ARTICLE

Code-Switching in Multilingual Classrooms: A Bridge or a Barrier to Language Proficiency?

Jashlyn Bardinas ⓘ *, Shinjane Campos* ⓘ *, Kimberlie Tacang* ⓘ *, Joemar T. Minoza* * ⓘ

College of Education, Cebu Technological University, Consolacion Campus, Consolacion 6001, Philippines

ABSTRACT

This literature review examines recent studies on code-switching in multilingual classrooms and its impact on students' language proficiency. This review analyzed 21 peer-reviewed sources from 2020 to 2025, organized chronologically and thematically. Findings show that strategic code-switching enhances engagement, comprehension, and confidence, making it a helpful scaffold in second language (L2) learning. However, excessive use may hinder language development by fostering dependency on the first language (L1), limiting L2 exposure, and increasing anxiety. While both positive and negative effects are observed, the review concludes that code-switching is most effective when used intentionally. It emphasizes the need for balanced teaching strategies and further long-term research to guide effective language instruction in multilingual settings. Future studies should monitor students' real language skill development over time, both with and without code-switching, according to this review article. The language outcomes of children subjected to strategic code-switching versus English-only education could be compared using experimental or quasi-experimental methodologies. Similarly, a more thorough understanding of the long-term effects of code-switching can be obtained by combining test results, classroom observations, and interviews using mixed-method

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:
Joemar T. Minoza, College of Education, Cebu Technological University, Consolacion Campus, Consolacion 6001, Philippines; Email: joemar.minoza@ctu.edu.ph

approaches. Additionally, case studies from different fields and grade levels can be used to ascertain how code-switching functions in a variety of learner groups and circumstances. Research could also examine educational frameworks or models to gradually reduce reliance on L1 without sacrificing comprehension or interest.

Keywords: Code-Switching; Language Proficiency; Multilingual Classrooms; L1 and L2 Use in Language Learning; Second Language Acquisition

1. Introduction

Language is crucial in education, acting both as a means of instruction and as a tool for building knowledge and enhancing understanding (Green and Wei [1]). In multilingual classrooms, where both students and teachers often utilize several languages, code-switching is a common linguistic practice wherein speakers alternate between two or more languages during a discussion or dialogue (Lin [2]). This phenomenon is particularly evident in contexts where English functions as a second language (ESL), with both teachers and students often alternating between languages to facilitate communication and enhance the learning process (Domede [3]). Code-switching has evolved as a dynamic aspect of classroom interactions, transforming students' cognitive and social experiences as well as their language environment. Due to its prevalence, code-switching raises important considerations about how it affects students' language proficiency.

Views on code-switching in language education vary, with numerous studies emphasizing both the advantages and disadvantages of this method. On one hand, code-switching is seen as an effective educational method that enhances understanding, encourages participation, and aids students in acquiring a new language. On the other hand, some argue that regular code-switching might restrict students' access to the second language (L2), consequently reducing their language proficiency and fluency as time progresses. For example, Kumar et al. [4] found that individuals' perceptions of code-switching differ, with some perceiving it favorably as a means to enhance understanding and involvement, while others consider it an obstacle to thorough language acquisition. Likewise, Dhungana cited in Garcines and Alvarez [5], suggested that frequent code-switching between L1 and L2 might hinder English language acquisition by reducing students' exposure to the intended language. Nonetheless, they also recognized that code-switching can enhance understanding and serve as an essential link for learners having difficulty understanding new ideas in a second language.

Conversely, some scholars, such as Macaro [6], argue that code-switching can be an effective teaching method when used strategically. It can foster a supportive learning atmosphere, bridge complex linguistic concepts, and keep students interested throughout the learning process. In fact, research suggests that code-switching can be an important foundation for learners transitioning from their native language (L1) to full immersion in a second language (Swain and Lapkin [7]). According to García and Wei [8], code-switching allows learners to engage in a more dynamic and engaged classroom experience, which improves cognitive development and classroom involvement.

Despite current rules in many schools that favor English-only instruction, students and teachers continue to employ code-switching, both intentionally and unconsciously, to assist clearer knowledge and emotional comfort in the classroom. Borlongan [9] discovered that most English language teachers code-switched regularly, breaking the 'English-only' regulation in English-dominated classrooms. This continuous practice demonstrates the practical benefits of code-switching as a tool for closing understanding gaps and promoting learner inclusion. Therefore, when employed carefully and effectively, code-switching acts as a bridge rather than a barrier to language proficiency in multilingual classrooms.

This literature review aims to examine the impact of code-switching on students' language performance in the classroom setting. Drawing on recent studies published between 2020 and 2025, the review assesses both the advantages and potential drawbacks of this linguistic strategy. The goal is to determine whether code-switching functions as a valuable support mechanism in language learning or whether it poses challenges to full language acquisition. Ultimately, this review seeks to provide educators with in-

formed insights and practical recommendations for effectively balancing code-switching with immersive language instruction to improve student language development.

