, p. 3)

Code-switching is the behavior that is commonly found in EFL classrooms. It is the switching between two languages in the process of communication. In EFL classrooms, the two languages that are commonly used in the process of communication include the target language (English) and the first language of the students. (Cook, 2001, p. 405)

Recent studies in applied linguistics have shown that code-switching is not a behavior of deficient competence. Rather, it is a communicational strategy that is used for the comprehension of the students in the classroom. By using code-switching in the classroom, the students have the ability to communicate in academic discourse.

In the context of Iraqi EFL university classrooms, code-switching may occur when students switch between Arabic and English during classroom interaction, particularly when discussing linguistic concepts or responding to teachers' explanations. Therefore, understanding the concept of code-switching is essential for examining its pedagogical and communicative roles in the learning process.

2.2 Types of Code-Switching

Code-switching can occur in different forms depending on the grammatical structure and the position in which the language alternation takes place. Researchers in sociolinguistics have proposed several classifications for code-switching, but one of the most widely accepted typologies is the model proposed by Poplack (1980). According to this classification, code-switching can be categorized into three main types: inter-sentential code-switching, intra-sentential code-switching, and tag switching (Poplack, 1980, p. 589).

The first type, inter-sentential code-switching, occurs when the speaker switches from one language to another between two separate sentences or clauses. In this type, a sentence may begin in one language and the following sentence is produced in another language. This form of code-switching usually occurs among speakers who have a relatively good command of both languages, since maintaining grammatical accuracy in both languages requires a certain level of linguistic competence (Poplack, 1980, p. 590).

The second type is intra-sentential code-switching, which takes place within the same sentence. In this case, the speaker alternates languages in the middle of a sentence without breaking the grammatical structure of the discourse. This form is considered more complex than inter-sentential switching because it requires the speaker to manage the grammatical rules of both languages simultaneously (Muysken, 2000, p. 4).

The third type is tag switching, which involves inserting a tag, discourse marker, or a short expression from one language into a sentence that is primarily produced in another language. This type of switching is considered the simplest form because tags or discourse markers usually do not require complex grammatical integration. Examples include expressions such as "you know,"

“okay,” or “right” inserted into sentences spoken in another language (Holmes, 2013, p. 35).

In EFL classroom contexts, these three types of code-switching may appear during classroom interaction. Teachers may employ inter-sentential switching while explaining difficult concepts, whereas students may use intra-sentential switching during discussions with peers. Tag switching, on the other hand, often appears in spontaneous speech during classroom participation.

2.3 Code-Switching in EFL Classrooms

Code-switching has been extensively investigated in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, especially where the use of English is limited to the classroom environment. In such settings, it is natural for the teacher as well as the students to fall back upon their first language for the learning process. Code-switching has been commonly observed in EFL classrooms, especially during instances where the teacher is explaining the complexities of the English language, such as grammatical rules, vocabulary, or explaining difficult concepts. According to Sert (2005), the use of the first language may act as a powerful tool for the learners, enabling them to bridge the gap between the new linguistic input and the learners' existing knowledge. This may, in turn, enhance the students' level of comprehension regarding the classroom activities. Similarly, Cook (2001) has pointed out that the use of the first language may play an important role in the foreign language classroom. By code-switching, the teacher may ensure the students' clear comprehension of the teaching material, especially during instances where abstract ideas or complicated linguistic structures are being explained. Code-switching may occur during university-level EFL classrooms as well, especially during instances where students may encounter difficulties in expressing their ideas in the target language. In such cases, code-switching may act as a powerful tool for the students, enabling them to participate more effectively in the classroom discourse, thereby gradually enhancing their level of competence in the target language. However, the use of code-switching has been a topic of debate among language educators. Some language educators argue that the use of code-switching may limit the exposure of the students to the target language.

2.4 Causes of Code-Switching in EFL Contexts

The occurrence of code-switching in EFL classrooms is affected by a number of linguistic, cognitive, and contextual factors. Linguistic experts in the field of

applied linguistics have identified a number of factors that motivate EFL students and teachers to switch between their first language and the target language while communicating.

First of all, one of the most important factors that cause code-switching in EFL classrooms is the low level of proficiency in the target language. When EFL students face difficulties in expressing their ideas in the target language, they often resort to their first language to convey their intended meanings. According to Macaro (2009), EFL students often employ their first language as a compensatory strategy to ensure the effective communication of their intended meanings when their linguistic resources in the second language are inadequate (Macaro, 2009, p. 240).

