



Exploring Code-Switching Practices of Foreign Teachers in Benghazi, Libya

Al-Mahdi Juma Fayad *


Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Languages, University of Benghazi, Benghazi, Libya.

Almahdi.fayad@uob.edu.ly

استكشاف ممارسات التبديل اللغوي لدى المعلمين الأجانب في بنغازي، ليبيا

د. المهدي جمعة فياض*

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وأدائها، كلية اللغات، جامعة بنغازي، بنغازي، ليبيا.

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الملخص:

يمكن أن يقدم التنقل اللغوي (التناوب اللغوي) مساهمة كبيرة لعلم اللغة من خلال إتاحة الوصول إلى مجموعة من خصائص اللغة التي يستحيل ملاحظتها في البيانات أحادية اللغة. الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة هو فحص ظاهرة التناوب اللغوي في حياة ثنائيي اللغة وتأثيراتها على تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية. لتحقيق هذا الهدف، استخدمت الدراسة الحالية نهجاً مختلطاً (بيانات نوعية وكمية) أثناء جمع البيانات للتحقق من أثر التناوب اللغوي على ثنائيي اللغة وضمان مصداقية البحث. جمعت البيانات من 23 معلماً ثنائيي اللغة يعيشون ويعملون في بنغازي، ليبيا، خلال العام الدراسي 2026/2025. استخدمت الدراسة استبياناً لجمع عينات دقيقة من أنواع وظروف حدوث التناوب اللغوي، تلا ذلك إجراء مقابلة غير رسمية للتعرف أكثر على وجهة نظر كل مشارك بشأن التناوب اللغوي. أشارت النتائج إلى أن التناوب اللغوي يُستخدم لاستيعاب استخدام لغات أخرى في التفاعل مع أشخاص مختلفين وعلى مستويات متعددة، وأنه يساهم في دعم النقاش البناء.

الكلمات الدالة: التناوب اللغوي، الثنائية اللغوية، المعلمون ثنائيو اللغة، الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

Abstract

Code switching (CS) can make a substantial contribution to linguistics by allowing access to a range of language features that are impossible to observe in monolingual data. This study investigates the role of code-switching of bilingual educators in Benghazi with particular attention to its implications for English language teaching. To achieve this aim, the current study used a mixed-methods approach (qualitative and quantitative data) during data collection to investigate the impact of code-switching on bilinguals and to ensure the credibility of the research. Data were collected from 23 bilingual teachers who live and teach in Benghazi, Libya, during the academic year 2025/2026. The study used a questionnaire to gather precise samples of the types and conditions in which code switching can occur; this was followed by an unstructured interview to learn more about each participant's perspective regarding CS. The results indicated that code-switching is used to accommodate the use of

other languages in interactions with different people at various levels and that it helps support productive discussion.

Keywords: Code switching; Bilingualism; Bilingual teachers; English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

1. Introduction

While the term "code-switching" (CS) was first introduced in language by the sociolinguist Gumperz (1982), the first recognizable observations concerning bilingual research were recorded by Ronjat (1913) and later by Leopold (1939). However, for a long time, this phenomenon was not investigated. Perhaps one of the main reasons for the lack of attention given to this phenomenon in the past was the belief that bilingualism had a negative impact on thinking (Baker, 2001). In addition, code-switching was viewed negatively by some monolinguals who believed that code switching is a sign of language deficiency. As a matter of fact, in contrast to monolinguals, Saer (1923) contended that bilinguals were cognitively confused and had a cognitive disadvantage. Therefore, during the 40s and 50s, many academics considered code switching to be an inadequate use of language. Accordingly, Meyer-Scotton (2006) points out that code-switching was considered as something "to get over". During the first half of the 20th century and much of the second, code switching was believed to be the product of poor second language acquisition and to happen randomly with no obvious pattern.

Nevertheless, starting from the 1980s, most scholars perceive code switching as a normal natural outcome of bilingual and multilingual language use. When Blom and Grumperz published their article in which they presented a survey of their studies in a Norwegian village in 1972, the perspective on code switching began to shift. In fact, Blom and Grumperz realized that members of the village spoke two dialects of Norwegian. In addition, they noted that villagers used these dialects according to the situation. More studies were conducted on the systematic nature of code switching in the years that followed (Bullock & Toribio, 2023; Gardner-Chloros & Weston, 2022; Li, 2021).

However, there is limited empirical evidence about foreign teachers' CS practices and perceptions in Libyan context, which rise the need for teacher-focused studies. Subsequently, this study seeks to discover the fundamental role of code switching in relation to foreign teachers who live and teach in Benghazi. Moreover, the current study tries to shed light on the impact that code switching has upon their educational activities and communicative life.

2. Research Aims

The primary aim of this study is to investigate how code-switching influences linguistic features across different communicative contexts and situational conditions. Additionally, the current study tries to evaluate the impact of code-switching on English language teaching and learning outcomes. Finally, this study aims to explore bilingual foreign-language teachers' attitudes and beliefs about code-switching.

3. Research Questions

1. How does CS affect linguistic aspects across various situations?
2. To what degree does CS benefit the teaching and learning process?
3. What are the bilingual teachers' perspectives on the pros and cons of CS?

4. Scope and limitation of the study

This study is limited to bilingual foreign teachers living and teaching English in Benghazi, Libya during the academic year 2025/2026.

5. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study hold considerable significance in relation to key elements that constitute the basics of the educational process. Firstly, this study will expand our knowledge of code-switching and its usage, especially because code-switching remains an underexplored phenomenon in language studies. Secondly, the findings of the current study will highlight the impact of code switching on teaching and learning emphasizing how it can influence the overall journey of acquiring a second language. Finally, the results of this study will provide insights into how code switching can contribute to communication within Libyan society, thereby enriching the understanding of its broader social, educational, and cultural role.

