The Advisability of Using English-Arabic Code Switching as a Teaching Strategy in EFL University Classroom: A Case Study

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Abstract

This paper addresses the issue of English-Arabic code-switching (henceforth CS) in the university classroom and how the use of alternative codes might serve the learning and teaching processes. The study is based on analyzing 20 in-class audio-recorded lectures presented by the researcher along a whole semester. The study aims to investigate the teachers’ awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of their actual use of code switching in EFL classroom when the teacher shares the same native language with his students. It provides a detailed analysis of the linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic considerations of this phenomenon and the reasons of its occurrence.

The first two parts of the study provides a theoretical background starting from the traditional perspective of code switching which considered it a random mixture of two languages (Legenhausen:1991), passing through a considerable bulk of research which analyzed many audio-recordings of classroom interactions (Martin-Jones: 2000). On the other hand, the first two parts talk about the various reasons of university classroom code switching, such as the ease of exposition and expression, the translation of particular unfamiliar terms, some socializing functions, maintaining classroom order etc. The third part discusses the various functions of using the L1 in the university classroom on the basis of 20 excerpts randomly selected from the data of the study. The data analysis is followed by a discussion to the findings of the study in comparison to those illustrated in similar studies.

1 The lectures were presented for the students in Zarqa Private University in phonetics at the summer semester 2009.
1. Preliminary Remarks

1.1. The Early Attempts:

In his discussion of the foundational studies of code switching, Nilep (2006) assumes that the concept of code switching is dated back to Hans Vogt’s “Language Contact” (1954) who was inspired by Uriel Weinreich’s (1953) “Languages in Contact”. The main interest of Weinreich was to describe the various consequences of language contact in bilingual communities. In the course of his criticism to the previous anthropological research of code switching particularly that of Barker (1947) (cited in Nilep: 2006), Weinreich talked about the deficiency of limiting the speech situations into: intimate, informal, formal, and inter-group. He was in pursuing of a more linguistic, rather than anthropological, treatment of code switching assuming that each bilingual has two different language varieties and is competent in using them in various contexts. Vogt (1954), on the other hand, emphasized on the psychological perspective of code switching distinguishing between bilingualism which might be treated by the linguists due to its connectedness to language interference, and code switching which is basically extra linguistic.

The other well-known early efforts presented with reference to explaining the process of code switching were that of Gumperz (1964/1972/ 1976) and Tim (1975) cited in Poplack (2004), Mattson & Burenhult (1999), Lin (1988), Redouane (2005) among many others. Blom and Gumperz’s (1972) “Social Meaning in Linguistic Structure” has initiated the preliminary ideas of the situational and metaphorical switching which were later developed by various anthropologists interested in studying the various consequences of language contact.

1.2. Selected Definitions:

Various types of definitions have been found in the literature depending on the various types of methodological approaches the researchers implement, and hence it is very hard to arrive at a widely-accepted definition. One of the early definitions is that of Valdés-Fallis (1978) who studied code switching in its naturally occurring context of bilingual communities of Spanish and English: “The alternating use of two languages on the word, phrase, clause, or sentence level”. He states:
When bilingual speakers of English and Spanish are speaking Spanish and introduce a word, phrase, clause, or sentence that is recognizably English (in both pronunciation and form), they are said to have code-switched into English. The same bilinguals may code switch into Spanish by introducing Spanish words, clauses, etc. into their English speech.

A more general definition is that produced by Lyons (1981-2006: 283) in which he assumes that code switching occurs as a result of “a situational change in the value of one of the variables that define a domain”; by “domain” he means “a fairly clear functional differentiation of the two languages”. In the same respect, Fromkin, Rodman & Hymes (2003:466) assume that “Code switching occurs wherever there are groups of bilinguals who speak the same two languages… (it) occurs in specific social situations, enriching the repertoire of the speaker”.

Following a communicative approach of studying the language contact, Gal (1988:247) defines code switching as “a conversational strategy used to establish, cross or destroy group boundaries; to create evoke or change interpersonal relations with their rights and obligations.” In the same respect, two comparative definitions are suggested by Heller (1988) as “the use of more than one language in the course of a single communicative episode”, and Auer (1984) as “the alternating use of more than one language”.

On the other hand, Verschueren (1999:119), in the course of his distinction between code switching and code mixing, states:

“Code is any distinguishable variant of a language, involving systematic sets of choices, whether linked to specific geographical area, a social class, an assignment of functions, or a specific context of use. Code switching is the change from one code to the other”

Placing CS in the setting of conversational analysis, Gumperz (1982:59) states: “Conversational code switching can be defined as the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems and subsystems”. Myers-Scotton (1993), alternatively, refers to CS as “the use of two or more languages in the same conversation”.

Ellis (1994: 28), with his second language acquisition research background, distinguishes between code mixing as “the use of both L1 and L2 in the construction
of the same sentence” and code switching as “the alternative use of L1 and L2 within a discourse” (see section 1.5 below).

Finally, in his section of some integrated definitions of CS, Nilep (2006) presents the following concluding one: “CS is a practice of parties in discourse to signal changes in context by using alternate grammatical systems or codes.”

1.3. The Diversity of Analysis

As it is obvious in the above section, defining CS depends on the different types of approaches a researcher follows. Ziran, He and Yu Guodong (2001) mentions four types of analysis they found in the literature: sociolinguistic, grammatical, psychological, and conversational analysis. They claim that all these four approaches are insufficient since they emphasize on a particular aspect of the CS data and disregarding the others; and hence they recommend another approach which they call the “pragmatic approach” claiming to be a comprehensive one (ibid: 44).

As far as the sociolinguistic approach of CS analysis is concerned, one of the early questions that the CS researchers tried to answer was: Is CS a sign of an insufficient knowledge or it occurs spontaneously or unconsciously? Building of Grice’s maxims of cooperative principle, Myers-Scotton (1983) initiates a model based on the theory of markedness trying to suggest some answers to this question. This paper establishes what is called “the negotiable principle” with the following three maxims:

- The Unmarked choice maxim
- The marked choice maxim
- The exploratory choice maxim

The markedness model of language choice adopted by Myers-Scotton is based on studying the sociolinguistic and psychological considerations of switching between Swahili and English in some African countries. The bilinguals/ multilinguals are assumed

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2 The first clear definition of the marked/unmarked relation appears in Jakobson’s article “Structure of the Russian Verb” (1932). In this article, he emphasizes that the marked category is identified by the signalization of “A” and the unmarked category by the non-signalization of “A” whereby “A” means some already defined property. Linda Waugh (1982:299) defines markedness as “the asymmetrical and hierarchical relationship between the two poles of any oppositions”. She assumes that the marked category necessarily conveys a more narrowly specified and delimited conceptual item than the unmarked”.
to be aware of the various types of codes they use in particular contexts assigning particular meanings to the choices they perform. The meaning is usually associated with the marked or the unexpected choice. Other researchers (such as Tay: 1989, Adendorff: 1996) share with Myers-Scotton the assumption that CS is mainly utilized in bilingual communities to maintain solidarity or intimacy among the members of the same society.

