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ORIGINAL RESEARCH

A resource or a threat? Codeswitching in the English First Additional Language classroom

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Abstract

Code-switching (CS) is common in multilingual classrooms, yet it is usually treated as a 'taboo' in English First Additional Language classrooms in South Africa. This article explored the experiences of English First Additional Language teachers in using CS in high schools. This qualitative case study purposefully selected four high school teachers in one education district in KwaZulu-Natal. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews and semi-structured classroom observations. This study was underpinned by the Communication Accommodation Theory, which found that English teachers use CS in their classroom engagements to eradicate confusion and misunderstanding, attain lesson objectives, enhance learner performance, and create a conducive learning environment. These teachers use CS as a remedial, teaching, and accommodation strategy. There was also a concern and fear that CS might hamper language development and lead to failure of assessments and examinations. Also, the schools' language policies are silent about CS. Given the findings, the researchers recommend that schools and education departments' language policies take a stance and adopt CS as one of the teaching techniques teachers can use to teach English First Additional Language.

Keywords: Code-switching, English as First Additional Language, English as Second Language, Multilingual classroom.

Introduction

Code-switching (CS) is inevitable in South African classrooms due to diverse cultures and eleven official languages (Fernandes-Martins, 2016; Motshekga, 2011; Ndebele, 2012), with the twelfth being the newly gazetted South African Sign Language. Most South African primary and secondary public schools use English as a Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT), as guided by the Language in Education Policy (Education, 1997). Furthermore, English as a subject is learnt by second-language speakers as a First Additional Language (FAL), globally termed the Second Language (SL). Moreover, English is operating in a multilingual context in South Africa. Learners' identity and linguistic repertoire in English FAL contexts are fully expressed in their home settings, while in school, this is limited (Zano, 2020; Zano, 2022). Teachers in rural and township schools of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), where isiZulu is a home language (L1), sometimes find it hard to meet the teaching objectives (Olugubara, 2008) due to limited English proficiency of learners (Probyn, 2009), hence the use of CS. According to Mrawushe (2016), in South African schools, Code-Switching (CS) occurs regularly in the classrooms because many people can speak more than one language since South Africa is diverse and rich in languages and cultures. The English FAL classroom is no exception. Hlatshwayo (2013) and Wei and Martin (2009) highlight that language teachers who teach in multilingual contexts face various challenges in meeting the complex needs of their learners. Some teachers opt for CS, while others are against this practice during English FAL classes or lessons. Others restrict learners to speaking only English on the school premises and in classroom interactions. (Algarin-Ruiz, 2014). There are different views and experiences regarding English FAL teachers using CS when they teach English. Some teachers teaching English FAL view CS as a useful resource within the classroom, while others

are still sceptical and view it as a threat. The use of CS as a scaffold, a response after detecting confusion, and a tool to improve language and vocabulary development are arguably why English FAL teachers use it in multilingual contexts (Shinga & Pillay, 2021). This study explored the English FAL teachers' experiences of using CS and their reasons for either using it or not. The study sought to answer two research questions: What are the Grades 10 to 12 English FAL teachers' reasons for using code-switching? How do Grades 10 to 12 English FAL teachers use code-switching to attain lesson objectives?

Background

Language specialists have been studying CS for decades, and there has recently been a surge of interest in CS research in the SL classroom. Nonetheless, debatably, there is still a gap in the literature on the subject due to a lack of contextualised studies and data accessible for analysis. This gap in the literature is particularly noticeable in CS studies in the South African and African context. CS is a relatively recent phenomenon in the FAL or SL classroom, and there is still much to learn (Baes, 2023). In South Africa, there is a continuous and robust focus on promoting multilingualism and decolonisation of the curriculum in the Higher education sector and the intellectualisation of Indigenous languages. This is done while neglecting the secondary education sector. In grades R to 3, learners are taught using their home language (L1), and then from Grades 4 to 12, English is mainly used as LoLT. This is gazetted and expected for teachers to enact. However, there seems to be more silence about using CS or encouraging multilingual or translingual approaches in secondary schools, especially in English FAL classrooms, Grades 10-12. Nevertheless, teachers use CS in English FAL classrooms to ensure effective learning and teaching (Shinga & Pillay, 2021) and yield the expected results. The policy or authorities do not support this. Baes (2023) argues that CS is a linguistic phenomenon observed in classrooms worldwide, becoming more noticeable in English language teaching. Using CS in the classroom is inevitable as South Africa is multilingual, and most rural and township school learners still need help with English proficiency. Mokoena (2023) suggests that self-directed learning may be an alternative strategy for English FAL learners in rural schools to become resilient amid proficiency challenges. However, this emphasises the use of English-only, which may still pose challenges if there is no connection between the L1 and the L2. The best system to maintain, preserve and promote all languages in a country and at the school level is to utilise them multilingually (Zano, 2022). This study, therefore, investigated the English teachers' reasons and experiences of using CS in Grades 10-12 English FAL at selected high schools in one KwaZulu-Natal education district.

