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A comparative study of novice and experienced EFL teachers' codeswitching in Chinese university EFL classroom

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Abstract

Scholars have focused on codeswitching problems for more than 50 years and have different voices about using codeswitching in the EFL classroom. This study used mix method to explore the EFL teachers' and students' attitudes towards using codeswitching in their College English classroom and the differences between novice and experienced teachers when they were using codeswitching at their pedagogies activities. 24 EFL teachers and 243 undergraduate students were involved in quantitative research, and 4 EFL teachers took participants in the qualitative analysis. The results showed there is no significant difference between EFL teachers and students' attitudes using codeswitching in the EFL classroom while, experienced and novice teachers have significantly different between novice and experienced EFL teachers by MANOVA. By qualitative analysis, some differences have been found between novice and experienced EFL when using codeswitching at their pedagogical activities. Problems have been discussed, and some suggestions are also put forward.

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Keywords: Codes-switching; EFL teachers; experienced; novice, attitude

1. Introduction

EFL teachers' classroom discourse is considered as one of the crucial factors influencing EFL teaching efficiently and effectively (Nunan, 1998). When students who take courses in foreign language contexts, EFL teachers' talk is more crucial, for what they are exposed in class linguistically might turn out to be the sole input for their language learning (Duff & Polio, 1994). However, there are still manifold facets of the issue, among which codeswitching (CS) is one of the most controversial and got the most attention in the present study (Ellis, 2014).

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Codeswitching (CS) in language classrooms refers to the phenomenon that the foreign language teachers alternate between students' mother tongue and target language, either intra-sententially or inter-sententially (Macaro, 2006; Levine, 2011). Myers-Scotton (1993) divides codeswitching into two categories: intra-sentential switching and inter-sentential switching. Hence, there are two separate codeswitching modes. One is inter-sentential codeswitching in which switching occurs between sentences. The other kind of codeswitching takes place when Chinese (L1) is used as the primary language to explain the teaching content to the students. Only when English phrases and columns are involved, they are switched to English (L2).

1.1. Literature review

There are some arguments about whether codeswitching could be used in the EFL classroom. Haugen (1950) argues that codeswitching should not exist in second language classrooms. Macaro (2001) emphasized that codeswitching is the interference of the mother tongue with foreign or second language acquisition based on Krashen's second language acquisition theory. Cook (2001) supported his viewpoints and noted that the use of the mother tongue would affect the input of the target language.

However, other scholars have been doubted these conclusions and hold a skeptical attitude on whether codeswitching would significantly influence students' EFL learning. Many researchers (Critchley, 1999; Schweers, 1999; Tang, 2002; Greggio & Gil, 2007) have argued that codeswitching can play an important role in contributing second language teaching and learning process. Auerbach (1993) found that the use of the mother tongue is sufficient and necessary for EFL learners, especially in easing the classroom atmosphere and improving beginners' reading, writing, and speaking abilities. Lin (1999) found that EFL teachers in Hong Kong embedded their native language into English and made students interested in learning and reading English more confidently. Levine (2014) holds that foreign language classrooms are in a multilingual social environment and that the mother tongue is an inevitable component of learners' cognition and communication. He advocates that teachers should use their mother tongue purposefully on the premise of guaranteeing comprehensible language input, and believed that the goal of foreign language education should be tantamount to train bilingual users. As to EFL teachers, they would feel guilty once use their mother tongue in class.

Furthermore, Sampson (2012) argued that to forbidden first language use was perceived as stopping to learning in classrooms. He disputed that students must not remain silent while they are in using their target language since studies pointed out that codeswitching could influence on teaching (Sampson, 2012). Similarly, some scholars (Martinez-Roldan & Sayer, 2006; Lehti-Eklund, 2013) also found through the use of codeswitching, it is helpful for students, and teachers use L1 to develop second language teaching and learning.

