

University Of Gulf Sidra (UGS)

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*Code-switching: Repetition of a Phrase or Passage  
in Arabic by some Libyan English Teachers in the  
Secondary Education Stages – Ajdabyia city*

التحول اللغوي: تكرار العبارة أو القطعة باللغة العربية من قبل بعض معلمين  
اللغة الانجليزية الليبيين في مرحلة التعليم الثانوي – مدينة أجدابيا

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### Abstract

This study deals with the concept of code-switching for English language teachers and the extent to which it is used during the educational process. As the paper finds out that most teachers tend to use CS inaccurately, and this may cause a decrease in the level of language acquisition for the student. In addition, excessive use of code-switching leads mental incoherence of the student. Baker's theory reveals that repetition of a phrase or text in another language may be acceptable in explaining a given concept. However, it is not considered an approved method in all cases, which may negatively affect the student.

### ملخص الدراسة

تتعامل هذه الدراسة مع مفهوم التحول اللغوي من قبل معلمي اللغة الانجليزية ومدى استخدامها خلال العملية التعليمية. تبين من خلال هذه الورقة بأن معظم معلمي اللغة الانجليزية يميلون إلي استخدام التحول اللغوي بشكل غير دقيق مما يؤدي إلي انخفاض مستوى اكتساب اللغة لدى الطلاب. بالإضافة إلي الاستخدام المفرط للتحول اللغوي الذي يؤدي إلي عدم التماسك الذهني للطلاب. نظرية بيكر توضح بأن تكرار العبارة أو النص إلي لغة أخرى ربما يكون مقبول في شرح مفهوم معطى. مع كل ذلك فهي لا تعتبر وسيلة مضمونة في جميع الحالات التي قد تؤثر سلبا على طلبة المرحلة الثانوية.

## 1. Introduction

Code switching may be an indispensable issue in the field of teaching, especially in some stages that may require the teacher to refer to a specific point and want to clarify it in his or her mother tongue in the classroom. Some scholars have defined code switching in a variety of ways, but they may all be on the same direction. One of the researchers mentions that "code switching may occur in several types, including alteration of words, phrases, and clauses"<sup>(1)</sup>. Two scholars point out that many linguists have emphasized the point that switching between languages is a communicative option available to a bilingual member of speech community just as switching between styles and dialects is an option for the monolingual speaker <sup>(2)</sup>. Another author also mentions that one issue that frequently appears for children's' parents and also the teachers who teach students in different ages is when one language is mixed with another. Terms such as Hinglish, Spanglish, Tex-Mex and Wenglish ( respectively for Hindi-English, Spanish-English, Texan-Mexican and Welsh-English) are applied in derogatory fashion to describe what may have become accepted language borrowing within a particular society. However, in other bilingual societies, strict segregation of languages may be the acceptable standard for political, social, or cultural reasons. If there is a power struggle between different ethnic groups, then language may be seen as an initial sign of a separate identity, and the CS may be less acceptable<sup>(3)</sup>. The above author argues that "Codeswitches have a variety of purposes and aims. Codeswitching will vary according to who is in the conversation, what is the topic, and in what kind of context the conversation occurs. The languages used may be negotiated and may change with the topic of conversation". There are three types of code-switching, they are:

### 1. Inter-Sentential

In Inter-Sentential code switching, language switch is done at sentence boundaries-words or phrases at the beginning or end of a sentence. This type is seen most often in fluent bilingual speakers<sup>(4)</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> - Skiba, R. (1997). Code Switching As a Countenance of Language Interference. The Internet TESL Journal. Vol. III. No: 10.

<sup>2</sup> - Aranoff, M. and Rees – Miller, J. (2003). The Handbook Of linguistics. Blackwell Publishers: Oxford.

<sup>3</sup> - Baker, Colin (1988) Issues in Bilingualism and Bilingual Education. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

<sup>4</sup> - Polack, S. (1981). Syntactic structure and social function. In Duran, R. P. (ed.), Latino language and communicative behavior. Norwood, N.J: Ablex. 169-84. Google Scholar.

## 2. Intra-sentential

In intra-sentential code switching, the shift is done in the middle of a sentence. With no interruptions, hesitations, or pauses to indicate a shift. The speaker is usually unaware of the shift.

## 3.Extra-Sentential

This is the switching of either a single word or a tag phrase (or both) from one language to another. This type is common in intra-sentential switches. It involves the insertion of a tag from one language into an utterance in another language<sup>(1)</sup>.