Code-switching

A code is a spoken component that takes the form of a small morpheme or is as complex and comprehensive as the entire system of language (Okoye, 2012; Ayeomoni, 2006). CS is a context where two languages are used in the same conversational turn (Myers-Scotton, 1993). Gumperz (1982) and Ong, Koh, and Teo (2023) define CS as a simultaneous and conscious insertion and exchange of speech belonging to two grammatical systems or subsystems. A multilingual person has two or more languages in their linguistic repertoire. They can use all these languages when communicating with people who share these resources (Ali & Mwila, 2021). A teacher or learner may switch between codes during teaching and learning for various reasons. Investigations of CS began during the 1950s and gained popularity during the 1970s in Sociolinguistics and then later in the ESL classroom (Wang, 2015). As a result of globalisation, both verbal and written CS practices have become more prevalent (Gardner-Chloros & Wenston, 2015). Furthermore, Yan, Fung, and Huang (2016) state that using L1 in SL classrooms has attracted more scholars to investigate this unique phenomenon. These studies show that it is a valuable strategy, although it is somehow restricted and negatively critiqued by experts and language policies.

Types of CS

Scholars differentiate between forms of CS that multilingual individuals use in their discourse and to engage freely. Inter-sentential CS, intra-sentential CS, tag-switching, situational CS, metaphorical CS, and borrowing are the relevant types for the classroom context. Inter-sentential

CS is the switching between languages using entire clauses or sentence boundaries; this refers to the turns taken between those speaking, the main difference being that the speaker keeps the grammatical structures of the two languages. Intra-sentential CS occurs within the clause or sentence boundary, allowing for the attachment of inflectional morphemes from one language onto the other (Isaac, 2011). Some linguists refer to intra-sentential CS as code-mixing (Ndebele, 2012). Tag-switching occurs when a speaker inserts a tag of one code into an utterance of another. It involves interjections, fillers, and idioms, which can be spoken by a speaker who could be more fluent in the other language (Poplack, 1980). Situational CS occurs when changes between languages redefine a situation (Reyes, 2004), while metaphorical CS occurs when changes improve a problem, allowing for the allusion to various social relationships within one case. Reyes (2004) also identifies representation of speech, imitation quotation, turn accommodation, emphasis, and question shift as examples of metaphorical CS. Metaphorical switching is also called conversational switching (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2007). All are evident in the FAL classroom context, one being dominant sometimes, depending on the context. Lastly, Borrowing, as highlighted by Gumperz (1982), introduces one word, phrase, or idiom from one code to another. Liu (2017) and Ndebele (2012) state that it is impossible to exclude CS from borrowing. Therefore, CS requires an understanding of grammatical structures and vocabulary.

The teachers' experiences and the reasons for using CS in the English classroom

According to Algarin-Ruiz (2014), Macaro (2009), and Olmo-Castillo (2014), teachers view CS differently; some believe that L1 should never be used during teaching in bilingual or multilingual classrooms, while others are in its favour. Those in favour believe that using L1 enhances fluidity in the classroom. According to Amorim (2012), the exclusive use of L2 is unrealistic because multilingual learners have more than one active language inside their minds and, therefore, will influence each other. Jiang et al. (2014) support this notion and postulate that L1 and L2 complement each other and significantly improve learning. These scholars advocate for using various languages in the classroom and argue that it increases learners' comprehension, leading to better learning outcomes. The interference of the mother tongue with an L2 is unavoidable (Na Phuket & Bidin, 2016). Scholars such as Macaro (2009), Qing (2010), Mrawushe (2016), Johansson (2013), Magid and Mugaddan (2013), Masrahi (2016), Abad (2010), Jamshidi and Navehebrahim (2013), Myers (2008), and Mareva (2016) state that CS is a common feature in the L2 classrooms where learners share the same L1. Macaro (2009) and Palmes (2023) added that teachers' CS does not adversely affect the quality and proficiency of the second language (L2); consequently, it can improve L2 proficiency if the teacher is an expert in using CS prudently and effectively.