6. Literature Review

More people are bilingual or multilingual than monolingual these days. Gratton (2022), estimated that 3.3 billion individuals, or 53% of the world's population, are multilingual. Similarly, Meyer-Scotton (2006, 2) argued that "more people in the world are bilingual than monolingual". This trend has notable benefits,

including enhanced cognitive ability in addition to improved cross-cultural communication. Baker (2011) points out that the bilingual brain displays superior attention and task-switching skills compared to the monolingual brain.

The improved cognitive control that comes with bilingual expertise is just one of the benefits that bilingual people obtain, as bilingualism has been linked to higher levels of metalinguistic awareness, namely the ability to recognize language as a system that can be manipulated and investigated, along with improved memory, visual-spatial skills, and even creativity (Shook & Marian, 2012). Moreover, in relation to possible neurological benefits, bilingualism provides crucial social benefits, such as the opportunity to explore a culture through its native tongue or speak with someone with whom you would otherwise be unable to interact (Özkara, 2025; Poplack, & Dion, 2021; Rayo, 2025). Research has overwhelmingly shown that when a bilingual person uses one language, the other is active at the same time (Shook & Marian).

Code-switching is a widespread practice among bilingual speakers and shows their linguistic flexibility. While switching in languages is a manifestation of being a bilingual, one could claim that just a small proportion of bilinguals are able to use both languages independently. In this respect, Baker (2011) believes that code-switching is not a random occurrence, as changing languages usually has a reason and a purpose.

6.1 Defining Code Switching

Several academics have researched the phenomenon of code switching in order to better understand how it is used in speech patterns. Different linguists and sociolinguists have defined code switching in accordance with respective disciplines (Mahmud, 2021). Forslund (2009) points out that code switching is a key aspect of bilingualism, while Fanani & Ma'u, (2018) describe it as the practice of shifting from one language or dialect to another in verbal communication.

Despite several terms have been used to characterize any language change that occurs during a single discourse, Baker (2011) claims that "code switching" is the most widely accepted label for switching languages in a conversation.

Earlier definitions focused on its functional and structural aspects (Auer, 2022; Muysken, 2024; Myers-Scotton, 2023). Di Pietro (1977) viewed code switching as the communicants' usage of multiple languages to carry out a speech act, whereas Fallis (1976) specified code switching basically as the switching between two languages. According to Scotton and Ury (1977), the use of one or more linguistic types in the same discourse or engagement is known as code switching. On the other hand, code switching, as defined by Grosjean (1982), is the alternating usage of two or more languages in a single statement or an act of speech.

Code switching has been defined by other scholars from broader perspectives. Jingxia (2010) declared in his study that the term "code" indicates any system of signals containing numbers and words with real meanings. In addition, he argued that, code switching occurs when speakers alternate between shared languages during conversation.

Code switching is the presence of switches between two languages in bilinguals' speech, which may appear at the level of a word, a phrase, or a sentence (Jdetawy, 2011; Taweel and Btoosh, 2012). However, Momenian and Samar (2011) claim that code switching is the occurrence of switches within and between utterances. Then and Ting (2010) maintain that code switching is the consistency in the same conversation with exchange of piece of utterance that is linked to a couple of syntactic systems. However, Greggio and Gil (2007) argue that code switching reflects a linguistic process in the development of bilingual competence, particularly among speakers producing distinct utterances.

6.2 Types of Code switching

Since the 1970s, a particular type of utterance known as "code switching" has been thoroughly examined from a variety of perspectives. For instance, sociolinguistic researchers would concentrate on the reasons behind language switching. While a psycholinguistic perspective investigated the cognitive and linguistic skills that enable speakers to switch.

Code switching is not an isolated phenomenon but a central part of a bilingual discourse. Mayers-Scotton (2006) distinguishes between two types of code switching: "classic CS" and "composite CS". The term "classical" refers to aspects from two or more language variations found in the same clause, but only one of these variations is the source of the clause's morpho-syntactic frame. On the other hand, composite CS

is identified as the engagement of the grammars of both languages, in which the guest language plays an important role in some of the abstract structure underlying surface forms in the clause.

In addition, Wardhaugh (1992) describes two types of code switching: situational CS and metaphorical CS. Situational CS occurs when the language use changes according to the situation the speakers are in. On the other side, metaphorical code switching happens when the topic needs to be changed in the language used.

6.3 Functions and Practicality of Teacher's CS

In order to study the functional distribution of L1 (first language) into L2 (second language) schools, various studies were carried out in different linguistic contexts (e.g., Alrabah et al., 2016 in Arabic context; Baazaoui et al., 2025; Cahyani, de Courcy, & Barnett, 2018 in Indonesian context; Sali, 2014 in Turkish context). Findings showed that teachers tend to use their L1 for pedagogical, social, and management purposes in L2 classrooms. Moreover, code switching can be used as a tool for classroom discourse management (Forslund, 2009).

In addition, Makulloluwa (2013) reports that L1 has been used as a second language in ESL classrooms (English as a Second Language) in Sri Lanka for pedagogical, administrative, and interactional purposes at various levels. Many teachers who participated in the study had a positive attitude toward L1 and found it useful to understand more about the input.

Zainil and Arsyad (2021) conducted a study in four junior high schools in Padang, Indonesia. The study examined five EFL teachers' code-switching using conversation analysis of ~25 hours of classroom video and stimulated recall interviews. Findings showed that teachers switch between English and Bahasa Indonesia for pedagogical (e.g. explaining grammar/vocabulary, instructions, comprehension checks) and affective reasons (e.g. saving time, building rapport), often using more L1 than they believed.

Hall and Cook (2012) carried out a global study. 2,785 teachers from 111 countries participated in this study. The results showed broad use of L1 within the classrooms of English Language Teaching (ELT). Teachers have reported that the use of L1 is easier for students to clarify ambiguous language and grammar.