Another important factor that affects the occurrence of code-switching in EFL classrooms is the need for clarification and comprehension. In EFL classrooms, the teachers occasionally employ the students' first language to ensure that students comprehend the intended meanings of complex concepts or technical terms. According to Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain (2009), the teachers' switch to the students' first language can be helpful in ensuring that students comprehend the intended meanings of the complex concepts or technical terms that the teachers present to the students (Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009, p. 18).

Another important factor that affects the occurrence of code-switching in EFL classrooms is the need to manage the classroom. EFL teachers occasionally employ the students' first language to manage the classroom. According to Ferguson (2009), the teachers' switch to the students' first language can be helpful in classroom management situations. For instance, the teachers can be more effective in their classroom management roles when they employ the students' first language to convey their intended meanings to the students (Ferguson, 2009, p. 231).

2.5 Communicative Functions of Code-Switching

Code-switching in EFL classes may carry a range of communicative functions, and these functions play a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of classroom communication. Code-switching is not a haphazard linguistic activity; it may carry a range of functions that are useful in facilitating communication and understanding between the teacher and the students.

One of the communicative functions of code-switching in EFL classes is clarification. Code-switching in this case may involve using the first language to clarify some complex ideas in class. For instance, a teacher may use the students' first language to clarify some complex ideas in class so that they are easily understood by the students (Sert, 2005, p. 6).

Another communicative function of code-switching in EFL classes is emphasis and reinforcement. Code-switching in this case may involve using the first language to emphasize some key ideas in class. For example, a teacher may use the first language to emphasize key ideas in class so that students are able to focus on these key ideas during their learning.

Code-switching in EFL classes may also carry an affective function in class communication. Language learning, as suggested by Krashen (1985), is affected by emotions such as anxiety and motivation. Code-switching in this case may help in reducing anxiety in class communication so that students are in a better position to learn.

In addition, code-switching in EFL classes may carry an interactional communication function in class communication. Code-switching in this case may help in facilitating communication in class through discussions. Halliday (1978) argues that language functions in social interactions and plays a crucial role in facilitating communication in class (Halliday, 1978, p. 23).

In this case, code-switching in EFL classes in a university setup may be observed in communication in class when explaining some linguistic concepts in class, in class communication during discussions in class, and in facilitating communication in class through collaborative learning.

Therefore, code-switching in this case may be regarded as a communicative strategy in facilitating communication in class and enhancing the effectiveness of learning in class.

2.6 Empirical Studies on Code-Switching in EFL Classrooms

A considerable number of empirical studies have examined the phenomenon of code-switching in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in different educational contexts around the world. These studies have attempted to identify the reasons for code-switching, the forms in which it appears, and the functions it performs during classroom interaction.

One of the early studies in this field was conducted by Sert (2005), who investigated the functions of code-switching in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms. The study demonstrated that teachers frequently switch between languages in order to explain complex concepts, provide clarification, and manage classroom activities. Sert concluded that code-switching plays an important role in facilitating communication and maintaining effective classroom interaction (Sert, 2005, p. 5).

Similarly, Macaro (2001) examined the strategic use of the first language in foreign language classrooms. The findings indicated that the controlled and purposeful use of the learners' first language could enhance comprehension and support the learning process. According to Macaro, code-switching can serve as a useful pedagogical strategy when it is used appropriately by teachers and learners (Macaro, 2001, p. 534).

2.7 Previous Studies

This section presents a review of several previous studies that have investigated the phenomenon of code-switching in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Reviewing these studies helps provide a clearer understanding of the theoretical background of the present study and highlights the similarities and differences between earlier research and the current investigation.

2.7.1 Sert (2005)

The research, named "The Functions of Code-Switching in ELT Classrooms," has the aim of examining the functional role of code-switching in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms and determining the motivations for code-switching from the first language of the learners.

The population of the research includes EFL teachers and students in Turkish secondary school classrooms. The primary tool for data collection in this research is classroom observation and audio recording, followed by discourse analysis.

2.7.2 Al-Nofaie (2010)

The study, which is titled "The Attitudes of Teachers and Students towards the Use of Arabic in EFL Classrooms in Saudi Public Schools," aims to investigate the attitudes of teachers and students toward the use of Arabic in EFL classrooms.