Samar and Moradkhani (2014) argue that many teachers opt for L1 in some circumstances in their classes. However, a few studies have tried to understand the various reasons from the teachers' perspectives. There is also a view that the reason for CS is either proficiency- or deficiency-driven (Oco & Roxas, 2012). Proficiency-driven CS occurs when the speaker is fluent in two or more languages and quickly switches from one to the next. Deficiency-driven CS occurs when the speaker is forced to code-switch because they lack competency in the other language. Teachers have proper and clear strategies for knowing how their learners learn in various contexts and get to understand them as human beings living in those contexts (Stevens, 2011). Hlatshwayo (2013) elucidates that CS is one of the strategies teachers use to cope with multilingual classrooms. Therefore, the teachers' use of CS is proficiency rather than deficiency-driven. Probyn (2009) agrees that teachers and learners in rural contexts often smuggle the HL into the classroom for social and teaching reasons. This may suggest that school language policies should address this issue and cater to contextual realities to ensure learners adequately master all languages needed for their education. Language practices should, therefore, be based on the language the learners already know (Jiang et al., 2014). This is crucial because languages are not secluded but integrated, flexible entities whose nature cannot be disrupted and not stagnant but can be reformed, re-arranged, and

recreated to fit into new communication spheres (Zano, 2019).

Some post-apartheid studies on CS in South Africa recognise the need to remove the idea that CS is a sign of poor English proficiency (Molapo, 2002; Setoi, 1997). These authors believe that CS is beneficial to education and language development. They also recognise and agree that African teachers must use CS for teaching and learning purposes. Khutso (2012) Also, it is believed that explicit teaching of L2 allows learners to learn a new language through communication instead of memorisation. She then argues that using L1 is also vital since it results in confidence (Lasagabaster, 2013; Lee, 2010), improved self-esteem, initiative, and creativity by learners (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015). CS has a positive effect on increasing and boosting learners' confidence and engagement during English classes. The teacher also plays a significant part in promoting the learners' motivation to participate and engage in discussions (Baes, 2023). Thus, English should be dominant in the EFAL class but not exclusive.

It is noticeable that African learners struggle if only the LoLT is used during teaching. Olugubara (2008) suggests that KwaZulu-Natal Schools should integrate a considerable use of CS during the teaching and learning process. Zano (2019) supports this notion by stating that language is an ever-developing and ever-changing phenomenon; thus, language teaching methods also develop and change over time. New approaches are offered occasionally to keep up with these developments and changes. Teachers need to be trained on how and when to use CS and use it with due consideration of its impact and usefulness (Algarin-Ruiz, 2014; Ong, Koh, & Teo, 2023)). Otherwise, CS may be overused (Ayeomoni, 2006), and Yataganbaba and Yildirim (2015) add that it should be used cautiously and not overused. Overusing CS may affect the learners' mastery of English and defeat the whole process of trying to enhance the learners' understanding and language development (Ong, Koh, & Teo, 2023). Drawing from Okoye (2012), we argue that it is beneficial for teachers and learners to engage in CS to accomplish their academic and social goals without a language barrier.

Moodley and Kamwangamalu (2004) and Wenston and Gardner-Chloros (2015) believe that CS plays a pivotal role in teaching fiction because L1 may inhibit the comprehension of the content being learnt using L2. These scholars argue that whether in literature or conversation, CS subverts the traditional assumption that languages should be kept separate. CS in drama or poetry can occur systematically and not bring any obscurity to the grammar. Moodley and Kamwangamalu (2004) and Baes (2023) postulate that using CS when teaching literature is an interjection, poetic tool, referential, and quotation strategy. Mrawushe (2016) investigated the implications of CS in a multilingual school and found that CS serves to manage and gain control of the class, helps to clarify issues to learners, and is also used to repeat anything learners might need help understanding in English (Ong et al., 2023; McMillan & Rivers, 2011). Furthermore, FAL teachers can use CS as the scaffolding device (Jiang et al., 2014). Some teachers discourage using CS, deny its prevalence, and are ashamed because they know policy restraints. Should CS be viewed as a resource rather than a threat to teaching and learning in multilingual classrooms, more fruitful interaction and language development could be realised.