Ma et al. (2019) studied the various functions of L1 use by the teachers and students in primary school in Australia. The findings showed that L1 was often used by the teachers for educational and social reasons. Teachers also maintained that the behavior of the classroom was regulated. Teachers used L1 to give instructions, provide answers, and explain. The students, however, used L1 to ask questions, to provide reasons for lack of skills in L2, and to offer peer help.

Bahous et al. (2014) conducted a study to explore instructors and students' views with regard to CS in higher education environment in the American university in Beirut, Lebanon. Contrary to what non-participant observations indicated, the main findings indicated that staff members are not aware that they code-switch. Moreover, the findings showed that both teachers and students use code switching in the classroom to improve their learning. However, Grant and Nguyen (2017) states that CS can only work as a positive strategy in EFL classroom when used selectively and voluntarily, but not when it is used automatically.

6.4 Teachers' and Students' Perceptions and Attitudes toward Classroom Code-Switching

A number of studies were conducted in various contexts to investigate the perceptions of the classroom participants on CS (e.g. Al-Nofaie, 2010; Alrabah et al., 2016; Bilgin, 2016; Ibrahim, Shah, & Armia, 2013; Leoanak & Amalo, 2018; Suteja & Purwanti, 2017). In general, teachers and students were positive about L1 to promote the L2, along with other research results carried out by, e.g., Ibrahim et al. (2013), Leoanak & Amalo (2018), and Suteja & Purwanti (2017) which demonstrated positive attitudes toward teacher code-switching among participants in the classroom. In addition, Adriosh and Razi (2019) carried out an ethnographic exploratory study to examine teachers' and students' attitudes toward classroom CS from three different universities in Libya. Similarly, the results demonstrated that both educators and students perceive CS positively as an educational and interpersonal resource.

Moreover, Al-Nofaie (2010) found that teachers and students had positive attitudes regarding the use of the first language for particular purposes and motivations. For instance, Alrabah et al. (2016) discovered that teachers successfully managed classroom activities by using their native tongue. Although teachers and students held a positive attitude toward CS, they were concerned about the use of the first language in the classroom to prevent its abuse. In this regard, Cheng (2013) warned that L1 should only be used in a

controlled manner in order to explain difficult grammar and obscure linguistic concepts, despite the widely acceptable use of CS.

7. Methodology

This study, conducted during the academic year 2025/2026, employed a mixed-method design to collect and analyze data. Both qualitative and quantitative instruments were employed in order to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the teachers' perspectives on code-switching both outside the classroom and in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom.

This study utilized an unstructured interview to collect teachers' personal views. The interview was divided into three parts; the first part is concerned with the teacher's personal information. The second part dealt with the teachers' views regarding the advantages and disadvantages of code switching in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms. The final part involved questions about how code switching contributes to their communicative connections.

A questionnaire was used to collect precise samples of the types and situations in which code switching can occur. First, the questionnaire began with a diagnostic section to collect some personal information. Then, there was a section about code switching interference, which included most code-switched words or sentences and possible circumstances to code switch. The final section concerned code switching outcomes.

7.1 Participants

The participants in this study were all foreign teachers who work and live in Benghazi, Libya. 23 teachers participated in this study during the academic year 2025/2026. Participants varied in terms of both language and background characteristics. The following table demonstrates the participants' personal information:

Table (1). Participants' Personal Information

N	School name	Nationality	Languages	Age	Teaching Experience
1	British School	Afrikaans	Afrikaans (5 dialects), English, and Arabic	63	20 years
2	British School	Afrikaans	Afrikaans (4 dialects), English, and Arabic	57	23 years
3	British School	Afrikaans	Afrikaans (11 dialects) and English	70	25 years
4	British School	British	English and Greek	67	11 years
5	Philippine School	Filipino	Filipino (4 dialects), English, and little Arabic	64	10 years
6	Philippine School	Filipino	Filipino (2 dialects), English, and little Arabic	36	10 years
7	Philippine School	Filipino	Filipino (5 dialects), English, and little Arabic	65	17years
8	Philippine School	Filipino	Filipino, English, and little Arabic	34	4 years
9	Philippine School	Filipino	Filipino (5 dialects), English, and little Arabic	59	15 years
10	Philippine School	Filipino	Filipino (4 dialects), English, and little Arabic	64	7 years
11	Pakistani School	Pakistani	Pakistani, English, and Arabic	32	5 years
12	Pakistani School	Pakistani	Pakistani, English, and Arabic	28	4 years

13	Pakistani School	Pakistani	Pakistani, English, and Arabic	37	3 years
14	Pakistani School	Pakistani	Pakistani, English, and Arabic	35	4 years
15	Pakistani School	Pakistani	Pakistani (2 dialects), English, and Arabic	45	12 years
16	Pakistani School	Pakistani	Pakistani, English, and Arabic	45	15 years
17	Pakistani School	Pakistani	Pakistani, English, and Arabic	32	5 years
18	Pakistani School	Pakistani	Pakistani (3 dialects), English, and Arabic	42	12 years
19	Pakistani School	Pakistani	Pakistani, English, and Arabic	35	8 years
20	Pakistani School	Pakistani	Pakistani, English, and Arabic	33	6 years
21	Harvest school	Swedish	Swedish, English, sign language, Arabic. And German	42	12 years
22	Harvest school	American	English and little Arabic	60	18 years
23	University of Benghazi	American	English, little Arabic, and little French	65	39 years

7.3 Data Collection Procedures

First of all, informed consent for the study was obtained from the participants before data collection processes were started directly. Since each school provides teachers with break time, the researcher scheduled an appointment with the participants during break time. The researcher met the participants separately.

For the interview, the researcher started with an explanation of the research goals and how the teacher's contribution will help to achieve them. As mentioned above, the interview was divided into three sections. Each section had a set of questions; the interviewer gave the interviewee the freedom to answer a question or to avoid it and also the liberty to elaborate on the questions as they pleased to ensure depth and reliability of the research findings.

