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**The Influence of Code Switching on the Comprehension and the  
Lexical Acquisition of EFL Learners**

Extended essay submitted to the Department of English as a partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of master in Language Studies

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**Academic year: 2018 - 2019**

## Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my parents who were always supporting me by their prayers and encouraging words.

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor Dr. Omar Azzoug for the continuous support of my Master study and related research, for his patience, motivation, and immense knowledge. His guidance helped me in all the time.

My sincere thanks also go to Dr. Semmoud, Dr. Berrabeh, and Mr Hadjadj who accepted to read and evaluate this humble work.

A special thanks to my very dear brother Abdellilah, Without his precious support it would not be possible to conduct this research.

## ABSTRACT

The present research work deals mainly with the influence of code switching on the comprehension and the lexical acquisition of EFL learners. It aims at determining that code switching, which is considered as a sociolinguistic phenomenon, can be used as a learning strategy that enhances the English language learning. To reach this end, two questionnaires have been administered to fifty four students and ten teachers, respectively, at the English department at the University of Tlemcen. The analysis of the findings shows that code switching develops the learners' language skills and improves the understanding of the students. Besides, code switching helps the teachers in conveying the meaning easily. As a result, language shift in EFL classrooms ameliorates the learning and it can be an efficient learning strategy if rationally used.

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## List of Abbreviations

CS: Code Switching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

TD: Tlemcenian Dialect

AA: Algerian Dialect

## General Introduction

One of the strategies that could be used to make learning more effective in second and foreign language classes is the situation of shifting between languages among teachers and students. That is they express their ideas and thoughts by selecting different languages. This act refers to the phenomenon of code switching which attracted the attention of many scholars.

In this study, the researcher tries to figure out if the use of code switching in EFL classrooms enhances or deters the learning of English; and if code switching helps the teaching of English. For that, two research questions have been asked:

Does code switching enhance or inhibit the Algerian student's English learning?

Does a rational use of code switching in the classroom help the learning of English?

Consequently, the following hypotheses have been formed:

The use of code switching in the Algerian classrooms tends to enhance the student's learning of English.

The use of code switching in the classrooms should be utilized as a strategy in ELT classroom.

The present study investigates the influence of code switching on the comprehension and the lexical acquisition of EFL learners. It attempts to show the weaknesses and strengths in using code switching as a strategy to ameliorate the learning of languages. In this research work, the sample population chosen is LMD1 and LMD2 English students and ten English language teachers at Tlemcen University. They have been selected to answer questionnaires that have been chosen as a research tool.

This research paper is divided into two chapters, theoretical and practical. The theoretical part includes some definitions of code switching and its relationship with language learning. The second chapter is concerned with the practical part in which two questionnaires were used. Through which data were analyzed and interpreted.



# CHAPTER ONE

## Glimpses on Codes witching as a Social Phenomenon

## **Introduction**

In the case of Algeria where English is the first foreign language, the only place that permits learners to speak English is EFL classrooms. To overcome the difficulties faced by the English language learners that are due to the linguistic gap and low mastery of English, students use code switching.

Also, teachers use this phenomenon as a learning strategy to improve learning. This chapter presents the theoretical part of the study in which code switching is defined with its functions and types and studied in relation with learning.

### **1.1 Code switching**

The term code switching is used to refer to the choice to alternate between two or more codes within the same sentence or conversation. Nunan & Carter (2001:275) define it as “a phenomenon of switching from one language to another in the same discourse”. CS may occur naturally, unconsciously, and even go unnoticed. CS can also be willfully used to include or exclude, to mark one’s roles and rights, and to express an idea more accurately.

Most studies on CS in Algeria describe it as a natural phenomenon among individuals and groups. In the 21st century, learning languages continues its spread around the world as a result CS is becoming a natural universal consequence of globalization and multilingualism. In most Arab countries, there is evidence of CS with English as one of the language pairs, in a wide

variety of sociolinguistic settings as the internet, music, media, advertising, and business, in particular at Universities where English is taught as a foreign language.

## **1.2 Types of Code switching**

A switch can be spontaneous, natural and unintentional. Milroy and Muysken (1995) stated that sometimes code switching occurs between the turns of different speakers in the conversation, or sometimes between utterances within a single turn. According to Gumperz (1982), code switching is “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical system of subsystem”.

This means that when the speaker switches from one language to another means he just uses the second language as an alternative to the first language due to some reasons. According to Wardhaugh, (2006) “code switching is a conversational strategy used to establish, cross or destroy group boundaries; to create, evolve or change interpersonal relations with their rights and obligation”.