Teachers use CS as a bridge (Hlatshwayo, 2013; Probyn, 2009; Spolky & Hult, 2010) to transfer meaning and enhance clarity. Moreover, Qing (2010) argues that it motivates learners to seek further understanding. FAL learners process switching differently from highly proficient and elementary bilinguals, the latter depicting an L2 advantage over L1 (Adamou & Shen, 2017). CS is more challenging and effortful when switching from the weaker L2 to the dominant, more robust L1 (Van Hell et al., 2015).

Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) is the theoretical framework underpinning the study

The theoretical framework used in this study was Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) or what other scholars call Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT) (Giles & Coupland, 1991). It emphasises achieving solidarity and rapport between the speaker and the listener. Among various contexts, CAT can be applied as a strategy in legal conversations, radio broadcasts, second language learning, intercultural

contexts, and language-switching contexts within multilingual communities. Accommodative processes can enhance or restrain language learners' proficiency in the second language. Rogerson (2015) highlights seven accommodation principles; two essential principles for this study were: (a) Speakers will continuously accommodate the communication patterns they believe are suitable for their listeners to decrease social distance, and (b) Speakers will usually not accommodate communication patterns which they believe are unsuitable for their listeners, and this is done to avoid increased social distance. This was relevant for this study, where English was the target language in the EFAL classroom. This theory was essential in framing this study and analysing data. It also assisted the researchers in better conceptualising the data and reporting on the teachers' reasons and experiences of using CS in the English FAL context.

The origins and development of the theory

It has been used since its inception in the 1970s. It started as an ethnolinguistic theory (Soliz & Giles, 2014). It was first researched and published by psychologist Howard Giles with his work partners in the 1970s (Giles & Coupland, 1991). This theory accounts for various contexts that affect the choice of sociolinguistic codes, styles, and strategies and their interactional effects (Jaspers et al., 2010). Initially, the Accommodation Theory was strictly a socio-psychological model of speech style. Recently, the CAT has been an interdisciplinary model in communication interaction, compared to the strict identification with the socio-psychological model of speech in the early times of the theory (Jaspers et al., 2010). Accommodation Theory shows how a speaker is motivated to make favourable changes to the listeners (Tien, 2009).

Speech convergence and divergence

CAT revolves around two essential concepts: convergence and divergence (Giles & Coupland, 1991). Convergence involves speakers adjusting themselves to cater to their listeners' needs. It is the strategy through which speakers adapt to each other's speech and non-verbal cues, including variation in speech rate, pause, utterance length, and self-disclosure (Giles & Coupland, 1991). Convergence reflects a speaker's motivation to gain social control or approval or increase communication effectiveness. Therefore, convergent speech behaviour acts to reduce interpersonal differences among speakers. On the other hand, divergence is how the speaker emphasises speech differences between themselves and others. Linguistic divergence can be verbal or non-verbal. It may be used to bring another's speech actions to an acceptable level or to enhance the coordination of speech patterns. Speech divergence may express attitudes, instruct or give order and meaning to the communication, and provide mutual understanding among those involved (Giles, 2016; Giles & Coupland, 1991). These scholars argue that divergence and convergence should not be perceived in isolation.

Methods

Paradigm, approach, and design

This study was within an interpretivist paradigm, as it depended on the views and experiences of the participants (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013). Interpretivists aim to understand the phenomena in detail and recognise multiple interpretations as equally valid; results are created, not found; and interpretivists are informed by theory (Christiansen, Bertram, & Land, 2010). This study aimed to explore the English FAL teachers' experiences of using CS. This was a qualitative case study underpinning a qualitative research approach focusing on how the participants perceived their reality. The study focused on experiences or data that cannot be portrayed numerically (Hancock, 2009). Qualitative research's interest is understanding the world as it is understood, experimented, and produced by the participants (Mason, 1996; Tuli, 2010). A case study was a suitable research design because the researchers studied four teachers from four schools on-site through observation and interviews. Case studies are expected in qualitative research to provide insight into situations, persons, and classrooms (Rule & Vaughn, 2011).