Additionally, Llurda (2006) mentioned that novice teachers tend to use codeswitching frequently to communicate with students. Erkunt and Yigitoglu (2018) supported this idea and notified that novice English as foreign language teachers are easy to use codeswitching during the classroom interactions. Al-Aqad (2018) indicated that novice teachers can be influenced by a classroom environment and used codeswitching at other language backgrounds. However, Puspawati (2018) found that experienced teachers tend to use codeswitching as a teaching method to facilitate students' learning by observing the classroom. Bilgin (2016) also mentioned that the use of codeswitching is related to teachers' teaching experience, and experienced teachers in Turkey took advantage of codeswitching to explain language points. Songxaba, Coetzer, and Molepo (2017) supported this viewpoint and pointed out experience teachers could create space for using codeswitching as a teaching strategy in Afrikaans learning and teaching.

1.2. Research questions

In light of the inconsistent results, it is necessary to investigate the attitudes of EFL teachers using codeswitching at their pedagogical activities and whether some differences exist between novice and experienced teachers using codeswitching. Hence, the research questions:

Q1: Are any different attitudes between teachers and students using codeswitching in the classroom?

Q2: Are there any difference between experienced university EFL teachers and novice teachers using codeswitching in the classroom?

2. Method

In order to investigate this study, mix methods were carried out to analyze two research questions. The qualitative method mainly explore whether there is any difference between EFL teachers' and students' attitudes towards using codeswitching in their EFL classroom, and whether there any difference between experienced and novice teachers using codeswitching in their classroom. And qualitative research mainly makes the comparison with the difference between experienced and novice teachers using codeswitching in their English language teaching.

2.1. Participants

24 EFL teachers and 243 undergraduate students were involved in this research. The quantitative self-report Likert scale questionnaires were arranged to teachers and undergraduate students, respectively. The researcher adapted the original self-report five points Likert scale questionnaire instruments for the study consisting of 17 items for the teachers and 14 items for the students with their demographic information.

Then four Chinese university EFL teachers from 24 teachers were involved in this research, and all 4 teachers from the same universities are observed for 2 weeks. 2 experienced teachers whose teaching age is more than 15 years, and 2 novice teachers whose teaching age is less than 3 years. The selected four teachers represent the average level of expert teachers and novice teachers respectively.

2.2. Data collection procedures and Data analysis

In qualitative research, video recording as a reliable technology enables the researcher to record naturally occurring activities that occur in ordinary habitats, such as the home, the workplace or the classrooms (Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2010). 16 classes of each teacher were recorded. Investigated teachers were not informed to guarantee the authenticity of classroom discourse. By one month observation, all kinds of teaching contents (such as reading, grammar, vocabulary, etc.) The selection criteria mainly follow the following principles, which refer to Yao (2006) with minor revision: 1. Teachers should teach completely and seriously in the classrooms. 2. Classroom environment should be normal and not deliberately prepared public classes. 3. All kinds of teaching contents (such as reading, grammar, vocabulary, etc.) should be included completely in the classroom. 4. Due to students' English proficiency is an essential factor to influence EFL teachers' codeswitching. Hence, almost the same levels of English classrooms are selected by referring to students' final scores.

In order to guarantee the authenticity of classroom discourse, the teachers were not informed of the purpose of the study in advance. The selected classes include reading, vocabulary, grammar (exercise-oriented and grammar-oriented), practice and evaluation. Four Teachers were also briefly interviewed after class. After the first collection of classroom data, all lessons were transcribed and coded according to codeswitching occurrences.

2.3. Data analysis

In the process of transcription, this study defines the English used in the whole class as the matrix language according to Myers-Scotton's Matrix Language Frame Model (1993), and the other is considered as the embedded language (Chinese). The transcription of codeswitching from matrix language (English) to embedded language (Chinese) or the mixture of matrix language and embedded language is conducted. Meanwhile, due to codeswitching is divided into inter-sentential switching and intra-sentential switching, hence, codeswitching in the classroom could be divided into Chinese-based intra-sentential switching and English-based intra-sentential switching, marked by C (E) and E (C) respectively.