The participants of the study are the 200 female secondary school students, and the 20 EFL teachers are also the participants of the study. The tools that were used in the study are questionnaires and interviews.

The findings of the study showed that the teachers and students have a positive attitude toward code-switching, especially when they use it for explaining hard words, giving instructions, and alleviating students' anxiety. The study also concluded that using the first language would help students' understanding.

2.7.3 Ahmed and Yasin (2020)

The study, entitled “Code-Switching in Iraqi EFL Classrooms: Teachers’ Perspectives,” seeks to investigate the reasons for, and the role of, Arabic-English code-switching in the EFL classroom in Iraq.

The participants of the study consisted of (30) EFL teachers in different secondary schools in Iraq. Data collection methods include observations and interviews. The data was analyzed qualitatively.

The study results showed that the reasons for code-switching in EFL classes in Iraq include the explanation of grammatical rules, the translation of words, the regulation of students’ behavior, and the students’ understanding. The study concluded that code-switching is an essential aspect in EFL classes in Iraq.

2.8 Discussion of Previous Studies

The previous studies reviewed in this chapter provide important insights into the phenomenon of code-switching in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Although these studies were conducted in different educational and cultural contexts, they share several similarities in terms of their objectives, methodologies, and findings.

2.8.1 Aims

The goals of the previous studies are similar in their concern with exploring code-switching as a pedagogical and communicative practice in EFL classes. Sert (2005) seeks to explore the functional use of code-switching in ELT classes, with special emphasis on its instructional and managerial functions. Al-Nofaie (2010) focuses on examining teachers’ and students’ attitudes towards the use of Arabic and code-switching in EFL classes, with emphasis on their benefits and drawbacks. Ahmed and Yasin (2020) seek to find out the reasons and functions of code-switching from the perspective of Iraqi EFL teachers in secondary school classes. The present study shares similar interests with these studies as it also examines the phenomenon of code-switching in EFL learning environments. However, the current study differs in its focus on university-level learners, specifically first-year students in the Department of English at the College of Arts, University of Tikrit. Unlike previous studies that concentrated mainly on teachers or secondary school settings, this research focuses primarily on students’ classroom interaction and the communicative functions of code-switching in a university context.

2.8.2 Samples

The samples in the previous studies differ in terms of size, level of education, and sociocultural settings, but all samples are related to EFL learning contexts. Sert (2005) carries out his study in Turkish secondary schools, including EFL teachers and learners without gender segregation. Al-Nofaie (2010) selects a relatively large sample of (200) female secondary school students and (20) EFL teachers in Saudi public schools, concentrating on female learners' views. Ahmed and Yasin (2020) select a sample of (30) Iraqi EFL teachers from different secondary schools.

In contrast, the present study concentrates on a more specific academic population. The sample consists of 40 first-year students enrolled in the Department of English at the College of Arts, University of Tikrit. By focusing on university students who are beginning their academic study of English, the current research aims to provide a more detailed understanding of code-switching practices in Iraqi higher education contexts.

2.8.3 Tools

The research tools used in the previous studies are mainly qualitative, as they mirror the interactional nature of code-switching. Sert (2005) mainly uses classroom observation, audio recording, and discourse analysis to reveal the functions of code-switching in the classroom. Al-Nofaie (2010) mainly uses questionnaires and interviews to examine the attitudes of teachers and students towards the use of L1. Ahmed and Yasin (2020) mainly use classroom observation and structured interviews to collect qualitative data on the code-switching behavior of teachers.

Similarly, the present study adopts qualitative and descriptive methods in order to analyze classroom interaction. Classroom observation and audio recordings are used to identify occurrences of code-switching and analyze their communicative functions. This methodological approach allows the researcher to examine authentic language use within the classroom environment.

2.8.4 Results

The results of the previous studies all suggest that code-switching plays important pedagogical and communicative roles in EFL classrooms. Sert (2005) concludes his study with the following summary: "Code-switching facilitates classroom interaction by helping with explanations, emphasis, and classroom management." Al-Nofaie (2010) also concludes his study with the following summary: "Code-switching was viewed generally in a positive light by both teachers and students, especially with respect to its role in promoting

understanding and reducing anxiety." In the study carried out by Ahmed & Yasin (2020), code-switching was found to be an "unavoidable and functional aspect of the Iraqi EFL classroom, especially with respect to grammar and vocabulary explanations."