Sampling and data generation, and ethical considerations

A purposive sampling method allowed the researchers to sample English FAL teachers teaching and practitioners of the subject in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase in

easily accessible schools. The FET phase (Grades 10-12) is the last phase of the secondary school system in South Africa. This phase is preceded by the Senior Phase (Grades 5-7), the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6), and the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3) (Motshekga, 2011). Rule and Vaughn (2011) elucidate that the participants must be deliberately chosen to fit the purpose of the study. The researchers selected a specific group, knowing it does not represent the whole population but itself. Semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were used to generate data. The benefit of using semi-structured interviews was that the researchers could change the order of questions (May 2011; Rule & Vaughn, 2011). The questions were open-ended, and where the participant had to elaborate, the researchers posed a relevant follow-up question. The researchers used the interview schedule, tape recorder, and field notes to record the interviews and the observation schedule to capture the observed data. The participants were informed prior and granted consent (Edwards & Holland, 2013). The participants were informed of confidentiality and anonymity. The study used pseudonyms, not their or the school's names, to ensure anonymity. Rule and Vaughn (2011) postulate that observing a lesson in the classroom can provide valuable data for a case study. The researchers were mere observers and did not question or guide the participants being observed. Gillham (2008) emphasises that although there are benefits to observations, there are also limitations, one of which is that they cannot tell the whole story. Using both the interviews and observations helped the researchers gain depth of experience and compare the data.

Data analysis and trustworthiness

The interviews were transcribed verbatim; then, observations were coded and compared with the interview data. According to Hancock (2009), transcribing is vital in qualitative interviews. The notes taken by the researchers and the tape records were analysed using a thematic data analysis method. Vithal and Jansen (2010) state that data analysis includes three steps: "scanning and cleaning the data; organising the data; and re-representing the data."

Trustworthiness in qualitative studies is embedded in credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Stewart, 2007). Credibility is enhanced when other researchers describe and interpret their experience as initial researchers (Williams, 2009). For credibility purposes, the researchers tape-recorded the interviews and took notes during classroom observations. Dependability ensures that the study is auditable. If another researcher can follow the decision trail used by the other researcher, the results would be similar. Transferability depends on the similarity between two contexts (Terre Blanche et al., 2011). The findings of this study cannot be generalised but may be transferred to a similar context. Confirmability is the extent to which the research methods meet the objectives. For triangulation purposes in this study, the researchers used semi-structured interviews and observations (Gillham, 2008). Rule and Vaughn (2011, p. 108) argue that triangulation is known to be 'a vehicle for achieving high quality, rigorous and respectable research.' Triangulation refers to the researcher's choice to use multiple methods to generate data (Terre Blanche et al., 2011). It enhances the study's credibility. We ensured that data were correctly analysed and exposed every element of bias through member checking.

Limitations

The study focused on one education district and circuit; only four teachers from four schools were studied. All the teachers in these schools are isiZulu speakers, mainly limited to isiZulu-English CS experiences. Some participants could have hidden the actual reality by acting in a particular way and only sharing information they would have felt and thought the researcher wanted to hear and see. To ensure that they freely shared their experiences, the study and ethics implications were explained to the participants.

Results

The four teachers who participated in the study teach Grades 10 to 12; one trained at a college, and the other three trained in universities. They teach in schools that are 20 kilometres apart. The participants stated that the learners have limited language proficiency due to limited exposure to English speaking, writing, and reading. In these rural schools, the learners' exposure to English is mainly at

school, and insufficient reading material is available at school and local community libraries (Mokoena, 2023; Zano, 2022). The literature textbooks and material provided are only used at school due to limited motivation to read for pleasure. In understanding learners' limitations, teachers then smuggle the L1 into the teaching and learning processes (Probyn, 2009). It should also be noted that all the teacher participants were isiZulu L1 speakers.

Theme 1: CS used to bridge limited language proficiency and background

The learners mainly were isiZulu speakers, and a few were isiXhosa speakers but were also fluent in isiZulu. What was unexpected in the teachers' responses when asked why they use CS in their Grades 10 to 12 English FAL classes was that they compartmentalised the language proficiency to the streams or subjects the learners were doing. There was a belief that the learners doing the Science subjects had better command and comprehension of English and needed less CS than the Humanities or Commerce learners. This emanated from the selection of the learners into these streams; from Grade 9, the high performers are typically channelled into the Science subjects. When asked about their reasons for using CS and their experiences, they highlighted limited English proficiency. This is supported by Shinga and Pillay (2021), who state that the contexts from which learners come from result in limited exposure to English, which hinders successful teaching and learning. All the participants agreed that they use CS in all their classrooms, but it varies according to learners' proficiency levels. PA, PB, and PD share these sentiments.