## 2. Hypothesis

This paper hypothesizes that most of the English language teachers in the secondary school stages in the city of Ajdabyia tend to use code-switching in conveying some concepts, especially those that deal with scientific topics such as engineering, medical, physics and other kinds of science within the texts that may be an obstacle to the students. In addition to the grammatical rules in those educational curricula that require the teacher to compare the two languages. The teacher also tends to apply code-switching to get the student's attention during the lesson. Allow students to code switch when they have difficulty continuing a conversation in the target language. Allowing code-switching as a bridge between familiar and unfamiliar vocabulary often helps students get more comfortable conversing spontaneously in the target language.

## 3. Research Question

The researcher conducted a questionnaire on all secondary education schools located in Ajdabyia city, which are three public sector schools, where three teachers were chosen as random samples from each school. The questionnaire includes the following points:

- 1- The use of the mother tongue in code-switching to clarify a point in the grammar rules during the class.
- 2- Repetition of a phrase or a passage in Arabic to explain a concept in the text during the class.

<sup>1</sup>- Polack, S. (1981). Syntactic structure and social function. In Duran, R. P. (ed.), Latino language and communicative behavior. Norwood, N.J: Ablex. 169-84. Google Scholar.

### 3- Was the code switching applied in all previous school stages?

Each teacher is obligated to answer the points mentioned above by choosing the appropriate box that represents his or her use of code-switching during the lesson process, and then each of them tries to explain why tends to apply code-switching. The researcher also touched on the inclusion of another sample, namely students from the same schools from which the teachers were chosen, for the purpose of conducting a questionnaire in which the following points. Firstly, the use of the mother tongue in code-switching to clarify a point in the grammar rules during the class is very useful or not useful. Secondly, Repetition of a phrase or a passage in Arabic to explain a concept in the text during the class is also very useful or not useful. Thirdly, was the code-switching applied in all previous school stages? In the third point, the student must choose the appropriate item from the options represented in "always, usually, sometimes and rarely" which indicate the extent to which code-switching has been applied in the past academic years. The study also included sixteen students from the same schools from which the researcher chose the teachers. The researcher gave these students the same questionnaire that was given to teachers. The answers to both questions contain a different pattern more than the first questionnaire given to teachers. The student must choose one of the two options, the first is *very useful* and the second is *not useful*. Whereas the third question, the students have the option to choose one of the four answers by placing a line under the option he deems appropriate.

### 4. Aims of this paper

The objectives of this paper are limited to the following points:

- 1- Teachers' strategies for using code-switching in Secondary Education.
- 2-The effectiveness of the code-switching application in Secondary Education stages and the extent of its positive impact on these students..
- 3- Addressing the opinions and viewpoints of teachers during the application of code-switching in the educational process.
- 4- This study is trying to measure the percentages to use the CS through the frequency rates shown in the questionnaire that is implemented by the researcher.

- 5- It may provide an opportunity for the researcher to conduct a further study on the subject of code-switching due to the importance of the topic, especially in teaching English.
- 6- Shedding light on the teachers' opinions in the interpretation of their use of code-switching in communicating with their students during the lesson.
- 7- Did the students early benefit from the application of this process in the previous academic years or not?

## 5. Literature Review

This study attempts to determine the mechanism of explaining the context in the classroom based on the code-switching, which has become a strategy adopted by a large number of Libyan teachers in teaching English language. International scientific journals discussed many aspects of code-switching in addition to specialized books that dealt with this concept by many researchers due to its great importance in bilingualism. One of the authors refers that Code-switching is the upshot of two languages or two cultures that met in contact with each other and as a consequence of some changes that effect the population and social policies. Many forms of CS can be observed in speech community might be considered as manifestations of these social changes at discursive level<sup>(1)</sup>.

Therefore, understanding how various types of CS are perceived by individuals who are conditioned and constrained by their material and symbolical position in society and their psychological disposition is helpful in order to get how these social changes are diffused among these individuals. Sometimes the prior threat of CS to preserve ethno-linguistic identity can also contribute to the negative evaluation of CS <sup>(2)</sup>. The attitudes towards CS were not found to affect the types of CS that bilinguals produced<sup>(3)</sup>. Some scholars concluded that the speakers' reported attitude toward code-switching, which is measured simply by asking whether people should insert Welsh and English in the same dialogue between people, could predict the degree to which they used mixed specific phrases<sup>(4)</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> - Coupland, N., Kristiansen, T. (2011). SLICE: Critical perspectives on language de (standardization). In Coupland, N., Kristiansen, T. (Eds), Standard languages and language standards in a changing Europe (pp. 11). Oslo, Norway: Novus Press.