One could understand from the above listed definitions that the situation of the speech is the main element that leads the speaker to switch from one language into the other.

Scholars have tried to give typology of code switching phenomenon. According to Poplack (2000), these types are: tag-switching, inter-sentential and intra-sentential switching:

***Tag-switching***: it is related to the inclusion of a tag (e.g. you know, I mean ...etc).It is switching of either a tag phrase or a word or both from language B to language A. This type of code switching is very simple and does not involve a great command of both languages.

***Inter-sentential switching***: the switch occurs at a clause or a sentence that is in one language or another. This type may also occur between the speaker turn (Romaine, 1989; Myers-Scotton,1993;Hoffman, 1991). Here is the example from Puerto Rican bilingual Spanish /English which is given by Poplack in (Romaine,1989, 123): “sometimes I start a sentence in English and finish in Spanish”. According to Romaine (1989), inter-sentential switching could be considered as requiring greater fluency in both languages than tag-switching since major portions of the utterance must conform to the rules of both languages.

***Intra-sentential switching***: the switching takes place within the clause or sentence and it is considered to be the most complex form of switching. In intra -sentential code switching, syntactic risk is much greater as compared to the rest of two. Blom and Gumperz (cited in Sridhar, 1996) introduced another typology of code switching; situational and metaphorical code switching.

***Situational code switching:*** occurs when the context and the situation change. For example, a Tlemcenian speaker uses TD to talk to a friend at work. He uses TD to talk to his friend speaker however; he uses a combination of French and English to talk about the lecture matters to his student, and a mixture of TD and French to talk about matters concerning daily life items.

***Metaphorical code switching:*** occurs when there is a change in topical emphasis. Then they develop this concept and introduced another term named “conversational codeswitching”.

***Conversational code switching:*** this type is not guided by a change in context or situation, and it is so rapid and used for communicative purposes.

### **1.3 Reasons for Code switching**

There are many reasons that lead people to code switch from one language to another. According to Trudgill (2000), “the same speaker uses different linguistic varieties in different situations and for different purposes”. Generally, the speaker code-switches to fulfill the interpersonal functions of communication, and he does that according to the context and the purpose that lead him/her to say some utterances in one language and not in others. Gumperz (1982) illustrated where the code switching serves to fulfill the interpersonal functions of communication by giving some examples. Those examples are as follow:

- To convey precise meaning

- To ease communication, i.e., utilizing the shortest and the easiest route
- To capture attention, i.e., stylistic, emphatic, emotional
- To emphasize a point
- To communicate more effectively
- To identify with a particular group
- To fill in the status gap
- To establish goodwill and support

So, when the speaker code switches, it means that he wants to convey a specific meaning in a specific situation and for specific purpose.

#### **1.4 Code Mixing**

Several linguists have attempted to define the concept of code mixing. Trudgill(1992) defined code mixing as “the process whereby speakers indulge in code switching between languages of such rapidity and density, even within sentence and phrases that is not really possible to say at any given time which language they are speaking”.

Although some linguists argued that there is no cut between code switching and code mixing, however; there are others who were against this view. McClure (1978) defines code mixing as follows: The individual’s use of opposite language element by community. It occurs when a person is momentarily unable to access a term for a concept in the language which he

is using but access it in another code or when he looked a term in the code he is using which exactly express the concept he wishes to convey.

It is important to make a distinction between code switching and code mixing because code mixing discusses issues that are related to grammar, but code switching does not (Sridhar, 1996)

### **1.5 Discourse-Related Switching**

Martin-Jones(1995: 99)describes discourse-related switching as a speaker-oriented resource used to accomplish different communicative acts at certain moments within the interaction, and participant-related switching as listener-oriented because the speaker takes account of the “hearer’s linguistic preferences or competences”.

For Milroy &Muysken(1995),single-word switches are generally concerned with an unknown word, and are predominantly intra sentential, as they happen inside a sentence. Phrase-switches and clause-switches depend on the purpose or function of the switch but are mostly inter sentential because they take place between sentences.

Hancock(1997) considers off-record discourse as negotiation between students as they are behaving as their normal selves, as opposed to on-record discourse, when they are putting on an act. Off-record discourse which may happen in the L1 is named meta task if it concerns the task, and meta language if it concerns language or vocabulary.

Examples of functional switches are: equivalence, the use of or elicitation of an equivalent in the other language; making use of stopgaps; reiteration, to reinforce, emphasize or clarify messages; group membership, switches that occur as in-group identity markers; and alignment, switches to mark rights or roles of the speakers.