The present study is expected to support some of these findings while also providing additional insights into the phenomenon of code-switching in Iraqi university classrooms. By focusing on first-year students in the Department of English at the College of Arts, University of Tikrit, the study aims to explore how code-switching functions as a communicative resource that helps students negotiate meaning, clarify ideas, and participate actively in classroom discourse.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The present study adopts a descriptive analytical research design in order to investigate the phenomenon of code-switching in EFL classrooms. This type of research design is widely used in applied linguistics studies because it allows researchers to describe and analyze linguistic behavior as it occurs naturally in educational contexts (Creswell, 2014, p. 14).

3.2 Population and Sample

The sample of the study consists of 40 first-year students from the Department of English. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, which is commonly used in educational research when the researcher selects participants who are directly relevant to the research objectives (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 98).

Several criteria were considered when selecting the sample participants:

1. The participants are enrolled as first-year students in the Department of English.
2. The students regularly attend English language classes during the academic semester.
3. The participants actively engage in classroom discussions and learning activities.

Selecting students from the first academic stage allows the researcher to observe natural language interaction among learners who are still developing their communicative competence in English. This provides valuable insight into how and why students alternate between Arabic and English during classroom interaction.

3.3 Research Instruments

To achieve the objectives of the present study, several research instruments were employed in order to collect the necessary data related to the occurrence of code-switching during classroom interaction.

1. Classroom Observation

Non-participant observation was conducted during English language classes in order to observe the occurrence of code-switching in classroom interaction.

During the observation process, attention was given to identifying the type of code-switching, the speaker involved (teacher or student), and the context in which the language switch occurred.

A checklist was used to record the observed instances of code-switching systematically.

2. Audio Recordings

Classroom lessons were audio recorded after obtaining prior permission from the relevant authorities and participants.

The recordings were used to ensure accurate transcription of classroom discourse.

Audio data also enabled the researcher to identify different types of code-switching such as inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag switching.

3. Questionnaires (Optional for Teachers)

A short questionnaire was administered to teachers in order to gather their perceptions regarding the reasons for the use of code-switching in English language classrooms.

The questionnaire was used to complement the observational data collected during classroom sessions.

3.4 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Validity

The validity of the research instruments was ensured through expert evaluation. The observation checklist and the procedures used for audio transcription were reviewed by two specialists in applied linguistics in order to confirm that the

instruments measured the intended aspects related to code-switching in classroom interaction (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 195).

In addition, the development of the research instruments was guided by previous studies that investigated code-switching in EFL classrooms, particularly the works of Sert (2005) and Ahmed and Yasin (2020). These studies provided a useful framework for designing tools suitable for analyzing classroom discourse.

Reliability

Reliability was established through inter-rater agreement. A sample of the recorded classroom data was analyzed by two independent coders in order to ensure consistency in identifying and categorizing instances of code-switching.

To measure the degree of agreement between the coders, Cohen's Kappa coefficient was calculated. According to Landis and Koch (1977), a reliability coefficient above 0.80 indicates a high level of agreement and consistency in the coding process (Landis & Koch, 1977, p. 165).

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3.5 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection occurs in the following steps:

1. Permission and Consent:

- Permission from the school authorities in writing and consent from students orally.

2. Observation Schedule:

- English classroom observations will be carried out for a span of two weeks with four observations a week, each lasting around 45 minutes.

3. Audio Recording:

- The lessons will be recorded without interrupting the natural flow of events.

4. Data Transcription:

- The audio data will be transcribed with all occurrences of code-switching.
- Each occurrence will be marked with regard to the person, type, and trigger.

5. Questionnaire Administration (Optional):

- The teachers will be given a short questionnaire after the observation.

3.6 Data Analysis Methods

The process of data collection was carried out through several organized steps in order to obtain reliable data regarding the occurrence of code-switching during classroom interaction.

1. Permission and Consent

Prior permission was obtained from the relevant authorities before conducting the observations. In addition, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their consent was obtained before the data collection process began.

2. Observation Schedule

Classroom observations were conducted during English language lessons over a period of two weeks. Four observations were carried out each week, and each session lasted approximately forty-five minutes.

3. Audio Recording

The classroom sessions were audio recorded in order to capture natural classroom interaction. The recording process was conducted without interfering with the normal flow of the lesson.