<sup>2</sup> - Karimzad, F., Catedral, L. (2018). "No, we don't mix languages": Ideological power and the chronoscopic organization of ethno linguistic identities. Language Society, 47.

<sup>3</sup> - Montes-Alcala, c. (2000). Attitudes towards oral and written code switching in Spanish-English bilingual youths. In Roca, A. (Ed), Research on Spanish in the United States (pp.218). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.

<sup>4</sup> - Parfait Couto, M.C., Deuchar, M., Fusser, M. (2015). How do Welsh-English bilinguals deal with conflict? Adjective-noun order resolution. In Stell, G., Yakpo, K.

Code – switching is frequently applied in bilingual societies or by bilingual speakers<sup>(1)</sup>. They use certain codes to transfer their intentions to each other. He also emphasizes that code – switching is considered one of the explicit and communicative strategies in conversations. It would be useful if the same results would still be supported and a more accurate handling of the attitudes towards code switching. In Libya, all English language teachers go through the code – switching during the explanation process of the lessons, whether the topics are grammatical or textual, and the purpose is always to enable the student to reach the intended information without any difficulties. But it may deviate from the true course. We note that some international curricula for teaching English, such as New Head Way contains a pattern of code – switching, especially at the beginner level. Where each unit includes a question, the student tries to translate a question that contains a set of sentences through which the student tries to convey them into his own language. As if it is evidence that the language shift may be one of the patterns of learning English language, but it must be in an academic way in order to achieve its purpose.

## 6. Methodology

This paper employed the qualitative and quantitative methods. The researcher was based on qualitative approach to examine the views of teachers well as of students. Both debates are directed towards the code-switching. in order to discuss the data. He has also used it as the quantitative method in order to clear the numbers of teachers and students as well as the statistic ratios showed by the results of this study. The methodology followed in this study by the researcher was based on the interpretation of opinions and views of both parties as opined by the fifth point of Baker's twelve over-lapping purposes of code-switching. The repetition of a phrase or passage in another language may also be used to clarify a point. Some teachers in classrooms explain a concept in one language, and then explain it again in another language, believing that repetition adds reinforcement and completeness of understanding<sup>(2)</sup>.

## 7. Discussion

Through the questionnaire submitted through the research, which targeted nine teachers and fifteen students from four public schools and among these schools, the school of AL-Motfoqeen, Ajdabyia branch, where three teachers were chosen from this school, all of whom study at secondary level. The questionnaire includes three paragraphs. Each of

<sup>1</sup> - Coulmas, F.. (2005). Changing language regimes in globalizing environments. International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 2005(175 – 176), 3 – 15.

<sup>2</sup> - Baker, Colin (1988) Issues in Bilingualism and Bilingual Education. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

These three paragraphs contains four boxes, which indicate the extent to which the teacher uses these paragraphs during the educational process within educational institutions. If we look closely at teacher (1), his opinion about the first paragraph was that he uses CS *sometimes* in his teaching of grammatical rules. The same teacher mentioned that CS may bring the concept of the rule closer to the student, while his answer to the second paragraph was using CS in repeating phrases or texts *usually* because he thinks that transferring phrase or texts using the mother tongue "Arabic" might help explain the meaning to the student. When the researcher asked the teacher about the extent to which codes-switching was used in the previous school stages, the reply was *usually* and the reason is that most curricula in the English language contain topics that may be difficult for the teacher. He tries hard to approximate and simplify the information in his mother tongue. Teacher(2) made most of his choices about the three points by choosing *usually* perhaps from the researcher's point of view, his choice was somewhat convincing.

This was shown by his modest explanation in the questionnaire that Libyan students tend not to use in their daily lives nor to talk to each other and to practice it on holidays. Although they learn it for more than seven consecutive years, which may make the student's level of English constant for several years. consequently, they may forget what they learned during the last semester. Teacher (3) interacted with the first and third point by using *usually* by placing a mark / in the *rarely* box on the second point of the questionnaire, as his explanation was controversial from the researcher's point of view, as he indicated that it is correct not to use the mother tongue, i.e. Arabic, in the classroom except for necessity.