### 1.6 Examples of Algerian AA/Fr CS

1- /sərjezmanʒamemadit/.

*Surieusementjamais* مديت

*(Honestly, I have never given).*

2- /mexatratʒəɔbliʒekima fi lɔpital/

*Maiss* 'afikiما' esobligé'خطرات'hopital

*(But sometimes you are obliged to as in the hospitals).*

3- /meʃ litbibwala la famdəmənəʒ/.

*la femme de ménage* ولا للطبيب ؟

*(Not to the doctor but to the cleaning lady).*

4- /wdeɸwa fi lɛʒɔperasyɔn tɔulumaʃihakdha/.

*les opérations* هكذا مش تقولو.



*(And even, she sometimes does teach him how or how not to do surgical operations).*

## **1.7 The Strengths and Weaknesses of Code Switching**

### **1.7.1 The Strength of Code Switching**

According to Azzoug (2014) code switching helps to improve class participation by inducing a relaxed class atmosphere that allows Algerian young learners to perform much better.

More so, Lee (2006) in his research affirms that the code switching used by the students outside the classroom should be allowed inside the classroom discussion process because it helps the students contribute in the discussions process and bridges any social and cultural gap.

Jacobson (1990) argues that code switching helps the speakers to express themselves and present pragmatic meanings. In essence, using code switching in the classroom fosters a positive ambience according to Azzoug (2014).

In other words, the use of code switching in classroom seems beneficial because it helps in explaining abstract concepts and in defining difficult terms to students. This indicates that code switching makes explanations easy to understand for the students by the teachers. It also noticed that CS helps both the students and teachers to bridge the communication gaps in their classroom interactions.

### **1.7.2 Weaknesses of Code switching**

Negative views on code switching continue to give teachers, administrators, and even parents a cause for concern. Parents are worried about their children's language development. On a logical note, educators and linguists argue on whether code switching facilitates or impedes learning, that when a child's two languages are both underdeveloped, that he/she might be unable to cope using the curriculum in the school in either languages (Baker, 1995). Some parents do not like their children mixing two languages; they expect the two languages to become separate.

According to Palmer (2009: 42) "many multilingual speakers believe that code switching is a sign of linguistic weakness or inadequacy. In this sense many Algerian English language teachers work hard to fight code switching when it occurs in their classrooms". For them CS is a source of trouble only when one party is not used to the meanings of the words or phrases used in all languages".

Consequently, at this level, the researcher arises a question if a child is learning through a new language; will this affect attainment at school? In a possible answer if the learner feels their language, their home culture have been rejected, such learners may feel dislocated, have low self-esteem and lack the academic self-confidence. Azzoug (2015) also asserts that in light of all the conflicting findings of studies regarding the role of code switching in the

classroom, Algerian teachers, in particular, are confused on whether they should or should not allow their students to code switch in the classroom.

### **1.8 English in the Algerian Educational System**

In the field of education, including English (from personal experience), education in Algeria is still dominated by the view that knowledge is a set of facts that have to be memorized. As a result, students may have problems to understand academic concepts as what they usually get is something abstract.

Teaching and learning processes have to make it possible for the students to understand the meaning of their learning material.

Going back to the Algerian educational system, children are eligible to go school consisting of pre-school, five years of primary school starting at the age of six, and four years of intermediate and secondary school three years that ends with Baccalaureate exam. Then the university studies which is mainly handled in French and AA except for language studies faculty that must be taken in that language.

English as a foreign language was added to the curriculum starting from the 1<sup>st</sup> grade of intermediate school (age 11/12). Students receive two hour lessons of English per week and they have to pass the examinations, to move from one level to another.

## **1.9 The Teaching Practices in ELT Classroom**

In ELT classes according to some experienced teachers, the principle of teaching and learning has been forgotten or ignored. In other words, although teaching still focuses more on grammar than on vocabulary, In topic switch cases, the teacher alters his/her language according to the topic that is under discussion.

This is mostly observed in grammar instruction, that the teacher shifts his language to AA in dealing with particular grammar points, which are taught at that moment. In these cases, the students' attention is directed to the new knowledge by making use of code switching and accordingly making use of the native tongue.

At this point it may be suggested that a bridge from known (the native language) to unknown (a new foreign language content) is constructed in order to transfer the new content and meaning is made clear in this way as it is also suggested by Cole (1998): "a teacher can exploit students' previous L1 learning experience to increase their understanding of L2".