A structured questionnaire was administered to gather specific data on the types as well as the contexts in which CS occurs. The questionnaire was divided into tables, each with certain comments. The researcher explained to the teacher how to take this questionnaire and provided clarification when needed.

7.4 Data analysis

7.4.1 Interview

The researcher utilized one of the most commonly used approaches to qualitative data analysis, namely, thematic analysis. To facilitate this process, NVivo software was utilized. Wong (2008) claims that in addition to data categorization, sorting, and retrieval, NVivo software supports qualitative research by integrating coding with qualitative connecting, shaping, and modeling.

Q1. What do you know about code switching?

The majority of participants admitted that they were aware that what they had done was a code switch, but they had not previously given it any thought. Nonetheless, a few participants stated that they know about code switching and conducted some research on it. The responses ranged from changing the language in accordance with others to using the two languages interchangeably.

Q2. Do you think you should be bilingual to code switch?

In response, older participants said, "Yes, you should have linguistic competence in both languages." Younger participants, on the other hand, said, "No, you do not have to be bilingual." They asserted that

people can switch codes even if they have a limited vocabulary or if their proficiency in both languages is not equal.

Q3. How often do you switch between languages?

All participants said they do this on a daily basis.

Q4. What sorts of situations do you tend to switch code in more often?

There were various responses to this question; some participants switch when speaking with their families because they are married to someone who speaks a different language or because they live in a country where the language is different from their own. Other participants switch at work for their students to facilitate communication between teachers and students, make funny comments, and break the ice. Others switch for social necessity because they have friends who do not speak English.

Q5. How code switching can help the process of teaching?

The majority of participants recognize the value of code switching even when they teach in English exclusively. They stated that switching with just one word makes things easier; students would feel confident and feel like they have something in common.

Q6. What are the advantages and disadvantages of code switching?

Generally, participants overwhelmingly expressed positive attitudes towards code switching. They simply said that "life gets easier when you switch". Nevertheless, some have noticed their children, who were born and raised in a three-language house, mix the grammar of these languages.

Q7. Does code-switching contribute to the choice of linguistic aspects through different situations?

Most of the participants did not notice any change but were pointed to them by others. Some participants tend change their voice tone when they switch between languages. Others speak more informally in one language than another.

7.4.2 Questionnaire

SPSS was used to analyze the questionnaire responses. To find out more about the participants' previous knowledge of the topic, the questionnaire started with a diagnostic section that asked about their knowledge. As a result, a list of potential code-switching scenarios and whether the participants switched intentionally or unconsciously was added in the code-switching interference section. The final section highlighted the results of code switching, the rationale behind it, and whether it was beneficial or not.

The figure below serves to illustrate a number of comments such as:

- 1) Code switching intermingle your concept of L1 to L2

The response was highly favorable with 66% agreed and 26% strongly agreed.

- 2) Code switching increase your communication skills

82% agreed.

- 3) Code switching makes you bilingual

74% agreed and 26% strongly agreed.

- 4) Code switching helps understand difficult words, concepts, and terms

47% agreed and 39% strongly agreed however, 9% disagreed.

- 5) Do you think code switching helps you express your thoughts?

This question elicited an even response with 47% agreed and 43% strongly agreed.

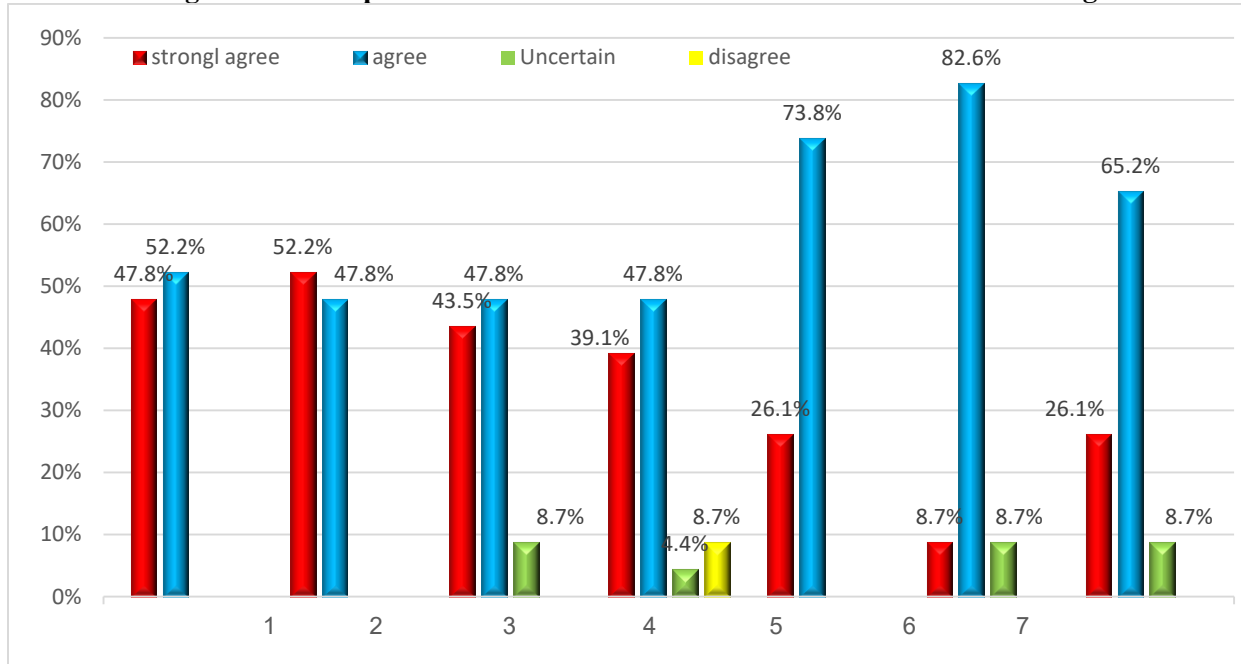
- 6) Do you think the frequency of code switching depends on the course that you are teaching?

