

Code Switching: Awareness Amongst Teachers and Students in Saudi Universities EFL Classrooms

Malik Ajmal Gulzar^{[a],*}; AbdulRahman Al Asmari^[b]

^[a]Ph.D, Assistant, Prof. English Language Center, Taif University, Taif, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Supervisor of Research and Curriculum Development Unit, Taif University.

^[b] Ph.D, Dean PYP & Director. English Language Center, Taif University, Taif, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Abstract

This study is a comprehensive investigation of Saudi university EFL classroom interactants' [faculty & students] awareness towards various dynamics of code switching (hereinafter CS). The participants comprised of 100 faculty members and 100 students drawn from Taif University English Language Center [henceforth TUELC]. A 22 item questionnaire was adapted on a Likert-scale to elicit their perceptions related to various functions of CS in a Saudi EFL classroom context. The results revealed that both groups [faculty & students] indicated almost the same results as far the attitudes towards the reasons that prompt CS in the EFL classroom are concerned but they showed comparatively wider differences towards perceptions of the awareness of CS in Saudi EFL universities classrooms (section 1) and perceptions of the subjective norms of CS in Saudi EFL universities classrooms (section 2) of the questionnaire. The findings of the study reveal that Saudi EFL classroom interactants bear quite positive attitudes towards CS. It is also found that the participants of this study have a strong urge to learn the English language and for the specified purposes of the role of CS is authenticated by the respondents. During the analysis, the results of the study indicated that both respondents [i.e. faculty & students] agreed to use CS, but utility of different functions vary in their perceptions. Moreover, in the light of the data analysis, trends were determined among groups to measure the significance of each function of CS. In short, this work tried to understand the significance of mother tongue [hereinafter MT] and target language [henceforth TL] in the EFL context of Saudi universities.

Key words: Code switching; EFL classrooms interactants; Saudi university EFL classrooms; and language choice

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of CS had not been a major subject of scientific study in Saudi university EFL classrooms. Only recently, the use of CS has attracted a considerable amount of attention of the researchers in the context of Saudi EFL classrooms. Fundamentally, the tradition of language alternation became known with the ban on the use of the learners' first language [L1] in foreign language teaching [FLT] and it was introduced by the Direct Method at the end of the nineteenth century (Cook, 2001). Although some uses of CS or MT are acceptable for communicative language teaching methodology, and there is still a debate over these accepted uses. For example, some of the linguists argue that the open view towards CS may lead to an overuse / injudicious use of it by teachers (Turnbull, 2001). Advocates of the exclusive use of TL, however, are losing ground and most researchers now argue in favour of a more tolerant approach towards CS (Brice, 2000). This position raises many questions in methodology. For example 'Which of the uses of CS should be selected and integrated into classroom practices?'; 'which ones should continue to be restricted?'; 'on what grounds do we decide which CS practices are permissible and which ones are not?' In KSA, insufficient attention is paid to the dimensions of EFL classroom discourse and for that reason the need increasingly emerges to develop more

understanding of this phenomenon in the context of Saudi EFL classroom discourse. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to examine the awareness of interactants about the significance of different functions of CS in the context of Saudi university EFL classroom discourse.

Objectives of the Study

The following points define the purpose of the study:

- i To examine the utility of different reasons for CS in the context of Saudi university EFL Classrooms;
- ii to find out the significance of CS from teachers' and students' perceptions in EFL classrooms of Saudi universities; and
- iii to investigate awareness/trends about different functions of CS among Saudi EFL classroom interactants.

Theoretical Framework of Research

This study is guided by a number of relevant theories such as second language acquisition, bilingualism, classroom discourse, discourse theory. A critical review of these theories helped to frame the theoretical structure for the current study. Moreover, the researchers tried to connect these theories with the topic of the research to understand their implications in the EFL classrooms of Saudi universities.

1. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

1.1 Functions of Code Switching in the EFL Classrooms

Importance of CS in relation to language classrooms has increased around the world as an area of special interest and investigation. Moreover, different studies on this phenomenon suggest that teachers' CS, either in teacher-led classroom discourse or in teacher-student interaction, serves many pedagogical purposes. Martin-Jones (1995, p.98) defines a bilingual as that who has the same language background as the learners switches into shared codes; s/he is invariably expressing solidarity with the learners. CS is employed in more subtle and diverse ways in bilingual classroom communication.

Nzwanga (2000) studied the use of CS at the Ohio State University in a classroom of French as a second language. She videotaped, and then determined the informal levels and the formal levels of code switching in the classroom interaction. Moreover, she concluded that code switching performed a role of administration or management at the informal level. At the formal level, code switching was formally used in order to do functions like introducing, explaining, commenting, practicing the TL, and so on. Nzwanga's study (2000) highlighted the communicative and academic roles of code switching engaged in that meticulous atmosphere. Similarly, using ethnographic observations, explained the determinants