The maximum *rarely* when using code-switching in the classroom, the student did not have the burden to use the target language and he will memorize what he gives in his language and not in the target and it is suitable sometimes to use code-switching between the two languages in case there is a similarity in the explanation so that it is easier for the student to understand otherwise the language should not be used the original is not in the classroom at all. In a consensual manner between both teachers (4) and (5), where they are from different schools, all of their answers marked / inside the *usually* box. Teacher 4 did not provide any comment about his answers to explain the reasons why he chose the same answer, while teacher (5) tended to use *usually* in code-switching Between English and Arabic, and the reason is from his pint of view is that the curriculum strategies for the English are not applied in the required manner, as these curricula were developed by

consultants who may not have a connection with the educational process of the ministry of higher Education, meaning in other words they may not have sufficient knowledge of the environment of public education and his negatively affects on the pattern of the proposed curricula, which may not take into account the time, place, or statistics of students inside the classroom, in addition to the absence of language laboratories, which may contribute to a major role in rising the student's competence in English. In a realistic way, we look at it as imaginary, and the learning environment is the realism that takes care of major shortcomings. In other words, the current curricula and the learning environment follow two parallel lines, but do not meet. Teacher (6)'s attempt was not much different from the previous answers. He also deals with choosing *usually* to answer the first two points, while his answer to the third question is *always* applied in his use of CS. Where it is indicated that he always seeks to explain in English, but it is not noted that the students from time to time cannot comprehend the meaning, as he usually tends to enter CS to clarify the meaning for the students, especially if the word or phrase is ambiguous to the extent that the student cannot comprehend its meaning.

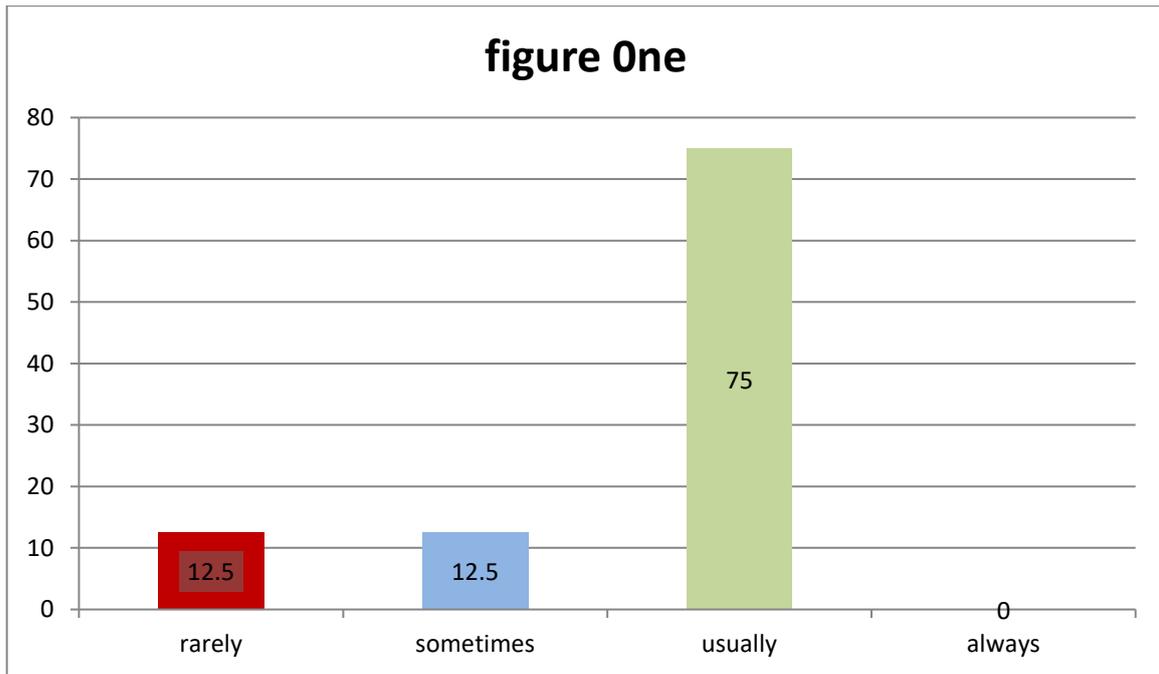
Teacher (7) chose the word *usually* to refer to the first point, and *sometimes* to refer to the second point, while *rarely* to answer the third question. The teacher thinks that it is necessary to use the mother tongue while explaining some grammatical structures to show the differences and similarities between both languages, especially if there is a great similarity between them. The teacher also added that the tendency to use code-switching in the formal language acquisition process during the teaching process in the early stages is useless, while the use of CS in the secondary education stages will be somewhat acceptable from his point of view. Teacher (7), on the other hand, answered as a diagonal line from the bottom left to the far right "rarely", "sometimes" and "usually". The same teacher thinks that it is necessary to use the mother tongue to explain some grammatical structures. The contradiction of his answer is that CS may not be appropriate in the early stages of education, while its use in secondary stages may be good, according to him.