The scope of this review centers on examining code-switching as either a bridge or a barrier to language proficiency. It examines both perspectives on how code-switching works in multilingual classrooms, particularly in ESL contexts, and evaluates the implications for language teaching practices.

2. Methodology

This literature review employed a chrono-thematic method to investigate the impact of code-switching on language proficiency in multilingual classrooms. The chronological aspect followed the evolution of scholarly perspectives on code-switching, from foundational works to more recent studies, to better understand how attitudes on this linguistic practice have evolved over time. The thematic aspect divided the literature into two major themes: (1) code-switching as a bridge to language learning, emphasizing its benefits such as enhancing learner engagement, improving comprehension, and boosting confidence; and (2) code-switching as a barrier to language proficiency, particularly in terms of dependency on the first language (L1), exposure to the target language (L2), and anxiety among learners. To ensure relevance and academic credibility, inclusion criteria were clearly stated. The review covered studies published between 2000 and 2025, focusing on peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and credible research publications. Selected works focused specifically on code-switching in multilingual classroom settings and directly addressed its impact on students' language proficiency. Sources were retrieved from well-established academic databases, including Google Scholar, ERIC, JSTOR, and ResearchGate, using keywords such as *"code-switching," "multilingual classrooms," "language proficiency," "second language acquisition,"* and *"L1 and L2 use in language learning."*

2.1. Methodological Trends in Code-Switching

Across the reviewed literature, researchers employed a range of methodological designs, with qualitative approaches dominating studies from 2020 to 2025. These included classroom observations, discourse analyses, and semi-structured interviews to capture the experiences of teachers and learners (e.g., Villanueva and Gamiao [10]; Wedananta [11]). Mixed-methods studies also emerged, combining surveys, questionnaires, and performance tests to assess the linguistic impact of code-switching on comprehension, engagement, and confidence (e.g., Ahmad and Jusoff[12]; Ng and Gurdarshan Singh [13]).

Some studies adopted quasi-experimental or experimental designs to compare students exposed to strategic code-switching versus English-only instruction (e.g., Minoza et al. [14]), while others relied on naturalistic classroom observations to explore spontaneous code-switching in real learning contexts (e.g., Hafid and Margana [15]; Flores and Balmeo [16]. A smaller number of studies employed corpus-based analyses, examining lexical and syntactic patterns in learners' code-switching.

This diversity of methods highlights both the strengths and limitations of current research. While qualitative studies provide rich, contextual insights, and mixed-methods designs combine subjective experiences with measurable outcomes, many studies are limited by short-term observations, small sample sizes, and reliance on self-reported data. These gaps underscore the need for longitudinal, experimental, and cross-context research to strengthen the evidence base for the pedagogical use of code-switching in multilingual classrooms.

2.2. Characteristics of Learners in Code-Switching

Most reviewed studies focused on low- to mid-proficiency learners, particularly in secondary and higher education contexts (e.g., Altun [17]; Minoza et al. [14]). Primary school learners and students with advanced proficiency were examined in only a few studies (e.g., Kumari [18]; Wedananta [11]), which limits the generalizability of claims regarding the long-term effects of code-switching.

In terms of linguistic backgrounds, the majority of participants were bilingual or multilingual learners, using a combination of a first language (L1) and a second/foreign language (L2) in classroom settings. Only a small subset of studies included heritage language learners who were balancing home language use with formal

instruction in L2 (e.g., Ng and Gurdarshan Gurdarshan Singh [13]).

Regarding learning contexts, most studies took place in ESL (English as a Second Language) settings, with students exposed to English in formal educational environments, while EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts were less frequently represented. This distribution suggests that findings are most applicable to learners who regularly use English in educational or immersive environments, and may not fully extend to contexts where English exposure is limited.

Overall, the learner characteristics in the reviewed studies provide insight into the populations for which code-switching strategies are most effective, while highlighting gaps in research on early learners, advanced L2 students, and heritage language contexts.

3. Discussion

3.1. Code-Switching as a Bridge to Language Proficiency

Code-switching (CS) has emerged as a useful tool in multilingual classrooms, particularly in supporting language development among students with limited proficiency in the target language. Rather than acting as an obstacle, multiple studies have identified CS as a helpful strategy that promotes engagement, comprehension, and confidence (**Table 1**). These research findings emphasize how CS serves as a bridge between learners' first language (L1) and the target language (L2), allowing for smoother transitions in understanding and contributing to long-term language proficiency.

Table 1. Summary of Studies on Code-Switching As a Bridge to Language Proficiency.