of teachers' code switching between English, Swahili and mother tongue in three Kenyan primary schools (Merritt 1992, p.65). The reasons they put forward for CS include the socializing role of the teacher, the importance of variation and repetition, and the teacher's linguistic competence and insecurity. The majority of researchers focused especially on the communicative functions of codes switching in teacher-led talks in ESL/EFL classrooms. Following the same pattern, adopting a qualitative approach, Flyman-Mattsson and Burenhult (1999, p.23) carried out a preliminary study of code switching in a French-as-a- Foreign-Language classroom. The study explored an extensive use of code switching in teacher's interaction with students and defined different functions for code switching, which included: i. Linguistic insecurity, ii. Topic switch iii. Affective functions, iv. Socializing functions, v. Repetitive functions. According to Martin-Jones (1995), Guthrie's comparative study's results proved that the monolingual teacher was less able to teach those students who were at an early stage of development and at this point he placed bilingual teacher at an advantage. Guthrie (1984) identified five communicative functions of code switching. According to his study, Chinese switching was used: i. for translation, ii. we code iii. for procedures and directions iv. for clarification, and v. to check understanding. Flyman-Mattsson and Burenhult (1999, p.25) suggest that "teachers switch code whether in teacher-led classroom discourse or in teacher-student interaction, may be a sophisticated language use serving a variety of pedagogical purposes". However, Auer (1990, p.98, in Martin-Jones, 1995, p.21) acknowledged that it is impossible to compile a comprehensive inventory of the functions of code switching because the number of functions is infinite.

Martin-Jones (1995) views that code switching as cross-disciplinary in nature. She claims that these studies about bilingual classroom interactions started with a more linguistic approach. She provided two examples of early studies of the analysis of classroom discourse: The work of Milk (1984) and the work of Guthrie (1984). According to Milk (1981 cited in Martin-Jones, 1995, p.12), the understanding about the role of each language in a bilingual discourse would be obtained by focusing on classroom discourse functions. Accordingly, Martin-Jones (1995, p.93) claims that two studies by Milk and Guthrie shifted the focus to the accomplishment of interactive acts in bilingual classroom discourse, "more attention was placed on the ways in which teachers and learners get things done with two languages in bilingual classrooms and to the way in which language values are transmitted through communicative choices". Cook (1991) describes that this practice of using two languages makes the lesson as communicative as possible and is similar to the 'New Concurrent Approach' presented by Rudolph Jacobson, outlined in Cook (1991). The approach helps teachers to balance the use of language switch at certain key points,

such as during important concepts, when students are getting distracted, during revisions or when students are praised and told off. On the basis of this view, switching may be used as an effective teaching strategy for second language learning. Skiba (1997, p.10) delineates the function of code switching and explains that code switching allows the student to become autonomous over a period of time whereby the teaching is reciprocated from the teacher to the student. Cook (1991, p.29) suggests that “a use of code switching in the classroom would provide for a bilingual norm whereby code switching is seen to be an acceptable method of communication.” Therefore, it is an essential requirement of the Saudi university EFL classrooms to investigate the role of CS to enhance the teaching and learning environment in the Saudi classrooms.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

- Q.1. How do Saudi university EFL teachers and students decide which reasons for CS are more permissible and which ones are less?
- Q.2. How do Saudi university EFL teachers determine the utility of different functions of CS in the discourse of Saudi EFL classrooms?

2.1 Delimitations of the Study

This study tried to explore the role of CS in Saudi EFL classroom discourse with special reference to Saudi teachers' and students' perceptions. Keeping in view this foremost point, the following ten functions of CS are delimited to recognize their significance in the context under study: Clarification, ease of expression, giving instructions effectively, creating a sense of belonging, checking understanding, translation, socializing, emphasis, repetitive functions, and linguistic competence.

2.2 Research Methodology

In this study, cross sectional survey is used as an instrument to collect data from a predetermined sample. The population of this study comprised of 100 TUELC faculty members [males and females] and 100 students [males and females] undertaking EFL courses at Taif University (TU). The researchers used simple random sampling techniques to select teachers and students as a sample for the study. The researchers discussed the questionnaire with several experienced faculty members of TUELC to develop a suitable questionnaire and to elicit participants' authentic responses to examine the awareness about CS amongst Saudi university students and teachers. Based on the opinions of the experts, 22-item Likert-scale was developed ranging as strongly disagree, disagree, uncertain, agree, strongly agree. In order to obtain useful and precise information, the design of the questionnaire

was developed in a structured pattern to specify and examine issues related to this study. Survey research is one of the most common researches connected to classroom dynamics. It involves researchers asking a large group of people questions on a particular topic or issue. This asking of questions related to the issue of interest is called a survey (Fraenkela, & Wallen 2000). The researchers considered all the prerequisites of the survey to produce transparent results of the study. Further, a pilot study was administered to insure that the developed questionnaires suit the purposes of the intended survey. Oppenheim (1992, p.21) clarifies that “the analytic, relational survey is set up specifically to explore the associations between particular variables. However, like experiments in the laboratory, it is usually set up to explore specific hypotheses. It is less oriented towards representativeness and more towards finding associations and explanations, less towards the description and enumeration and more towards prediction.”

This questionnaire was translated into Arabic that was administered among the students of TUELC [See Appendix # 1] whereas the English version [See Appendix # 2] of the questionnaire was given to the teachers. The researchers managed to get 100 questionnaires from faculty members and the same number from the students.