3. Results

3.1. The Attitudes when codeswitching using pedagogical activities

The procedures of multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were conducted to investigate the difference between the teachers and students group whether there was a statistical significance in the study. The Box's M test, $p=0.059$, indicated the covariance matrices of the dependent variables; attitudes about the use of codeswitching were homogeneous. The multivariate result showed that using an alpha level of 0.05, the difference was not statistically significant, Wilks' Lambda = 0.956, $F(2, 17) = 0.384$, $p = 0.687$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.06$. As a result, both null hypotheses failed to reject. The multivariate $\eta^2 = 0.06$ indicated that approximately 6% of the multivariate variance of the dependent variables is associated with the teacher respondents. It indicated that both teachers and students hold the same attitudes towards using codeswitching at their pedagogical activities.

On the other hand, in Figure 1, the ratios of four EFL teachers using codeswitching of the total amount at their pedagogical activities are 32%, 35%, 19.7%, and 16.8%, respectively. The Grammar teaching of the highest percentage of codeswitching use is ranging from 18.6% to 52%. Teachers tend to use Chinese to explain the grammar points so that students could understand easily. In order not to impart the wrong information, the application of mixed language codes is reasonably one of the safer options. Reading teaching, including vocabulary teaching, is also one of the types of activities that require a certain amount of codeswitching, ranging from 8.9% to 32.8%. Taking advantage of the Chinese language would let EFL students understand the teaching objectives and new concepts quickly. The percentage of codeswitching in speaking and listening ranges from 4.1% to 12.3% and in writing and exercise from 10.1% to 49.3%.

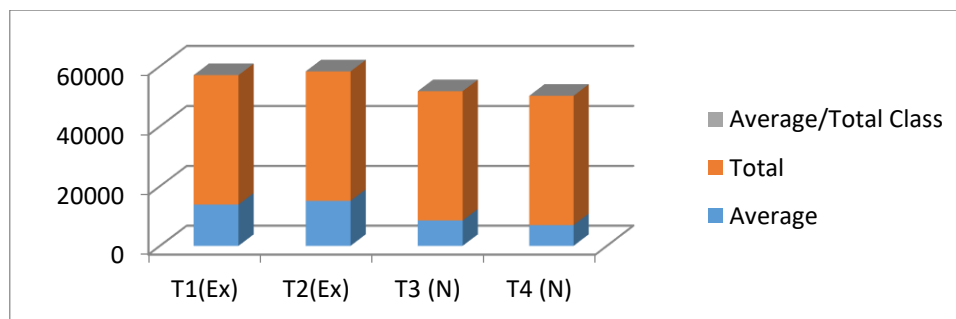


Figure 1 The Ratio of EFL teachers using CS at different pedagogical activities

Additionally, four teachers used codeswitching at different pedagogical activities according to Table 1. Table 1 showed that four teachers used codeswitching mainly to explain grammar explanation, writing, and exercising checking.

Table 1. Time spent on different pedagogical activities of four EFL teachers

Lesson	T1 (Ex) C-E	Average /Total class (5400)	T2 (Ex) C-E	Average/ Total class	T3 (N) C-E	Average/ Total class (5400)	T4 (N) C-E	Average/ Total class (5400)
1(Listening and Speaking)	142	0.071	156	0.056	101	0.039	98	0.041
2(Listening and Speaking)	243		145		112		123	
3 (Reading)	981	0.328	1021	0.354	867	0.299	785	0.266
4(Reading)	789		891		748		654	
5 (Grammar)	1034	0.394	1578	0.543	1067	0.361	879	0.304
6 (Grammar)	1093		1356		876		765	
7 (Writing and Exercise)	1192	0.408	1435	0.41	561	0.145	412	0.101
8(Writing and Exercise)	1011		781		224		129	
9(Listening and Speaking)	214	0.191	238	0.09	125	0.039	79	0.033
10(Listening and Speaking)	219		247		87		101	
11(Reading)	813	0.307	981	0.371	235	0.089	341	0.129
12(Reading)	845		1022		245		356	
13(Grammar)	1342	0.481	1453	0.52	765	0.296	451	0.186
14(Grammar)	1257		1356		834		552	
15(Writing and Exercise)	1298	0.493	1341	0.451	761	0.307	554	0.228
16(Writing and Exercise)	1365		1094		898		679	
Average	13838		15095		8506		6958	
Total	43200		43200		43200		43200	
Average/Total Class	0.32		0.3494		0.1969		0.1681	