On the other hand, S. D. Krashen (1985) insisted that the students' L1 should not be used in the classroom so as to maximize the exposure of the target language. The more the L2 exposure students receive, the faster the students learn (Ellis, 2015).

### **1.10 Students' Codeswitching in ELT Classroom:**

Seidlhofer (2001) defends that CS and mixing can no longer be considered as interference errors or fossilization, but 'bilingual resources'. In the same vein of thought, Jenkins (2009: 95) states that because "almost all the English speakers are bi-or multilingual and make extensive use of CS and code mixing, it seems logical to include this phenomenon in grammars and dictionaries".

However, CS has been regarded by some members of the ELT community, as negative, and an undesirable behaviour to the extent to be considered as a failure to use and learn the target language or an unwillingness to do so in a sense leading to a lowering of standards (Bailey&Nunan1996). For the Arabic speaking world, it has been seen as a sign of laziness. In the teaching/learning sphere, CS is thought to be an inadequate command of the language that is the case of almost all English teachers at the department.

Where the Algerian students share and practice their AA the use of English is impracticable, as the two languages are active inside the learners' heads and will influence each other. Furthermore, the learners tend to converse inside the class in their mother tongue as naturally. Thus, the language switch is a communicative strategy that learners resort to compensate for their lack of language competence.

There are both opposing and supporting views of the use of CS in the classroom instruction as a form of effective learning strategy. Cook (2002:333) believes that in multilingual classrooms CS could be a problem. According to Sert (2005), students should share the same native language if CS is to be applied in instructions. Algerian students share AA as their mother tongue and English as their target language in between, CS takes place.

### **1.11 Teachers' Attitude towards the Classroom's Code Switching**

An enquiry that arises: why the Algerian teachers and experts in the field are so watchful about not to mix up codes whereas code switching is often considered as subconscious and spontaneous process.

At the English department, there are certain rules regarding classroom language usage and the main rule is that English should be only a language for classroom discourse. The university authority regularly monitors whether the teachers are speaking in English or not.

It is an observable fact that English is strictly maintained as the classroom medium of instruction in the department, though there is no written rule imposed. However, AA and French interference is prohibited, yet, code switching happens occasionally.

So the question is who starts the code switching. obviously the students start it and continue to indicate the reasons for students code switching such as, the English proficiency level, many of them are good at reading and writing but

are very weak in speaking as they are not exposed to everyday conversational English. Moreover, the fear and the shame of making mistakes in front of the teachers and the classmates make them feel shaky and they take help of code switching.

### **1.12 Students' Attitude**

The students of the English department usually have negative attitudes towards code switching whereas, students from other departments have no objections. Students prefer to have monolingual classes to enhance their learning and the English language skills and appreciated that the classes should be conducted in English without the interference of AA. Some students believe that code switching is not an effective way to achieve their success in language learning.

The educational level of the students plays an important role to determine effectiveness of code switching as a learning strategy. For beginners or low-proficiency learners, for instance, code switching is an effective strategy to learn, but, for intermediate level students, more target language input is required therefore, code switching is not approved or liked by their lecturers and students as well (Ling et al., 2014).

### **1.13 Role of the Learners' L1 in the L2 Classroom**

Two schools of thought have advocated for or have rejected the use of the L1 in L2 teaching and learning. These are the Bilingual Approach and the

Monolingual Approach, respectively. While the Bilingual Approach accepts or encourages the use of learners L1 in L2 teaching and learning, in monolingual teaching, the teaching itself, as well as the organisation of the work in the classroom, should take place in the target language“ (Simensen, 2007:236).

This was advocated by the Reform Movement in the advent of the Direct Method, in which “teaching in the target language itself would establish direct associations or links between L2 items and the things, actions, and the states talked about“ (Simensen, 2002:26).

Cook (2001) observes that over the last century, the use of the L1 in L2 learning has largely been regarded as taboo and was therefore banned or minimised. Cook also states that the proponents of the Monolingual Approach argue the following:

- The learning of an L2 should be modelled on the learning of an L1, that is, through maximum exposure to the L2.
- The separation and the distinction between the L1 and the L2.
- Students should be shown the importance of the L2 by its continual use.

Furthermore, the rationale behind the Monolingual Approach is that the more students are exposed to the target language (TL), the more quickly they will learn it, and as they learn and use it, they internalise it to begin to think in it.

In the words of Cook (2008:95), “the purpose of language teaching in one sense is to provide optimal samples of language for the learner to profit from –



the best input to the process of language learning.” Moreover, according to Macaro (2001:551), the proponents of L2 exclusivity argue that “teaching entirely through the TL makes the language real, allows learners to experience unpredictability, and develops the learners’ own in-built language system.”