One of the most noteworthy works in adopting the sociolinguistic approach of CS analysis is that of J. Gumperz. Gumperz’s early works (such as 1958; 1961) were implemented to study the Hindi variants. Building on the work of Ervin-Tripp (1964) about the role of setting, topic, and function in language choice, Gumperz emphasizes on the fact that although these three language choice determiners are essential, they might put a ceiling on other linguistic elements. Accordingly, together with Bloom, Jan-Petter, they initiated what they call the “situational and metaphorical switching” (Bloom & Gumperz: 1972). The situational and metaphorical switching associate the language choice with the social setting; the former occurs when the linguistic form is changed with reference to the change in a social setting, whereas the latter occurs when two varieties are used in a single social setting (Nilep: 2006).

The second approach to CS analysis is that which considers the syntactic realizations in the two languages involved. One of the earliest researches in this reference is that of Weinreich (1953/1968) which is usually identified as grammatically constrained intra-sentential CS (Poplack: 2004). Such research is based on the assumption that in all bilingual communities, bilinguals have the tendency to code switch from one language to another at clearly identified morphosyntactic boundaries. Gumperz (1976/1968) and Timm, L. (1975) identify some of these boundaries within a sentence such as between pronominal subject and verbs or between conjunctions and conjuncts. In this respect, there has been an extended controversy with reference to the syntactic restrictions that might occur on CS. Lance (1975: 143), for instance, has his doubts about the existence of such restrictions as opposed to the other studies such as those of Gumperz (1976), Kashu (1977), Lipski (1978) which emphasize on various types of syntactic constraints (Redounane: 2005).
Another important research is that of Poplack (1980) in which is the idea of “Equivalence Constraint” is presented; it stipulates that “Code switching will tend to occur at points in discourse where juxtaposition of L1 and L2 elements does not violate a syntactic rule of either language” (ibid: 586). This constraint is one of three constraints (the other two are free morpheme constraint, size of constituent constraint) suggested by Polack and some of her associates which were, later on, supported and criticized by many researchers (Pandharipande: 1990; Nartey: 1982; Berk-Seligson: 1986; Park: 1990). These constraints are placed within the general framework of the universality of the syntactic theory adopted by the generative approach of Chomsky (1965;1981;1982) and his followers on one hand, and the typological universal approach initiated by Greenberg (1966), and developed by Comrie (1984), and Croft (1990) on the other hand.

Moreover, various types of researches have made use of many well-known theories in the formal syntax. For example Di Sciullo, et al. (1986) and MacSwan (1999) explain CS in terms of Chomsky’s theory of “Government and Binding” appeared in his book “Lectures on Government and Binding” (1981) later developed to what is called “the Minimalist Approach” appeared in Chomsky’s (1995) “The Minimalist Program”. The basic idea of the minimalist approach could be explained in terms of the principles and parameters approach suggested in the earlier versions of Chomsky’s theory (For example, the pro-drop parameter in Hyams: 1983; White:1989a; Chomsky: 1981, 1988; Gass: 1989 and the prepositional stranding and pied piping in Bardovi-Harlig: 1987; Mazurkewich: 1984) presented neatly in Ellis (1994-2000:319) in which he assumes that the parametric variation is workable within the circle of the marked “periphery” rules, whereas the unmarked “core” rules are “those that can be arrived at through the
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Using particular theories appeared in the theoretical monolingual syntax in describing the various characteristics of CS discourse has proved to be incomprehensive; Poplack (2004: 105-120) states in this reference:

The assumption that bilingual syntax can be explained by general principles of monolingual grammar may account well for monolingual language structure (including that of the monolingual fragments in CS discourse), there is no evidence that the juxtaposition of two languages can be explained in the same way.

Valldes-Fallis (1978: 10), on the other hand, suggests a stylistic approach on analyzing CS. He distinguishes between CSS which indicate social information and those performed by particular code switchers as a “personal rhetorical device to add color to an utterance, to emphasize, to contrast, to underscore a context, to create new poetic meanings”. He adds that the stylistic CS is performed to imply a particular meaningful message and not as a result of language incompetence and thus it occurs “when all participants are bilingual and when the social situations allow the use of either code” (ibid: 11).

In the course of his distinction between the structural-constraints based approaches on the analysis of CS and the nonstructural-constraints based ones, Nilep (2006: 2) assumes that despite the fact that the various types of syntactic, morphological, and phonological constraints on studying CS have produced various models, they disregard the sociocultural perspectives and hence “they are not sufficient to describe the reason for or effect of a particular switch”.

1.4. Code Switching and Code Mixing
Some researchers distinguish between code mixing as the use of two languages within the same sentence boundaries which is sometimes termed as intrasentential CS, and code switching which occurs across the sentence boundaries and sometimes termed as intersentential CS (Lipski, 1985: 5). Code mixing is a process similar to that performed by the creators of a pidgin which is defined by Romaine (2000) as “a contact variety restricted in form and function and native to no one, which is formed by members of at least two groups of different linguistic backgrounds”; yet, code mixing users, unlike a pidgin users, should have the same linguistic knowledge in the languages involved in the process. The terms code switching and code mixing are usually used interchangeably (Muysken: 2000, Bokamba: 1987) though some researchers make a clear distinction between them. Muysken (2000:1) defines code mixing as “all cases where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentence”. Bentahila et al. (1983), moreover, state that the “act of choosing one code rather than another must be distinguished from the act of mixing the two codes together to produce something which might itself be called a third code”. On the other hand, Wardhaugh (2002) makes a distinction between creoles languages, which are developed from pidgins when they create some native users, and mixing the codes which is one aspect of code switching in bilingual and multilingual societies. Lipski (1985), moreover, suggests the term “mechanical switching” to describe what he calls the shift that occurs unconsciously in the middle of the sentence when “a speaker is momentarily unable to remember a term, but is able to recall it in a different language”.

1.5. Manifestations of Language Contact

CS, diglossia, borrowing, and interference share the common characteristic of occurring when two or more languages come in contact as a result of various types of sociocultural, political, geopolitical, or economical reasons. Yet, researchers make a clear distinction between these processes.