2.3 Statistical Analysis

The responses of the participants were analyzed statistically to determine the significance of reasons for CS uses in the EFL university classrooms. This was done by running three processes: The value of mean, mode, and standard deviation [hereinafter SD] which was determined for all the variables, but the significance of each function of CS was determined by the value of mean while considering its importance in the language research. As Brown (1988, p.154) defines: “the central tendency of groups is often described in terms of means and medians. Comparing the performance of groups will often involve looking at one or both of these basic characteristics”. The following two statistical methods are used according to the demand of the research questions: Relative frequency distribution which is used to obtain the general percentage of the respondents' awareness about the utility of CS and its importance and comparative studies which determine the importance of each variable in the cluster. Independent samples T-test is applied to identify any statistically significant differences in the perceptions of the respondents.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive analysis was performed to identify participants' perceptions regarding the responses generated through the questionnaire were manually coded and analysed using SPSS version awareness of CS in Saudi EFL universities classrooms. Six items

of the questionnaire were included in section 1 of the questionnaire to elicit the participants' perceptions of CS in the context of Saudi EFL university classrooms. Out of these six variables, three variables [3, 5, 6] carried negative inclination and lower values of mean indicate

that the participants hardly perceived them as a significant reason for CS. The rest of three variables [1, 2, 4] reflected positive inclination and higher value of mean assigned to any of these items represented that it was a significant factor in this regard (see Table 1 below).

Table 1
Perceptions of the Awareness of CS in Saudi EFL Universities Classrooms

	Questionnaire Items	Group	n	M	SD	T	df	p value
1	CS is an easy way for interaction in the EFL classroom.	faculty	100	3.7400	1.01125	6.660	198	.000
		students	100	2.5200	1.52739	6.660	171.803	.000
2	CS is simple and flexible way for teaching/studying purposes.	faculty	100	3.8900	1.01399	7.304	198	.000
		students	100	2.6200	1.41264	7.304	179.616	.000
3	CS is an effortless way to understand even technical information.	faculty	100	3.5000	1.20185	3.760	198	.000
		students	100	2.8200	1.35124	3.760	195.343	.000
4	CS enables to accomplish studying/teaching tasks more effectively.	faculty	100	3.6300	1.07923	5.055	198	.000
		students	100	2.7100	1.46539	5.055	181.983	.000
5	CS enhances understanding in target language material	faculty	100	3.4600	1.09563	5.370	198	.000
		students	100	2.5100	1.38895	5.370	187.815	.000
6	CS enhances effectiveness in a communicative process.	faculty	100	3.5400	1.22615	5.703	198	.000
		students	100	2.4500	1.46594	5.703	192.002	.000

The second variable, 'CS is a simple and flexible way of teaching/studying purposes', was considered as the most important function with a mean ranking of 3.8900 by faculty members and student considered it as third important function with a mean ranking of 2.6200. In addition, a low SD 1.01399 for this variable implies that the faculty respondents were generally in agreement about the importance of this variable. On the other hand, relatively high SD 1.41264 was observed by students for this function and it implies that the respondents on the whole were not in agreement about the importance of this variable.

Data analysis shows that the first variable, 'CS is an easy way for interaction in the EFL classroom', was considered as the second important function by the faculty respondents with a mean ranking of 3.7400. The students considered it as the fourth most important function with a mean ranking of 2.5200. In addition, a low SD 1.01125 for this variable implies that the faculty respondents were generally in agreement about the importance of this variable. Conversely, a relatively high SD 1.52739 reported by students implies that the respondents were not fully in agreement about the importance of this variable.

The fourth variable, 'CS enables to accomplish studying/teaching tasks more effectively', was considered by the faculty respondents as the third most important function with a mean ranking of 3.6300 and it was considered as the second most important function by

student respondents with a mean ranking of 2.7100. Further, the faculty members reflected the lower SD 1.07923 for this function as compared to the SD (1.46539) of students. A low SD for the faculty members implies that respondents were in agreement with one another about the importance of this variable. On the other hand, students' response did not show optimum consensus about this variable. The third variable "CS is an effortless way to understand even technical information" was considered as the fourth important variable with a mean ranking of 3.5000 by faculty respondents and it was reported as the most important function by the student respondents with a mean ranking of 2.8200. Interestingly, the faculty respondents reflected a lower SD 1.20185 for this function as compared to the SD (1.35124) of students. A low SD for the faculty members implies that they were in general agreement with one another about the importance of this variable. Conversely, students' response did not show consensus about the importance of this variable. As for the fifth variable 'CS enhances understanding in target language material', data analysis revealed that it was deemed as the sixth important variable by faculty members and fifth significant variable by students. At last, the sixth variable 'CS enhances effectiveness in a communicative process', was ranked fifth in significance of this cluster by faculty members and the sixth significant variable by students.

