

Exploring the Role of Teacher Perceptions on Code-Switching and Student Engagement in Bilingual English Classrooms : A Case Study of Elementary School

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1. Introduction

The way that teachers view code-switching in bilingual English classes has a significant impact on how engaged students are and how well they learn overall. In bilingual education, code-switching the alternating use of two or more languages in a classroom has gained a lot of attention, especially in settings where English is taught as a foreign language. For students learning a second language, code-switching can be a cognitive and communicative ability that significantly aids in filling in linguistic gaps and fostering deeper comprehension. Lee (2016) added that code-switching can assist students' language learning needs. Mochacha (2020) claims that it aids students in achieving a variety of goals, including enhancing methods and approaches to make assignments easier to understand. Code-switching is useful for topic explanation, classroom management, and better communication (Ufuk Ataş, 2021).

The teacher's perception can significantly influence the dynamics of code-switching and its effect on student participation in bilingual English classes. Code-switching can boost student engagement in a bilingual classroom by streamlining instruction, lowering anxiety, and promoting involvement. In order to promote student involvement in bilingual classrooms, it is crucial to comprehend how teachers perceive code-switching, since this might affect both the learning environment and the language confidence of the students. Although there have been numerous studies on the extent of code-switching by learners and preceptors in particular, very few of these studies have included preceptor opinions on the subject, as they may have differing views on the pedagogical function of code-switching and the needs it can meet in the classroom.

This study aims to explore the nature of teachers' perceptions regarding code-switching and the tangible impacts these perceptions have on students' behavior, motivation, and academic performance. The research will offer important insights into the real-world uses of code-switching and its consequences for creating a stimulating, bilingual learning environment by concentrating on an elementary school.

2. Literature review

(1) Teacher's Perspective on Code-switching

Teachers use code-switching to make the material more approachable and to aid students in understanding the foreign language (Puspawati, 2018). Code-switching is a strategy for behavior control, classroom management, and preserving the class's flow (Mugla, 2005; Tien, 2009). Additionally, the method aids in capturing students' focus and enhances their involvement (Fhitri, 2017). Karakaya & Dikilitaş (2020) found that EFL teachers consider code-switching a useful teaching and social interaction technique. Beyond the advantages of instruction, code-switching reduces pupils' anxiety, improves involvement increases confidence and drive, particularly in those who have trouble understanding or expressing themselves in English. To support English language acquisition, instructors must create a setting that is so comfortable. Code-switching in multilingual ESL contexts can support social and emotional growth and improve linguistic cognitive processes; it can also generate educational opportunities that will enhance the second language acquisition of English (Yaccob et al., 2023). Similarly, Alnefaie & Gupta (2024) emphasizes the social and cognitive advantages of code-switching, indicating that teachers' positive attitudes about the activity are influenced by their prior experiences as language learners, but also warning that an excessive dependence on the practice may impede the development of language competency. The study by Gamelo & Raymundo (2024) further explores the relationship between classroom conduct and code-switching, demonstrating that both educators and learners view it as helpful for understanding courses and upholding order, therefore creating a dynamic learning environment. Abeywickrama (2023) offers a more nuanced perspective, pointing out that although code-switching facilitates comprehension of the material, it does not always enhance pupils' language proficiency in speaking or writing. Altalhi, (2024) discovered that opinions on code-switching differ according to the linguistic skill levels of students. The majority of teachers and students have a favorable opinion of it, although a desire for less L1 use in the classroom is associated with better proficiency. Furthermore, to improve students' English language ability, teachers can foster a more inclusive learning environment by utilizing their first languages to build rapport, explain ideas, and offer emotional support (Sastra & Adriyanti, 2022). Code-switching, according to this research, is essential to bilingual English instruction because it strikes a balance between language acquisition and engagement.

(2) Teacher perceptions of code-switching as an instructional strategy

Language objectives, cultural background, and pedagogical effectiveness are some of the variables that influence teachers' opinions on code-switching as a teaching technique. The views of pre-service teachers discovered that the majority of them view code-switching favorably, particularly for enhancing multilingual competencies. However, they are nonetheless wary of possible setbacks in developing English fluency Balilla et al. (2024). Wedananta (2020) found that teachers frequently employ code-switching to promote intercultural understanding, especially when articulating culturally complex concepts that lend themselves to translation in her English class. According to Makena & Mpahla (2022) English teachers in South Africa see code-switching as a helpful strategy for helping multilingual pupils understand complex ideas and promoting linguistic diversity. Enhanced these benefits by finding that code-switching can lower language anxiety in L2 learners and promote a relaxed learning environment in the classroom. Khan et al. (2022). Mangila (2020) emphasized how code-switching helps students and teachers bridge cultural expressions during encounters, highlighting its significance in promoting cultural identification and connection. These findings demonstrate that worries about code-switching's impact on language immersion are still pertinent, even though educators generally see it as advantageous for language comprehension and cultural involvement.

(3) Code-switching and Student Engagement

"Code-switching," the practice of alternating between languages throughout a single discourse or conversation, is increasingly recognized as an effective teaching method in language classes, especially in multilingual settings. By improving understanding, confidence, and interest in the learning process, code-switching the practice of moving between languages in educational settings has demonstrated substantial benefits for student engagement.

According to research on bilingual education, code-switching in language classes, like English for Math, not only helps students express difficult concepts but also reduces their anxiety related to language competency, which increases their academic engagement (Cesaria, et al., 2024). Researchers have found that code-switching-based math instruction increases student engagement by boosting enthusiasm and attention, especially when tag-switching and inter-sentential switching are used strategically these strategies are linked to increased confidence and experience in learning environments (Manalo, 2023). Similarly, Improved student engagement is demonstrated by the

instructional use of code-switching in non-English major classrooms, as students feel more competent and inclined to participate in class discussions when the language options match their backgrounds and comprehension levels (Lestariningsih, 2019). In a Bruneian classroom, By promoting peer interactions through particular linguistic functions like emphasis and clarification, code-switching promotes bilingual competency and knowledge transmission (Hamdan, 2023). According to Swedish educators, who increasingly see code-switching as a useful communicative tool despite traditional monolingual standards, this pedagogical shift is in line with larger educational goals to accommodate multilingual realities and benefit from students' full linguistic repertoire (Gustavsson & Anastasia, 2019). Overall, these findings highlight that code-switching, when strategically integrated, can enhance student engagement by providing linguistic flexibility, improving comprehension, and fostering a more inclusive and interactive learning environment.

3. Conclusion

The study emphasizes how crucial instructor perceptions are when introducing code-switching in bilingual English classes. Teachers see it as a tool for creating an inclusive learning environment and bridging linguistic disparities. This method improves academic engagement and cultural competency while lowering anxiety and assisting students in understanding difficult topics. However, issues with an excessive reliance on the use of one's native tongue must be addressed. Promoting linguistic growth and diversity should be the main goal of professional development programs.

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