The results in this case are fairly balanced: 47% agreed and 52% strongly agreed.

- 7) Code switching provides a realistic environment for L2 learning process.

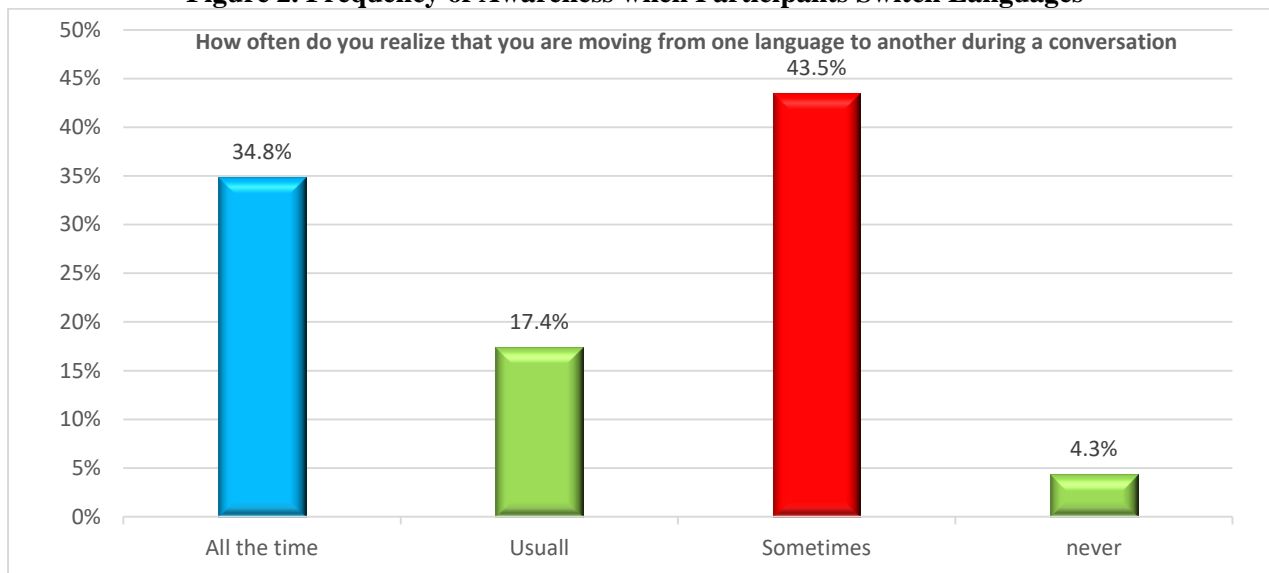
52% agreed and 48% strongly agreed.

Figure 1. Participants' Attitudes on Effects and Benefits of Code-Switching



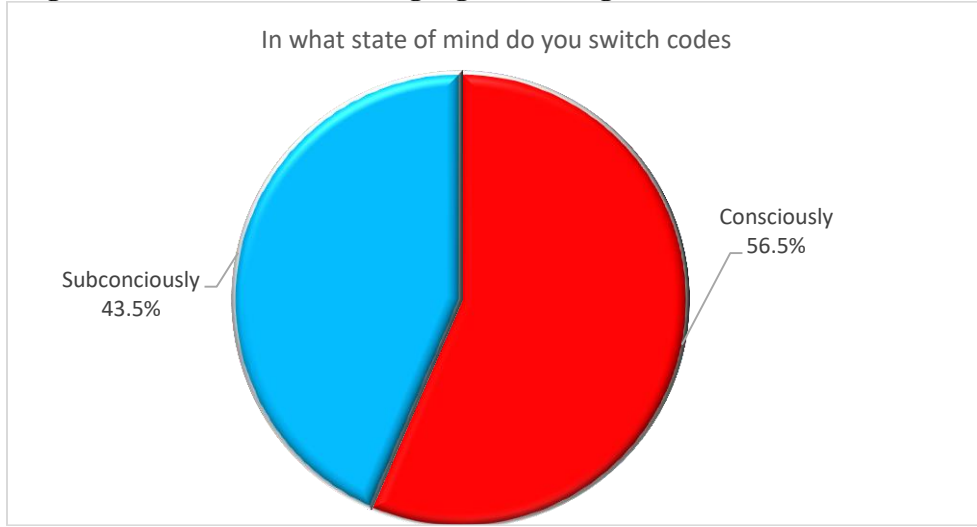
The next figure below shows how often participants are aware that they switch language during a single conversation. About 43.5% of the participants reported that they "sometimes" realize when they switch languages. On the other hand, nearly 35% stated that they realize the code switching all the time.

Figure 2. Frequency of Awareness when Participants Switch Languages



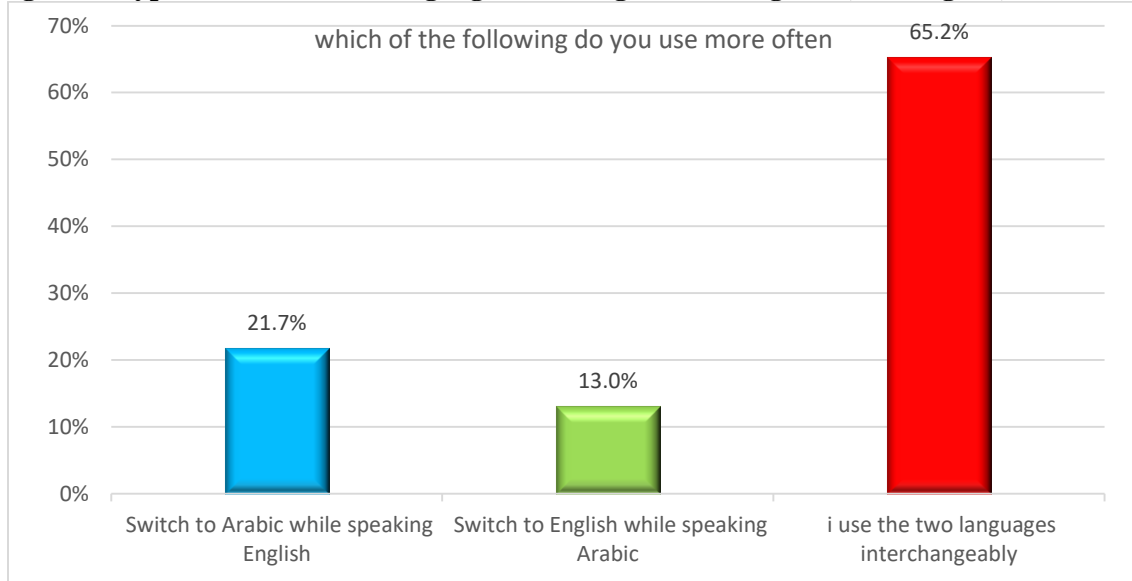
When the participants were asked whether they switch languages consciously or subconsciously, 56.5% indicated that they consciously switch languages. On the other hand, 43.5% stated that they do it subconsciously.

