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Classroom Code- switching in Arabic Context: A Review Study

Mohamed Milad Abdussalam Adriosh

Department of English Language , Faculty of Arts, Alasmarya Islamic University AIU , Libya

A B S T R A C T

Solid theoretical grounds for First Language (L1) use in Second Language (L2) classes have been established over the past three decades. Most of these arguments are based on the assumption that L1 use can enhance L2 teaching and acquisition. Recently, several studies have been conducted to support these theoretical arguments in different contexts, including the Arabic context, where Arabic is the mother tongue of teachers and learners. The present study aims for an in-depth review of the research on classroom code-switching (CS) in the Arabic context during the past three decades. It attempts to identify the most common research areas on classroom CS in the Arabic context. The systematic review approach was adopted for this study. The conclusion drawn for the present review revealed that research on classroom CS in the Arabic context needs to be more extensive and covers only some geographical contexts. The results also revealed that the research on classroom CS in the Arabic context focused on three common research areas. These areas are "Perceptions of Classroom Participants OF Classroom CS", "Functions of Teachers' and Students' CS", and "Reasons for Classroom CS". However, more research needs to be done to measure the effects of classroom CS on learning and teaching English as a foreign language.

التبديل اللغوي داخل الفصول الدراسية في الحالة العربية: دراسة مرجعية

محمد ميلاد ادريوش

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية الآداب، الجامعة الأسمرية الإسلامية، ليبيا

الملخص

خلال العقود الثلاثة الماضية، تكونت أسس نظرية قوية لصالح استخدام اللغة الأولى في فصول تدريس اللغة الثانية. تعتمد معظم هذه الحجج على افتراض أن استخدام اللغة الأولى يمكن أن يعزز تعلم اللغة الثانية واكتسابها. وقد أجريت مؤخرًا العديد من الدراسات لدعم هذه الأسس النظرية في أوساط مختلفة، بما في ذلك الوسط العربي، حيث تعد اللغة العربية هي اللغة الأم للمعلمين والمتعلمين. تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى إجراء مراجعة متعمقة للأبحاث المتعلقة بالتبديل اللغوي داخل الفصول الدراسية في الحالة العربية خلال العقود الثلاثة الماضية. وتحاول الدراسة تحديد مجالات البحث الأكثر شيوعًا حول ظاهرة التبديل اللغوي في الفصول الدراسية في الحالة العربية. اعتمدت الدراسة منهج المراجعة المنهجية في جمع و تحليل البيانات و كشفت الاستنتاجات التي تم التوصل إليها أن البحث في ظاهرة التبديل اللغوي داخل الفصول الدراسية في الحالة العربية يحتاج إلى أن يكون أكثر شمولاً وأنه يغطي فقط بعض المناطق الجغرافية . وكشفت النتائج أيضًا أن الدراسات البحثية حول ظاهرة التبديل اللغوي داخل الفصول الدراسية فيالحالة العربية ركزت على ثلاثة مجالات بحثية مشتركة هي :(دراسة وجهات نظر الطلاب و المعلمين حول ظاهرة التبديل اللغوي) و(وظائف التبديل اللغوي للمعلمين والطلاب) و(أسباب التبديل اللغوي داخل الفصول الدراسية). و خلصت الدراسة إلى وجود حاجة إلى إجراء المزيد من الأبحاث لقياس تأثير ظاهرة التبديل اللغوي داخل الفصول الدراسية على تعلم وتعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

*Corresponding author:
E-mail addresses: adriosh2014@gmail.com

Introduction

Since the nineteenth century, the use of the first language (L1) in second language (L2) classrooms has been a contentious issue (Hall & Cook, 2012). However, there has been growing interest in this topic over the last three decades. Many scholars have investigated this issue from an educational (Levine, 2011) or sociolinguistic (Auer, 1988) perspectives. Much research has been done on classroom code-switching (CS) in many geographical contexts, including the Arabic context, where Arabic is the learners' first language (L1).