Source	Participants	Context	Research Method	Major Findings
de la Cruz, A. Y. (2021). Students' and teachers' attitude and reasons for code-switching, and its role in learning and second language acquisition [19].	Teachers and Students	L2 (second language) classrooms	Mixed-methods	The major findings show that both teachers and students generally view code-switching in L2 classrooms positively.
Ulfah, N. M. et al., (2021). The use of code-switching by English teachers in foreign language classrooms [20].	6 English teachers	English foreign language (EFL) classroom	Descriptive qualitative method.	The findings suggest that code-switching can serve as a bridge to language proficiency when used strategically in the classroom.
Olivera, L. C. A. (2021) Code-switching in English class: A strategy in boosting learners' confidence and engagement [21].	Learner s	English classroom	Descriptive method using learner responses.	The study found that code-switching has positive effects on students' confidence and engagement during English class discussions.
Kumar et. al., (2021) Effectiveness of Code-Switching in Language Classroom in India at Primary Level: A Case of L2 Teachers' Perspectives [4].	20 language teachers	L2 (second language) classrooms	Quantitative descriptive method	The findings of the study reveal that code-switching is commonly used by teachers to interpret complex ideas, translate questions, seek confirmation, check students' understanding, and build solidarity with learners.
Minoza et al., (2024) EMI or bilingual instruction? An experimental study in the teaching of oral communication among Philippine senior high school students [14].	Senior high school students in the Philippines who are non-native speakers of English. Control group: EMI (English as Medium of Instruction) Experimental group: Bilingual instruction	Senior high school Oral Communication classes.	Quasi-experimental method.	The study found that both bilingual instruction and English as a medium of instruction (EMI) are effective in improving students' language proficiency in Oral Communication, as shown by the increase in pre-test and post-test scores.

Table 1. *Cont.*

Source	Participants	Context	Research Method	Major Findings
Villanueva, L. B., and Gamiao, B. A. (2022). Effects of code switching among college instructors and students in a Philippine classroom setting [10].	Filipino college instructors and students from Mariano Marcos State University, specifically those from the College of Teacher Education and the College of Industrial Technology.	Multilingual College classrooms in Laoag City, Philippines.	Descriptive-qualitative method.	The study found that code-switching greatly supports teaching and learning in college classrooms.
Hafid H. and Margana M. (2022) Code-Switching Practices in Multilingual Classrooms: Exploring Pedagogical Functions [15].	Teachers and students in multilingual secondary-level classrooms in Indonesia	Multilingual Indonesian secondary school classrooms where English is the primary medium of instruction.	Ethnographic case study design	The study found that code-switching serves three major pedagogical functions: helping students access and construct knowledge, supporting classroom management, and strengthening interpersonal relationships between teachers and students.
Ahmad, B. H., and Jusoff, K. (2009). Teachers' Code-Switching in Classroom Instructions for Low English Proficient Learners. English Language Teaching, 2(2), 49–55 [12].	257 low English-proficient learners enrolled in a Communication 1 proficiency course at a public university in Malaysia.	Malaysian university English language classrooms	Quantitative research method.	The study revealed that learners viewed teachers' code-switching positively because it served helpful classroom functions.
Altun, M. (2021). Code-switching in L2 classrooms: A useful strategy to reinforce learning [17].	Teachers in L2 (second language)	L2 (second language) classrooms.	Qualitative method	The study revealed that, although teachers may be hesitant to use the first language (L1) in second language (L2) classrooms, code-switching plays an important role in supporting language learning and improving proficiency. T
Bonyadi, A. et al., (2021). Teachers' Perceptions on Code-Switching in EFL Classroom Discourse [22].	Four EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers.	Multilingual EFL classroom settings.	Qualitative approach	The study found that code-switching was shown to be a practical strategy for enhancing teaching and learning
Domede, A. (2023). Code-switching as a teaching strategy in English language classrooms: Exploring students' attitudes and perceptions. Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 15(4) [3].	Students at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences-Al Musannah (UTAS-A).	English language classrooms at UTAS-A.	Qualitative method	The study found that code-switching is a practical strategy to aid comprehension, facilitate discussions, and encourage participation in English classrooms.
Wedananta, K. A. (2020). Code-switching as a translanguaging to transfer cross-cultural understanding in an English classroom: Teachers' perception. International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture, 6(1), 70–78 [11].	Seven English teachers	English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom.	Qualitative method	The study found that most teachers used inter-sentential code-switching, switching languages between sentences, deliberately for several purposes: to convey meaning effectively, make communication inclusive, improve student comprehension, emphasize meaning, and support bilingual learners.
Ghaderi, M., Moghaddam, M. M., and Ostovar-Na maghi, S. A. (2024). Code-switching in English language classrooms: Revealing teachers' strategies and motivations for effective language instruction [23].	30 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Iran.	English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Iran.	Semi-structured interviews	The study revealed that English language teachers use code-switching in EFL classrooms for several purposes. The most common reason was to avoid misunderstandings during interactions with learners.