However, many authors advocate for the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom and articulate the many benefits of doing so.

### **1.13 Views on Language Teaching**

Larsen-Freeman (2000:182) states that “...rather than adopting or rejecting methods in their entirety as being suitable or unsuitable for a particular context, different methods, or parts of methods, should be practised in the same teaching context.” By implication, therefore, Larsen-Freeman seems to be calling for the fusion of monolingual and bilingual L2 teaching methods.

This study is, thus, interested in finding out the language choices of the English teachers in the English classroom.

#### **1.13.1 Code switching in Educational Settings**

Code switching in educational settings was found to be prevalent, though sometimes an unconscious activity. Macaro (2005:72) observes that code switching is a common phenomenon in the L2 classroom. He also argues that teachers who are deprived of code switching from their tool kit are unable to offer their learners translation as a learning task. (ibid: 68)

Apart from that, Algerian teachers find it hard to offer learners learning activities and listening strategies since learners are likely to react more

positively to the task at hand if they are assured in their AA. Furthermore, avoiding code switching will inhibit the use of certain classroom activities which are useful. “There is nothing unnatural or psycholinguistically disturbing about codeswitching in the classroom. It just mirrors a natural process happening in naturalistic discourse” (Macaro, 2005:80).

Ferguson (2006) observes that code switching is not only very prevalent across a wide range of educational settings but also seems to arise naturally.

Sert (2005) also observes that the use of code switching by teachers is not always done consciously so the teacher is not always conscious of the functions and outcomes of code switching. While Simon (2001) avers that code switching in the classroom may be influenced by the teacher’s desire to make use of all the possible available means to facilitate learning.

Baker (2019:2) observes that “The use of two languages in the classroom is all about which language is relatively valued, privileged, how the use of two languages are synchronized and sequenced, negotiated and switched, how meanings and understandings are constructed”.

In Ghana, Yevudey (2013) explored the pedagogical functions of code switching in Ewe (an L1) and English (an L2) lessons and found out that code switching was used to explain questions and statements that learners did not understand, for introducing the English lessons, to correct learners who had provided incorrect answers, for acknowledgment of learners and calling on them

to participate, and to facilitate understanding and vocabulary acquisition through repetition of sentences by translation.

In the Algerian context, language practices such as code switching are a controversial issue often condemned by authorities and not accepted by teachers and some experts in the field; code switching has important pedagogical functions.

#### **1.14 The Linguistic Situation of Algeria**

The linguistic profile of Algeria is faraway more knotty than this, and its truth is so much difficult to pinpoint with its various configuration.

The Algerian language is discussed from a sociolinguistic point of view and Algerian legislation, Arabic is considered the standard as an official language, and French is viewed as the country's first foreign language and second language sociolinguistically speaking, but in reality it is not actually like that. Actually, Arabic is taught at school as a first language, but it has never been the main communicating language within the Algerian society.

The mother language for Algerians is AA which is used to express oneself on a daily basis. It is a language formed by different languages, which has come about through the coexistence of various civilizations in the North-African lands, like Arabic, Berber, French, Spanish, Turkish, Italian and also, influenced by English through its being as a global language.

The second most commonly spoken language is French, which is used by the majority of the population due to colonization and the parabolic which is very present in Algeria.

Another language which is present in Algeria is the Berber language, which is spoken by natives.

Many debates are happening lately in Algeria to establish the Algerian Arabic as a co-official language alongside standard Arabic, but politicians have not approved this yet, as it was analysed by Louafi (2010).

### **1.15 Sociolinguistics and Historical Factors**

Linguistic variability in society, the use of language within a certain context, social rules, Linguistic particularities of the Algerian language , it is noteworthy to mention that Algerian Arabic is different to Arabic, the language has been influenced by Berber, Turkish and French from which it has many borrowed words, with a large amount of diversity of ethnic groups and diverse languages which are spoken in the country: the Kabyle language in Kabylie, Chnaoui in the north-east, and Chaoui in the Aurésregión, Tuareg in the Sahara, Temzabit in the M'zab Valley, Tashelhit on the Moroccan boarder.

In addition to the diverse amount of dialects which are spoken in each region and that is difficult to put into numbers: The Algerian spoken in Algiers, Oran, Tlemcen, Anaba, Constantine, and many others.

The linguistic variety in Algeria is very rich and aided throughout history by other foreign languages, due to the coexistence of foreigners with Algerians (wars, long periods of staying put, globalization, etc.).