Globally, the review of the literature showed that much research have been done on the topic of CS in the classroom from diverse perspectives. However, the most prevalent aspects were the functions and practicality of classroom CS (e.g. Adriosh & Razı, 2019), the reasons for classroom CS (e.g. Grant & Nguyen, 2017)), and the classroom participants' attitudes towards classroom CS (e.g. Horasan, 2014).

Although no explicit restrictions prohibit the use of L1 in L2 classrooms in many Arabic education systems, administrators and some practitioners in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) have a general prejudice towards using L1 in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). English is not extensively used as a foreign language in the daily life of many Arabic speakers. Therefore, the language classroom is viewed as the only chance for students' L2 practice. Nonetheless, an observer of the status quo of learners' use of their original language (Arabic) in L2 classrooms will detect the existence of L1 (Arabic) in various forms. These forms can be categorized as translation, translanguaging, code-switching by teachers and students, and other categories.

The present study aims to systematically review the research paradigms and approaches to classroom code-switching in the Arabic context, where Arabic language is the classroom participants' mother tongue. It attempts to uncover the areas of the main focus of the research of classroom CS in the Arabic context. Consequently, it contributes to identifying the areas and topics with less interest that need more focus on research. Consequently, it will help direct future research to such topics to fill the gap of research in these topics and aspects of classroom CS research.

Related Terminology

The term "code-switching" was coined by Haugen (1950), who viewed it as an unusual incidence in which speakers of two languages incorporate elements of one language into the other. According to Haugen (1950), speakers may rapidly switch from one language to another but speak only one language at any given time. He viewed incorporating some elements from one language into another as an alternation of the second language, not a blending of the two.

Zentella (1981) states that the primary challenge in bilingualism research is the phenomenon of "code-switching". Bilinguals utilize two or more languages interchangeably in the same speech. Researchers in the field have given a variety of definitions for the phenomenon of code-switching. Zentella (1981) describes code-switching as: "The ability of bilinguals to alternate between the languages in their linguistic repertoire is often referred to as code-switching" (P. 109). Gumperz (1982), on the other hand, explains that code-switching is "the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems" (p.59). Auer (1984) also defines codeswitching as "the alternating use of more than one language" (p. 1). In addition, Myers-Scotton (1997) and Heller (2010) assert that code-switching involves using various languages inside a single discussion.

Code-switching, frequently spelt as "code-switching", is the process of shifting from one linguistic code, dialect, or language to another. Within the field of "bilingualism", code-switching is one area that has captivated the researchers' attention for years. Based on the evidence provided by linguistics and language behaviour, it was discovered that several articles on code-switching had been published in nearly all fields of linguistics. As stated by Nilep (2006), many studies on "code-switching" are primarily concerned with the morphology or syntactic limits on language shift. Most studies on Second Language Acquisition (SLA) typically refer to code-switching as the "Cognitive-Linguistic Capacities" of bilingual speakers or language learners. Sometimes, it refers to techniques in which students use multiple languages in the classroom. This scenario is described by Nilep (2006) as the use of "Language Diversity" as a synonym for "code."

Language Classroom CS

Like other bilingual environments, in language classrooms, where L2 is taught or used as the language of instruction, code-switching is used by the classroom community, teacher and students for diverse reasons and functions. Even though L1 use in L2 classrooms has been avoided and rejected by many scholars and practitioners due to the failure of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) as a teaching method, many scholars and linguists have recently called for a reconsideration of specific axiomatic issues relating to the role of L1 in L2 classrooms. One of these concerns is the inevitable existence of L1 in the L2 bilingual classrooms that promote classroom code-switching for different functions and reasons.

Macaro (2005) drew parallels between code-switching in naturalistic speech and classroom discourse. Macaro (2005) explains that the first arises because the speaker thinks communicating via switching codes is more suitable than maintaining the same language for linguistic and cultural contexts. It occurs frequently and is widespread in multilingual communities. Conversely, the second takes place in the Second Language (L2) classroom, where, following contemporary language teaching methods, teachers seek to make the environment resemble the real world. Then, it is remarkable, according to Macaro (2005), that there are diverse attitudes towards code-switching in these two linked discourses. In the naturalistic discourse, it is viewed as an asset and an additional vital resource for bilinguals. However, many consider it neither an asset nor a valuable addition for language learners.