In an initiative well-known research, Ferguson (1959) and Fishman (1967) talk about a linguistic phenomenon that occurs in some societies when they assign a high prestigious status to a particular variant of their language in comparison to a low status to
other variants of the same language. A typical example in this reference is the standard Arabic with its high value used in particular situations in comparison to the other low-status colloquial variants used in other defined situations. Fishman (1967) extended Ferguson’s description of limiting diglossia within the same language varieties to include the functional divisions between different languages. Trying to distinguish between diglossia and CS, Nilep (2006) assumes that diglossia is based on the notion of situational switching (formal and informal), whereas CS might occur within a single situation, interaction, or a discourse. Moreover, in an interesting study of Wlodzimierz J. Szmanaik (2002) which examines the immigrants’ language in Canada based on the language used by a Polish girl who immigrates to Canada in a novel called “Necessary Lies” by Eva Stachniak, he assumes that the concept of diglossia as discussed by Fishman (1967) are almost irrelevant because no cases of diglossia in Fishman’s sense appear in the protagonist’s discourse in the novel. He adds: “The protagonist uses the two languages in every kind of situation, motivated solely by pragmatic factors, such as, for example, the language of the interlocutor or of the written document”. Accordingly, it is a matter of CS rather than that of diglossia.

Valldes-Fallis (1978: 7), on the other hand, assumes that “it is important not to confuse code switching with the process of borrowing”, the English word “push” which has been exported to the Spanish and changed into “puchando” in the example he cites, “has not only been given Spanish pronunciation, but has also been transformed into Spanish present participle”. In a similar assumption, Poplack (2004: 150-160) believes that CS should be clearly distinguished from the other manifestations of language contact; namely “lexical borrowing” which “tend to be recurrent in the speech of the individual and widespread across the community... Loanwords further differ from CS in that there is no involvement of the morphology, syntax or phonology of the lexifier language”.

3 In the course of his distinction between “transfer” and “borrowing” Corder (1983) assumes that borrowing is “a performance phenomenon, not a learning process, a feature, therefore, of language use and not of language structure... nothing is being transferred from anywhere to anywhere.” Thus, borrowing implies the insufficient knowledge in second language or foreign language learning which is used to “compensate for deficiencies in the interlanguage system” of L2 learners (Ellis, 1994: 336).
In the course of his distinction between negative and positive transfer Lado (1957:2) states:

The student who comes into contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult.

This statement of Lado, who was one of the pioneers of the adopters of the behaviorist approach to L2 learning, stands as a starting point to the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (henceforth CAH) which was the most important method used by most L2 researchers in the United States and Europe throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The behaviorist theory had its impact on all fields of knowledge including linguistics. Thus, almost all the second language researches used to work under the assumption that L2 learning could proceed by using the methods of imitation and reinforcement. If there was an error in the performance of an L2 learner, it was because the old habits which impeded the learning of the new ones. Such an assumption led them to invent the notion of interference which was one of the most important notions in this respect.

Within the same behaviorist atmosphere, Vogt (1954: 368) suggested the following distinction between code switching and interference:

Code switching in itself is perhaps not a linguistic phenomenon, but rather a psychological one and its causes are obviously extra linguistic. But bilingualism is of great interest to the linguist because it is the condition of what has been called interference between languages (cited in Nilep: 2006).
Valdes-Falis (1978:6) instigates his article “Code Switching and the Classroom Teacher” by making a clear distinction between these two manifestations of language contact. He assumes that in CS “there is ordinarily a clean break between phonemic systems”. Based on the assumption that CS should not be analyzed in terms of language competency of bilinguals since there are always some particular messages to be conveyed and hence should be clearly distinguished from interference, he explains the latter as “a momentary transfer from one language to another of elements from one of the languages spoken by a bilingual”. He concludes by approving Fishman’s (1964) assumption of interference which “has unfortunate pejorative connotations and suggests that the language of bilinguals has not been approached in an unbiased fashion.”

2. The Use of L1 in the Classroom

2.1. The Conventional Approach against Using the L1 in the Classroom

One of the basic assumptions in teaching second and foreign languages, which has always been taken for granted in all over the world, is that the students’ first language should be prohibited inside the classroom (e.g. Willis:1981; Swain:1982; Dulay, Burt & Krashen: 1982). Such an assumption has recently been questioned by several scholars for the sake of arriving at a more reasonable treatment to this thorny issue (e.g. Dodson: 1967; Guthrie: 1984; Atkinson: 1987; Cook: 2001). One of the most influential attempts in this reference has been suggested by Vivian Cook (2001). Vivian Cook starts with a discussion to the strongest and the weakest theories which forbid the use of L1 in the classroom. The strongest stipulates that L1 should be banned from the classroom and the weakest stipulates that L1 should be minimized.
The bulk of research which discourages the use of L1 in the classroom (e.g. Krashen: 1982; Wong-Fillmore: 1985; Chaudron: 1988), is based on the several conventional assumptions. Cook (2001) suggests three major ones. One of these assumptions is based on what is called the “identity hypothesis” or L1 = L2 hypothesis which suggests that L1 and L2 learning share many fundamental principles and hence implies that L2 teaching should follow a comparable process to L1 acquisition (Dulay and Burt: 1974; Ervin-Tripp: 1974). Such an assumption has been refuted by many scholars (e.g. Bley-Vorman: 1988) who states various types of differences between foreign and native language learners (Ellis, 1994: 107).
The second assumption is based on those researches which study bilingualism in terms of clearly distinct separable parts of the two languages in the minds of the users. A good example in this reference is that of Weinreich’s (1953) “Languages in Contact” in which he suggests that bilinguals have two clearly separated languages and they use each in particular contexts. Such proposal has also been refuted by Cook (2001) and other researchers cited in his article (Beauvillian & Graninger: 1987; Obler: 1982; Locastro: 1987) who proved that “the two languages are interwoven in the L2 user’s mind” at the various language levels.

The third conventional assumption mentioned by Cook is related to how foreign language teachers are always advised to maximize the second language exposure inside the classroom since it might be the only chance for the students to use it. Although Cook does not deny this factual assumption, he states:

The maximal provision of L2 input does not deny the L1 role in learning and teaching. Having a large amount of meaningful L2 use, including samples of language relating to external goals, does not preclude using the L1.

2.2. The Role of L1 in Learning the L2

CAH, mentioned in 1.5 above, was pedagogic in principle. It was directed to foreign language teachers. Lado (1957) states:

The teacher who has made a comparison of the foreign language with the native language of the students will know better what the real problems are and can provide for teaching them.

After the 1960s, several applied linguists questioned the strength of CAH in second language learning. Such criticism to CAH has forced L2 researchers to think of a more convincing theory of language learning, which might overcome these obvious shortcomings. Hatch (1983) assumes that “naturalness” factors and interference might be at work in SLA. By naturalness factors, Hatch means those features which are inherited in L2
and hence cause difficulty not only for L2 learners but for the native speakers as well. He concludes that the role of naturalness factors is determined with reference to the different levels of language. In a famous study made by Cazden et al. (1975) of Spanish learners of English as L2, it is found that the learners follow the same developmental routes (the first negative consisted of no+V). Since such construction occurs in L1 acquisition of English but not in Spanish, they assume that it is more likely that such construction appears as a result of naturalness factors rather than interference. They conclude their study by listing three factors, which might be at work in SLA:

a. Universal factors

b. Specific factors about the learner’s L1

c. Specific factors about the L2.