Table 1. *Cont.*

Source	Participants	Context	Research Method	Major Findings
Shafi, S., Kazmi, S. H., and Asif, R. (2020). Benefits of code-switching in language learning classroom at University of Education Lahore. International Research Journal of Management, IT and Social Sciences, 7(1), 227–234 [24].	Language teachers and L2 learners.	Multilingual classrooms	Qualitative method	The study found that code-switching is a natural and strategic practice used by bilingual and multilingual speakers, particularly in multilingual classrooms.
Ng, Y. S. and Gurdarshan Singh A. (2024) The positive influences of code-switching on second language learning of TESL undergraduate students at a private university in Ipoh [13].	Seven TESL students enrolled in programs for two to three years at a private university in Ipoh.	ESL classrooms	Qualitative method	The study revealed that TESL students perceive code-switching as highly beneficial in learning English as a second language.
Flores, I. R. P., and Balmeo, M. C. S. (2021). Code Switching in Instruction: Pre-Service Teachers' Lived Experiences [16].	Pre-service teachers from Ramon Magsaysay Technological University.	Instructional settings where English is being taught	Qualitative method	The study found that pre-service teachers prefer to use code-switching in instruction, believing it helps capture students' interest, manage the classroom, and improve understanding of lessons.

3.2. Code-Switching Promotes Motivation and Engagement

Code-switching promotes motivation and engagement in multilingual classrooms. According to de la Cruz [19], code-switching is viewed by both teachers and students as a tool for establishing connections and mutual understanding. This idea is supported by Ulfah et al. [20] and Olivera [21], who found that code-switching encourages greater student participation by making classroom communication less intimidating. Their studies indicate that students are more likely to ask questions, participate in discussions, and take academic risks when they know that code-switching is acceptable. While these studies share a focus on the relational benefits of code-switching, their methodologies differ: de la Cruz [19] offers a dual-perspective analysis from both teachers and students, whereas Olivera [21] and Ulfah et al. [20] emphasize learner experiences.

Meanwhile, Kumar [4] adopts a more teacher-centered perspective, arguing that teachers utilize code-switching intentionally, not out of habit, but as a strategic choice to maintain student attention and highlight important points. This calls into question the idea that code-switching is reflected in poor instruction. Instead, it supports the concept that, when used effectively, code-switching can serve as a bridge between students' existing knowledge and new language content.

3.3. Code-Switching Enhances Comprehension

In terms of enhancing comprehension, several studies have emphasized the cognitive value of code-switching (CS). For instance, Minoza et al. [14] conducted a quasi-experimental study in senior high school classrooms to assess the effectiveness of bilingual education with code-switching to English as the medium of education (EMI). Their findings revealed that both EMI and bilingual education helped students improve their language proficiency and comprehension. This shows that CS can be used as a useful scaffolding. especially in situations when students are still learning basic English skills. Although the study had a solid empirical design, it focused on a single subject and student group. As a result, its conclusions may not be widely relevant to other subjects or educational settings.

Villanueva and Gamiao [10] also investigated the impacts of CS in Philippine college classrooms and discovered that both instructors and students viewed it as an effective strategy for clarifying lectures, particularly those

involving complex or abstract subject matter. Code-switching not only enhances comprehension, but also promotes inclusion and lowers communication barriers in linguistically diverse settings. Similarly, Hafid and Margana [16] observed that teachers frequently switch codes to facilitate student comprehension, maintain the flow of classroom discourse, and respond to varying levels of language proficiency. These findings support earlier claims that CS, when employed with clear instructional intent, serves as a tool for managing both learner diversity and cognitive load.

Both results demonstrate the educational value of CS in addressing differences in language and improving comprehension. However, Villanueva and Gamiao [10] centered on higher education in the Philippines, making their conclusions geographically and institutionally specific. In contrast, Hafid and Margana [16] provided extensive classroom applications with potentially more generalizable implications. Despite their contributions, both studies relied heavily on qualitative data collected from observations and participant inputs, limiting the extent to which their conclusions may be used in a variety of educational settings.

Similarly, Ahmad and Jusoff [12] discovered that teachers who code-switch strategically perform better in classrooms with low-proficiency students. This is confirmed by Altun [17], who claims that CS strengthens important vocabulary and grammatical structures, especially among students who are still developing core English skills. According to Altun [17], code-switching does not limit exposure to English; rather, it provides a foundation that gradually leads to more confident language use. Ahmad and Jusoff provided more empirical support than Altun, but their study did not assess long-term language results, raising concerns regarding the long-term effectiveness of CS in fostering complete second language acquisition.

Further corroborating these findings, Bonyadi et al. [22] found that teachers believe CS improves classroom interaction and instructional clarity, especially when used to explain difficult concepts or provide feedback. Their findings support Altun's arguments by emphasizing the communicative role of CS in improving the teacher-student relationship. Nonetheless, Bonyadi et al.'s [22] study focuses exclusively on teacher perceptions and excludes student voices and objective measurements of comprehension. This exclusion limits our ability to adequately analyze the true impact of CS on learning outcomes.

From the perspective of learners, Domede [3] discovered that students perceive CS positively since it explains instruction and reduces anxiety. Similarly, Shafi et al. [24] found that CS helps university students deal with complex or new topics. These studies emphasize the accessibility that CS provides to instruction, particularly for students who may struggle with lessons taught entirely in English. However, both studies rely on self-reported data, which may be biased, and do not explicitly assess comprehension improvement.