CS in the classroom is distinct from CS in natural discourses. The type of the activity or task is directly tied to choice of the code-switching in the language classroom. In the school setting, as an educational institution, teachers aim to teach and students aim learn and acquire a second/foreign language, such as English. The type of communication, and whether L1 should be used or not, is influenced by such situation (Macaro,2005). However, CS appears to be a standard component of language courses and performs multiple functions in different contexts. Both teachers and learners use classroom CS to serve pedagogic, managerial and social objectives in the classroom discourse.

Classroom Code-switching in Arabic Context

Like other linguistic contexts, much research has investigated different aspects of classroom CS in the Arabic context. The related literature indicates various approaches to the research that targeted different aspects of classroom CS. The reviewed literature revealed that many researchers were interested in the issue of using L1 in the field of L2 learning and teaching. Since English is considered a foreign language(FL) in most Arabic countries, teachers and learners commonly resort to their native language (Arabic) to overcome some linguistic constraints in the classroom. One of the most common strategies adopted for such aim is to code switch between the two available languages within their linguistic repertoire: L1 and L2.

Methodology

The systematic literature review approach was adopted for the present study. According to Mulrow(1994), the systematic review is a helpful method for assisting the researcher in determining which data are relevant and which should be discarded based on particular stated criteria. Data collection processes took place through different phases. The first phase involved navigating the different web search engines using related keywords such as: "Classroom code-switching", "Arabic context", "Using Arabic Language as L1 in L2

classrooms", and "The Role of Students' Mother tongue in Learning the Second Language in Arabic Context". In the second phase, all results found not related to the classroom CS in the Arabic context were excluded. The third step involved categorizing the reviewed studies based on the key points of each study to investigate the central topics conveyed by research on classroom CS. Finally, each categorized group was coded and given a related name based on its typical features.

Findings and Discussion

Analysis of the reviewed studies revealed some significant findings. Firstly, the classroom CS research in the Arabic context is found to be relatively small. For example, some Arabic countries need to be covered by classroom CS research. In addition, there are few studies in some Arabic counties that only cover some educational contexts. Therefore, more research is needed to comprehensively understand the status quo of the classroom CS in the Arabic context.

The analysis of the reviewed research depicted that the most common topics that granted more interest in classroom CS research can be categorized into three topics and areas. The first group included those studies on "Teachers and Students' Attitudes on Classroom CS". However, the second group focused on the "Functions of Classroom CS". Conversely, the third group addressed the "Reasons for CS in the Classroom", while the fourth comprised studies that tackled other topics and aspects of classroom CS.

Classroom Participants' Attitudes to classroom CS

Much research has been oriented to investigate the attitudes of teachers and students on classroom CS in the Arabic context. The review of the related literature shows that this topic gained the most interest among researchers in the field of classroom CS research. The issue of students' and teachers' attitudes towards the use of L1 in L2 classrooms was the most common aim among the studies conducted on the phenomenon of first language use in foreign language classrooms. Many studies (e.g. Ahmad, Radzuan & Sabboor Hussain, 2018; Al-Qaysi, 2016; Omar & Ilyas, 2018) aimed to uncover the perceptions of the classroom participants, instructors and learners towards utilizing CS inside the classroom. The results concluded that classroom participants have positive views on using CS in the classroom.

The topic of classroom participants' attitudes was investigated in different aspects. For instance, Omar and Ilyas (2018) discussed the sociolinguistic significance of classroom participants' attitudes towards CS in Saudi Arabia. Focus group and interviews were adopted to collect the data. The findings of the qualitative study revealed that the acceptability of CS and the age of the learners affect the learners' attitudes towards CS. It was also found that learners' perceptions of CS affected their academic performance and contributed to their learning and knowledge acquisition.

