

Teachers' Beliefs of Code-Switching in English as A Foreign Language (EFL) Classes at Kabul Education University

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- Language learning
- Teachers' perceptions

Abstract: This study investigates the beliefs and perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers at Kabul Education University regarding the use of code-switching in their classrooms. Employing a qualitative research design, the study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of teachers' viewpoints and experiences with code-switching as a pedagogical tool. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 10 EFL teachers from the university's English Language Department, all of whom had at least 2 years of teaching experience. The findings reveal that the majority of teachers recognize the practical functions of code-switching, such as clarifying complex concepts, providing feedback, and enhancing student confidence, particularly among lower-proficiency learners. However, some teachers raised concerns that excessive reliance on the first language (L1) could hinder English language acquisition by limiting exposure to the target language (L2). Despite these differing perspectives, most teachers acknowledged the value of code-switching as an instructional strategy when employed strategically. The study underscores the importance of a balanced approach to code-switching, ensuring that it supports students' language development while maintaining opportunities for English immersion.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool for communication. Nowadays, English is considered a working and travelling language, as well as a language for seeking educational opportunities. In bilingual societies worldwide, speakers usually switch between languages to achieve communicative goals. This process of changing language during communication is called code-switching, or defined as the practice of using two or more languages in the same statement or discourse

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(Sampurna, 2023). Bahatti (2018) defined code-switching as the process of moving from one language to another in the middle of the speech when both speakers knew the same language. In addition, Haller (1988, as cited in Abdolaziz & Shahla, 2015) defined code-switching as "The use of more than one language in the course of a single communicative episode". In most bilingual communities, English is used in teaching and learning processes. During these processes, code-switching usually occurs between teachers and students, or among students, for various reasons. According to Bashir (2015), code-switching serves different purposes in different forms, such as content delivery, managing discipline, humor, and turning the mood. Moreover, Bhatti et al. (2018) found that Pakistani English teachers use code-switching for various functions. The function included greetings, chatting, and accelerating the warm-up session before the lecture. During the lectures, the instructors switched code to translate new words, explain complex topics, maintain discipline, and get the learners' attention.

In university-level EFL classes in the Afghan context, it seems unnecessary for teachers and some students to use code-switching in teaching and learning. Most teachers think that code-switching indicates low English proficiency. Such classes without code-switching frustrate low-level students because the input is not comprehensible to them. In this regard, Bahatti et al. (2018) stated that, despite having good proficiency in English, teachers use code-switching to ensure that students learn effectively.

Based on the researchers' knowledge, no similar research has been conducted at Kabul Education University to address the gap this study focused on: the beliefs and perceptions of Kabul Education University EFL teachers about code-switching. It is hoped that this study provides EFL teachers with information on the concept of code-switching and how it is understood and perceived at Kabul Education University.

However, many studies have been conducted by other researchers. For instance, Wardhaugh et al. (1998) defined code-switching as a conversational technique used to establish, modify, or dismantle group boundaries, as well as to evoke or alter interpersonal relations. Code-switching refers to the practice of alternating between two or more languages or language varieties within a conversation, particularly when speakers share a similar linguistic repertoire (Trousedale, 2010). Romaine (2000) emphasized that, for bilingual individuals, switching between languages is a communicative tool that functions much as switching between dialects or styles does for monolingual speakers. This linguistic strategy allows bilinguals to navigate different social contexts and express meanings in ways that a single language might not fully capture.

There are different types of code-switching, each serving distinct communicative purposes. One of the most common forms is situational code-switching, in which speakers switch languages depending on the social situation they are in. In this kind of switching, the language used is determined by the context, but the topic of conversation remains consistent. For instance, a speaker might use one language at home and another at work or in public (Bentahila, 1983). Wardhaugh (1998) explained that situational code-switching occurs when

speakers adjust their language in response to external social factors, such as the setting or participants, without necessarily changing the subject matter of the conversation. This type of switching is often influenced by the speaker's sense of appropriateness in different social contexts.