Figure 3. Consciousness of Language Switching: Conscious vs. Subconscious



When the participants were asked about which pattern of code-switching they usually follow, 65.2% revealed that they use the two languages (English and Arabic) interchangeably. 13% stated that they usually switch to English, whereas 21.7% reported that they switch to Arabic.

Figure 4. Typical Direction of Language Switching (Interchangeable, To English, To Arabic)



Bilinguals tend to use their languages interchangeably, as the figure below illustrates: 47.8% indicated that they switch only a few words, 26.1% the whole sentence, and 26.1% a phrase.

Figure 5. Typical Scope of Switches (Few Words, Phrase, Whole Sentence)

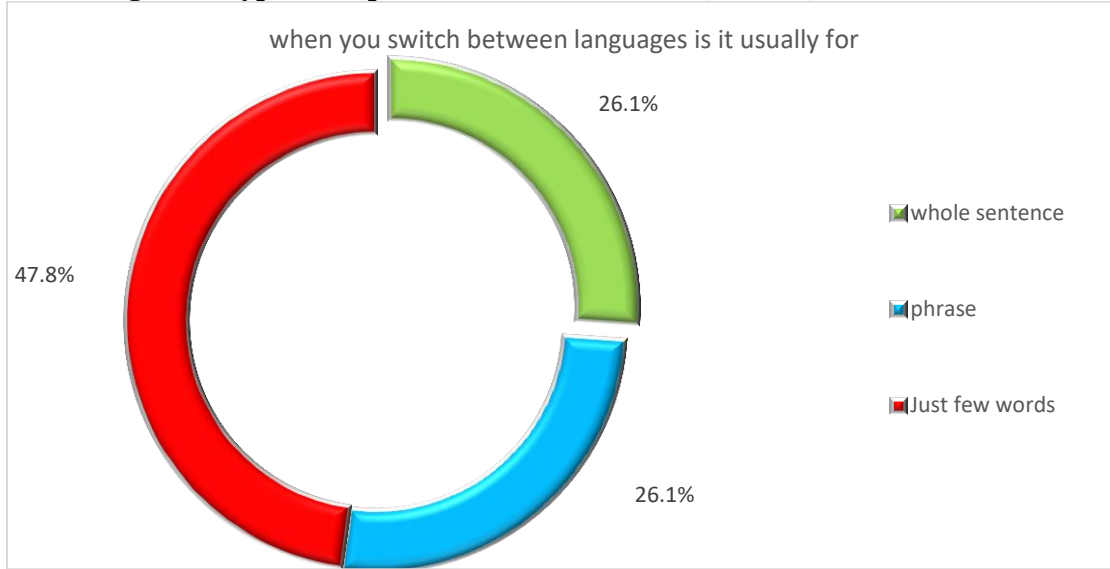
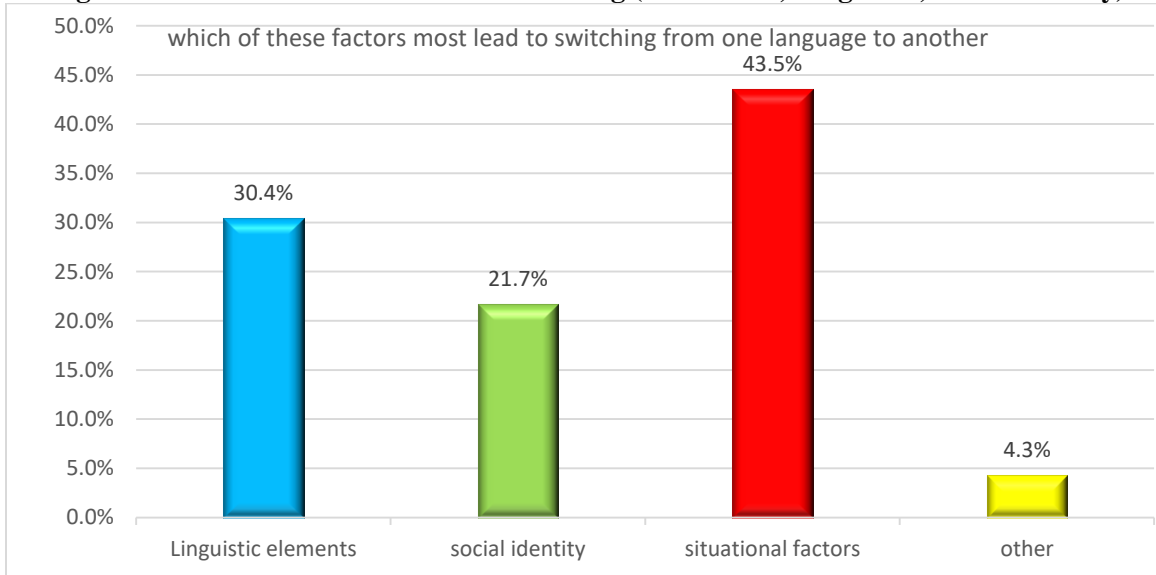