4. Data Transcription

The recorded audio data were transcribed carefully in order to identify all instances of code-switching. Each occurrence of code-switching was marked according to the speaker, the type of switching, and the context in which it occurred.

5. Questionnaire Administration (Optional)

After the observation period, a short questionnaire was distributed to the teachers in order to obtain their views regarding the reasons for the use of code-switching in English language classrooms.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Types of Code-Switching in Iraqi EFL Classrooms

In order to answer the first research question concerning the most frequently occurring types of code-switching in Iraqi EFL classrooms, the classroom observations were carefully analyzed. The patterns of code-switching were identified based on the classification proposed by Poplack (1980), which includes inter-sentential code-switching, intra-sentential code-switching, and tag switching.

The analysis revealed that inter-sentential code-switching was the most frequently occurring type during classroom interaction. This type represented 45% of the total instances of code-switching observed in the recorded data. Inter-sentential switching often occurred when the teacher explained certain concepts or provided additional clarification during the lesson.

The second most frequent type was intra-sentential code-switching, which accounted for 35% of the observed cases. This type of switching was often found during students' responses or discussions when students alternated between Arabic and English within the same sentence.

The least frequent type was tag switching, which represented 20% of the total instances recorded. Tag switching appeared when short expressions or discourse markers from one language were inserted into sentences spoken in another language.

Table 1: Types of Code-Switching in Iraqi EFL Classrooms

Type of Code-Switching	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inter-sentential	72	45
Intra-sentential	56	35
Tag Switching	32	20
Total	160	100

These findings indicate that switching between sentences is the most common pattern of code-switching in classroom interaction. This type of switching allows speakers to maintain grammatical accuracy while ensuring that the intended meaning is clearly communicated.

4.2 Causes of Code-Switching Among Fourth Preparatory Female Students

The second research question was intended to identify the major causes of code-switching among the students during their interaction in the classroom. The

analysis of the recorded data indicated that there were several causes that led to the use of code-switching among the students during the English language lesson.

According to the findings, the major cause of code-switching among the students was their poor proficiency in the English language, which constituted 40% of the total occurrences. This was evident when the students switched to their Arabic language to express their ideas that were hard to express in English.

The second major cause of code-switching among the students was to clarify their understanding of the language, which constituted 30%. In most cases, the students switched to their Arabic language when they needed to ask questions or clarify their understanding of some explanations given during the lesson.

The rest, which constituted 30%, was associated with classroom management and affective factors. In some cases, the students used code-switching to make the classroom interaction more comfortable during the learning process.

Table 1: Causes of Code-Switching

Causes of Code-Switching	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Limited English Proficiency	64	40
Clarification and Comprehension	48	30
Classroom Management & Affective	48	30
Total	160	100

These results suggest that code-switching functions as a practical strategy that students use in order to overcome linguistic difficulties and maintain participation during classroom interaction. The findings also indicate that language alternation is influenced by both linguistic limitations and communicative needs within the classroom environment.

4.3 Communicative Functions of Code-Switching

In order to answer the third research question, the cases of code-switching that were identified within the classroom setting were analyzed with regard to their communicative functions. The basis for the classification of the communicative functions was the framework suggested by Halliday (1978) and Sert (2005).

Clarification was the most frequently occurring communicative function of code-switching, which comprised 38% of the total occurrences of code-switching that were recorded. In some cases, teachers and students used Arabic to clarify their ideas to ensure that the meaning was understood properly.

The second most common function was emphasis and reinforcement, which represented 25% of the cases. In these situations, important points or key terms were repeated in Arabic in order to highlight their significance and strengthen students' understanding of the lesson content.

The analysis also revealed that interactional functions accounted for 22% of the observed instances. In these cases, code-switching was used to facilitate communication during classroom discussions and to maintain the flow of interaction between teachers and students.

Finally, affective support represented 15% of the total instances. In this context, code-switching contributed to creating a supportive classroom atmosphere and helped reduce students' anxiety during the learning process.

Table 1: Communicative Functions of Code-Switching

Communicative Function	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Clarification	61	38
Emphasis & Reinforcement	40	25
Interactional Functions	35	22
Affective Support	24	15
Total	160	100

These findings indicate that code-switching serves several communicative purposes in classroom discourse. The results demonstrate that switching between languages can support comprehension, strengthen important concepts, and facilitate interaction during classroom communication.