In contrast, metaphorical code-switching involves switching languages based not on the situation but on the topic or the roles of the participants in the conversation. According to Wardhaugh (1998), metaphorical switching happens when speakers shift languages to reflect a change in the tone, topic, or interpersonal dynamics of the interaction. For example, a speaker might switch from a formal to a more casual style when the conversation moves from a professional to a personal topic. This type of switching is often used to express emotional nuances and to redefine the social situation, such as moving from a serious discussion to a humorous one or from an official conversation to a more relaxed, personal interaction. Wardhaugh (1998) argued that metaphorical code-switching carries an emotional dimension since the shift in language can reflect changes in the speaker's relationship with their conversational partner, ranging from formality to solidarity.

Conversational code-switching, as described by Gordon (2011), occurs within a single sentence or discourse, where speakers alternate between languages even within the same utterance. This type of switching is more fluid and spontaneous, reflecting the speaker's need to convey specific meanings or expressions that may not translate well across languages. Hudson (2002) adds that conversational code-switching involves switching between distinct languages rather than dialects, and it is often motivated by speaker-external factors. Gordon (2011) distinguished between situational and metaphorical code-switching, noting that conversational switches are often driven by changes in topic or by the speaker's intent to emphasize specific points. These switches can be complex, as they require the speaker to navigate between different linguistic systems while maintaining coherence in the conversation.

Another form of code-switching is intra-sentential code-switching, which involves switching languages within the same sentence or clause. Romaine (1995) pointed out that intra-sentential switching is particularly challenging because it requires a high level of linguistic competence in both languages. Only highly fluent bilinguals typically engage in this kind of switching, as it involves navigating multiple syntactic and grammatical rules simultaneously. Poplack (2000) identified two constraints on intra-sentential switching: the equivalence constraint, which requires that the word order before and after the switch must be grammatically acceptable in both languages, and the free morpheme constraint, which prohibits switching between a stem and an affix or within idiomatic expressions. Intra-sentential switching is considered one of the most complex forms of code-switching because it demands a sophisticated understanding of both linguistic systems simultaneously (Poplack, 2000).

Social dynamics also play a significant role in code-switching. Wardhaugh (1998) observed that speakers may switch to the interlocutor's language as a sign of politeness, especially

when interacting with strangers. Poplack (2000) supported this view, noting that speakers are often sensitive to their audience's preferences and will switch languages accordingly. In these instances, code-switching serves to strengthen social bonds and show respect for the other person's linguistic background. Spolsky (1998) also explained that some speakers switch languages for convenience, particularly when one language lacks the vocabulary or expressions needed to convey their thoughts fully. For example, Sert (2004) found that in classroom settings, students often switch languages when they struggle to express themselves clearly in the target language, using their first language as a fallback.

In educational contexts, code-switching is often viewed as either a pedagogical tool or a crutch that hinders language acquisition. Sert (2004) identified three primary functions of code-switching in the classroom: topic switching, affective functions, and repetitive functions. In topic switching, teachers switch languages to introduce new material, particularly in grammar lessons, directing students' attention to key points. Affective functions involve using code-switching to express emotions and build rapport between teachers and students, while repetitive functions involve switching languages to clarify meaning and ensure comprehension. Reyes (2004) also argued that code-switching serves a clarifying function, helping ensure that both the speaker and the listener fully understand the message being conveyed.

Despite its prevalence, code-switching in the classroom is often viewed negatively, especially in second language (L2) learning environments. Teachers and educators may believe that L2 learners should think and communicate solely in the target language to improve proficiency. Cohen (1998) acknowledged that for most L2 learners, their first language remains the primary medium of thought, even when completing tasks in the second language. However, Macaro (2001) noted that teachers frequently use code-switching for practical purposes, such as building relationships with students, giving complex instructions, managing classroom behavior, and explaining difficult grammatical concepts. In these cases, code-switching can help speed up the learning process by making content more accessible to students.

- This study aims to discover the opinions of EFL teachers at the Kabul Education University regarding the use of code-switching in their classes.
- What beliefs do EFL teachers of Kabul Education University have towards code-switching in their classes?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative research design, allowing for an in-depth understanding of teachers' viewpoints and experiences with code-switching in the classroom. The following sections outline the participants, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures used in the study.