PA: *My learners' English proficiency is poor, except for the courses in the different classes. For instance, Science classes are always better than Humanities classes.*

PB: *Our Science class is better at English and high achievers in all other subjects; this differs from the Humanities classes.*

PC: *As you may know, learners are different, and they differ in years in terms of their level of understanding and use of English. If I see that learners are confused, I code-switch.*

PD: *The learners' English proficiency is poor, especially in the Humanities class, Grade 12E, in particular.*

The findings revealed that the participants found it easier to teach Science classes because they were a brighter group than the Humanities one, which ranged from average to slow learners. Therefore, using CS for learners who are slow and struggling is inevitable. The reasoning behind the participants' use of CS is to close the linguistic gaps between bright and slow learners by ensuring that comprehension is facilitated. CS becomes a tool, a teaching strategy, and a scaffolding method (Bensen & Cavusoglu, 2013; Ong et al., 2023). The purpose is to close the linguistic gap so the speaker and listener can effectively communicate in writing or verbally. Speech divergence may serve to express attitudes but also to instruct or give order and meaning to the communication and finally provide a mutual understanding amongst those involved in the conversation/ teaching-learning process in the classroom context.

PC, unlike PA, PB and PC, clearly stated that he used CS whenever he *detected confusion or misunderstanding, identified mistakes, or felt that the concepts needed to be simpler for learners*. All the teachers noted that they use CS minimally, especially in classes where learners were known to be linguistically weak or struggling with the English language. The teachers recalling their teaching experiences stated that CS works for them as it assists them in ensuring the learners' mastery of the content and the target language (Roslan, Idris, & Sulaiman, 2023). CS can influence learners' exposure to each language regardless of the subject being taught. Consequently, it can impact their ability to effectively communicate in English, which is crucial in various contexts (Palmes, 2023).

Theme 2: CS is used when confusion is detected and to eradicate misunderstanding.

Rogerson (2015) argues that speakers will continuously accommodate the communication patterns suitable for their listeners to decrease social distance. The

teachers use CS when they detect confusion and a lack of understanding. The teachers are also aware of the weaknesses of their classes; therefore, they code-switch just before a problem occurs. PC and PD shared common experiences. When asked when they use CS, they stated:

> **PC:** *When I see that learners are confused or due to experience knowing that they will be confused when learning a particular aspect or section, then I code-switch. So, when I see that they do not understand and are confused, I ask a question, and there is silence, and I try to make examples. I see they do not relate to that; only then do I decide maybe I should just code-switch to an HL that is a language they understand better.*

> **PD:** *As I have mentioned earlier, the struggling class is Grade 12E, when I am teaching most of the time. I usually use CS when … each… there is a need, for example, if I notice they do not understand. That is where it must come in.*

These responses show that the teachers use CS in times of need and for the benefit of the learners (Palmes, 2023). It is not a matter of weakness on their side, as Tien (2009) suggested, but being proactive, considerate, and understanding their learners' needs prompts them to code-switch (Baes, 2023). There is an understanding that whenever a teacher is teaching, and they identify some level of confusion from the learner, CS may be a helpful teaching or remedial strategy in the EFAL classroom. Teachers had similar views about the CS practice.

> **PC:** *I do code-switch when I realise there is extreme confusion, but I also feel like it poses problems where learners now tend to be comfortable with you [the teacher] code-switching, and then they think you will always code-switch.*

This participant believed in using CS but was also sceptical and questioned its effectiveness. His experience with CS positively and negatively impacts the teaching and learning process. As much as it often worked for him in times of need, he also acknowledged that it did pose problems when learners were entirely dependent on it and had yet to attempt to learn the target language (English). Fakeye (2012) insists that the opposing view towards CS should stop; the decision-makers and users should look at the positive side and ensure that positive effects are realised. PA and PB are CS enthusiasts, although they mainly stated the positive impact CS has in eradicating confusion yet strengthening the learning of English as a subject and language (Baes, 2023). PA and PB also shared similar sentiments:

> **PA:** *Some learners will need help understanding terminologies they do not understand if I only use English because the concept is foreign to their context and culture. Thus, to define some of the terms correctly and contextualise them, I code-switch depending on the types of learners in the classroom.*