Note: EX: experience teachers; N: novice teachers

3.2. Differences between Experienced and Novice EFL teachers using codeswitching

Table 2 shows below the means and standard deviations on the 24 teachers' attitudes according to teaching experiences. It showed that novice teachers have lower means than experienced teachers in attitudes towards codeswitching using at the classroom activities. It indicated that no matter novice and experienced teachers hold positive attitudes towards codeswitching at their teaching, while experienced teachers use codeswitching frequently compared to novice teachers.

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations on Teachers' Attitudes about the Use of codeswitching in Teaching English by Teaching Experience

Years of teaching experience	N	Attitudes	
		M	SD
Novice teachers (< 5 years)	12	21.97	8.46
Experienced teachers (> 5 years)	12	28.45	6.79

Besides, MANOVA was conducted to assess if there were differences between experienced teachers and novice teachers. The Box M test $p = 0.388$ indicated the covariance matrices of the dependent variables; attitudes about the use of CS were homogeneous. The multivariate result showed that using an alpha level of 0.05, the difference was not statistically significant, Wilks' Lambda = 0.893, $F(2, 17) = 1.337$, $p = 0.298$, and partial $\eta^2 = 0.22$. As a result, both null hypotheses failed to reject. The multivariate $\eta^2 = 0.22$ indicated that approximately 22% of the multivariate variance of the dependent variables is associated with the years of teaching experience.

Related to Table 1, the most significant differences between experienced and novice teachers are grammar and writing parts. Furthermore, the matrix language used by teachers in the classrooms is English and Chinese is embedded language. While it is different in expert teachers, experienced teachers use Chinese as the matrix language and occasionally embed English, especially, in grammar and practice classes, they use Chinese as the matrix language higher than English. For experienced teachers, in grammar and writing and exercise checking classes, Chinese is the dominant language, while English is still the dominant language for novice teachers. In listening and speaking classes, no matter experienced and novice teachers, all adopt the language model of Chinese as the matrix language.

Novice teachers used English as the matrix language in all their class activities, among which speaking and listening, reading, writing, and grammar class used less English than experienced teachers' classes. While experienced teachers mainly taught in English in reading and listening and speaking classes, but in grammar and practice classes, they used Chinese as the matrix language opposes to novice teachers, yet Chinese in their classroom activities was used in a slightly higher proportion. Teachers tended to use Chinese for grammar teaching. On the other hand, in terms of the analysis of two modes of codeswitching, novice teachers mainly used inter-sentential switching, while experienced teachers had more intra-sentential switching with Chinese as the matrix language. In grammar practice classes, although both groups of teachers had a certain proportion of intra-sentential codeswitching, however, experienced teachers used a higher percentage than novice teachers. In reading classes, the two groups of teachers' switching patterns were relatively consistent, both of which were mainly intra-sentential switching with Chinese as the matrix language.