The presence of foreign languages is equally as important as the presence of French is obvious due to the long-term stay of two civilizations in the Algerian lands for long periods of time.

In the same way, the importance of the English language is relevant due to globalization and its influence in technology, as Mami (2013) explains “By the mid of the year 2000, Algeria has started a series of changes with the aim to improve the structure of the educational system”.

However, the traumatic past events have left the administration confused in certain areas where many schools required better organization and more teachers.

Since the introduction of the English language into schools, it has become an important part of the curriculum and has recorded a great demand in all levels of education. As a result, various Teaching English as a Foreign Language schools have been established throughout the country such as SIBAWAIH and ECMA (CHERIF MOULAY AZZOUG) schools.

These coexistences create a unique language for the Algerians, who express themselves in different languages and switch from one to another frequently, what is commonly known as Code Switching that constitute the core of the study.

On the other hand, code switching is also defined as a combination of words, phrases and sentences that result from sentence limitations in similar speech context. Based on these definitions, it can be deduced that code switching in general, in Algeria can be regarded as the act of speaking in different languages interchangeably in order to overcome language constraints, to deliver speeches affectively and most importantly as a crucial step towards achieving successful communication

In this study we observe the amount of Codeswitching which has gone about in classroom conversations, and our study consists in finding out if using this method is intentional or not, beneficial or not.

The Algerian minister of education proposed to teach Algerian at school in parallel with standard Arabic language classes, it is not the researcher concern in this thesis but it is noteworthy to mention the policies which govern the linguistic matters. It is an advantage to conserve the standard Arabic language, French and even other foreign languages so that the twenty-one Arab countries can communicate with each other.

### **1.16 CS Occurrence during the Lesson**

Codeswitching takes place in different parts of the lessons: when teaching grammar, working through texts comprehension, doing exercises and checking them, having a discussion or when discussing issues.

The students use English when it is demanded by the activity or the textbook, but AA for unofficial interactions during the lessons, for commenting on the exercise etc.

It was interesting to observe how the students sometimes make a distinction with the exercise (e.g. answering the teacher's question in English) and the other activity (e.g. requesting help or correcting oneself in AA) by employing codeswitching. The students know that they are required to use English when they are doing, for instance, a question-answer exercise. But when they want to, for example, ask the teacher something they switch to AA.

This behaviour by the students indicates that the two languages in the classroom have different roles and meaning. This indicates that the students do not see classroom environment as a real communication situation where they could use English at all times. They know that AA is an allowed variety, so resorting to it when a problem arises is usually the first thing to do.

This is not to say that they should not do so, it is understandable to use AA if one has, for example, limited vocabulary. However, especially 1<sup>st</sup> year LMD students the teacher should encourage the pupils to use English most of the time, for example, ask them to repeat in English what they have said in French.

## **1.17 Code-switching and learners' strategies**

Overall, the Algerian learners' perceptions of the presence of psychological support brought about by the teachers' code-switching were positive.

### **1.17.1 Course Explanation**

The explanation occurs when the teacher wants or sees a need to repeat what has been previously said in another language in order to help the students understand him/her. In an EFL classroom this explaining generally happens in AA, since the students are less competent in the foreign language and may need an explanation to help them understand the lesson better.

According to Canagarajah (1995:186), there are different strategies for explaining the issues being taught; he mentions repetition, reformulation, clarification and exemplification as such strategies.

In the present data, explanation is a common function of codeswitching; it occurs constantly in classrooms. Explanation occurs at different places during the lessons: when checking an exercise, when doing an exercise and when working in groups.

### **1.17.2 Request help**

When students are faced with a problem or question during the lesson, they usually resort to codeswitching to find an answer to their problems. One common function of codeswitching is requesting help. This function is employed by the learners; they use it when they want to ask for help.



The learners request help when they do not know. This function of codeswitching is quite usual in all levels of English teaching.

The more the teachers codeswitch the stronger is the learners' affective state. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between teachers' codeswitching and positive affective learning state.

We observed that codeswitching helped learners to enjoy their learning due to their ability to comprehend the teachers' input. The comprehensible input also allowed them to feel less stressful and to become more comfortable to learn. Once they are comfortable with the environment, without any unnecessary anxiety (Lai, 1996; Schweers, 1999; Chi, 2000; Burden, 2001), the learners are able to focus and participate in classroom practice and activities more successfully.

### **1.17.3 Learners Helping each other**

The previous function dealt with learner- teacher communication, where a learner requests help from the teacher who provides an answer to the asked question.