In addition to cognitive benefits, CS promotes cultural and contextual understanding. Wedananta [11] underlined that CS allows students to use their knowledge of language to generate meaning, which improves both comprehension and cultural involvement. This sociocultural perspective distinguishes Wedananta's work from previous studies that solely focus on linguistic outcomes. Despite this addition, the study lacks comparative or longitudinal data and does not investigate how CS might be gradually phased out to foster greater independence in L2 use.

3.4. Code-Switching Boosts Confidence

Recent studies have found that code-switching (CS) not only improves comprehension but also boosts learner confidence in applying a second language. Ghaderi et al. [23] noted that skilled teachers purposefully employ CS to connect learners' linguistic origins with teaching objectives. Their findings revealed that CS is not employed randomly, but rather as part of a purposeful teaching strategy that improves accessibility and student engagement. However, their research relied heavily on instructor perspectives without examining responses from students or monitoring outcomes, limiting the understanding of CS's impact on learners' actual performance and confidence.

Similarly, Kumari [18] investigated the usage of code-switching and code-mixing, emphasizing their importance in reducing the cognitive cost of second language acquisition. She discovered that these strategies reduce emotional barriers and make students more comfortable, promoting consistent language growth without compromising the status of the target language. While Kumari's [18] findings are consistent with those of Ghaderi et al. [23] in emphasizing the intentional and strategic use of CS, her

study lacks empirical classroom data and instead gives more theoretical reasoning, which limits its practical application.

Furthermore, Ng and Gurdarshan Singh [13] introduced a crucial psychological aspect by looking into the impact of CS on students' motivation and confidence in using English. Their study, which focused on TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) students, found that learners who were exposed to code-switching felt less frightened and more encouraged to speak English. Unlike prior studies, Ng and Singh included student input, which provided useful insights into learner impact. However, their conclusions are based on self-reported data, which may be biased and do not always reflect long-term language progress.

The pedagogical value of CS is also echoed in 2023 by Flores and Balmeo [16], who studied the lived experiences of pre-service teachers in 2023, agreeing that CS has pedagogical value. As stated by the authors, code-switching enables future educators to communicate more effectively with pupils while maintaining the flow of education. Interestingly, their thoughts suggested that code-switching was not viewed as a lack of teaching competency but rather as an adaptive method to fulfill learner requirements, especially when teaching lower-level or nervous pupils.

When compared, all four studies agree that CS plays a positive role in boosting learner confidence by reducing anxiety and supporting more inclusive instruction. However, they differ in focus and methodology. Ghaderi et al. [23]

and Kumari [18] approached the topic from the perspective of instructional planning, while Ng and Singh focused on learner impact, and Flores and Balmeo [16] examined the reflections of future educators. Despite their contributions, all studies face limitations related to scope, participant diversity, or lack of longitudinal data.

These studies examined provide solid proof that, when used strategically, code-switching promotes language learning by increasing engagement, comprehension, and learner confidence. Despite these benefits, many students continue to struggle to access and engage with content due to a lack of competency. There is a need to investigate how code-switching might be gradually phased out to avoid long-term dependency and ensure that learners eventually acquire independent usage of the target language.

3.5. Code-Switching as a Barrier to Language Proficiency

Code-switching (CS) has long been recognized as a common strategy in multilingual classrooms, frequently used to bridge comprehension and enhance learning in different linguistic situations. However, recent research suggests that excessive code-switching may hinder language ability, particularly in second language learning (**Table 2**). Specifically, studies indicate that excessive code-switching fosters dependency on the first language (L1), restricts exposure to the target language (L2), and increases anxiety among learners. These factors can collectively hinder learners' progress toward language proficiency.

Table 2. Summary of Studies on Code-Switching As a Barrier to Language Proficiency.

Source	Participants	Context	Research Method	Major Findings
Muico, E. et al., (2021). Code-Switching: A Boon or Bane in Bilingual Speakers [25].	Bilingual speakers	Bilingual speakers and language learning contexts, mainly within educational and bilingual settings.	Qualitative synthesis.	Code-switching has both beneficial and adverse effects on language learning, and effective teaching requires finding a balanced, context-sensitive approach.
de Castro, N. P., et al., (2021). The Effects of Code-switching to the Communicative Competence of 21st Century Learners: A Case Study [26].	30 HUMSS learners from Higher School ng UMak	Senior high school English speaking activities in the Philippines (21st-century learners)	Case study using standardized speaking tasks, transcription, and inter-rater evaluation	Tag-switching was the most frequent type of code-switching and was mainly used to address the lack of register; however, more frequent code-switching negatively affected learners' communicative competence. The higher the frequency of code-switching, the lower their English communicative competence was rated.