4. Discussions

This study provided answers to the research questions. Both EFL teachers and students hold the same attitudes towards codeswitching using in the classroom. No matter what EFL teachers and students acknowledge that using codeswitching is useful for their English language learning and teaching. These findings coincide with the previous studies on codeswitching that have been supported in the literature review (Gumperz, 1964; 2009; Martinez-Roldan & Sayer, 2006; Seng & Hashim, 2006; Stavans & Swisher, 2006; Lehti-Eklund, 2013). They proposed to support the positive functions of codeswitching to maximize the success rate of teachers and students in second language learning and teaching. Meanwhile, in this result, codeswitching frequently is used in explaining the grammar and exercise part. This result is constant with Gulzar (2010), who informed that English proficiency may be improved when explaining grammar, new vocabulary, integrative class tasks, giving instructions, and in establishing communication with languages of contact, teachers, and learners who use codeswitching, may increase English mastery. Farruggio (2009) and Raschka et al. (2009) provided support and emphasized a linguistic bias did not discourage language codeswitching in second language learning and teaching. Codeswitching is a distinct type of teaching strategy that has reflected sufficient English

understanding, which unlocked new aspects in their teaching (Seng & Hashim, 2006; Ahmad & Jusoff, 2009).

The responsibility of a teacher is providing students with a wealth of classroom opportunities while developing an equivalent level of English in reaching the level of English teaching (Lehti-Eklund, 2013). EFL teachers should guarantee that every student has an equal chance to succeed, along with native English speakers. The findings from this study would also provide insights to students on how codeswitching as a resource supports the claim that L1 assists in developing L2 positively towards the success in their language attainment. EFL teachers should provide students with affective needs, a successful classroom experience, saving time, and reduced stress, were why three of four teachers explained why their use of mother tongue to facilitate their second language learning process (Copland & Neokleous, 2011).

This finding is contradicted by Macaro (2001) and Cook (2001). Although EFL teachers' attitudes on L1 use codeswitching in the classroom were contradictory and complicated due to guilt in L1 use to learn L2, however, even an advocate for L2 only policy, allowed L1 student interaction frequently. EFL teachers' actual behavior was different than their stated behavior and under-reported their L1 classroom beliefs and practices (Copland & Neokleous, 2011). On the other hand, the study found that in reading and speaking and listening classes, no matter experienced and novice teachers mainly use English to teach. In grammar and writing and exercise classes, both groups of teachers teach in Chinese. It shows that teachers tend to use their mother tongue (Chinese) in grammar and exercise classes.

This research is consistent with previous studies (Guthrie, 1987; Duff & Polio, 1994). Under the same class pattern (grammar and exercise classes), novice teachers use English more frequently, and mainly use inter-sentential switching with complete meaning, while experienced teachers mainly use intra-sentential switching with English embedded in Chinese, and the use of English largely depends on materials. In terms of the analysis of the specific modes of codeswitching, novice teachers mainly use inter-sentential switching, while experienced teachers have more intra-sentential switching with Chinese as the matrix language. In grammar practice classes, both groups of teachers have a certain proportion of intra-sentential codeswitching, but novice teachers use a higher proportion. In exercise classes, the two groups of teachers' switching patterns are relatively consistent, both of which are mainly intra-sentential switching with Chinese as the matrix language. Generally speaking, the use of novice teachers' English and non-text-based authentic communicative English is higher than that of experienced teachers' use of English. This finding is consistent with the results of Guthrie (1987) and Duff and Polio (1994), which they suggested that in the classrooms with English as the matrix language, both groups of teachers turned to Chinese in the teaching process mainly for further explanation, translation, questioning, explanation of grammar and vocabulary, and also for classroom management and expression of praise, criticism and other emotions to students.

However, this study is different from Yao's (2012), which found that interpretation, translation, questioning, and classroom management are the main functions for codeswitching. In the classrooms with Chinese as the matrix language, experienced and novice teachers turned to English mainly for explaining, translating, asking questions, explaining grammar and vocabulary, language demonstration. This inconsistency might be because the perspective of different types of classes has different codeswitching used in the classroom.