The participants in this study were 10 EFL teachers from Kabul Education University in Afghanistan. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants, ensuring that only teachers with relevant experience in teaching English at the university level were included. All participants were from the university's English Language Department and possessed varying levels of experience in teaching English as a foreign language. The selection criteria required that each participant have at least two years of teaching experience and be actively involved in teaching English courses to university students (see Figure 1).

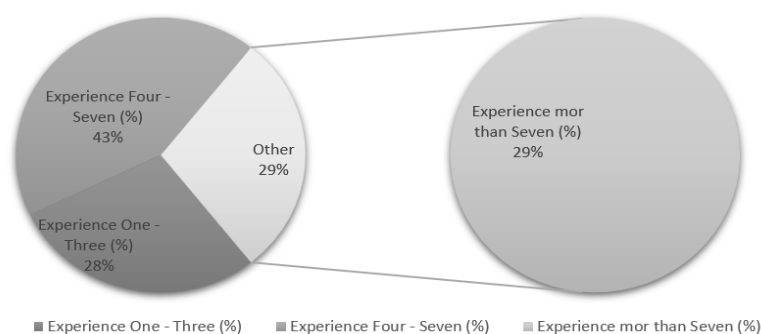


Figure 1: Distribution of Teaching Experience among Participants

According to Figure 1, 42.9% of males have four to seven years of teaching experience, while no females fall into the one to three years category. Additionally, 66.7% of females have more than seven years of experience, indicating a high level of experience within this group.

Table 2: Distribution of Teaching Experience among Participants

Experience Category	Percentage (%)
Experience One – Three	28
Experience Four – Seven	43
Experience More than Seven	29

According to Table 1, all participants were from the English Language Department and had at least 2 years of teaching experience. The distribution of their teaching experience revealed that 28% had one to three years, 43% had four to seven years, and 29% had more than seven years of experience.

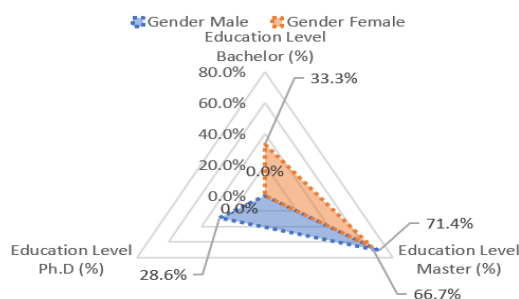


Figure 3: Educational Attainment by Gender

The majority of study participants hold advanced degrees, revealing significant trends in educational attainment and gender among teachers. Among males, 71.4% hold a Master's

degree and 28.6% have a Ph.D., with no males having a Bachelor's degree. In contrast, 33.3% of females hold a Bachelor's degree, 66.7% hold a Master's degree, and none hold a Ph.D. (see figure 2).

Table 2: Educational Attainment by Gender

Gender	Bachelor's Degree (%)	Master's Degree (%)	Ph.D. (%)
Male		71.4	28.6
Female	33.3	66.7	

Table 2 summarizes the educational attainment of study participants by gender. Among male participants, none hold a Bachelor's degree, while a significant majority (71.4%) possess a Master's degree, and 28.6% have a Ph.D. In contrast, female participants show a different distribution: 33.3% hold a Bachelor's degree, 66.7% hold a Master's degree, and no females attain a Ph.D.

FINDINGS

Based on the interview results, most teachers demonstrated awareness of both the functions and effects of code-switching in their EFL classrooms. However, perspectives on its specific uses varied. Only one teacher disagreed with the notion that code-switching serves multiple purposes, while seven of the eight teachers identified at least one function. The analysis of the interview data revealed the following functions of code-switching:

The first function highlighted that code-switching is used for clarification and providing feedback. Teachers 1 and 8 expressed that when instructors give feedback, students may need to use their first language (L1) to confirm their understanding and seek further clarification. As Teacher 1 stated:

"I utilize L1 to provide clarification, feedback, and information on a student's task performance to assist them in developing language skills and confirming their comprehension." (T1 & T8)

The second function showed that code-switching helps students feel more confident and comfortable. Teacher 2 noted that it can allow students to express themselves more easily in Dari or Pashto when they struggle with English. He explained that if a learner forgets an English term, they might switch to Dari or Pashto:

"I believe it is the teacher's role to decide when to use L1 or L2. I use English whenever possible and Dari or Pashto when necessary. If the teacher uses more English in the classroom, the students will follow suit. More English in the classroom leads to more language practice, allowing students to become more proficient speakers." (T2)

The third function revealed that code-switching is used to enhance classroom discussions about tasks, assignments, tests, and quizzes. Teachers 3 and 5 indicated that switching to L1 allows more transparent communication and facilitates discussions of student work:

"In my opinion, using L1 in the classroom when students cannot grasp the teacher's explanation or instructions is a useful instructional approach in teaching L2." (T3)

"I feel that switching to L1 saves time, especially when explaining difficult terms. It helps students understand instructions and encourages them to participate effectively, thereby improving their learning." (T5)

The fourth function involved checking students' understanding. Teacher 4 was the only one who argued against using L1, believing it would hinder students' language abilities and prevent them from learning proper English sentence structures:

"I only switch to Dari and Pashto when there is a gap in English knowledge that may affect students' overall understanding of the language. Additionally, if students do not strive to learn the correct English words or expressions, they will not improve their language proficiency." (T4)

The fifth function showed that code-switching is used to develop vocabulary and explain grammar. Teacher 6 believed that code-switching helps clarify new vocabulary and grammatical concepts, though he stressed that L2 should be used more often to enhance students' oral skills:

"I occasionally switch to Dari and Pashto when introducing unfamiliar words or explaining complex content. However, I believe reducing L1 use in the classroom will increase students' exposure to the target language." (T6)

The sixth function identified that code-switching increases student interaction in the classroom. Teacher 7 expressed that using L1 helps students communicate more effectively and express themselves clearly during lessons. She also claimed that it aids in student comprehension:

"From my perspective, switching to Dari and Pashto strengthens students' relationships with their classmates and teachers. I support mixing the mother tongue with the target language to facilitate teaching a foreign language." (T7)

Regarding the effects of code-switching in the EFL classroom, the interview findings showed that only 2 of 7 teachers opposed its use. These teachers believed that L1 should not be used when teaching L2, particularly when focusing on speaking skills, and emphasized the importance of using English as much as possible. Four teachers, however, preferred to code-switch between L1 and L2, viewing it as a way to facilitate the teaching process. The analysis of the interview data revealed the following effects of code-switching:

The first effect was that code-switching facilitates foreign language learning and promotes bilingualism. Teacher 1 remarked that it is an effective method for improving foreign language acquisition and fostering bilingualism among students. She noted that using L1 is particularly beneficial when the topic is challenging:

"I believe switching between languages is a useful tool for meeting students' communication needs, enhancing their understanding, and promoting bilingualism. Additionally, using Dari and Pashto helps simplify complex topics for students." (T1)

The second effect identified that code-switching is an effective teaching strategy. Teacher 2 emphasized that it enhances the teaching and learning process by making students feel more relaxed and engaged in their English studies:

"In my opinion, code-switching is an effective way to improve English classroom instruction. It provides students with opportunities to develop their language skills while also allowing them to enjoy their learning experience." (T2)

The third effect was that code-switching accelerates language development and understanding. Teachers 3 and 5 noted that switching between L1 and L2 helps students, especially those at lower proficiency levels, better understand the target language and promotes faster language development:

"When needed, switching between L1 and L2 is beneficial for encouraging students to engage with challenging tasks, especially for those at lower levels, and it ultimately enhances their language proficiency." Teacher 7 added. Besides T3 & T5 mentioned, "L1 use in the EFL classroom cannot be dismissed as an effective tool for improving students' language skills."