Teacher (8) is from the School of AL-Motifwiqeen, where this school is classified as the most prominent school for the elite students in addition to the high quality of teachers. The teacher chose *sometimes* in terms of using CS around the first point, while he chose *usually* to answer the second and the third points. From the teacher's point of view, the application of CS depends on the level of awareness of the student, although it contains some criticism. Repeating the phrase or even the text using the mother tongue makes the students

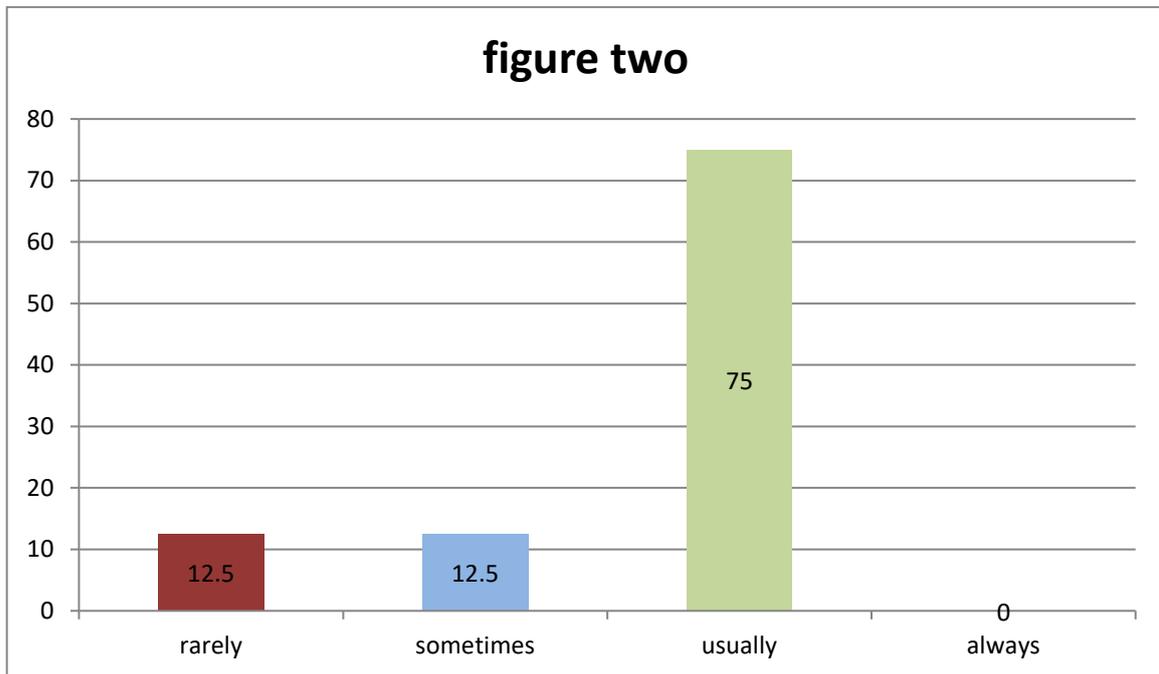
understand what is being said to them. The same teacher reinforces his saying that English-should be used most of the time, but if it turns out that the students gradually lose comprehension, the teacher in the matter should be tend to use the mother tongue. The second part of the questionnaire includes the students' opinions about answering the two points, the first point refers the use of the second language in code-switching to clarify a point in the grammar rules during the class and secondly, repetition of a phrase or a passage in the second language to explain a concept in the text during the class. Consequently, each one of them includes two options, the first is very useful and the second is not useful. Through the submitted questionnaire, eight students commented with the answer *very useful* to both points. As for the third question, their answers were *sometimes*. While there were two students who chose *not useful* for the first point and very useful for the second point. Regarding the third question, their answer was *usually*. Another student whose response to the first point was *not useful* and the second was *very useful*, while his answer to the third question was *always*.