3.1 Comments on the findings

The present study data analysis provides a frequency count to define how the ranking for the CS functions was distributed. Results reflect that different level of awareness is demonstrated in the views of faculty members and students about the significance of the variables mentioned in the cluster form in Table 1. Results show that faculty members had a stronger consensus on the significance of CS in EFL university classrooms compared to students. Also, there was a definite division in the views of both groups. The data generated through the descriptive analysis of faculty members and student responses regarding their perceptions of CS indicate that variables 1, 2 and 4 are considered as the most important variables respectively. These findings are in line with Jacobson's (1983, in Macswan in 1999, p.258) view point that languages are best mixed in the classroom by code switching. He further argues that if languages are separated in the classroom, they can lead to quandaries. For efficient implementation of CS, Jacobson (1983) advises: "code switching in order to be educationally effective, four conditions must be met: (1) the languages must be distributed at an approximate ratio of 50/50, (2) the teaching of content must not be interrupted, (3) the teacher must be conscious of her alternation between two languages, and (4) the alternation must accomplish a specific learning goal. The data have offered valuable insight into the fact that faculty respondents [both male and female] indicated the 6th variable as a fifth significant reason and student ranked it 6th significant reason. Both groups ranked the significance of the 5th variable in

opposite directions following the example of the sixth variable. It might be a significant finding in which both respondents explicitly indicated that it can be useful in accomplishing the teaching task, but communicative competence cannot be enhanced by using CS excessively. Moreover, this finding is substantiated by Guthrie's (1984) claim that code switching may be valid for junior classes. However, the value assigned to variable number 3 in Table 1 by the Saudi undergraduates suggests that respondents' perceptions is highly positive about the use of CS to understand technical terms, and they considered it as the most important function of CS. This finding is also in line with the opinion of Pennirgton (1995), and Roseberry-Mckibbin and Hegde (2000) that code switching is a normal, common, and an important aspect of EFL classrooms. Thus the results of the study provide very significant finding that CS can be used more appropriately for the purpose of students' facilitation but when it is really required.

3.2 Results and Discussions

The second part of the questionnaire comprised of six items was included to elicit participants' perceptions regarding the subjective norms of CS in Saudi EFL universities classrooms. Out of these 6 items, 3 items (7,8,9) carried negative inclination and higher values indicate that the participants reflected low consensus about them, whereas the rest of the 3 items (10,11,12) had a positive inclination and low SD values assigned to any of these items represented that it was a significant factor in the perceptions of the respondents.

Table 2
Perceptions of the Subjective Norms of CS in Saudi EFL Universities Classrooms

	Questionnaire Items	Group	n	M	SD	T	df	p value
7	CS ought to be implemented in the EFL classroom.	faculty	100	3.3100	1.09816	4.029	198	.000
		students	100	2.5700	1.47199	4.029	183.138	.000
8	Teacher should make a conscious effort to code switch in the classroom.	faculty	100	3.4200	1.12976	6.639	198	.000
		students	100	2.2000	1.44949	6.639	186.860	.000
9	The CS habits ought to be nurtured among the EFL students.	faculty	100	3.0700	1.13043	2.726	198	.000
		students	100	2.5700	1.44429	2.726	187.197	.000
10	CS is a necessary technique in the EFL classroom discourse.	faculty	100	3.4600	.90364	4.575	198	.000
		students	100	2.7200	1.34149	4.575	173.503	.000
11	The use of CS should be increased to make students proficient in bilingual set-ups.	faculty	100	3.5100	1.21018	5.532	198	.002
		students	100	2.4700	1.43868	5.532	192.359	.002
12	Arabic speaking learners think that bilingual teachers can enhance their motivation to learn English.	faculty	100	3.5600	1.05715	4.719	198	.000
		students	100	2.7100	1.45848	4.719	180.523	.000

The twelfth variable, 'Arabic speaking learners think that bilingual teachers can enhance their motivation to learn English.', was considered as the most important function with a mean ranking of 3.5600 by faculty respondents and was considered as a second important function by students with a mean ranking of 2.7100. In addition, faculty respondents reflected 1.05715 a low SD for this variable and it implies that they were generally in agreement about the importance of this variable. However, students reflected high SD 1.45848, and it implies that the respondents were not in agreement about the importance of this variable. The eleventh variable, the use of CS should be increased to make students proficient in bilingual setups.', was considered as the second most important function by the faculty respondents with a mean ranking of 3.5100 and was considered as a fourth important function by the student respondents with a mean ranking of 2.4700 with a SD of 1.43868. This function displayed the second lowest SD for faculty respondents compared to other variables in this cluster. And it implies that a majority of respondents were in agreement about the importance of this variable. On the other hand, students' second highest SD reflects that they were divided about the significance of this variable.

The tenth variable, 'CS is a necessary technique in the EFL classroom discourse', was considered by faculty members as the third important function with a mean ranking of 3.4600 (faculty) and the lowest SD.90364 reflects that the respondents reflected optimum consensus about their opinion. But students considered it as the most important function with a mean ranking of 2.7200, and lower SD 1.34149 for this function showed optimum consensus by students compared to the SD of other variables in the cluster. The eighth variable was considered as the fourth most important variable by faculty respondents and fifth significant variable by students, and the seventh variable was considered as fifth important variable by faculty respondents and reflected as a third significant variable by student respondents. And the ninth variable was considered as sixth important variable in this cluster by the faculty members and as the third significant factor by the students. However, SD for faculty respondents (1.13043) reflects more strong compared to students' SD (1.44429). This variable reflects that both groups are poles apart and faculty's viewpoint reveals that CS should not be nurtured as a habit. The above mentioned table provides a frequency count to define how the ranking for the functions was distributed. This table also reflects that significant differences were found in the views of faculty members and students except for the eleventh variable.