The fourth effect demonstrated that code-switching improves both English learning and teaching. Teacher 7 explained that switching languages helps students better understand the target language and reduces confusion about the subject matter:

"Code-switching can be valuable. It helps students follow instructions, stay engaged, and grasp the material more easily. It simplifies teaching, especially when all students share the same native language. Some students, for instance, start writing in their first language and then translate it into English because they find it easier to express their thoughts in their native language." (T7)

However, teachers 4 and 8 preferred to use English as much as possible in their classrooms, even when introducing new words or phrases:

"I always use English, and if students struggle with phrases or idioms, I prefer to adjust my language instead of switching to L1. In my opinion, L1 should not be used, especially during speaking activities." (T4)

"I believe that using L1 limits students' opportunities to enhance their English skills and causes them to lose sight of the cultural context of the language. Speaking more English in my English classroom is essential for helping students improve their language abilities. In my view, the more English is spoken, the faster students will learn." (T8)

Furthermore, however, Teachers 9 and 10 agree to use their native language whenever explaining new words, expressions, or idioms in their classrooms:

"I use native language as well as English language when explaining the meaning of new words, new expressions, and new idioms. I prefer to say the culture differences switching to L1. In my opinion, L1 should be used, especially during introducing new words, new expressions, and new idioms." (T9)

"I believe that using L1 helps students to enhance their general knowledge and helps them to learn English skills with a meaningful sense. Though speaking more English in my classroom is essential, for helping students improve their language abilities I need to convey meaningful teaching that is interesting to learners. In my view, students might learn words, expressions, and idioms well, while they understand the meaning in L1." (T10)

Overall, a significant 80% of respondents believe that code-switching is an appropriate method, indicating strong support for its use in communication. Conversely, 20% oppose it, suggesting some reservations about its effectiveness or appropriateness in specific contexts. The Findings section presents the results of the data analysis and addresses the research questions. It should comprise 20-30% of the total article length.

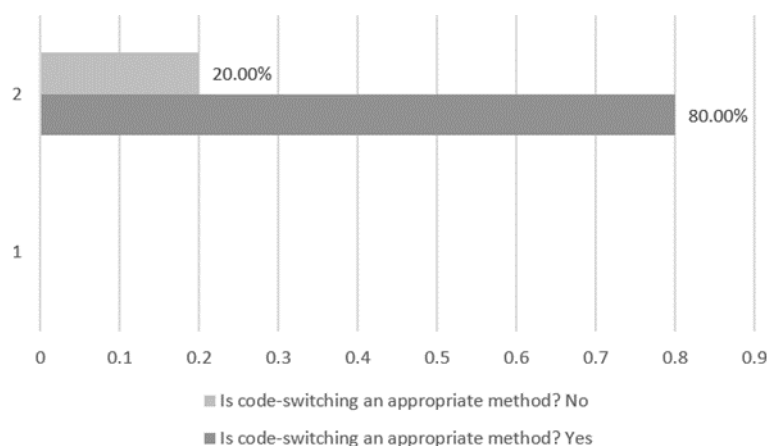


Figure 4: *Is code-switching an appropriate method?*

According to Figure 3, 80% of respondents agree that code-switching is a very reasonable method in the learning process, as a teacher's ability to use this approach enhances teaching effectiveness.

Table 3: *Respondents' Views on Code-Switching*

Response	Percentage (%)
Yes, it is appropriate	80
No, it is not appropriate	20

Table 3 summarizes participants' responses on the appropriateness of code-switching as a communication method. A significant majority —80% —agree that code-switching is an

appropriate technique, underscoring strong support for its use to enhance communication and teaching effectiveness. Conversely, 20% of respondents oppose it, citing concerns about its effectiveness or appropriateness in specific contexts. This data suggests that while code-switching is widely accepted among educators and learners, a minority perspective questions its role in effective communication.