In this respect, Gass (1980:180) states that “universal factors determine the general outline of learning. Language-specific considerations can come into play only when universal factors underdetermine the result”.

The minimalist position on transfer works under three important claims; the similarity between L1 and L2 acquisition, the underestimation of the role of L1 in SL and the importance of the contribution of universal processes of language learning. Newmark & Reibel (1968) for instance assume that the phenomenon of interference could be interpreted in terms of ignorance. They assume that when a learner uses some structures of his L1, he may simply “fill in his gaps of training he refers for help to what he already knows”. Researchers such as Dulay and Burt (1973), Newmark & Reibel (1968), Krashen (1983) Rutherford (1983) and Zobl (1986) have worked under the assumption that there are universal learning strategies which might be used by both the first and the second language learners.
One the other hand, in order to investigate the role of L1 in learning the L2, several scholars study particular linguistic aspects of the L2 of learners with different native languages (Odlin: 1989; Kellerman: 1983; Gass: 1979; 1983; Hyltenstam: 1984). These researchers talk about the facilitative effect of L1 in learning the L2. They assume that learners might pass through different levels of development; in the early stages of such development they might make use of their L1 if there is a comparable corresponding feature in L2. Gass (1979; 1983) investigated the structural phenomenon of pronominal retention in 17 adult learners of English with different mother tongues arriving at a conclusion that those learners whose first language does not permit pronominal retention, similar to English, committed fewer errors in comparison to those learners whose first language permits it.

Other scholars, alternatively, have suggested an inclusion of the L1 in the teaching methods of the L2. The first method, which is called New Concurrent Method (Jacobson: 1990) is based on the assumption of using CS between Spanish and English in schools. The study suggests that the teacher can switch to L1 (Spanish) to convey meaning of difficult ideas, to maintain discipline, and to reward or warn students. The second method is that of Dodson’s Bilingual Method (Dodson: 1967) which recommends that a teacher might read the L2 sentences more than one time and follow the reading with an interpretation in L1. Despite the fact that these two teaching methods receive a great deal of criticism in the literature, they attract the attention to the unreasonable earlier attempts of the strongest approach of banning the L1 in the classroom.

Some researchers (cited in Gray: 2005), moreover, suggest that the culture of the first language users, might also be helpful in learning several aspects of the second language.
Oller: 2005; Chihara Sakurai, and Oller: 1989 assume that changing the names of particular places or characters mentioned in L2 literature into more familiar L1 comparable names might facilitate the general comprehension of L2. Floyd and Carroll, (1987: 90-91), alternatively, assume that the cultural origin of folktales for Iranian EFL students had a greater effect on their comprehension than did the level of the syntactic and semantic complexity of the text. That is, Iranians performed better on the texts adapted in English from their native culture than on a text from American culture.

Adapting a more communicative approach to the benefits of using CS inside language classroom, Skiba (1997) assumes that L2 learners might be allowed to use their L1 for the sake of communicative continuity which might help in interference avoidance.

2.3. CS inside and outside the Classroom

One of the theoretical problems that researchers studying CS inside the classroom are usually encountered with is related to the debatable assumption of whether it is acceptable to consider using the L1 inside the classroom a similar or a different manifestation of CS in comparison to CS in its naturally occurring contexts; i.e. in bilingual/multilingual communities. As it is explained in 1.5 above, CS, in its naturally occurring context, is a manifestation of language contact which appears due to several sociocultural, political, and geopolitical reasons. An essential question might be asked in this reference: Is it satisfactory to consider a foreign language teacher, who has learned his second language in a different monolingual community, a bilingual and hence is competent to CS between the two languages as bilinguals do in bilingual communities?

In the course of his distinction between the bilingual and monolingual communities, Lyons (1981-2006: 281) states:

We can admit, as a theoretical ideal, the possibility of perfect bilingualism, defined as the full range of competence in both languages that a native monolingual speaker has in one. Perfect bilingualism, if it exists at all, is extremely rare, because it is rare for individuals to be in a position to use each language in a full range of situations.

Building on Lyon’s assumption, one may conclude that as far as there are no perfect bilinguals, it is possible to take CS outside the limited circle of bilingual communities to arrive at a more extended sense of switching between any two languages regardless the sociolinguistic circumstances in which these languages are learned and used. Yet, it might be useful to identify the similarities and differences between the various sociolinguistic circumstances of using CS inside and outside the classroom.
An early attempt in this context is made by Valldes-Fallis (1978) who distinguishes between “academic” and “natural” bilingualism. He assumes that the academic bilingual becomes so by choice and “generally acquires such additional language skills in an academic context, and may or may not actually be a member of a bilingual community”\(^4\), whereas the natural bilingual is “the product of a specific linguistic community that uses one of its languages for certain functions and the other for other functions and situations”. Valldes-Fallis (ibid) concludes that teachers should not consider academic CS as a sign of language strength or weakness because it is similar to the natural CS in having particular messages to be conveyed.

Talking about a context more comparable to the background situation of this study, Mattson & Burenhult (1999) distinguish between what they call the “tutorial” and “natural” situations of CS claiming that CS in tutorial situations differ a great deal from its counterpart in natural discourse. They state (ibid: 4):

> We should bear in mind that the foreign language teacher perhaps should not be regarded as a true bilingual who can choose freely between different codes. Instead we are normally dealing with a monolingual individual who has skills in a foreign language and whose task is to teach this language to other monolinguals.

Yet, a rapid review for the functions of these two faces of CS in the academic and the naturally occurring contexts of bilingual communities might illustrate obvious correspondences. Sert (2005) assumes in this reference that the CS in natural contexts “may have commonalities with its observable applications in foreign language classroom”. Such commonalities are ascribed to the fact that in spite of the differences, the language classroom is, in one way or another, a social bilingual community which is the basic requisite for CS to occur.

2.4. Various Functions of Using CS inside the Classroom

Building on the new approach of specifying some types of restricted permissions granted to in-class CS mentioned in the above sections, several scholar suggested many pedagogical and “para-pedagogical” functions of using the L1 in the classroom depending on various types of empirical studies.

\(^4\) It should be clearly defined here that in this study Valldes-Fallis concentrates on investigating the Spanish-English bilingual community in the US wherein English is a second language whether inside or outside the classroom. Such situation differs in many respects in dealing with CS in the context of teaching English as a foreign language which is the background of this study.
Many researchers cite a variety of utilities that might be gained in using the L1 in the classroom. An early attempt in this reference is that of Atkinson (1987) which includes “eliciting language, checking comprehension, giving instructions, explaining classroom methodology, translation, checking for sense, and testing”. Eldridge (1996: 305-307) suggests four functions: equivalence, floor-holding, reiteration, and conflict control. Other researchers (Polio and Duff:1994; Mattsson, A. and Niclas Burenhult: 1999; Swain and Lapkin: 2000; Sert, Olcay: 2005; Thoms et al.: 2005; Li Wei and Zhu Hua:2006) keep on listing more and more functions for the use of L1 inside the classroom. Polio (1994: 145) responded to some of these lists stating that “There is little left to do in the L2, if all the above may be done in the L1”.