> **PB**: *I code-switch because our learners are mostly Zulu speakers; those who are Xhosa understand isiZulu. I sometimes use isiXhosa terms if I know it or even ask the isiXhosa-speaking learners to explain in their language. Then, we all learn something and then revert to English. I believe that by doing so, English vocabulary develops and improves.*

Misunderstanding is inevitable in the multilingual classroom and must be bridged through CS (Palmes, 2023). There would always be foreign and abstract concepts that the learners need help comprehending. (CS can then be used to explain the problematic concepts that learners find hard to understand (Abrera, 2023; Yevudey, 2013). If further confusion arose, they resorted to CS to effect clarity. Palmes (2023), who advocates for using CS in the English classroom and notes the benefits, poses an opposing view to vocabulary development due to CS. In his study findings, he argues that learners who engaged in CS encountered unfamiliar words when reading and had a smaller vocabulary. This might have emanated from the constant switching between languages. Moreover, despite being able to read, learners struggled to understand what they read. Thus, excessive dependence on CS may interfere with their overall comprehension

skills. Linguistic convergence and divergence come into play in this context (Giles and Coupland, 1991), as the teacher understands the purpose and the context for CS to be used.

Theme 3: CS as a remedial strategy

Secondary school education is competitive and results-driven. Moreover, it has implications for the teachers teaching the subjects and the school. If the subject is not doing well, the teacher is accountable. Hence, teachers must often find suitable remedial strategies for learners to improve performance. CS is one of the remedial strategies teachers use to assist individual learners or groups in mastering the English subject's content and improve language proficiency.

In her interview response, **PD** reveals this: *In Grade 12 E, that is where the problem is. I use code-switching…because the learners struggle with language, which affects their performance in the subject. As an English teacher, I am always expected to teach in English, but I cannot go on if my learners do not understand essential concepts and content.*

Classes where learners struggled the most needed more remedial assistance from the teacher concerned. The immediate and available solution or remedial strategy was for the English teacher to opt for CS since she was bilingual and deemed fit to use this strategy.

The researcher's findings from the classroom observations supported the participants' responses from interviews. It was evident that teachers were comfortable using CS, and it was a habitual action. Regarding whether the participants used CS to introduce the lesson or clarify unknown or new concepts, two participants used CS, while the other did not. It was noticeable that the lessons taught in the different classes where the participants were teaching were of varying levels in terms of language proficiency. The following was recorded:

PA: "*Bantabami, this asks us to give points about how to take care of your eyes; uwanakekela kanjani amehlo, do you understand?"*

PB': "*Omniscient narrator; Umlingiswa Obona konke*".

PA and **PB** used the intra-sentential CS to introduce her summary writing lesson and to introduce the literature lesson, respectively.:

PC and **PD** did not use CS in their introductions but used it during the content discussion and giving instructions.

Based on the observations, the researchers concluded that PA and PB were comfortable with their lesson delivery and possibly expected the learners to understand the lessons. The learners were engaged with them from the onset and rarely used CS. This shows that CS is only used in some contexts at the discretion of the teacher or insertion by the learner.

Theme 4: CS is used as a strategy to maintain discipline.

During the classroom observations, it was noted that CS is also used to maintain order and discipline. Teachers are sometimes prompted to use CS to build rapport (Ali, Ahmed, & Kottaparambram, 2023) or deal with misbehaviour. While teaching poetry, **PD** asked the verbal question using IsiZulu: '*Siyamazi uMaya Angelou* [Do you know Maya Angelou] *or any poem by her?*' Some learners got very excited and made a noise in PD's class, where he used CS to enforce his authority. The noise emanated from those who knew the answer and laughed at those who did not. There was competition, and the teacher had to maintain an amicable learning environment (Palmes, 2023). Learners' misbehaviour prompted PD to code-switch. **PD** enforced authority in the classroom using some isiZulu words like *'uzothula ke* [you will listen], *ulalele angithi?* [You are listening, right?], and there was absolute silence and cooperation. These observations clearly show that CS is used for various reasons by users who deem it fit in multiple contexts. Similar events were noted in PC's classroom, and CS was used to maintain discipline.

Theme 5: Perceptions towards the continued use of CS within the EFAL classroom

When asked whether CS should be part of the EFAL classroom, the participants were conflicted about the issue of condoning or discrediting CS in the English classroom. Some

felt that EFAL classes should be strictly conducted in pure English and that they should only resort to CS if a need arose. At the same time, they agreed that they used it often in their EFAL classrooms. Three of the four participants confidently stated they would recommend using CS in the FET English class; however, it should only be used when necessary, and the teacher should apply prudence. PA, PB, and PC's responses show arguments for, whereas PD argues against, the continuous use of CS.