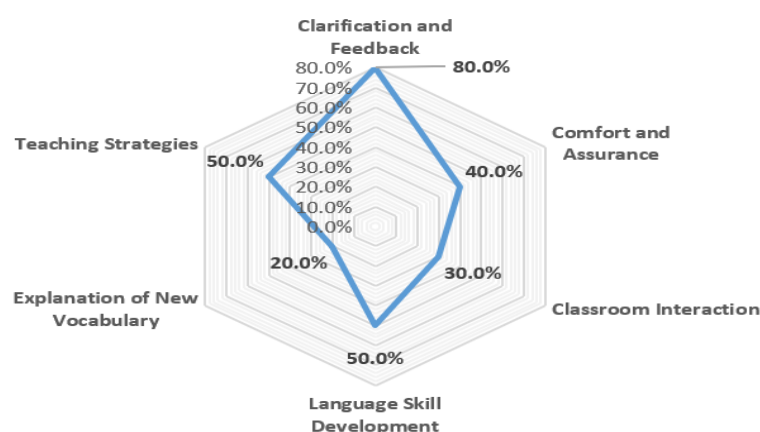


Figure 5: Key Aspects of Code-Switching Effectiveness in Education

According to Figure 4, 80% of participants emphasize the importance of clarification and feedback, indicating that code-switching can help teachers convey concepts more clearly and provide greater assurance to students. However, only 40% highlighted comfort and assurance, suggesting that while many feel at ease with this method, some still experience hesitation and may require more practice. Additionally, only 30% acknowledged its role in classroom interaction, suggesting potential limitations in its effectiveness at fostering engagement. Half of the respondents (50%) believe that code-switching aids language skill development, though this also signals a need for more effective teaching strategies in this area. Conversely, only 20% felt that it is beneficial for explaining new vocabulary and for reflecting on challenges teachers might face in this regard. Lastly, the 50% agreement on teaching strategies suggests that, while code-switching is viewed positively, there remains a need for further research to optimize its implementation in educational settings. Overall, these insights indicate strong support for code-switching, along with specific areas for improvement.

Table 4: Key Aspects of Code-Switching Effectiveness

Aspect	Percentage (%)
Clarification and Feedback	80
Comfort and Assurance	40
Classroom Interaction	30
Language Skill Development	50
Explanation of New Vocabulary	20
Teaching Strategies	50

Table 4 represents key aspects of code-switching effectiveness as perceived by participants. A notable 80% emphasize the importance of clarification and feedback, suggesting that code-switching enhances teachers' ability to convey concepts clearly and reassure students. However, only 40% highlight comfort and assurance, indicating that while many are comfortable with this approach, some experience hesitation and may need more practice.

Classroom interaction is acknowledged by only 30%, suggesting potential limitations in effectively engaging students. Additionally, half of the respondents (50%) believe code-switching aids language skill development, yet this also points to a need for improved teaching strategies in this area. Only 20% recognize its benefit for explaining new vocabulary, reflecting the challenges teachers face in this aspect. The 50% agreement on teaching strategies further suggests that while code-switching is positively regarded, there is room for research and development to optimize its implementation in educational settings. Overall, these insights provide strong support for code-switching, alongside specific areas for improvement.

In conclusion, the interview results were supported by the survey findings, which showed that teachers frequently use L1 for various functions that contribute to improving students' learning.

DISCUSSION

The findings from the interviews with EFL teachers at Kabul Education University provide valuable insights into the complex role that code-switching plays in the classroom. The teachers' perceptions reveal a nuanced understanding of the uses and effects of code-switching, reflecting broader discussions in the literature about its pedagogical advantages and potential drawbacks.

One of the primary themes that emerged from the interviews is the practical use of code-switching as a pedagogical tool. Most teachers reported that switching to students' first language (L1) helps clarify difficult concepts, provides feedback, and engages students who might struggle with full immersion in English. This aligns with research by Bhatti et al. (2018), who found that code-switching serves multiple functions in the classroom, such as facilitating comprehension and maintaining classroom discipline. Teachers 1 and 10, for example, highlighted that L1 could be used to confirm students' understanding and ensure they grasp the feedback provided. This view supports the idea that code-switching can be a valuable strategy for improving students' comprehension, particularly when dealing with complex or unfamiliar content.

However, the interviews also revealed that not all teachers are in favor of code-switching. For instance, Teacher 4 argued that using L1 might negatively affect students' English proficiency, as it could limit their exposure to the target language (L2) and hinder their ability to construct English sentences correctly. This perspective reflects concerns raised by Cohen et al. (2013), who suggested that over-reliance on L1 might slow the process of language

acquisition. Teachers 4 and 8 emphasized the importance of maximizing L2 use in class, especially during speaking activities, to encourage students to think and communicate in English. This echoes the belief held by some educators that immersion in the target language is key to developing fluency and confidence in L2 (Macaro, 2001).