## 8.Findings

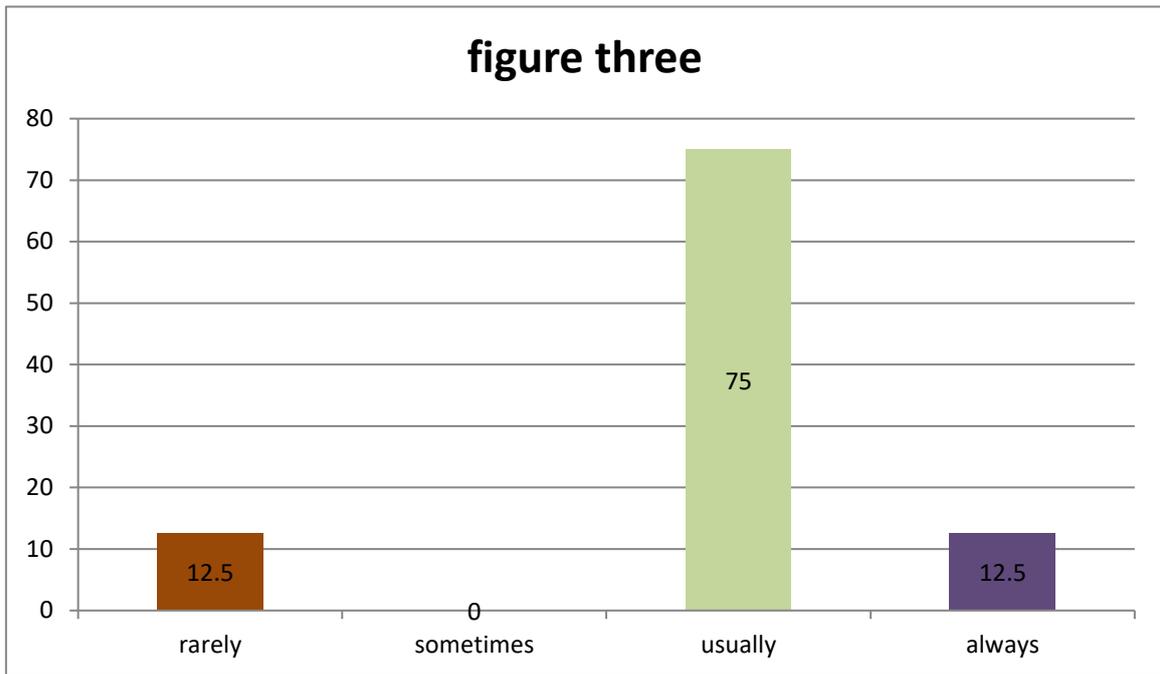
The results show that after discussing the opinions and viewpoints, the percentages that refer to the teachers' use of code-switching appeared frequently in the first three graphs whereas, the results of the study related to students are also shown in the charts four, five and six.



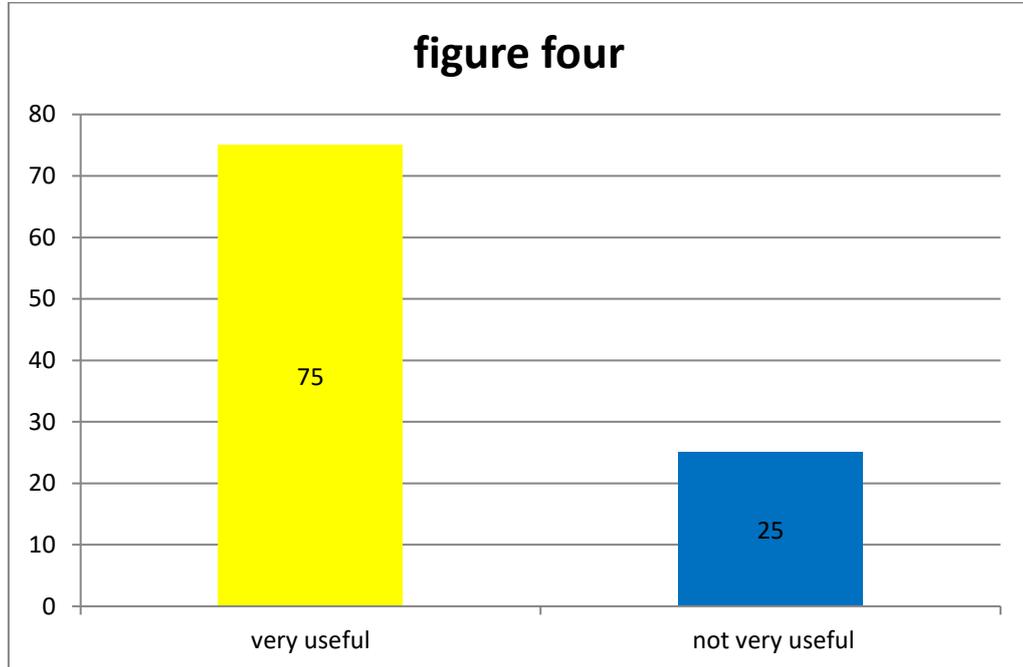
The use of the second language in code-switching to clarify a point in the grammar rules during the class.