In EFL classroom there are instances where learners help each other when doing an activity which involves the whole class. Usually this kind of codeswitching occurs when the teacher asks a student something in English that (s)he cannot understand and the other students help by translating the teacher's question into AA.

In this context, Cook (2001) sees this as a positive way of using the mother tongue in the classroom. By translating the teacher's words, the teachers ensure that all the students know what is happening.

It does not always have to be the teacher who translates the question. Moreover, by letting the students help each other the teacher creates a more natural communication situation.

#### **1.17.4 Self-corrections**

Apart from being used to help out others, students also use codeswitching in self-corrections. This function of codeswitching is quite common in EFL classroom. The students employ self-correction in their utterance by beginning it in English but inserting one word or a couple of words in AA in the middle of the utterance. When self-correction occurs, a learner is usually producing an answer to the teacher's question and when (s)he realizes that a mistake has occurred in the answer (s)he corrects it by inserting an AA word and then continuing the answer, but now with a more correct answer.

The use of self-correction may indicate that a student wants to keep separate the exercise and the need to correct something in the answer. The students know that if the teacher asks them a question in English they are required to answer it in English. However, if they find that they have said something wrong in their answer, they resort to AA to make it obvious to the hearers that now they want to change something in their answer.

On the other hand, self-correction may occur when a student does not initially remember a word in English and says it first in AA and then after remembering it says it in English, continuing the answer in English.

### **1.18 Teachers' Codeswitching Strategies**

Teachers also use codeswitching. The function of moving from one activity to another is employed by the teachers to mark a shift in the lesson; furthermore, they employ this function quite often. This marking of activity shift in the lesson happens when the teachers move from one topic to another: from discussing an exercise to teaching grammar and vice versa, from giving instructions to doing a listening comprehension.

When the teacher moves from one activity to another, employing codeswitching may be a device to get the students' attention. They have to pay more attention to the teaching using English. This is because English is a foreign language to them, thus they need to use more effort to understand the teacher.

Apart from using codeswitching, the teacher employs other means to signal the change in topic. Firstly, the discourse marker '*okay*' with a rising intonation may be used to mark an end of a topic; secondly, there is a one - second pause when the change happens.

Teachers use codeswitching when moving from one activity to another. It is a general truth that when something new happens, it grasps one's attention. The teachers may thus use codeswitching as an attention getting device.

Sometimes this codeswitching is triggered by the fact that the English counterpart is unknown at that moment. If the student has inserted a French or AA word, the teacher usually reacts to that by trying to find the correct translation but not always. In other words, it seems clear that codeswitching is not employed extensively to fill out gaps in the vocabulary.

### **1.19 Unofficial Interactions**

In case of the unofficial interactions AA was almost used by the students. Codeswitching occurs when either the students or the teacher are talking about issues not related strictly to the lesson.

Unofficial interaction may take place between students while the teacher is teaching. At the same time as the teacher is teaching, the students are engaged in a private discussion which is completely conducted in AA.

### **1.20 Teacher Admonitions when Using CS**

Teachers use the mother tongue to express this anger or frustration. This function of codeswitching has been frequently observed during the present study. The students have had three exercises to do at home and the teacher goes around in the classroom checking the students' books whether they have done these exercises.

The teacher uses English when talking about the exercises, she answers to the students mostly in English when they tell her how many exercises they have done (Ouahmiche: 2013). However, as she goes around the classroom and hears what the students have to say about the way they have done the homework, it is

becoming clear that some of them have not done their homework and this leads to the teacher employing codeswitching from English to AA.

The mother tongue has sometimes more power in the EFL classroom. When codeswitching is employed, it gives more emphasis to the teacher's words. The students know that as they are learning English, a lot of English is used in the classroom. They even know that in some cases AA is used instead of English. But sometimes they are taken by surprise; they may assume that as the teacher has been speaking English she will continue to do so in a certain situation; instead, the teacher switches to AA.

This strategy by the teacher will make the students more alert, they respond better to their mother tongue. Furthermore, they know that they cannot make an excuse by appealing to not understanding the teacher. To conclude, codeswitching used when reprimanding students is an effective strategy.

### **1.21 Conclusion**

Both the teacher and the students employ codeswitching in EFL classrooms. However, there are differences in their uses of codeswitching. The students mostly employ it from English to AA, in contrast to the teachers, who employ it from AA to English as well as from English to AA. The students' behaviour is understandable as they are not so confident. Users of English yet; when a problem arises they often resort to AA rather than trying to, for example, rephrase their English utterance. However, there are pupils who are willing and

have the courage to communicate in English as much as possible in the classroom despite, for example, the lack of vocabulary.