Another important function of code-switching, as discussed by Teachers 2 and 7, is its ability to create a more comfortable and supportive classroom environment. Teacher 2, for instance, mentioned that switching to Dari or Pashto can make students feel more confident when expressing themselves, especially when they struggle to find the right English words. This view is consistent with Wardhaugh's (1998) argument that code-switching can serve an affective function, helping to build rapport and reduce anxiety in learners. By allowing students to use their L1 when necessary, teachers can create a more inclusive and less intimidating learning space, which may, in turn, enhance student engagement and participation.

The teachers' opinions also reflect broader discussions about the different types of code-switching. Several teachers noted that they switch languages depending on the context or topic, which aligns with the situational and metaphorical types of code-switching identified by Wardhaugh (1998). For example, Teacher 6 mentioned using L1 to explain new vocabulary or grammar, a practice that fits into the concept of topic-switching. On the other hand, Teacher 7 emphasized that switching languages could foster social bonds and improve interactions between students and teachers, which relates to the affective function of code-switching as described by Sert (2004).

Despite generally positive views of the pedagogical uses of code-switching, some teachers, like Teacher 4, expressed concerns about its potential to limit students' exposure to English. This highlights a key tension in the debate over code-switching in language classrooms. While it can be a valuable tool for aiding comprehension and creating a supportive learning environment, excessive reliance on L1 may prevent students from fully engaging with the target language. As Poplack (2000) observed, effective code-switching requires careful management to avoid undermining the goals of L2 acquisition.

The teachers' reflections on the effects of code-switching also suggest that it plays a significant role in promoting bilingualism and facilitating language learning. Teacher 1, for example, noted that code-switching can help students develop their bilingual abilities by allowing them to switch between languages as needed. This supports Gordon's (2011) assertion that code-switching is not just a linguistic crutch but a sophisticated communicative strategy that enables speakers to navigate different social and cognitive demands. Similarly, teachers 3 and 5 noted that code-switching can accelerate language development by ensuring that students understand complex material before moving on to more advanced English topics.

As a result, the interviews with EFL teachers at Kabul Education University highlight both the benefits and challenges of code-switching in the classroom. While many teachers view it

as an effective tool for enhancing comprehension, building rapport, and promoting bilingualism, others raise concerns about its potential to hinder students' immersion in the target language. These findings suggest that while code-switching can be a valuable pedagogical strategy, it must be used thoughtfully and in moderation to support, rather than detract from, students' language learning. These findings suggest that further research and professional development may be needed to help teachers balance the use of L1 and L2 in ways that best support their students' linguistic and cognitive development.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the beliefs and perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers at Kabul Education University regarding the use of code-switching in their classrooms. Employing a qualitative research design, the study aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of teachers' viewpoints and experiences with code-switching as a pedagogical tool. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 10 EFL teachers from the university's English Language Department, all of whom had at least 2 years of teaching experience. The findings reveal that the majority of teachers recognize the practical functions of code-switching, such as clarifying complex concepts, providing feedback, and enhancing students' confidence, particularly among lower-proficiency learners. However, some teachers raised concerns that excessive reliance on the first language (L1) could hinder English language acquisition by limiting exposure to the target language (L2). Despite these differing perspectives, most teachers acknowledged the value of code-switching as an instructional strategy when employed strategically. The study underscores the importance of a balanced approach to code-switching, ensuring that it supports students' language development while maintaining opportunities for English immersion.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study:

- Ali Mohammad Hekmat: Conceptualization, methodology, and writing – original draft preparation.
- Soma Hotak: data collection, data curation, and writing – review and editing.
- Mohammad Kazim Ameri: Data analysis, preparation of charts and tables, software management, and validation.
- Deewa Karwar: Visualization and data collection.
- Khatira Habibi: Project administration and supervision.

Ali Mohammad Hekmat and Soma Hotak prepared the initial draft of the manuscript. All authors reviewed and commented on earlier versions of the manuscript. Each author read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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This research was conducted without any external financial support. The authors declare that the study and manuscript preparation were carried out using their personal resources. No

funding was received from governmental agencies, private organizations, or any other external sources.

DATA AVAILABILITY

All data supporting the findings of this study are available within the Department of English Language at Kabul University of Medical Sciences, "Abu Ali Ibn Sina." The data collection tools and materials used in the research are securely stored and can be accessed upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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