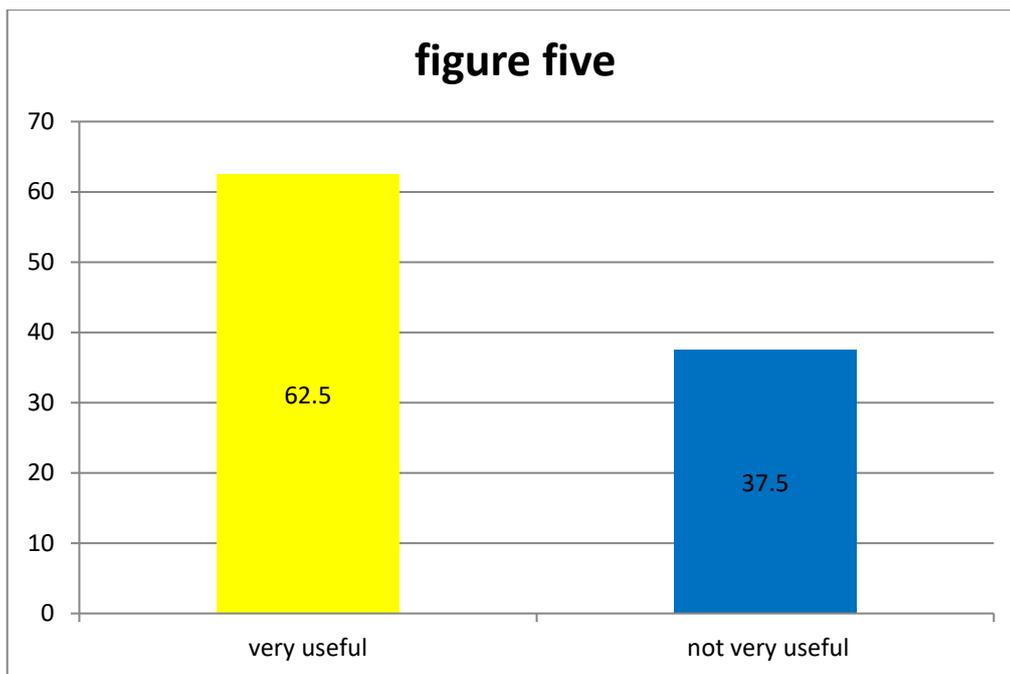
Repetition of a phrase or a passage in the second language to explain a concept in the text during the class.