4.4 Differences Between Teachers' and Students' Use of Code-Switching

The fourth research question aimed to determine whether there were noticeable differences between teachers and students in their use of code-switching during classroom interaction. The analysis of the transcribed classroom data showed

that both teachers and students used code-switching; however, the frequency and purposes of switching differed between the two groups.

The results indicated that teachers were responsible for 60% of the total instances of code-switching observed during classroom interaction. Teachers frequently used inter-sentential code-switching while explaining lesson content, giving instructions, or clarifying complex concepts presented during the lesson.

Students, on the other hand, accounted for 40% of the observed instances of code-switching. In most cases, students used intra-sentential code-switching during discussions or while responding to questions. Tag switching was also observed in students' speech when they used short expressions or discourse markers while speaking in English.

Table 1: Differences Between Teachers' and Students' Use of Code-Switching

Speaker	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Teachers	96	60
Students	64	40
Total	160	100

These findings highlight that teachers tend to use code-switching more frequently than students during classroom interaction. Teachers mainly use code-switching as an instructional strategy to facilitate explanation and improve students' comprehension.

4.6 Discussion

Based on the analysis of the data collected in the present study, a number of important findings emerged that are related to the phenomenon of code-switching in the Iraqi EFL classroom. These findings provide the answer to the research questions raised in the present study.

Based on the findings of the present study, the most frequently used type of code-switching in the classroom was inter-sentential code-switching. This was followed by intra-sentential code-switching and tag switching. This finding is in line with the findings of previous studies such as Sert (2005) and Ahmed & Yasin (2020), which reported that the most frequent type of code-switching in the classroom was inter-sentential code-switching. This type of code-switching was used most frequently by the teachers while explaining the lesson content to the students or while translating the difficult vocabulary items.

The most frequent type of code-switching was inter-sentential code-switching. This type of code-switching can be used while speaking grammatically correct sentences. On the other hand, intra-sentential code-switching and tag switching were less frequent. However, these types of code-switching were also observed in the classroom discussions.

Based on the findings of the present study, the most important cause of code-switching was the limited proficiency in English. This finding supports the argument raised by Macaro (2009) and Al-Nofaie (2010) that the limited proficiency in the second language forces the students to switch to their first language as a compensatory strategy. The need to clarify was another important cause of code-switching. In this respect, the students switched to their first language to ensure that the students understand the complex ideas. In addition to this, classroom management and affective factors were the cause of code-switching.

Concerning the communicative functions of code-switching, the results showed that clarification was the most frequent function, followed by emphasis, interactional purposes, and affective support. These findings suggest that code-switching plays an important role in facilitating comprehension and supporting communication during classroom discourse.

The results also revealed differences between teachers and students in the use of code-switching. Teachers were responsible for a larger proportion of code-switching instances, mainly using language switching as an instructional strategy to explain lesson content and provide clarification. Students, on the other hand, used code-switching primarily as a communicative strategy in order to express their ideas and maintain participation during classroom interaction.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the phenomenon of code-switching in Iraqi EFL classrooms, with particular focus on first-year students in the Department of English at the College of Arts, University of Tikrit. The study attempted to explore the types of code-switching that occur during classroom interaction, the main reasons behind the use of code-switching, and the communicative functions it serves in the learning environment.

The analysis of the collected classroom data revealed that inter-sentential code-switching was the most frequently used type during classroom interaction. This type of switching was commonly used when teachers explained certain concepts or provided clarification during the lesson. Intra-sentential switching and tag switching were also observed, although they occurred less frequently.

The results also revealed that there were some factors that contributed to code-switching in classroom communication. The main factor was found to be limited proficiency in English, which prompted students to code-switch to their second language, Arabic, when they found it difficult to express some ideas in English. Other factors were found to be relevant in this study, namely clarification, classroom management, and affective factors.

Furthermore, it was revealed through this study that code-switching in classroom communication has some communicative functions, of which clarification was found to be the main function, followed by emphasis, interactional support, and affective functions. It is clear from these functions that code-switching in language plays a vital role in facilitating communication in the learning process.

It was also revealed through this study that there are some differences in code-switching usage between teachers and students in classroom communication. It was found that code-switching is more dominant in teacher communication than in student communication. Teachers were found to use code-switching in classroom communication for instructional purposes, while students were found to use it as a communicative strategy in overcoming linguistic difficulties in classroom communication and participating in classroom discussions.

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