3.3 Comments on the Findings

Independent Samples T-test was applied to identify any significant differences in the responses of both groups [faculty & students] in Saudi university EFL classrooms.

The results showed in Table 2 indicate that both sample groups showed significant differences in a number of variables about the utility of CS. The data generated through the 6 items questionnaire reveal interesting findings regarding the perceptions of both groups. For example, teachers rated the variable number 12 as the most important factor and students ranked it as the second most important variable. Both of the groups validated the significance of the bilingual teachers and agreed that bilingual teacher can enhance their motivation for learning English. This finding is in line with the study of Gulzar (2010) in the context quite different from this one. The data have offered valuable insights into the fact that student assigned the highest value to a variable 'CS is a necessary technique' as the most important variable, but teachers ranked it as a third important factor as they know the counterproductive effects of CS as a technique in the EFL classroom. In this regard, MacSwan (1997) maintains that code switching significantly enhances the expressive capacity of an individual; McLaughlin, and McLaughlin, Blanchard and Osanai (1997) also urge educators to recognize the communicative and metaphorical values of code switching. Code switching, according to these researchers is a device of "great semantic power" (1997). So, mother tongue can be used as an ally in the teaching of foreign language. Because successful classroom interactions usually have dual focus e.g. on the content and on the language of the interactants, it is a part of the teacher's art to know when he has to focus on language without cutting off the thread of serious communication. Therefore, CS should be used only at required level particularly. This finding is also in accord with the Gulzar and AlAsmari (2013) in which they define that mother tongue can be used as an assistant factor in teaching and it should be avoided at the optimum level with an extra care particularly while teaching to the productive foreign language learners. The data generated through the descriptive analysis of responses regarding the perceptions of CS indicate the variables 9,8,7 are rated very low and these results suggest that respondents believe that overuse and injudicious use of CS is not recommendable in the EFL classrooms, and it reflects their acquaintance with the pros and cons of the over use of CS.

3.4 Results and Discussions

The third part of the questionnaire comprised of six items was included to elicit participants' perceptions regarding the reasons for CS in Saudi EFL universities classrooms. In order to answer the research questions, the researcher determined the importance of all the ten functions of code switching by using the relative frequency distribution method. All the variables are individually analyzed to examine the level of awareness among Saudi EFL classroom interactants. The summary of statistical analysis of all the functions of CS is presented in the below mentioned Table 3.

Table 3
Perceptions for the Reasons for CS in Saudi EFL Universities Classrooms

Do you think that the following reasons prompt code switching in the EFL classroom?		Two groups: 100 respondents in each group	Strongly disagree %age	Disagree %age	Uncertain %age	Agree %age	Strongly agree %age
i.	Clarification	Faculty	5%	10%	2%	65%	18%
		Students	16%	12%	9%	59%	4%
ii.	giving instructions effectively	Faculty	5%	7%	9%	60%	19%
		Students	20%	9%	13%	52%	6%
iii.	translation	Faculty	8%	19%	24%	47%	2%
		Students	18%	6%	13%	60%	3%
iv.	linguistic competence	Faculty	40%	13%	20%	6%	21%
		Students	43%	13%	20%	19%	5%
v.	topic shift	Faculty	5%	14%	29%	42%	10%
		Students	37%	20%	24%	12%	7%
vi.	ease of expression	Faculty	8%	10%	13%	50%	19%
		Students	21%	8%	17%	48%	6%
vii.	emphasis	Faculty	8%	4%	17%	58%	13%
		Students	21%	10%	20%	45%	4%
viii.	checking understanding	Faculty	8%	9%	10%	55%	18%
		Students	23%	6%	16%	49%	6%
ix.	repetitive functions	Faculty	10%	7%	24%	53%	6%
		Students	20%	8%	20%	42%	10%
x.	creating a sense of belonging	Faculty	2%	16%	20%	42%	20%
		Students	46%	4%	15%	26%	9%

The following discussion is based on the statistical results provided in the above-mentioned Table 3 and this table also presents respondents' reflected percentage about the functions of CS in Saudi EFL classrooms.

3.4.1 Clarification

The Table 3 shows that 5% faculty respondents strongly disagreed and 10% disagreed and 2% were uncertain about clarification as a function of the CS. Moreover, 65% faculty respondents agreed and 18% strongly agreed with this variable as a reason for CS in the EFL classroom. The table reflects that 16% student respondent strongly disagreed and 12% disagreed, and 9% were uncertain about clarification as a reason for CS in the EFL classroom. Moreover, 59% respondents agreed and 4% strongly agreed with this variable as a reason for CS in the EFL classroom. These findings are exactly in line with the findings of Gulzar (2010), and both studies reveal extraordinary similarities despite the difference of context. These findings are in accord with the statement of Aichuns (n.d.) when he claims that teachers' concerns for unfamiliar vocabulary or expression often prompt them

to code switch. When the teacher is not sure whether the students know the meaning of the target language word or expression in question, then it is common for him/her to offer the Chinese translation for clarification. Moreover, the data reflect the maximum awareness of respondents about the use of CS in Saudi EFL classrooms because faculty members considered it the most important reason and student considered its second most important reason for CS.