In this paper we are going to deal with the following most obvious three functions elicited in the data of the study.

2.4.1. Meaning Conveyance

Meaning conveyance might be used in a different way by students and teachers inside the class. One of the main functions of using the L1 in both the naturally occurring contexts of CS and by the students inside the classroom is to fill the communicative gabs that might occur due to language incompetence in L2. Mattson & Burenhult (1999), who call such phenomenon, the “linguistic insecurity”, assume that it is generally associated with students’ rather than teachers’ L2 performance because teachers usually stay away from using the words and the phrases they don’t know. Eldridge (1996: 305-307), on the other hand, calls this phenomenon “equivalence” assuming that it is usually occurred as a result of students’ linguistic deficiency in L2. Moreover, Pennington (1995) examined the CS of eight English teachers concluding that they sometimes use the students’ L1 to compensate their low language ability and little motivation.

Teachers, on the other hand, might use the L1 to save time and effort when they need to explain some difficult L2 words or ideas. Franklin (1990) (cited in Cook: 2001) finds that 39% of the tested Scottish teachers used the L1 to explain the difficult meanings, and only 8% used the L2. Lin, Angel (1988) studies the performance of an English language teacher in a
secondary school who shares the same L1 (Cantonese) with the students assuming that the
teacher followed the English question with “a series of elaborations of the meaning in
Cantonese”. Sert (2005) believes, in this reference, that the teacher’s continuous inclination to
follow the L2 instruction with L1 interpretation might have some negative pedagogical
results.

2.4.2. Class Organization

Allwright and Bailey (1991) mention three major stages in classroom discourse:
Planning, classroom interaction, the outcomes. The first stage includes the pre-class processes
which include “syllabus”, “method” and “atmosphere”, the second stage incorporates the
main classroom activities; some of them presented by the teacher and others by both the
teachers and the students such as teaching, students’ participation, doing exercises, raising
questions and listening to answerers etc., the third stage incorporates the “input”, “practice
opportunities”, and “receptivity”. The process of in-class CS might appear in more or less
percentages in one or in all of these three stages depending on various rudiments such as the
topic under teaching, the students’/ teachers’ language proficiency, the teacher-students
mutual cultural and sociolinguistic backgrounds etc.

Firstly, many researchers find that teachers are inclined to CS to the L1 when they like
to maintain discipline. On the basis of a comprehensive data of in-class CS, Lin (1988)
assumes that teachers switch to Cantonese to indicate a move from teaching to disciplining.
On the other hand, CS might occur when a teacher likes to carry out a particular task for
instance reading a text followed by asking some reading comprehension questions. Macaro
(1997) came to a general conclusion that teachers are forced to use the L1 after they feel
desperate to keep on in doing particular class activities; a condition which usually happens
when the students are under various types of pressures as in examinations and quizzes times.
Thoms et al. (2005) investigates the use of L1 by second language learners when a jigsaw task
in a computer chat environment is performed. They assume that the use of L1 was proved to
be an effective procedure for a management strategy.

Another reason for in-class CS, in this respect, is the topic switching. Mattson &
Burenhult (1999) suggest that the grammar instruction is always preferred to be introduced by
using the L1 due to the fact that “the proficiency of the students is not developed enough to
include terms necessary in grammar instruction”. Mattson & Burenhult (ibid: 6) also includes

5 It should be mentioned here that I usually avoid using the L1 in teaching English grammar in contrast to what
is concluded in the study of Mattson & Burenhult among many other studies; one of the reasons might be the
language distance between English and Arabic on one hand and French and Sweden (the two languages of their
study). I have noticed that translating the grammatical terms used to describe, for instance, the English tenses
to Arabic has always proved to be ineffectual.
the shift from the “focus on meaning to focus on form” within their general use of topic switching since some of their data demonstrate some ambiguous topic changes.

2.4.3. Sociocultural Functions

The interaction between teachers and students inside the classroom is very complicated. Teaching is not solely pedagogical but involves various other tasks like promoting learning motivation, marinating classroom discipline and fostering a favorable human relationship that is conducive to both teaching and learning in the classroom setting… It is no exaggeration to say that the degree of success of the pedagogical to a great extent depends upon the degree of success of the other tasks (Lin, 1988:83).

Mattson & Burenhult (1999) noticed that their subject teacher occasionally “expresses his sympathies by switching to Swedish, and continues with French as soon as focus back on the task”. Macaro (1997) assumes that praising the students if they do something well is more “real” if the teachers use their mother tongue. Polio & Duff (1994: 318) adds that a personal remark presented by a teacher in response to a students’ cough might send a particular sociocultural message for everybody in the class; a message which might be understood like “I am now speaking to you not so much as your English language teacher but as your friend” (Lin, 1988 :77).

Accordingly, the teacher who shares the same L1 with his students might make use of it in maintaining a kind of language solidarity; an action comparable to a continuously occurring action in bilingual and multilingual societies. It has always been very-well known that one of the most influential functions of CS in any bilingual community is to maintain solidarity among its members particularly at the times of political or cultural threats (Romaine, 2000; 162-3). In this reference, Auerbach (1993: 10) states: “whether or not we support the use of learners’ L1s is not just a pedagogical matter: it is a political one, and the way that we address it in ESL instruction is both a mirror of and a rehearsal for relations of power in the broader society”. Carless (2004: 107), alternatively, talks about the teacher-students socio-political mutual background stating that by using the L1, “teachers may be resisting “linguistic imperialism or showing pride in their own heritage”.

An interesting notice has been presented by Mattson & Burenhult (1999: 9). They suggest that In-class CS might also be performed by switching form the first language to the foreign language when the teacher does not share the same mother tongue with his students.
The Advisability of Using English-Arabic Code Switching as a Teaching Strategy in EFL University Classroom: A Case Study

The Swedish teacher in their study sometimes switch from Swedish (the language of instruction) to French (the L2 language) in order to “mark a socializing even”6.

3. The Study

3.1. The Background

The study investigates CS as a teaching strategy in a foreign language university classroom. The teacher used the audio-recorded method in data collection. He recorded his lectures along a whole summer semester which lasted 45 days. The average duration of each lecture was 50 minutes. CS in 20 lectures was identified and analyzed. Since it is usually a more condensed semester in comparison to the other ones, the lectures were presented five days a week. The semester’s main topic was about teaching English phonetics to the Jordanian Arab learners of English. The students’ major was English and phonetics is one of the courses they usually study in their second year. The classroom was a language lab which comprises 25 students (seven male and 18 female).

The course description states as:

“This course aims at introducing students to the scientific description of the English sound system as well as sound articulation, sound functions and sound sequences. In addition, the course will focus on practical training in producing sounds, words, and sentences in connection with their phonetic transcription.”