PA: *Yes, CS should be used, but with caution. The HL should not dominate the lesson. It should be overwhelmed by the medium of instruction, which is English. So now, some teachers make mistakes when they code-switch; they tend to have a lesson that the HL mostly dominates.*

PB: *Yes, when necessary. Again, to help the learners, not because the teacher has a language barrier, no! However, when essential, if it will benefit the learners, so be it. However, let us not overdo it and ensure the lesson is not a Zulu lesson. For example, you cannot have learners asking things in isiZulu; 100 percent IsiZulu. Then, you have got to correct them and ask them to speak English. … They will make mistakes, so the English teachers are there to correct them and ensure they phrase their sentences correctly, etc.*

PC: *Well, I think my answer is obvious. Yes, I would, but I would encourage it to be kept at a minimum all the time. Refrain from relying on it entirely because it sort of provides this idea that there is always, you know, an escape, and it provides comfort for the learner. Then, they sit in that corner of their comfort zone because they know there will always be CS, and in the process, they still need to achieve their goals as set.*

***PD**: Not at all [will not recommend CS], I will not, I will not, or recommend. It is just because … each… kids are writing their exams in the medium of instruction, English. Only one language is spoken in isiZulu, and that is isiZulu.*

PA, **PB**, and PC believe in the strength CS brings to the EFAL classroom. However, they are sceptical about the English lesson becoming an isiZulu lesson. Thus, there should be little reliance on CS because learners will become complacent and eventually not learn the necessary language skills to engage with the language consistently (Roslan, Idris, & Sulaiman, 2023), as PA emphasises the cautionary application of CS. Palmes (2023) confirms that excessive reliance on CS can potentially hinder the development of learners' English language skills, particularly their proficiency in speaking and listening. To counter this potential hazard, teachers should balance CS by providing authentic learner opportunities and using authentic listening, speaking, reading, and writing material.

Only one participant was adamant and argued that she would not suggest that CS be used in the classroom because she felt it leads to examination failure. Although she practised it in her classroom, she believed it was only necessary for some contexts and should never be encouraged. However, her response lacked conviction and showed hesitation. Furthermore, it contradicted her interview responses and the observed lesson, where she code-switched during her teaching. Shinga and Pillay (2021) argue that teaching the second language (L2) may be enhanced by using learners' home language (L1) since learners already possess a home language system with its communicative structure, which can improve the learning of the target language. Not using CS could limit learners' comprehension of the content and the language.

The findings reveal that CS is more of a strength in the EFAL classroom than a threat. It benefits the learners more and helps language and vocabulary development if used sparingly and purposefully; this is also evident in the studies by Baes (2023), Yataganbaba and Yildirim (2015), and Palmes (2023). It is an effective strategy and should be treated as such and not as a foreign phenomenon because English is a subject like others. Therefore, there must be a clear distinction between English as a FAL subject and English as a LoLT. Given the findings, the researchers recommend that schools and education departments' language policies take a stance and adopt CS as one of the teaching techniques teachers can use to teach English First Additional Language.

Conclusion

The teachers do not need to avoid CS; it is a highly skilled cognitive control, not a sign of linguistic deficiency. They just have to ensure they use it sparingly. A switch from L2 is meant to increase the efficiency of information transmitted to the listener, not just in elementary classes but also in secondary and tertiary levels. Therefore, CS should be a natural behaviour in the L2 classroom since the teacher and the learners share the common ground, the L1. Ideally, FAL teachers should view CS as a valid and effective teaching strategy or methodology and an advantage to enhance learners' mastering of the L2. Consequently, the learners would concentrate even more. There is a need for indigenous languages to be given equal respect and space for intellectualisation. This will not just erase negativity against CS, multilingualism, and translinguals in the English classroom. However, it will be a tool to empower the teachers and learners within the multilingual classrooms in South Africa. Lastly, Zano (2022) emphasises that multilingual diversity is an untapped resource, and he proposes that harnessing the multilingual competencies of learners to overcome hurdles in misunderstanding questions set for individual tasks through group work is an essential approach. This would be feasible because learners will engage in possibly flipped classes, and new knowledge is created through the interaction using different languages.

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