3.4.2 Giving Instructions Effectively

The results indicate that 9% faculty respondents were uncertain and 5% strongly disagreed, 7% disagreed and 60% agreed, and 19% strongly agreed with this reason as the main function of CS in Saudi EFL classroom. The results show that 9% students disagreed and 20% strongly disagreed to this function of CS out of 100. 52% students agreed and 6% strongly agreed to this function of CS out of 100. Flyman-Mattson and Burenhult (1999, p.10) define that a common reason for code switching between people who speak one standard language along with another language in a more vernacular style is to use one of the languages for more affective functions. The data

generated through the descriptive analysis indicate that the findings of this study at this point go in line with the results of the study of Gulzar (2010) in the context quite different from Saudi university EFL classrooms. And in the study of Gulzar this reason is placed at number 3, and in the present study, faculty respondents graded at number 2 and students placed it at number 3. Thus, it approves the high level of awareness among Saudi university EFL classroom interactants.

3.4.3 Translation

The teachers often switch their code from TL to MT to translate or elaborate the important message during the process of explaining new vocabulary, grammar points or instructions, instead of continuing in the foreign language. It reduces the comprehension burden and makes it easier for students to focus on the important message conveyed. Krashen (1985, p.81) explains that “the teacher speaks a little in one language, and then translates what was said in the other language. When this happens, students listen to the message in their own language and pay no attention to the English input.” Krashen’s explanation about translation is not welcomed by respondents in the context of the present study. And the results show that 8% faculty respondents strongly disagreed and 19% disagreed and 24% were uncertain. 47% respondents from the faculty side agreed and 2% strongly agreed to this function as the reason for CS in the EFL classroom. The results also indicate that 18% student respondents strongly disagreed and 6% disagreed, and 13% showed uncertainty and 19% respondents agreed and 5% strongly agreed about this function of code switching out of 100. Atkinson (1987, p.241) also warns that “the teacher and/or the students begin to feel that they have not ‘really’ made clear or understood any item of language until it has been translated. The teacher and/or the students fail to observe the distinctions between equivalence of form, semantic equivalence, and pragmatic features and thus oversimplify to the point of using crude and inaccurate translation.” The data have offered valuable insights into the fact that faculty members strongly believe in counterproductive effects of translation as mentioned by linguists and data indicate that they ranked this reason for CS at number 7. But the results of the students indicate dichotomy when they ranked it at number 1 and this reflects their dependence on the translation. Moreover, the data reveal that student shows great demand for translation, and at this point teachers have to strike a balance between the use of TL and MT, and this finding shows anomalous results where both groups found pole apart. Focusing on this point, further studies are recommended here to investigate hidden features.

3.4.4 Linguistic Competence

The results of the present study reflect that 40% faculty respondents strongly disagreed and 13% disagreed to this reason for CS and 20% respondents were uncertain about

this factor as a reason for CS from the both groups. And 6% faculty respondents agreed and 21% strongly agreed with this reason for CS in Saudi EFL classrooms. The results show that 43% student respondents strongly disagreed and 13% disagreed, and 19% agreed, 5% strongly agreed to this function of code switching out of 100. Considering it as a vital issue, Flyman-Mattson and Burenhult (1999, p.7) define that linguistic insecurity in classroom interaction is a more complicated matter. There are a number of possible reasons for the switching from one language to another, and the first of these is the notion that a speaker may not be able to express him/herself in one language; so, he/she switches to the other to compensate the deficiency (Crystal 1987, p.112). This kind of conception in the classroom is very dangerous for the teachers and learners especially in reference to EFL teachers, and this is also an important finding that teacher denied this reason for CS. This reason is placed as the last important reason by the faculty members and second last important reason by the students in the hierarchical order of the reasons for CS. The results show that the strong correlation is found in the results of both respondents (faculty and students), and also with the previous studies conducted on the same pattern by (Gulzar, 2010). It is an important finding that the respondents totally denied the role of incompetence as a reason for CS. The results verify the findings of earlier research works of Gulzar & Flyman-Mattson and Burenhult (1999).

3.4.5 Topic Shift

Code switching for topic shift is relatively frequent phenomenon in the classroom because the instructions are usually carried out in students’ mother tongue. The teachers consider that the first language is a compulsory means of explaining the rules of the foreign language. Martin-Jones (2003) defines that “in natural discourse this kind of topic switch is not very common, mainly because metalinguistic conversations are rare outside the classroom”. Flyman-Mattson and Burenhult (1999) give two reasons: the message is so important that the teacher is not willing to risk a misinterpretation, or the code switching is used to get the students’ attention. Data reflects that 5% faculty respondents strongly disagreed and 14% disagreed, 29% were uncertain, and 42% agreed and 10% strongly agreed with this function of CS in the EFL classroom. It is alarming that 29% faculty respondents were not aware of its significance as an important factor in the EFL classrooms. And this situation is quite different from the findings of the previous studies. The results from the second group (students) show that 37% agreed and 20% disagreed and 12% agreed and 7% disagreed to this function of code switching out of 100. Faculty members placed this variable at the eighth position and students gave it last position in the hierarchical order.