The course components are:

- Production of speech sounds.
- Vowels and consonants
- English cardinal vowels

6 The researcher has noticed that some native English language teachers working in Oman practice code mixing for different reasons mainly by using some Arabic words usually religiously oriented because they are deeply rooted in the Arabic culture for the same purpose of marking particular social events.
3.2. The Limits of the Study:

1. The study concentrates on the functions of the teacher’s CS as opposed to the students’ CS.
2. The study deals with CS inside the university classroom as opposed to CS in its naturally occurring context of bilingual communities.
3. The subjects of the study are monolingual learners of English as a foreign language; their mother tongue is Jordanian Arabic.
4. The major aim of the course is “phonetics” in comparison to the other courses offered in the university which deal with teaching the four English basic skills.

3.3. Data Analysis

The three functions of using the L1 in the classroom, mentioned in 2.4. above, were verified in the data of the study. With reference to the first function (conveyance of meaning), the data proved that the teacher usually switched to Arabic to translate some difficult words or to elaborate in L1 to explain some difficult ideas (e.g. excerpts 2, 5, 15, 17 and 6).

In excerpt 2, the teacher repeated the same English question in L1 for the sake of emphasis and to explain some difficult ideas.

**Excerpt Two:**

What’s the difference between /t/ and /n/ with reference to the place of articulation? There is no difference... they are the same because both of them are alveolar... the /t/ the blade touches the alveolar ridge and the /n/ the blade touches the alveolar ridge... they are similar... the difference in the manner of articulation; the /t/ is oral, whereas /n/ is nasal. What is meant by the place of articulation?

**CS E-A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning... whereas does exactly the articulation occur. (explaining difficult ideas)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**CS A-E**

OK? Did you get it?
In excerpt 5, the teacher translated the word “vibration” to Arabic to save time and effort in explaining the term.

**Excerpt 5**

*If you just put your thumb here and say /ð /, you would feel the vibration, but if you say /θ /, there is no vibration*

**CS E-A**

| Vibration means “ihtizaz”  
(explaining difficult terms) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>فا cumshot يعني اهتزاز</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In excerpt 15, the teacher had a long elaboration in L1 to explain the acoustic sound property of “pitch”.

**Excerpt 15**

*Think about musical instruments; any musical instrument should have a box...*

**CS E-A**

| For instance the lute and the guitar contain a box to amplify the sound; How can the size of such a box, whether big or small, affect the sound properties?  
How does the size affect the pitch of the sound?  
Sounds like those of insects, for instance, that of a cockroach; Does it have a high or a low pitch?  
Women’s sound is low because of the pitch.  
(Explaining difficult less important conceptions) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>يمكن للعود والكيتار كلاهما فيها صندوق العرض أنه يضخم الصوت. أما كانت الآلة الموسيقية فيها صندوق كبير أو صغير ثلثم، هذا يؤثر على حجم</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>هذا كان كبير هذا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>راج يكون عالي أو وسطي.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مشابهة أصوات مثل أصوات الحشرات مثل صوت العصور يكون صوتاً بي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>عالي أو وسطي؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>صوت المرأة زقين بسبب ارتفاع</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

259
In excerpt 17, the teacher believed that explaining how to pronounce the schwa required more attention and hence switched to Arabic and asked one of the students to read some words with the schwa.

**Excerpt 17**

*Listening to audio-recording material about how to pronounce the schwa /ǝ/: hear, square…*

**CS E-A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning, the schwa is almost silent, let's hear it from the beginning; who can read the words from the beginning but slowly and loudly? From the beginning till the word “square”.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(explaining information and performing classroom activity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>CM: Schwa</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>تفريحا ميلتفظ، خلي بلا نسمع من البداية من يقرأ الكلمات بس</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>CM: slowly and loudly</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>من البداية إلى حد</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>CM: Square</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, in excerpt 6, the teacher switched to translate the term “transcription”.

**Excerpt 6**

*With reference to what is called orthography or the transcription...*

**CS E-A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning the way it is written (explaining difficult terms)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The following points should be noticed in this reference:

- The main objective of this course as it is stated in the course description above is to “introduce students to the scientific description of the English sound system as well as sound articulation” so the concept of increasing the L2 exposure is less important here.

- The function of explaining some difficult words or ideas by using the L1 as illustrated in these four excerpts is associated with some other functions. For instance in excerpt 17, it is associated with another function of using the L1 to perform particular classroom activities.

- The researcher has noticed that the teacher switched to the L1 whenever he talked about Arabic or wanted to compare English and...
Arabic with reference to particular phonological or grammatical phenomena (see excerpts no. 9, 11, 16, and 20).

- It is usually very hard to identify the average percentage of the use of L1 in performing a particular function in comparison to the others since there is no clear-cut boundaries between these different functions; an L1 sentence, a phrase, or even a word might be used to perform more than one function simultaneously.

On the other hand, the second function of using the L1 in the classroom for the sake of organizing the class has been verified clearly in the data of the study (e.g. excerpts 1 and 10). In excerpt 1, the teacher tried to warn the students to avoid being distracted telling them that he would put them in an embarrassing situation by some direct questions. This word of warning was followed by a socializing comment to avoid shocking or upsetting the students. Thus, in the second part of the excerpt, the teacher tried to create a social atmosphere of understanding his students’ reasons of being distracted. Accordingly, this excerpt shows that CS here is a sign of function two and three together.

**Excerpt One:**

*Why do we consider /w/, /j/, and we have /r/ as approximant consonants and not vowels.... Hadeel? Why?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CS E-A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What did I ask? What was my question? I don’t understand why haven’t you got used to my procedure yet? I know this is your first semester with me; I am always asking those students who I find distracted; you have to stay on alarm in order to avoid any embarrassment. I know that you may pass through difficult times or some particular difficult situations; yet, please, not only in my lecture, when you entered the classroom you should leave everything outside. (discipline with socializing / avoiding distraction)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CS A-E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ايش كنت اسال ... ثنئي سوالي ... يعني انا معرف انتوا متعودتوا عليه ... همه صحيح انتوا اول مرة تاخذون عندي يعني اني وين ماشوف وقت سرحان اساله متعودتوا لازم تلتبتين حتى لاجر هوجك وازم تلتبتين على طول الخط ... اني اعرف مرات في واحد بمر في مشاكل معينة أو في موقف معين بس رجاء مش بس بمحاضري لما تجرون على المحاضرة تحاول ترك كلشي خارج المحاضرة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*So I was asking about /w/ and /j/ why we consider them approximants and not vowels. That was my question... Yazin*
In excerpt 10, the teacher used the L1 spontaneously; he was annoyed because one of the students kept arriving late. He thought that using the L1 might have more effective power to control the class.

**Excerpt 10**

Aymen, this is the last time I allow you to arrive late; if you do it again, I won’t allow you to enter the class. You did it two times before; I can’t accept that.