Al-Qaysi (2016) conducted a study to explore the students' and teachers' perceptions of CS concerning their gender, age, major and degree (for students), and academic rank and academic experience (for teachers) in Oman. The results showed that students' age, gender, principal, and degree have no significant impacts on the student's attitudes towards CS. Similarly, teachers' gender, age, academic rank and experience have no significant impact on teachers' attitudes towards CS. According to the findings, CS is seen among classroom participants as a promising and effective educational approach in higher education.

Alharbi (2019) conducted a review study on teachers' opinions on the language of instruction in Saudi Arabia. The reviewed literature indicated a contradiction between the teachers' views and actual pedagogy on the one hand and the recommended pedagogy on using the Arabic language as L1 in EFL classrooms. On the other hand, in contrast to their stated beliefs, the teachers' pragmatic decisions affect their resistance to using L2 in EFL classrooms.

More studies investigated the classroom participants' perceptions

of classroom CS concerning other aspects such as its effects (e.g. Alenezi & Kebble,2018; Alzamil, 2019; Tamtam, Gallagher, Naher & Olabi, 2013), students' proficiency level in the target language (Almohaimeed & Almurshed, 2018), its relation to the actual practice(Alsuhaibani, 2015), and affective responses and students' rational to using Arabic (L1) and English (L2) in EFL classroom. Some researchers, on the other hand, attempted to make a comparison between the Arab teachers' and students' perspectives and other adjacent classroom participants' (e.g. Orland-Barak & Yinon, 2005; Shuchi & Islam, 2016), while others opted to approach the topic from the sociocultural aspect and using Activity Theory (Machaal, 2012).

Functions of Classroom CS

In the classroom context, CS typically serves instructional, communicative, and social roles. Many studies (e.g. Adriosh & Razı, 2019; Algazo, 2023; Almulhim, 2014; Al-Nofaie,2010; Alrabah, Wu, Alotaibi & Aldaihani, 2016; Bahous, Nabhani & Bacha, 2014) attempted to identify the different functional distribution of classroom code-switching in different Arabic geographic contexts: Libya, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, and Lebanon. The vast majority of the reviewed studies that focused on the functions of classroom CS used classroom observation and teachers' and students' interviews as instruments for data collection. However, others followed the quantitative approach and used the questionnaires for data collection. The results revealed that classroom CS, either students' or teachers' CS, served different purposes and functions in different educational and geographic contexts.

In general, the results showed that the functions of code-switching in the classroom can be sorted into three types. The first type is concerned with transferring knowledge and facilitating the educational process, and it includes explanation, translation, clarification and comparison using the learners' L1. The second type, in contrast, is concerned with managing the class by the teacher, giving directions, talking about exams and various evaluation mechanisms. The third type, however, focuses on social communication in the classroom, such as expressions of encouragement and motivation, exchanging greetings, and some expressions of a unique religious and cultural nature.

Adriosh and Razı (2019) conducted an ethnographic exploratory study to identify the functions of teachers' code-switching in EFL undergraduate classrooms at Libyan universities. Six EFL university techers and twenty-four students were interviewed, along with fifteen hours of classroom observation. The results demonstrated that Arabic, the participants' first language (L1), was occasionally employed for various pedagogical and social purposes. The most common functions were Clarification, Recapitulation, Repetition, and Socialization.

Almulhim (2014) examined the functions of instructors' and students' CS in university EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia. The study also investigated the teachers' and students' attitudes regarding CS in the classroom. The qualitative study utilized interviews and video recordings to collect the data. Both instructors and students were found to have switched codes in class. However, the functions of teachers' CS are distinct from those of students. The findings revealed that teachers codeswitched for various reasons, including reiteration or translation, clarifying language, delivering directions, grasping learners' attention, classroom management, praising appropriate behaviour, and reprimanding disruptive behaviour. It was also found that teachers and students do not necessarily share the same perspectives on CS.

Alrabah et al. (2016) investigated the usage of L1, Arabic, by English teachers in Kuwaiti college classrooms. The study aims to uncover the functions of teachers' code-switching, to identify the sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, and affective factors that may have led teachers to use L1 in L2 instruction. It also aims to identify the teachers' attitudes towards using L1 in EFL classrooms. Data collected through surveys and interviews. It was found that teachers used L1, Arabic, as a teaching tool and for classroom management.