Additionally, experienced EFL teachers used codeswitching more frequently than novice teachers. This result is supported by Puspawati (2018), Bilgin (2016), and Songxaba, Coetzer and Molepo (2017). English in Chinese-dominated classrooms comes from textual materials. That is to say, experienced teachers tend to quote English from textual materials, supplemented by the proportion of Chinese explanations, translations, or questions. Experienced EFL teachers turn to Chinese mainly to translate and express communicative emotions such as criticism and praise in the reading and vocabulary classes,

which is consistent with other foreign language classes investigated before (Guthrie, 1984; Duff & Polio, 1994).

Besides, this finding also contradicts to Llurda (2006), Erkunt and Yigitoglu (2018), and Aqad (2018). The reason might be a certain proportion of novice teachers are used English mainly related to teaching, and interpersonal communication is very high in classroom management, which is inconsistent with the relevant studies of Lin (1999), Duff and Polio (1990). Although it can be indicated that novice EFL teachers have a high level of language proficiency, while it might be ignoring the students' language level so that they could master the language points well. From the perspective of codeswitching modes, novice teachers mainly turn to complete English sentences in interpretation and questioning and lacking analysing, feedback, and explanations. In language demonstrations, experienced teachers generally adopt the form of Chinese in which English vocabulary and phrases are embedded. While novice teachers mainly integrate English words and phrases in Chinese, most of the complete English sentences come from textual materials.

5. Conclusion

This study examined teachers' and students' attitudes about the use of codeswitching in the English classroom and also analysed the differences between experienced and novice teachers. The results found that teachers and students have the same attitudes towards using codeswitching, and experienced teachers used codeswitching more frequently than novice teachers by using the MANOVA. This research enriched the theories of codeswitching and provided enough evidence and data for further codeswitching research. This researcher also provides the reference about the controversial issue of using mother tongue in foreign language classrooms. This study also found codeswitching's rationality and existing problems when exploring the use of the classroom code of College English teachers in China, and it helps colleges and universities administer to focusing on EFL teachers' teaching. There are also some limitations. For instance, only 24 EFL teachers involved in the survey, and 4 teachers observed for transcription. In addition, this study is only focused on undergraduate students, and College English teachers and other subjective have not been considered.

6. Ethics Committee Approval

The author confirms that ethical approval was obtained from Zhejiang Yuexiu University of Foreign Languages. (Approval Date: June 05,2020).

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Çin üniversitesi yabancı dil olarak İngilizce sınıfında acemi ve tecrübeli İngilizce öğretmenlerinin dil değiştirmesi üzerine karşılaştırmalı bir çalışma

Öz

Araştırmacılar 50 yıldan fazla bir süredir dil değiştirme problemlerine odaklanmış ve EFL sınıfında dil değiştirmeyi kullanma konusunda farklı görüşlere sahipler. Bu çalışma, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin ve öğrencilerin Kolej İngilizcesi sınıflarında dil değiştirmeyi kullanmaya yönelik tutumlarını ve pedagoji etkinliklerinde dil değiştirmeyi kullanırken acemi ve tecrübeli öğretmenler arasındaki farkları ortaya çıkarmak için karma yöntem araştırma deseni kullanıldı. 24 İngilizce öğretmeni ve 243 lisans öğrencisi nicel araştırmaya katılmış ve 4 İngilizce

öğretmeni nitel analize katılmıştır. Sonuçlar, İngilizce öğretmenleri ile öğrencilerin İngilizce sınıfında kod anahtarlamayı kullanma tutumları arasında önemli bir fark olmadığını, tecrübeli ve acemi öğretmenlerin, ancak yeni ve deneyimli EFL öğretmenleri arasında önemli ölçüde fark olduğunu gösterdi. Nitel analizle, pedagojik faaliyetlerinde kod anahtarlamayı kullanırken acemi ve deneyimli öğretmenler arasında bazı farklılıklar bulunmuştur.

Anahtar sözcükler : dil değiştirme; İngilizce öğretmenleri; tecrübeli; acemi; tutum

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