(Spontaneous)

On the other hand, in order to organize the classroom the teacher repeatedly switched to Arabic in order to attract the students’ attention to what he believed to be important (e.g. excerpt 4, 8, 13).

**Excerpt 4**

Now the lower teeth are not usually involved in sound production; they are just used for the sake of resonance...

**CS E-A**

In other words, if I am going to ask you to fill in the blanks

One of the questions will be like this; alright?

(attracting the attention)

The teacher here inserts the phrase “fill in the blanks” in his Arabic discourse; a process which is usually called code mixing rather than code switching. The idea of using the L1 here in talking about the expected questions in the exam is to attract the students’ attention to bring them back to the classroom as many of them were always loosing their focus. A similar demonstration is applicable to excerpt 8 and 13 below; though the CS in 8 is also associated with the function of performing a class activity.

**Excerpt 8**

Now, you need to learn how to write these sounds. I am going to give you words and asking you to write how these words are pronounced by using these sounds; ok? This is called transcription.

Switching the code…

**CS E-A**

You will have one question in the first, second, and
The Advisability of Using English-Arabic Code Switching as a Teaching Strategy in EFL University Classroom: A Case Study

Excerpt 13

What is this sound? Is it /ʃ/ or /ʒ/?

CS E-A

The problem is I concentrated only on how to distinguish between the dark and the light /l/ and disregarded that you also have a problem in pronouncing /ʃ/ and /dʒ/. (attracting the students attention to what the teacher identifies as an important topic)

Within the same framework of organizing the classroom, the teacher used the L1 in performing various types of classroom activities as it is clear in excerpt 8 above in addition to excerpts 12 and 18 below:

Excerpt 12

All your papers should be left aside; prepare a small piece of paper; write your name then write the cardinal and short vowels; I don’t want to see any paper in front of you; if you like you can locate them in the chart.

The teacher answers: Of course. (Performing a task)

The teacher here stops teaching to do a particular quiz task; he gave the instructions in Arabic. When one of the students found his teacher using Arabic he asked his question in Arabic too.

Excerpt 18

\(^\text{1}\)During the lecture, one of the students mispronounced the /ʃ/ and /dʒ/ and the teacher has discovered that they have a serious problem in Jordan in pronouncing these sounds due to the effect of the Jordanian dialect of Arabic; hence he found it was more appropriate to use Arabic to attract their attention about this problem.
In addition to the functions of meaning conveyance and organizing the classroom, the data of the study show the occasional use of L1 for various types of affective reasons. In excerpts 18 (cited above), 7 and 19 the teacher made some friendly attempts to establish a social atmosphere in the class.

**Excerpt 7**
(A late student comes in)
Are you with us?

**CS E-A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why are you late?</th>
<th>أتى ﻣتأخر؟</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ok it seems that you feel hot; sit down here close to the air condition.</td>
<td>طي thônد قدك ﻋند أدا ﻫنا ﺑأردي ﻓآدي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Creating a social atmosphere)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Excerpt 19**
Ending the lecture: Alright; that’s enough for today

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did anybody download this software? I think not everybody has an internet access.</th>
<th>هذا البرمجي ﻓين ﻓدا ﻳنلاى ﻟه ﻣت ﻢدا ﻓناى ﺑأردي</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some students answered in Arabic that they couldn’t download the software.</td>
<td>multipled أنك ﻳنلاى ﻓناى ﻋند أدا ﻫناأ ﻣأدا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What if I do?</td>
<td>أدا ﻫنا؟ ﺑأدا ﻫدا ﻡأدا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would reward myself with two additional marks. (Ending the lecture; socialization)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, the data show that the affective function is usually associated with some other ones as it is clear in excerpts 3 and 14 below.

**Excerpt 3**
Teeth also give special resonance...

**CS E-A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you remember its meaning that I mentioned before?</th>
<th>أتى ﻳرقد أدا ﻓآدي ميما؟</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
The teacher here looked for some feedback from the students to realize if they had comprehended some already mentioned data; he mixed his question with some humorous remarks to arouse laughter to create a social atmosphere.

**Excerpt 14**

Now, from now on if you want to check the meaning of a particular word in a dictionary, don’t check the meaning only, you have to check the way it is pronounced...

**CS E-A**

This excerpt contains many functions performed in one L1 sentence. It starts with trying to repeat the same idea in Arabic to attract the students’ attention. In other words the teacher thinks that Arabic here would be more efficient. The teacher, afterwards, made some sarcastic remarks about the students’ motivation in choosing their major.

Another important function of the use of L1 that the data of the study show is what other scholars call “topic switch” (e.g. Mattson & Burenhult: 1999; Nilep: 2006 and Sert: 2005). Most of them associate this function with explaining the L2 grammar by making use of the students’ prior knowledge of the grammar of their L1. Excerpts 9, 11, and 16 demonstrate clearly this function.

**Excerpt 9**

*The phonological distribution for vowels is different from the phonological distribution for the consonants not only in English but also in Arabic ....*
CS E-A

In Arabic we don’t have consonant clusters; in the collegial variants of Arabic we may have such a thing, but in the standard Arabic we don’t; we either have a vowel or an inflectional diacritical mark placed between two consonants; we are talking here about phonology not phonetics.

(Topic Switch)

Excerpt 11

You, here in Jordan, are mixing between the second and the first cardinal vowel /I/ and /e/ be careful …

CS E-A

As your colleague said the /I/ and /e/ are pronounced similar to the two inflectional diacritical marks assigned for accusative and genitive cases; you’ve got a problem here; ok, you…

The students reads and the teachers listens

Things have been mixed now; you usually mispronounce /e/ as /I/, but you did the opposite.

( Topic Switch)

The teacher in these two excerpts found that it would be more appropriate to use Arabic to talk about Arabic phonology and making a comparison between Arabic and English pronunciation.

Excerpt 16

Please try to pay more attention to /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /ʃ / and /ʒ/ they are very confusing for you here in Jordan because simply…

Which one of these sounds you have in your various dialects?
/kafak/ /kaɪfak/ /shlonek/ what are the sounds that change here?

The /k/ is velum not like /ʃ / and /tʃ /

Do you see how close they are; that is why they are so confusing; even their names “fricatives” and “affricates” are very close.

Ok what about this one; do you have it in your dialect?

Aha it exists; so you have the four sounds in your dialect.

The difficulty is when you produce a sound like the retroflex /r/ which does not exist in your mother tongue. That is why the British can not produce particular Arabic sounds and also the Greeks. The students: Also the Jewish.

The students answered

The students: Also the Jewish.

The students: Also the Jewish.

The students: Also the Jewish.

The students: Also the Jewish.
This is the longest excerpt in which the teacher and the students entered into a long discussion in L1 about a comparison between the various sounds in English and in the Jordanian dialect of Arabic.