3.4.6 Ease of Expression

The results showed that 21% student respondents strongly disagreed and 8% disagreed, and 48% respondents

agreed and 6% strongly agreed and 17% respondents were uncertain about this reason for CS. Moreover, 8% faculty respondents strongly disagreed and 10% disagreed and 50% respondents agreed and 19% strongly agreed, and 13% were uncertain about this reason for CS in Saudi EFL classroom. This reason was not presented by Guthrie (1984), Merrit et. al. (1992) and Anna Flyman – Mattson and Burenhult (1999) in their studies, but the results proved this reason also as an important reason for code switching in Saudi context. While explaining the code switching function for ease of expression, Aichun (n.d.) defines that the teacher may switch to English for ease of expression when an English word or expression finds its equivalent in several Chinese terms or when its Chinese equivalent is not easy to retrieve. This is a very important reason for CS because students due to shortage of vocabulary often switch code. And the results of the study also confirm the findings of Al-Seghayer (2011) who reported that 87% of Saudi Graduates do not have the required level of proficiency to effectively communicate in English. The reports presented by the Cambridge Examination Centre for the year 2009 and the Educational Testing Services for the year 2003 to 2009 substantiated the above mentioned factors that those Saudi students who appeared in the TOEFL scored the lowest points from Asia. All these studies confirm the findings of the present study.

3.4.7 Emphasis

The analysis of the reason for CS indicates that 8% faculty respondents strongly disagreed and 4% disagreed and 17% respondents were uncertain about the importance of this reason for CS in the EFL classroom. 58% faculty respondents agreed and 13% strongly agreed with this reason for CS in the EFL classroom. The results of students reported that 45% agreed and 4% strongly agreed to this function of code switching out of 100. The results for this reason reflect different situation from the previous studies because faculty members placed it number 3 and the students ranked it at number 6. But Saudi respondents gave it more importance and placed it at a higher position. Eldridge (1996:303) claims that “messages are reinforced, emphasized or clarified where the messages have already been transmitted in one code but not understood.” Moreover, this reason was also not presented as a vital factor of CS by Guthrie (1984), Merrit et. al. (1992) and Anna Flyman–Mattson and Burenhult (1999) but Saudi respondents verified it as an important reason for CS.

3.4.8 Checking Understanding

The Table 3 illustrates that 8 faculty respondents strongly disagreed and 9% disagreed, and 10% respondents were uncertain and 55% agreed and 18% strongly agreed with the importance of this variable as a reason for CS in the EFL classroom. Flyman-Mattson and Burenhult (1999) explain that the main reason for teachers’ code switching is to make the students understand their utterances. Gumperz (1982) and Kamwangamalu and Lee (1991 in Brice 2000, p.102) have identified the function of

reiteration for checking understanding. The results of the students’ group show that 23% student respondents strongly disagreed and 6% disagreed, and 49% agreed, and 6% strongly agreed to this function of code switching out of 100. It is a very important finding that strikes a balance among the faculty and students because both ranked it at number 4. So, the results of the study show that this reason (checking understanding) was an important reason for code switching in EFL classrooms of Saudi universities.

3.4.9 Repetitive Function

The analyses of this reason for CS show that 10% faculty respondents strongly disagreed, 7% disagreed, 24% subjects were uncertain, 53% agreed, and 6 strongly agreed about the importance of this function as a reason for CS in Saudi EFL classroom. The findings of the study substantiate the claims of the Flyman-Mattson and Burenhult (1999, p.11) in which they define “the repetition in the first language can be either partial or full, and is often expanded with further information, but more frequently code switching is used as a repetition of the previously uttered sentences”. Commonly in the repetitive form of code switching, the target language precedes the first language. The results show that 20% students strongly disagreed, 8% disagreed, 20% were uncertain, 42% students agreed and 10 strongly agreed to this function of code switching out of 100. The results of this function showed a great variation not only between the two groups of the present study but also with the previous studies. The faculty members placed it at number 5 and students at number 7 and in the study of Gulzar (2010) it was placed at number 7. This percentage indicates that respondents were split in their agreement to this reason for code switching and further studies are recommended to investigate the dichotomy between faculty and students for a better understanding. So Anna Flyman–Mattson and Burenhult’s this reason for code switching was not considered as an important reason for code switching especially by the respondents in the context of Saudi universities.

3.4.10. Creating a Sense of Belonging

It was found in the analysis of this function of CS that 2% faculty respondents strongly disagreed, 16 disagreed, 20% were uncertain, 42% agreed and 20% strongly agreed with this reason for CS in the EFL classroom. On the other hand, students’ results show that 26% agreed, 46% disagreed, and 15% were uncertain about this function of CS out of 100. So, Merrit (1999) this reason for CS is not proved as an important reason by the interactants of Saudi EFL classrooms, and faculty members and students both placed it at number 8. This is a significant finding that the bilingual teachers most of the time shared the feeling of pleasure and displeasure by switching code from target to native language. The claims of the Flyman-Mattson and Burenhult (1999) substantiate the awareness of Saudi EFL teachers in the following words: socializing functions are

