

CODE-SWITCHING IN ENGLISH CLASSROOMS: PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

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Annotation: Code-switching is a common phenomenon in English language classrooms, particularly in multilingual learning environments where teachers and students alternate between English and their native language. While this practice can facilitate comprehension, reduce learners' anxiety, and support classroom interaction, its excessive or inappropriate use may limit students' exposure to the target language and hinder the development of communicative competence. This paper examines the major problems associated with code-switching in English language teaching and explores practical solutions based on contemporary pedagogical approaches. The study discusses the factors influencing code-switching, its impact on language acquisition, and strategies for maintaining an appropriate balance between the first language and English in classroom instruction.

Keywords: Code-switching, EFL classrooms, Bilingualism, Multilingualism Language choice, Classroom interaction, Teaching strategies.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, the English language has become very important in international communication, education and the workplace. Therefore, using English in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom is essential for meaningful communication. However, many students sometimes switch from English to their first language during the lesson. This is called *code-switching* and it may help students understand difficult topics and notions, but using of first language can reduce students' exposure to English and limit their opportunities of improving and using English. Although many studies and research have discussed code-switching in bilingual and multilingual classrooms. However, there are not many studies about code-switching in Uzbek EFL classrooms. It is important to identify when and why students and sometimes teachers use code-switching. This can help teachers choose the best language methods to use in the classrooms. Therefore, this study aims to find the reasons why teachers and students use code-switching in English classrooms. It also examines how code-switching affects English learning and suggests simple ways to use it effectively while motivating students to speak more English.

Main Body

Code-switching is the use of two or more languages at the same time during communication or classroom interaction. In EFL classrooms it usually occurs between English and students' first language (for example Uzbek). Teachers sometimes use the first language to explain complex grammar rules, new vocabulary or instructions of tasks. Students can switch to their first languages when they do not know necessary English words or unable to express their ideas. In some cases code-switching saves time and improves understanding. Although code-switching has several advantages, it also has some disadvantages. Firstly, students become dependent on using their first language in class. If they switch Uzbek every time, when they have difficulties, they cannot develop the habit of thinking in English. Secondly, they limit their opportunities doing exercises in English. For learning language effectively, it is necessary to hear and use it. If most of the lesson is taught in the first language, students do not use English very often. Thirdly, students' speaking skills develop more slowly. They feel fear to speak English and choose their first language. As a result their confidence and fluency do not develop well. Fourth, English classroom environment becomes weak. When teachers and students often use their first language, they do not use English enough in the classroom. There are several ways to reduce unnecessary code-switching in English classrooms. First, teachers should use English as the main language in the classroom. Greetings, simple instructions and questions and answers can be given in English. In this case students hear more English and have more opportunities to communicate in English. Second, code-switching should be used only when it is necessary. Teacher can use students' first language to explain difficult grammar rules, new topics or complex instructions. However, during classroom activities and everyday communication students should use English. This gives students more chances to practice English. Third, teachers should encourage students to speak English in pair and group works. Teachers suggest to communicate in English for all groups or pairs, if they need, teachers can give them the list of useful phrases. This will increase learners' confidence. Fourth, teachers should create a friendly atmosphere that students accept making mistakes is a natural part of learning. When the students do not feel fear to make a mistake, they try to speak English more. The main feature of the proposed method is that students feel more confident and comfortable when speaking English. It can be concluded that code-switching should be used only when it supports students' learning and communication in English.

Conclusion

Code-switching remains an integral aspect of English language teaching, especially in multilingual educational settings where learners possess varying levels of linguistic competence. The findings of this study indicate that code-switching should neither be viewed as an obstacle to language learning nor be encouraged without clear pedagogical purpose. Its effectiveness depends largely on how, when, and why it is

employed during classroom interaction. Appropriate use of the learners' first language can facilitate the explanation of complex concepts, support classroom management, and reduce communication barriers, particularly among beginner and intermediate learners. However, excessive reliance on the native language may decrease meaningful exposure to English, limit opportunities for authentic communication, and slow the development of learners' communicative competence. Therefore, teachers should adopt a balanced and strategic approach that gradually increases the use of English while employing code-switching only when it contributes directly to learning objectives. Future research may investigate the long-term effects of controlled code-switching on learners' speaking fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and classroom participation across different educational contexts. Such studies would provide further evidence for developing effective bilingual teaching practices that support both language acquisition and learner confidence.

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