Table 2. *Cont.*

Source	Participants	Context	Research Method	Major Findings
Kasap, S. (2021). Attitude Towards the First Language and Its Effects on First Language Lexical Attrition [27].	Kurdish–Turkish bilingual young adults (initial sample: 104 university students aged 20–26; main analysis based on 10 participants selected by MTAS scores).	L1 (Kurdish) attrition among bilingual Kurdish speakers living in dominant L2 (Turkish) environments in Eastern Turkey.	Mixed-methods (quantitative MTAS scale + qualitative storytelling task and self-evaluation interviews).	Participants with lower positive attitudes toward their mother tongue used more Turkish lexical borrowings and showed greater signs of Kurdish lexical attrition, whereas those with more positive attitudes recalled more Kurdish vocabulary and demonstrated less attrition, indicating that attitude significantly influences maintaining L1 lexical knowledge.
Temesgen, A. and Hailu, E. (2022). Teachers' codeswitching in EFL classrooms: Functions and motivations [28].	Three teachers, along with their students from Sayint Secondary School.	English as a Foreign Language (EFL) secondary-school classroom in Ethiopia, focusing on teachers' code-switching practices (their functions and reasons) during English lessons.	Qualitative classroom-based study	The study found that teachers often code-switch in EFL classrooms to explain content, manage the class, and build rapport, but frequent switching can reduce students' exposure to English and limit full engagement with the language. It also shows that teacher behavior, rather than student choice, is a key source of code-switching, which can act as a barrier to L2 learning. It is based on classroom observations in a specific context and does not assess long-term effects on language proficiency.
Aparece, R. A., and Bacasmot, J. C. (2023). Analyzing the impacts of code-switching on foreign language classroom anxiety and English language problems through path analysis [29].	Senior high school students	Foreign language (English) classrooms in Davao City	Quantitative; descriptive and inferential statistics (Mean, Pearson's r, Regression Analysis, Path Analysis)	Students had high levels of foreign language classroom anxiety, moderate levels of English language problems, and high levels of code-switching. Significant positive relationships existed between classroom anxiety and English language problems, anxiety and code-switching, and code-switching and English language problems. However, code-switching did not mediate the relationship between anxiety and English language problems.

3.6. Code-Switching Fosters Dependency on the First Language

According to Muico et al. [25], excessive code-switching encourages learners to rely primarily on their first language, which can limit opportunities for developing L2 vocabulary and fluency. Their findings demonstrate that excessive use of CS could hinder learners from fully engaging with the target language. Similarly, de Castro et al. [26] discovered that reliance on code-switching had a negative influence on students' speaking and writing skills. Both results emphasize that excessive CS prevents clear and effective English communication. However, Muico et al.'s [25] conclusions are mostly based on classroom observations and instructor interviews, which may not fully capture learner viewpoints or objective competence measurements. De Castro et al.'s [26] study, while including an assessment of speaking and writing skills, is limited by a relatively small sample size and a focus on a single educational context, which may affect the generalizability of their findings.

Beyond observable dependency, research suggests that learners' *attitudes* toward their first language may intensify this reliance. Kasap [27] argues that negative or conflicted attitudes toward L1 can contribute to lexical attrition, an erosion of vocabulary over time, as learners inconsistently shift between languages. Applied to classroom code-switching, this implies that when students view their L1 as either inferior or overly comfortable, they may rely on it in ways that disrupt balanced L2 development. Negative attitudes toward L1, as discussed by Kasap [27], may exacerbate patterns of code-switching that reinforce L1 dependency and complicate the transition toward stronger L2 proficiency.

3.7. Code-Switching Restricts Exposure to the Target Language

Furthermore, Temesgen and Hailu [28] emphasize the role of teachers, arguing that regular code-switching by teachers lowers learners' consistent exposure to English. They argue that regularly switching between L1 and L2 promotes partial understanding rather than full engagement with the target language. In contrast to earlier research, this study focuses on instructor behavior rather than student preference as the source of code-switching. Temesgen and Hailu's [28] study is significant for its classroom observation approach; however, it is limited to a specific regional context and lacks long-term monitoring of students' language development to assess long-term benefits.

3.8. Code-Switching Increases Anxiety among Learners

In addition, Aparece and Bacasmot [29] provide a psychological approach, relating frequent code-switching to higher language anxiety. Their findings suggest that while students feel at ease using their native language, this comfort simultaneously reduces their confidence in speaking English, resulting in hesitation and decreased participation. It also adds an emotional dimension to the matter, as opposed to the more skill-based concerns addressed in previous studies. However, the study is mainly based on self-reported data from learners, which may be influenced by personal bias or a lack of self-awareness, and there are no objective assessments of anxiety or language proficiency.

Although code-switching may provide short-term benefits in terms of comprehension and convenience, the reviewed research suggests that excessive use may hinder long-term second language acquisition. It promotes reliance on the first language, reduces meaningful exposure to the target language, and contributes to learner anxiety. Despite these insights, current research provides limited guidance on how to transition from code-switching to full immersion in the classroom. There is also a lack of long-term studies that investigate how reduced code-switching over time affects learners' eventual language independence. Future studies should focus on how teachers can gradually phase out code-switching while still promoting students' linguistic development.

4. Conclusions

Code-switching is the practice of alternating between two or more languages within a conversation. In multilingual classrooms, particularly when English is being taught as a second language, both teachers and students regularly switch between their native language (L1) and the target language (L2) in order to facilitate communication and learning. This linguistic practice is common and serves various uses, such as clarifying difficult ideas, managing classroom dynamics, and supporting students' comprehension and confidence.