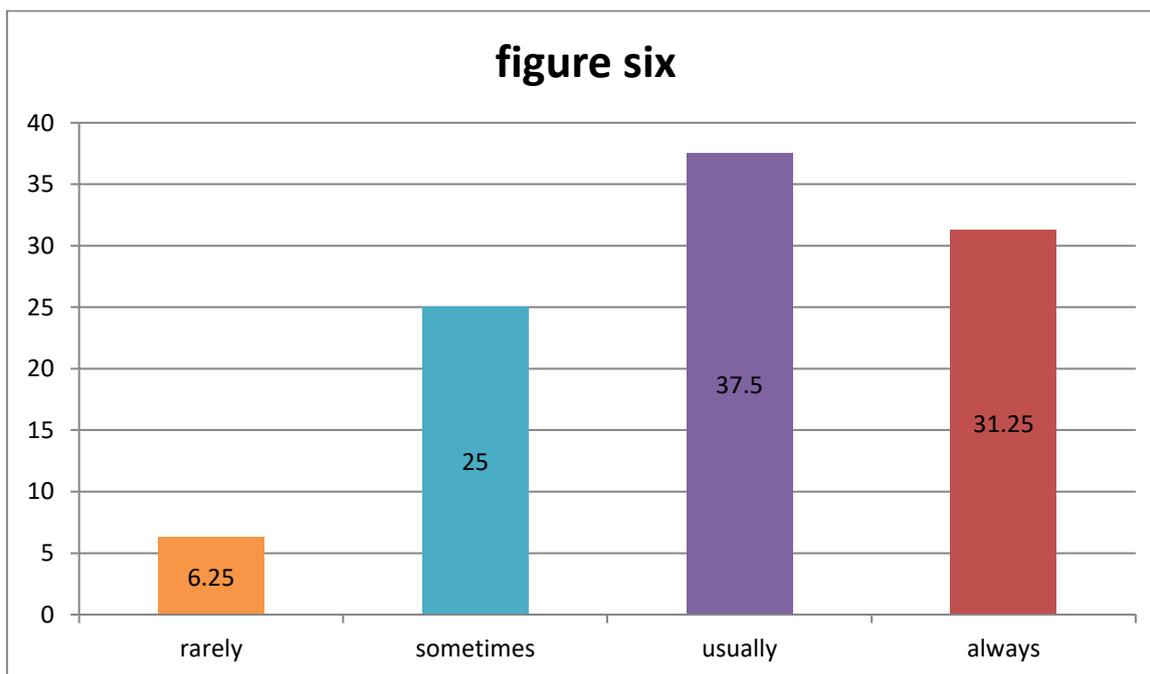
Was the code-switching applied in all previous school stage?



The use of the second language in code-switching to clarify a point in the grammar rules during the class.



Repetition of a phrase or a passage in the second language to explain a concept in the text during the class.



Was the code-switching applied in all previous stages?

## 9. Conclusion

This study shows that many Libyan teachers in English as a course tend to use Code-switching during the lesson frequently in a way that may deviate from the correct way of implementing the CS, which leads to distraction or delay in the process of acquiring the second language of the student. The conclusion as a whole shows the common compatibility between the teacher and the student and the mutual agreement, each of which is based on the code-switching as an appropriate method.

## 10. Recommendations

The recommendations proposed by the researcher are to provide training and educational courses for language teachers that deal with teaching methods, emphasizing the content of the curricula and providing the appropriate environment for both the teacher and the student. Among the main points recommended by the researcher is to provide training programs for English language teachers periodically during official holidays. Where these programs focus on basic skills in teaching, including teaching methodology under the supervision and coordination with the nearest academic body that includes an English language department and faculty staff who hold accurate qualifications in this field such as a PhD and Master degree. This idea may give teachers the opportunity to develop themselves in the field of teaching, as well as give them confidence in how to deal with the English language curricula, especially in conveying the concepts between the two cultures.

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- Polack, S. (1981). Syntactic structure and social function. In Duran, R. P. (ed.), *Latino language and communicative behavior*. Norwood, N.J: Ablex. 169-84. [Google Scholar](#)

## Appendixes

**Code switching: Repetition of a phrase or passage in Arabic by some Libyan teachers  
in the secondary education stages to clarify a point**

(Ajdabyia City)

Teacher's Questionnaire**Part A:**

Put the sign √ in the box that represents your use of code switching in teaching English

Teacher [            ]

| No | Items   | rarely | Sometimes | usually | always |
|----|---|--------|-----------|---------|--------|
| 1  | The use of the second language in code switching to clarify a point in the grammar rules during the class.    |        |           |         |        |
| 2  | Repetition of a phrase or a passage in the second language to explain a concept in the text during the class. |        |           |         |        |
| 3  | Was the code switching applied in all previous school stages?   |        |           |         |        |

Underline the word that represents your use of code switching (always – usually – rarely – sometimes) and explain why.

1-

2-

**Code switching: Repetition of a phrase or passage in Arabic by some Libyan teachers  
in the secondary education stages to clarify a point****(Ajdabyia City)**Student's Questionnaire**Part A:**

Does the repetition add reinforcement and completeness of understanding?

If YES choose useful

If NO choose not useful

| no | Items   | Very useful | Not useful |
|----|---|-------------|------------|
| 1  | The use of the second language in code switching to clarify a point in the grammar rules during the class.    |             |            |
| 2  | Repetition of a phrase or a passage in the second language to explain a concept in the text during the class. |             |            |

**Part B.**

Was the code switching applied in all previous school stages?

Always

Usually

Sometimes

Rarely