closely related to affective function i.e. when the speaker signals friendship and solidarity by using the addressee's first language. It seems as if the teacher code switches when he/she wishes to be friendly with the students. But in the context of the present study, Saudi students oppositely report the significance of this reason for CS. Crystal (1987, p.14) further defines that "switching commonly occurs when an individual wishes to express solidarity with a particular social group. Rapport is established between the speaker and the listener when the listener responds with a similar switch". Flyman-Mattson and Bruenhult (1999) define that this function is performed by teachers to share the spontaneous expression of emotions and emotional understanding in interacting with students. This study reports a different finding because both respondents graded it at number 8, and the same position of the results further strengthens the findings and demands more investigation on this particular point.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study clearly reflect the high level of awareness among the Saudi university EFL respondents. In this study, the majority of the respondents agreed with the reasons of CS in the context of Saudi EFL classrooms. Though they were found divided in the ranking of the significance of the reasons for CS, but no reason was totally rejected by them despite the differences of opinions amongst faculty members and students. The below mentioned value of each function of CS was ranked by both respondents who reported their consent on 1 to 5 ranking system about the significance of CS. These determined values for each of the functions are given below in the hierarchal order as they are determined by faculty members and students.

Reasons that prompt CS in the EFL classroom	Determined awareness of faculty for each function of CS		Determined awareness of students for each function of CS	
	Determined percentage value of agreement	Determined hierarchal order according to the percentage	Determined percentage value of agreement	Determined hierarchal order according to the percentage
Clarification	65%	1	59%	2
giving instructions effectively	60%	2	52%	3
translation	47%	7	60%	1
linguistic competence	6%	10	19%	9
topic shift	42%	8	12%	10
ease of expression	50%	6	48%	5
emphasis	58%	3	45%	6
checking understanding	55%	4	49%	4
repetitive functions	53%	5	42%	7
creating a sense of belonging	42%	8	26%	8

The results of the study demonstrate that the significance of CS is not denied rather respondents agreed that CS caters for the needs of the students. As far as the teachers' poor linguistic competence was concerned, it was rejected. Respondents also were aware of the fact that teachers' poor linguistic competence can hinder their progress of learning a target language. Thus, they approved the linguistic competence of their teachers and it was the least important reason in all the reasons for CS. There was not even a single reason that was totally rejected by Saudi respondents in relation to its utility in Saudi EFL classroom discourse. Clarification for faculty members and translation for students were the most important reasons for CS, and linguistic competence for faculty and topic shift for the students were the least important reasons for CS.

If we look into the issues of awareness in Saudi EFL classrooms, it can be confidently claimed that there is no big difference of awareness between faculty members

and students. On the basis of the findings of the present study, it is strongly recommended that use of CS as a strategy should be introduced to teaching English in Saudi EFL classroom discourse. Aguirre (1988) defines that "language alternations or code switching in the classroom are obvious and unavoidable and educators should regard language alternation as a communicative strategy employed by the students learning a second language." For this development, language policy along with other issues should take care of the sensitive issue of percentage of CS in reference with EFL classroom discourse. Unfortunately, a true understanding of language alternation behaviours is a phenomenon still not well understood by professionals in education and it may be perceived as a controversial issue (Cheng & Butler, 1989; Reyes, 1995). However, it is the consensus of many in the field of second language education that it is a normal occurrence, and its use as

a language choice in instruction is perfectly legitimate (Brice, 2000a, 2000b; Brice & Roseberry-McKibbin, 1999). Due to this misunderstanding, educators, course developers and teachers misunderstand language processes and cannot devise classroom strategies based on the appropriate use of languages (Gulzar & Alasmari 2013). So, it is essential for teachers and educators understand the utility and significance of CS in the EFL classroom discourse.

This study has provided significant findings that teachers don't know for which reasons they can/should code switch to cater for the needs of the students. This serious situation is a main reason for Saudi students' low proficiency in the target language and due to the same imbalanced situation teachers' effectiveness is also suffering. The researchers agree that teachers should not treat the use of CS by themselves or learners as a sin, and that CS does have a place in ELT methodology only if not used imprudently. These findings clearly demonstrate that the overall results are in accordance with the outcome of the studies conducted by Guthrie (1984), Merrit et. al. (1992) and Flyman-Mattsson and Burenhult (1999) (see section delimitation of the study). On the basis of the results of the present study, it can be emphasized that there is a need to explore other dimensions of code switching because, unfortunately, a true and comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon has not yet been achieved in Saudi context. Thus, it can be emphasized that the discourses that teachers constitute need to be critically analyzed to consider their effectiveness on students' learning in the EFL classroom discourse. Code switching is a normal, common, and an important aspect of bilingualism (Pennington, 1995; Roseberry McKibbin & Hegde, 2000). For the English language learner, the process of code switching (alternating of two languages) requires a sophisticated, nonrandom, rule-governed, cognitive and linguistic manipulation of the two languages (Aguirre, 1988; Miller, 1984 in Brice and Roseberry-Mickbin). Therefore, it is found that it is an unavoidable and inevitable phenomenon because almost all the teachers substantiated its use to achieve different purposes and functions through it. Essentially, in the present situation, the teachers need to understand how and why to alter the languages to meet the students' needs. However, this situation demands immediate attention of the policy planners to determine the prerequisites of the classroom discourse for the balanced and judicious use of languages. Moreover, a clear language policy should be devised for the promotion of effective interactional patterns in the EFL classroom. The findings of this study can be helpful to develop the new pedagogies for classroom interactions. Finally, more researches in this area can open new avenues/dimensions because a better understanding of CS will have positive impacts on the planning for the discourse of EFL classrooms.

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