According to the teachers' reports, affective, sociolinguistic, and psycholinguistic elements had influenced their use of L1 in L2 instruction.

Algazo (2023) conducted a qualitative study to explore the viewpoints of instructors regarding the purposes of first language (L1) use in second language (L2) classrooms. Seven Jordanian EFL instructors engaged in one classroom observation with one pre-observation interview and post-observation interview. A thematic analysis approach was followed for data analysis. The findings revealed that teachers employed six functions of CS to promote teaching and learning. These functions can be listed as translating, explaining metalinguistic information, overcoming teaching problems, delivering directions, boosting motivation, and avoiding taboo phrases in the L2. The results also aided L2 policymakers, academics, and practitioners in realizing the significance of L1use in EFL classrooms.

The four studies mentioned above that hit the functions of classroom CS showed that both teachers and students used CS for different purposes. Although the researchers used various terminology to introduce these functions, they can be categorized into educational, managerial, and social functions. For example, educational purposes include Clarification, Repetition, and Recapitulation (Adriosh & Razı,2019); reiteration or translation, clarifying language, Almulhim (2014); and translating, explaining metalinguistic information, overcoming teaching problems Algazo (2023). Managerial functions, on the other hand, may comprise: delivering directions, grasping learners' attention, and classroom management Almulhim (2014). Social functions, however, can cover: praising appropriate behaviour and reprimanding disruptive behaviour Almulhim (2014); boosting motivation and avoiding taboo phrases in the L2 (Algazo,2023); socialization (Adriosh & Razı,2019).

Reasons for CS in the Classroom

Teachers and students have strategies to make teaching and learning more manageable and effective. One of these strategies is to resort to their L1 to facilitate classroom activities and promote the learning process. Teachers' and learners' CS in the classroom is seen as a strategy that classroom participants can adopt to achieve their ultimate goal or particular objectives during the class session.

Some studies sought to identify the reasons for classroom CS in Arabic contexts. Despite the overlap between functions of and reasons for CS in the classroom, some researchers focused on the proposed reasons for classroom CS in particular. The main objective of such studies was to determine why and when teachers and students resort to their L1 in L2 classrooms.

Bhooth, Azman and Ismail (2014) investigated the reasons behind using CS in EFL reading classrooms in Yemen. The findings concluded that students use L1 as a scaffolding strategy to facilitate learning. In contrast, teachers use it as a pedagogical tool to maximize classroom engagement and enhance their students' learning experience. Khresheh (2012), on the other hand, attempted to investigate why and when L1, Arabic, is used in EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia. The findings revealed that L1 (Arabic) was practiced as an eclectic method in some cases irrespective of the adopted teaching method. It was also found that the learners follow specific strategies such as substitution and literal translation to facilitate their learning process. However, some advanced learners prefer to use Arabic linguistic forms, even though they are capable to use the English equivalents as they believe that L2 forms miss the religious and cultural values of the original L1 concepts. Finally, Magid and Mugaddam (2013) addressed the role of students' CS to L1 (Arabic) in ESL classes in Sudan and Saudi Arabia. The results revealed that L1 (Arabic) had been helpful in expanding classroom interaction.

The overall findings of the above studies conclude that, in the Arabic context, both teachers and students have reasons to code-switch in the classroom. While students resort to their L1 as a

scaffolding strategy for their learning process, teachers make use of their multiple linguistic repertoires to help their students in their educational progress and development. Learners with a low level of L2 try to maintain the learning process by alternative use of their mother tongue along with the L2, including code-switching, code-mixing, and translating complicated terms. Conversely, teachers opt to use their L2 to serve some pedagogic strategies such as expanding the interaction in the classroom, maximizing students' engagement in the classroom discourse, and maintaining the learning process.

More Scopes of Classroom CS Research

In addition to the above-mentioned main topics of classroom CS, the literature review showed that some researchers addressed other related research topics. Less research attempted to examine the actual effect of classroom code-switching on the progress of the learners' achievements in learning the second language, L2. Such studies tend to adopt the experimental approach to collect the data away from the classroom participants' accounts.