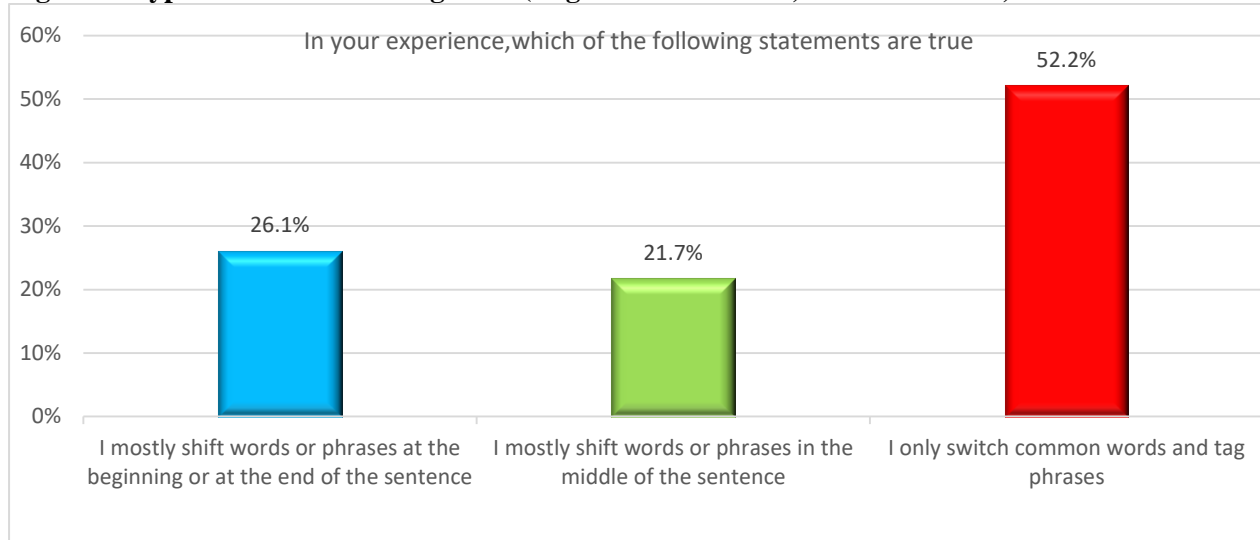
Figure 6. Perceived Causes of Code-Switching (Situational, Linguistic, Social Identity)



As shown in Figure 6, 43.5% of the participants claimed that they switch between languages because of situational factors. Roughly, 30% of the participants believe that the linguistic elements are the main factors behind code switching and 21.7% for social identity.

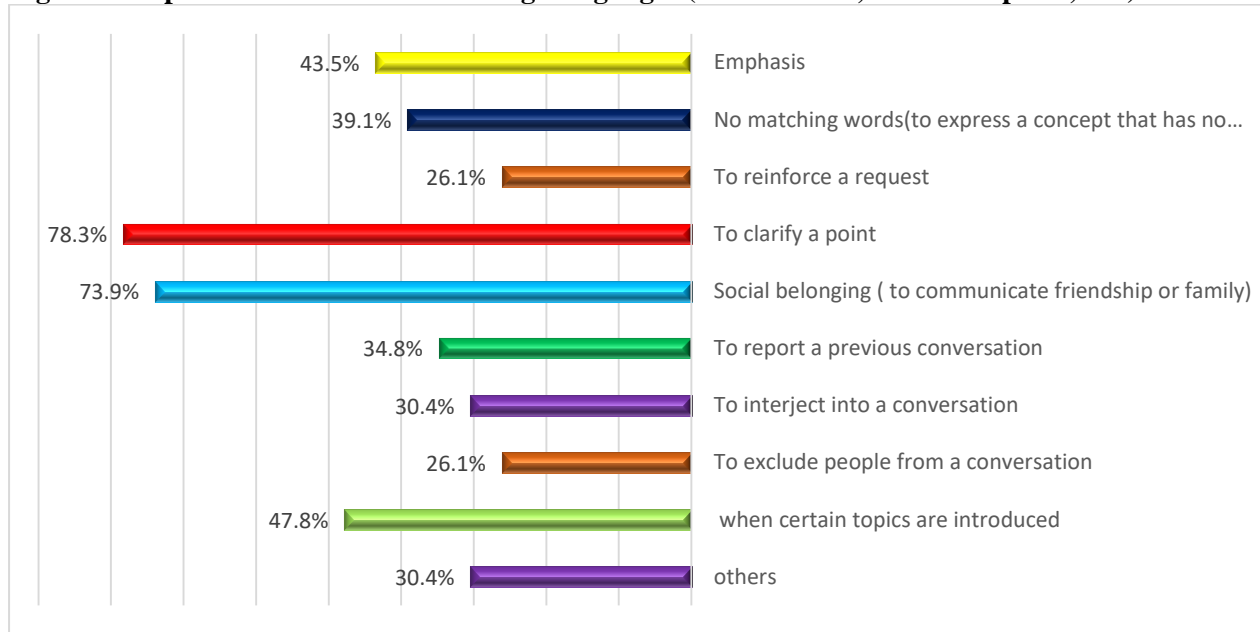
As illustrated in the next figure, the tag switches or extra-sententials, which indicate an exclamation, a tag, or a parenthetical in another language than the rest of the sentence, are the most used among the participants 52.2%, followed by inter-sententials 26.1%, which happen between sentences. Then intra-sentential code mixing 21.7%, where switches occur in the middle of a sentence.

Figure 7. Types of Code-Switching Used (Tag/Extra-sentential, Inter-sentential, Intra-sentential)



Why do people switch between languages in the course of a conversation? (more than one answer). Roughly 78% of the participants believe that people switch languages for clarification. On the other hand, about 74% said for social purposes.