This section examines code-switching in multilingual classrooms and its impact on students' language proficiency. Findings reveal that code-switching primarily functions as a bridge toward developing language proficiency. It promotes learner engagement by fostering a more comfortable and inspiring environment, encouraging students to participate actively without worrying about making mistakes. Additionally, code-switching improves understanding by giving learners access to difficult material through references that are linguistically familiar to them. This scaffolding method helps learners progressively develop their second language skills while maintaining a connection to their first language. Furthermore, code-switching boosts confidence by reducing anxiety and providing emotional support, which promotes a more positive attitude toward language acquisition. Teachers frequently use code-switching strategically to maintain attention, explain difficult concepts, and adapt to different proficiency levels of students in the classroom. While concerns exist that code-switching may reduce exposure to the target language or increase reliance on the native language, evidence shows that, when used carefully, code-switching promotes rather than hinders the acquisition of a second language.

4.1. Limitations

Despite these insights, several gaps in the literature on code-switching remain. Many studies rely on teacher and student perceptions rather than long-term empirical data measuring actual improvements in language proficiency. This reliance on self-reported information introduces potential bias and limits confidence in whether code-switching functions as a bridge or a barrier. Research

also focuses on limited aspects of language learning, leaving essential skills such as speaking, writing, and listening underexplored. As a result, the overall impact of code-switching on comprehensive language proficiency remains unclear. Only a few studies examine code-switching over time or across different stages of language development, leaving questions about when and how it should be gradually reduced as learners' L2 proficiency grows. Furthermore, few studies have been conducted on the efficacy of code-switching at various classroom levels, such as beginner versus intermediate, limiting guidance for educators in diverse instructional contexts.

Methodological limitations, including small sample sizes, short study durations, and the lack of experimental or comparative designs, further reduce the reliability and applicability of findings. Most research is also localized, often in the Philippines, limiting its relevance to other multilingual or culturally diverse settings. Finally, many studies lack strong theoretical grounding, with few connecting findings to established models of second-language acquisition, which makes it harder to draw practical teaching implications.

4.2. Recommendations

To address these gaps, future research should conduct long-term investigations that track students' actual language proficiency progress over time, both with and without code-switching. Experimental or quasi-experimental designs could be used to compare the language outcomes of students exposed to strategic code-switching versus English-only instruction. Similarly, combining test results, classroom observations, and interviews through mixed-method designs can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the long-term effects of code-switching. Furthermore, case studies from various areas and grade levels can be used to determine how code-switching works in diverse contexts and learner groups. In order to progressively lessen dependency on L1 without compromising understanding or engagement, research should also look into instructional frameworks or models.

Understanding the role of code-switching in multilingual classrooms is essential for creating inclusive, effective language teaching strategies. Recognizing code-switching as a bridge to achieving language proficiency encourages

educators to value students' linguistic abilities and cultural backgrounds. This approach fosters a supportive learning atmosphere where learners can thrive and progressively gain confidence and competence in the target language. Given the increasing linguistic diversity in education around the globe, gaining further insight into the strategic application of code-switching is crucial for enhancing language education policy and practice.

Author Contributions

Funding

Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement

Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest

References

[1] Green, D.W., Wei, L., 2014. A Control Process Model of Code-Switching. Language, Cognition and Neuro-

science. 29(4), 499–511. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/23273798.2014.882515

[2] Lin, A.M.Y., 2017. Code-Switching in the Classroom: Research Paradigms and Approaches. In: King, K., Lai, Y.J., May, S. (Eds.). Research Methods in Language and Education, 3rd ed. Springer: Cham, Switzerland. pp. 487–501. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02249-9_34

[3] Domede, A.B., 2023. Code-Switching As a Teaching Strategy in English Language Classrooms: Exploring Students' Attitudes and Perceptions. Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal. 15(4), 285–292.

[4] Kumar, T., Nukapangu, V., Hassan, A. 2021. Effectiveness of Code-Switching in Language Classroom in India at Primary Level: A Case of L2 Teachers' Perspectives. Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction. 11(4), 379–385.

[5] Garcines, J.V., Alvarez, E.H., 2017. Code-Switching: Boon or Bane? International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies. 4(8), 1–10.

[6] Macaro, E., 2002. Analyzing Student Teachers' Code-Switching in Foreign Language Classrooms: Theories and Decision-Making. The Modern Language Journal. 84(4), 531–548.

[7] Swain, M., Lapkin, S., 2000. Task-Based Second Language Learning: The Uses of the First Language. Language Teaching Research. 4, 251–274.

[8] García, O., Wei, L. 2014. Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, UK.

[9] Borlongan, A.M., 2009. Tagalog-English Code-Switching in English Language Classes: Frequency and Forms. TESOL Journal. 1, 28–42.