Mahmoud (2012) examined the effects of using L1 (Arabic) on students' achievements in General English Classes in Saudi Arabia. The experimental study attempted to measure the effect of using L1 on students' achievements. The results were in favour of not using L1(Arabic) in English language classrooms. Another study was conducted by Al-Adnani and Elyas (2016) to examine the effects of teachers' CS on students' achievements in speaking skills in EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia. The findings indicated that the students who attended only L1 classes performed better than those who attended code-switching classes. Even though the observed sessions showed that classroom CS was for "assessing understanding" and then "translation". However, the results shown that both groups of students have positive views on classroom CS.

Youssef (2016) examined English-Cairene Arabic CS in university-level English literature teacher-led discourse in Egypt. This type of code-switching involves the simultaneous use of L1 and L2. The researcher assumed that certain verbal activities are associated with a given language during the switch and that the code-switching behaviour is a contextual cue associated with certain activities. So, both need to be mixed. The study advocates that bilinguals use a natural linguistic approach to enrich their communication in the classroom.

Albesher, Hussain, and Farid (2018) aimed to highlight the primary psychological and emotional factors that affect classroom L1 use in bilingual education for Saudi Arabian EFL adult learners. The emphasis was to consider whether using the first language in EFL classrooms negatively affects the natural and constant input of L2 or it positively reduces classroom anxiety. It was mainly found that using students' L1 speeds up the natural learning process if used judiciously to maintain the students' self-respect and positive images, and minimise the students' anxiety.

Conclusion and Implications

Recently, there has been an increasing interest among linguists and language practitioners in the debatable issue of using L1 in L2 classrooms in many geographical contexts around the globe. This study reviewed the recent literature on the trends and directions of classroom code-switching research in the Arabic context, where the Arabic language is the first language of students and teachers. The systematic review study aims to investigate the research on classroom CS to identify the most common scopes of research on classroom CS.

The results showed that the studies conducted on classroom CS in the Arab context are still limited and need more research. The findings also revealed that the research on classroom CS was directed to address three main topics: examining the learners' and teachers' attitudes on the use of the L1 within the L2 classes, the functions of classroom CS, and the reasons and motives of both students and teachers to adopt CS in the classroom. Additionally, some studies dealt with other topics, such as the effects of classroom CS on enhancing the educational process and promoting a suitable

environment for the language classroom.

The vast majority of the reviewed studies agree that both teachers and learners have a favourable view of classroom CS and perceive it as an inevitable phenomenon that helps to improve communication between learners and teachers in the classroom and assists learners in increasing their level of language proficiency. In contrast, it helps teachers manage the classroom and efficiently and effectively transmit knowledge to the students efficiently and effectively.

The literature review also showed that classroom CS serves several functions on the pedagogic levels, classroom management, and social dimensions. Pedagogically, CS in the classroom helps both the teacher and the students improve their performance and maintain language communication. On the other hand, teachers use CS in the classroom to ensure good classroom management', give directions to students, and motivate and encourage them via L1. Socially, teachers and learners prefer to exchange their social communication and cultural and religious expressions with particular great values using their native language, thus resorting to CS in the classroom.

It was also found that teachers and learners have their reasons for code-switching between the two available languages in the classroom. For example, teachers code-switch in the classroom for pedagogic reasons to assist in conveying knowledge to the students and facilitate the explanation of the more complicated linguistic structures. On the other hand, students resorted to CS in the classroom to maintain linguistic communication and reduce classroom anxiety.

Based on the review results, many significant implications can be concluded. Firstly, more research is needed on classroom CS to cover more geographical and educational aspects in the Arabic context. Secondly, future research should investigate the effectiveness of classroom CS on learning a second language. This can be achieved by focusing more on the experimental approaches to collect and analyse the data. Finally, Teachers should be qualified for the optimal use of language switching in the classroom through qualifying courses during the service so that the best use is made of the presence of the first language in addition to the second language within the EFL classes Arab societies.

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