The following excerpt 20, moreover, shows the teacher’s attempt to use the L1 to perform two different functions of “topic switch” and “affective function”:

**Excerpt 20:**

*Asking one student: What is the difference between the definite and indefinite articles?*

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t be embarrassed; you are a student and I am expecting you to commit mistakes. You may say “I don’t know” that’s it; but don’t say something you are not sure about.</td>
<td>CS: A-E: you can do it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even in Arabic we have the same idea concerning the “definite” and “indefinite”; we say “kitabun” and “alkitab”.</td>
<td>CM: retroflex /r/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CM: mother tongue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CM: Standard dialect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The students adding..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CM: They have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CM: But not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4. Findings and Discussion

---

The teacher’s mother dialect is Iraqi Arabic and he is not well-acquainted with the Jordanian dialect of Arabic.
The data elicited from the 20 audio-recorded lectures manifest various types, functions, and durations of using Arabic inside the classroom. Most of the excerpts show that the teacher is using Arabic for particular purposes as it is explained clearly in the above section. Cook (2001) assumes in this reference that teachers who share the same native language with their students might switch to their mother tongue in the following three different ways:

(a) Spontaneously,
(b) for direct translation, or
(c) intentionally.

Spontaneous switching is very rare in the data (excerpt 10); direct translation (excerpts 3, 5, and 6) and intentional switching (all the excerpts) are more prominent. The intentional switching is used to serve various types of functions illustrated in 3.3. above.

As it is obvious in table one below, the lectures’ average time is 41.24 Min.; ranging from the maximum time of 51.41 Min. to the minimum time of 24.19 Min. The data also show that the average duration of L1 used in the class is 5.90 Min. ranging form the maximum use of 12.13 Min. to the minimum use of 1.5 Min. The average percentage of using the L1 in the class as it is clear in figure 1 is 13%, and hence the average percentage of using the L2 is 87%.

Figure 1, on the other hand, manifests that the longest duration of using the L1 occurred in lecture No. 5 (31.82%). In this lecture, there is a 480 minute excerpt in which the teacher talked about three secondary ideas namely: the biological functions of some articulators such as the larynx and the pharynx which are not used in producing English sounds; the second idea was about some physical sound properties such as “pitch” which is not included in the course description, the third idea was an explanation of the word “cartilage” and the teacher here elaborated in talking about football players knowing that most of the students have an interest in this topic. The shortest duration of using the L1 occurred in lecture No. 14 (5.4 %). The lecture’s main topic was to describe the differences between affricate and fricative sounds in terms of manner and place of articulation and their phonological distributions. That topic had an integral part within the general outlines of the course.

Furthermore, the data show a variety of elements involved in switching to Arabic by the teacher. The most prominent one is what other scholars call “topic switch” (e.g. Mattson & Burenhult: 1999; Nilep: 2006
and Sert: 2005). Mattson & Burenhult: 1999 state that “certain aspects of foreign language teaching such as grammar instruction are preferably expressed in the mother tongue of the students”. The data present a different, but related, aspect of the topic switch mentioned by those scholars. The teacher seemed to have a potential tendency to switch to Arabic when he liked to compare between the English and Arabic phonological systems (see excerpts 9, 11, 16, and 20). In excerpt 16, for instance, the teacher talked about particular Arabic consonants in comparison to their English counterparts, and in excerpt 9, he talked about consonant clusters in English and Arabic.

Another important element involved in the teacher’s CS is his inclination to explain the various types of the course materials at any expense including the L2 exposure reduction. In many cases the teacher switched to Arabic because he believed that the topic under discussion wouldn’t be plainly comprehended by his students due to its highly theoretical nature. In excerpt 15, for instance, the teacher presupposed that the abstract nature of the concept of “pitch” might obstruct the student’s comprehension and hence he thought that it might be useful to explain it even in Arabic.

The other important factor is the nature and the objectives of the various types of classroom activities. Classroom activities vary depending on the nature and the topic of the course (for instance practical VS theoretical/ optional VS obligatory etc.), the students’ L2 proficiency, and the teacher’s academic standards in teaching methodology. The practical course on which the data of this study is based required particular types of activities including listening to students pronunciation, watching some video-recorded lectures, listening to many audio-recordings, using a
mixture of computer’s software to explain the articulators movements and positions among many other tasks. If the instruction associated with quiz task mentioned in excerpt 12, for example, was explained in English, it would be possible to cost the teacher more time and effort.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Total time</th>
<th>Time in Arabic</th>
<th>Percentage of Using L1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30/06/2009</td>
<td>45.36 Min.</td>
<td>10.18 Min.</td>
<td>22.45 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/07/2009</td>
<td>51.41 Min.</td>
<td>4.52 Min.</td>
<td>8.79 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/07/2009</td>
<td>48.29 Min.</td>
<td>11.87 Min.</td>
<td>24.58 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/07/2009</td>
<td>49.54 Min.</td>
<td>9.76 Min.</td>
<td>19.70 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/07/2009</td>
<td>38.12 Min.</td>
<td>12.13 Min.</td>
<td>31.82 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/07/2009</td>
<td>41.41 Min.</td>
<td>5.9 Min.</td>
<td>14.40 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/07/2009</td>
<td>39.20 Min.</td>
<td>4.40 Min.</td>
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<td>14/07/2009</td>
<td>37.15 Min.</td>
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<td>5.33 %</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>04/08/2009</td>
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<td>2.71 Min.</td>
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<td>2.75 Min.</td>
<td>11.36 %</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>824.97 Min.</td>
<td>118 Min.</td>
<td>14.30 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>41.24 Min.</td>
<td>5.90 Min.</td>
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Table One
The Data Statistics
4. Conclusion
The Advisability of Using English-Arabic Code Switching as a Teaching Strategy in EFL University Classroom: A Case Study

The conventional approach against banning the use of L1 in the classroom is no longer taken for granted; many researchers have suggested that CS in language classroom should not always be associated with language incompetence; on the contrary, it might be utilized as a useful method if it is used in a proficient way. Yet, it should be noticed that the teachers should be highly cautious in this respect as Baker (1997) assumes that although using the L2 learners native language inside the classroom might be helpful “to build conceptual understanding and to process knowledge and skills; instructors must be clear about when and how to use it”.

The study has come up with the following concluding remarks:

1. University classroom code switching is an indispensable process if the teacher shares the same native language with his students.
2. Instead of warning L2 teachers to create some hypothetical foreign contexts which might differ a great deal from their L1 counterparts in various cultural aspects, they might be advised to have a full control of using code switching inside the classroom by taking the advantage of sharing the native language with their students in supporting the general process of learning.
3. The use of L1 inside the university classroom should not exceed particular limits and should be used in a clearly identified purpose; for instance, to explain particular difficult terms, maintain the students-teacher solidarity, or to show discipline. Yet, occasional spontaneous code switching are not as harmful as they used to be considered particularly if we assimilate the inside classroom L2 learning to the natural L2 acquisition outside the classroom.
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