[10] Villanueva, L.B., Gamiao, B.A., 2022. Effects of Code Switching Among College Instructors and Students in a Philippine Classroom Setting. American Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation. 1(2), 70–77. DOI: https://doi.org/10.54536/ajmri.v1i2.292

[11] Wedananta, K.A., 2020. Code-Switching As a Translanguaging to Transfer Cross-Cultural Understanding in English Classroom: Teachers' Perception. International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture. 6(1), 70–78. DOI: https://doi.org/10.21744/ijllc.v6n1.845

[12] Ahmad, B.H., Jusoff, K., 2009. Teachers' Code-Switching in Classroom Instructions for Low English Proficient Learners. English Language Teaching. 2(2), 49–55. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v2n2p49

[13] Ng, Y.S., Gurdarshan Singh, A., 2024. The Positive Influences of Code-Switching on Second Language Learning of TESL Undergraduate Students at a Private University in Ipoh. Journal of Social Sciences and Business. 3(1), 27–34. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12576586

[14] Minoza, J., Albiso, M.C., Armas, A.K., et al., 2024. EMI or Bilingual Instruction? An Experimental Study in the Teaching of Oral Communication Among Philippine Senior High School Students. International Journal of Education. 17(1), 1–14. DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/ije.v17i1.61456

[15] Hafid, H., Margana, M., 2022. Code-Switching Practices in Multilingual Classrooms: Exploring Pedagogical Functions. AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan. 14(2), 2551–2562. DOI: https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v14i2.1326

[16] Flores, I.R.P., Balmeo, M.C.S., 2021. Code Switching in Instruction: Pre-Service Teachers' Lived Experiences. International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research. 2(7), 598–612. DOI: https://doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.02.07.08

[17] Altun, M., 2021. Code-Switching in L2 Classrooms: A Useful Strategy to Reinforce Learning. Canadian Journal of Language and Literacy Studies. 1(1), 21–26. DOI: https://doi.org/10.53103/cjlls.v1i1.13

[18] Kumari, S., 2024. Code-Mixing and Code-Switching in Multilingual Classrooms: Enhancing Second Language Acquisition of English. Chetana International Journal of Education. 9(2), 9–16.

[19] de la Cruz, A.Y., 2025. Students' and Teachers' Attitude and Reasons for Code-Switching, and Its Role in Learning and Second Language Acquisition. Linguistics Form—A Journal of Linguistics. 3(4), 1–6. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14812143

[20] Ulfah, N.M., Tsuraya, A.S., Risal, R., 2021. The Use of Code-Switching by English Teachers in Foreign Language Classroom. English Language, Linguistics, and Culture International Journal. 1(1), 11–23. DOI: https://doi.org/10.24252/elstic-ij.v1i1.22001

[21] Olivera, L.C.A., 2021. Code-Switching in English Class: A Strategy in Boosting Learners' Confidence and Engagement. International Journal of Arts, Science and Education. 1(1), 15–28. Available from: https://www.ijase.org/index.php/ijase/article/view/10

[22] Bonyadi, A., Kalvanagh, M.K., Bonyadi, M., 2021. Teachers' Perceptions on Code-Switching in EFL Classroom Discourse. Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education. 12(2), 68–80. DOI: https://doi.org/10.2478/dcse-2021-0015

[23] Ghaderi, M., Moghaddam, M.M., Ostovar-Namaghi,

S.A., 2024. Code-Switching in English Language Classrooms: Revealing Teachers' Strategies and Motivations for Effective Language Instruction. Qualitative Research Reports in Communication. 26(1), 41–50. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/17459435.2024.2329062

[24] Shafi, S., Kazmi, S.H., Asif, R., 2020. Benefits of Code-Switching in Language Learning Classroom at University of Education Lahore. International Research Journal of Management, IT & Social Sciences. 7(1), 227–234. DOI: https://doi.org/10.21744/irjmis.v7n1.842

[25] Muico, E.J., Pineda, R.M., Tacilbon, A., 2021. Code-Switching: A Boon or Bane in Bilingual Speakers. International Journal of English Language Studies. 4(1), 12–19. DOI: https://doi.org/10.37500/IJESSR.2021.4112

[26] de Castro, N.P., Parajito, G., Realco, J.M., et al., 2021. The Effects of Code-Switching on the Communicative Competence of 21st Century Learners: A Case Study. Universitas—The Official Journal of University of Makati. 9(1). Available from: https://journals.umak.edu.ph/universitas/article/view/10

[27] Kasap, S., 2021. Attitude Towards the First Language and Its Effects on First Language Lexical Attrition. International Journal of Kurdish Studies. 7(1), 65–81. DOI: https://doi.org/10.21600/ijoks.827571

[28] Temesgen, A., Hailu, E., 2022. Teachers' Codeswitching in EFL Classrooms: Functions and Motivations. Cogent Education. 9(1), 2124039. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2124039

[29] Aparece, M.L., Bacasmot, J.B., 2023. Analyzing the Impacts of Code-Switching on Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety and English Language Problems Through Path Analysis. Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies. 41(1), 1–17. DOI: https://doi.org/10.9734/ajess/2023/v41i1883