Figure 8. Reported Reasons for Switching Languages (Clarification, Social Purposes, etc.)



8. Discussion

In light of the central focus of this study's issues - foreign teachers' code-switching (CS) practices and perceptions in Benghazi, Libya - the previous section reported the analysed results. To drive the discussion, this section will revisit the research questions addressed by the study aims. The section begins with a quick description of the results relevant to the specific research questions, followed by an interpretation and clarification of the results, drawing a comparison with previous research to highlight not only points of convergence but also divergence.

Q1. How does CS affect linguistic aspects across various situations?

Generally, teachers reported that CS occurs in varied situational contexts (classroom instruction, social interaction, family life) and is most often realized as short tags or single-word insertions. The findings indicated that code switching primarily functions at a micro-linguistic level as on-the-spot mediation

rather than wholesale replacement of the matrix language. Short, situational switches can temporarily alter register and pragmatics (e.g., more informal tone, changes in voice or politeness strategies) without fundamental change in the overall classroom language norms. Nonetheless, some teachers noted cross-linguistic interference (e.g., mixed grammar in multilingual homes).

Q2. To what degree does CS benefit the teaching and learning process?

Participants overwhelmingly reported that code switching has a number of pedagogical benefits as follows: clarification ($\approx 78\%$ endorsed), enhanced communication skills (82% agreed), improved ability to express thoughts ($\approx 90\%$ combined agreed/strongly agreed), and creating a realistic L2 learning environment (100% agreement across agree/strongly agree). These pieces of evidence indicate perceived short-term benefits for comprehension, classroom management, and affective engagement. In fact, the prevalence of short, strategic switches (tags, single-word glosses) suggests that CS can be an effective mediational tool that supports learning.

3. What are bilingual teachers' perspectives on the pros and cons of CS?

Teachers held broadly positive attitudes to CS as they value it for clear pedagogical and social functions. Participants cited classroom management, rapport-building, time-saving explanations, and comprehension facilitation as the main advantages of code switching. However, they were also aware of and concerned about the possible negative long-term effects if CS is used inappropriately.

The results are consistent with and extend the existing literature in several important ways. First, participants overwhelmingly viewed CS as a useful communicative and pedagogical resource rather than as a sign of deficiency. Teachers reported daily use of CS in varied situations—classroom instruction, social interaction, and family life—and acknowledged that even brief switches (single words or tags) can ease communication, build rapport, and boost student confidence. These results corroborate large-scale and context-specific studies (Hall & Cook, 2012; Bahous et al., 2014; Zainil & Arsyad, 2021) showing that teachers worldwide rely on L1 strategically to clarify meaning, manage the classroom, and strengthen affective bonds.

Second, the patterns and functions of CS in this study are compatible with well-established functional classifications (e.g., Ferguson 2009; Wardhaugh 1992, 2014). Participants most frequently reported tag/extra-sentential switches and brief intra-utterance items rather than wholesale language replacement, consistent with the questionnaire finding that many switches involve only a few words (47.8%) or short phrases (26.1%), while whole-sentence switches were less common (26.1%). Teachers' preferred CS types and scopes point to CS functioning primarily as a micro-level mediation tool. This micro-use pattern supports the Matrix Language Frame view (Meyer-Scotton, 2006) in which English frequently operates as the matrix language while the L1 plays an embedded, support role.

Third, the data reveal an interesting mix of conscious and habitual use. While 56.5% of respondents reported conscious switching and interviewees described deliberate pedagogical uses (clarification, simplified explanation, instructions), other evidence—both questionnaire percentages and interview comments about subconscious or automatic short repetitions—indicates that some CS behavior is routinized. This mirrors findings from Bahous et al. (2014) and Zainil & Arsyad (2021), where teachers often used more L1 than they believed or realized.

Fourth, teachers attributed multiple causes to switching. The situational factors were most frequently cited (43.5%), followed by linguistic needs and social identity concerns. This indicates that code switching is a contextually responsive practice. This finding is consistent with Wardhaugh's (1992, 2014) situational vs. metaphorical distinction. It also suggests that teachers adapt language choices dynamically to interactions, task demands, and interlocutor needs. Importantly, clarification emerged as the dominant reported motive ($\approx 78\%$), with social functions close behind ($\approx 74\%$), which reaffirms the dual pedagogical–interactional nature of classroom CS.

On the other hand, concerns about code switching's negative outcomes and impacts were mentioned. In this aspect, some participants mentioned possible interference across languages (e.g., mixing grammatical structures in multilingual homes) and emphasized a controlled use of code switching. This finding supports studies that were conducted by Cheng (2013) and Grant & Nguyen (2017), who emphasize selective, intentional use of L1. In addition, questionnaire responses (e.g., substantial agreement that CS can intermingle L1 and L2 concepts) showed teachers' awareness of both benefits and risks.

9. Limitations

Each study has its own limitations, especially regarding methodology, context, timeframe, and participants. This current study is not an exception, and its findings must be evaluated in light of certain limitations. One of these limitations is generalizability; this study was conducted on a sample of only one city (Benghazi), which may not reflect the full image in the rest of Libya and affect the accuracy of the generalization. Therefore, results may not be generalized to Libyan teachers, other regions, or different institutional contexts. In addition, self-report instruments (interviews and questionnaires) are vulnerable to awareness gaps (teachers may under- or over-estimate their L1 use) and social desirability bias. Although the current study provides descriptive and attitudinal evidence, it does not measure CS's direct impact on student learning gains or long-term L2 development. Therefore, future research is needed to provide details with regard to the effectiveness of CS on students' learning and the educational process.

10. Conclusion

It can be argued that, based on the findings, code switching is a conscious, functional, and beneficial tool that facilitates both language learning and social integration in a foreign environment. Language teachers should be encouraged to use CS strategically to accommodate specific classroom needs. In addition, code switching can be a useful tool for building student confidence and relationships. In view of these considerations, future research is needed to better support bilingual educators.

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