As mentioned above, on their turn, teachers employ codeswitching both from English to AA and from AA to English. When the teacher switches from English to AA, the reasons may be to make sure everyone understands (i.e. explaining). This is understandable since the teacher's duty is to teach the students and a part of this teaching is making sure everyone knows what they are supposed to do or understand the lesson they are about to listen to.

It seems that these switches are usually a conscious choice since by employing codeswitching the teacher can for instance help students who do not understand something. However, sometimes there are occasions when a teacher's switch to AA is not planned but is accidental (a lapse) or triggered by the student's codeswitching to AA. The teacher has spoken English but a pupil's switching to AA causes the teacher to switch to AA as well. Usually this switch is a short one, one or two words only, as the teacher quickly goes back to speaking English.

# CHAPTER TWO

## Codeswitching as a Learning Strategy

## **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter is called the practical chapter of the research. It helps to collect data by analyzing the statistics gathered from the sample chosen for the investigation. This practical part tries to define the research instruments used to collect data, and to present the sample population chosen for the research. Then, it aims at confirming or rejecting the research hypothesis after analyzing the research findings.

## **2.2 Categories of Code Switching**

The study used 10 categories of code switching in analysis for conversational codeswitching. These categories used to indicate the conversational functions of the codeswitching in relation to the contextual information at a specific point of the ongoing conversation. The categories are presented below according to Gumpers&Berenz(1982) Categories of Code Switching for Analysis by

*1 Clarification, 2 Emphasis, 3 Situation Shift, 4 Representation of speech,*

*5 Quotation, 6 Insistence, 7 Topic Shift, 8 Person Specification, 9 Question Shift*

*10 Discourse Markers*



## **2.3 Informants' profile**

The selected participants in this study were 2<sup>nd</sup> and third years' EFL students in the department of English at Tlemcen University. The group is composed of 54 students. 12 students were males and 42 students were females. These students have been studying English since middle school phase.

The second group of participants includes 10 EFL teachers at the department of English at Tlemcen University from different specialties. They were administered a questionnaire to see their attitudes toward the use of code switching in the classroom.

### **2.3.1 Language Background of the Participants**

Algerian Arabic is the participants' native language. The students and teachers use only AA in their daily life compared to English which is used only during the University sessions. On average, they are proficient in both languages to be able to participate in this study.

## **2.4 Methodology**

There are essentially two broad orientations in research: qualitative and quantitative research.

### **2.4.1 Data Collection**

The research design of this study is quantitative and qualitative method since it provides a systematic, factual, and accurate description of classroom situation.

Mainly the research is quantitative one since all the data collection is in the form of numbers and charts. The research is conducted by using qualitative approach because the result of the data analyzed is in the descriptive phenomenon such as words, sentences and utterances.

### **2.4.2 Qualitative and quantitative research**

The quantitative method is used, in this research work, to quantify the problem of code switching in the Algerian EFL classroom presented by the English department at Tlemcen University by generating numerical data or data that is transformed into useable statistics namely attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and other defined variables

However, qualitative method is primarily exploratory. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. In fact, it provides insights into the classroom that helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for the research at stake.

### **2.4.3 The Questionnaire**

A questionnaire is a data collection research tool that is composed of a set of questions. It aims at gathering information about the studied subject by asking different questions. These questions can be open, closed, or multiple choice questions. It is the most reliable research instrument in comparison to others since it helps to gather qualitative and quantitative data.

For collecting data, two separate sets of questionnaires were designed and distributed among the two distinct groups: English teachers and LMD1 & LMD2 at English department in Tlemcen University.

In the questionnaire designed for the teachers (see Appendix 1), some questions are included that presuppose some obvious reasons for teachers' classroom code switching. These questions are included to justify and verify whether the assumed reasons are true or not, which received strong support from the teachers. Some questions are designed to evaluate what kind of attitude the teachers possess towards their own and towards the students' code switching. An open ended question is included to find out some more reasons for teachers' code switching which has given an additional value to this research.

For the teachers' questionnaire, the first question was also about the gender. The second one and the third were about the qualification and the experience in teaching. The second part contains questions about the reasons of the teachers' code switching in the classroom and its effects on learning.

The second set of questionnaire (see Appendix 2), designed for the students, has basically one aim: what is the students' attitude towards their teachers' code switching. The responses collected from the students reveal that though most of the teachers perceive code switching negatively, students consider that code switching is a positive thing and it helps their comprehension of the target language.

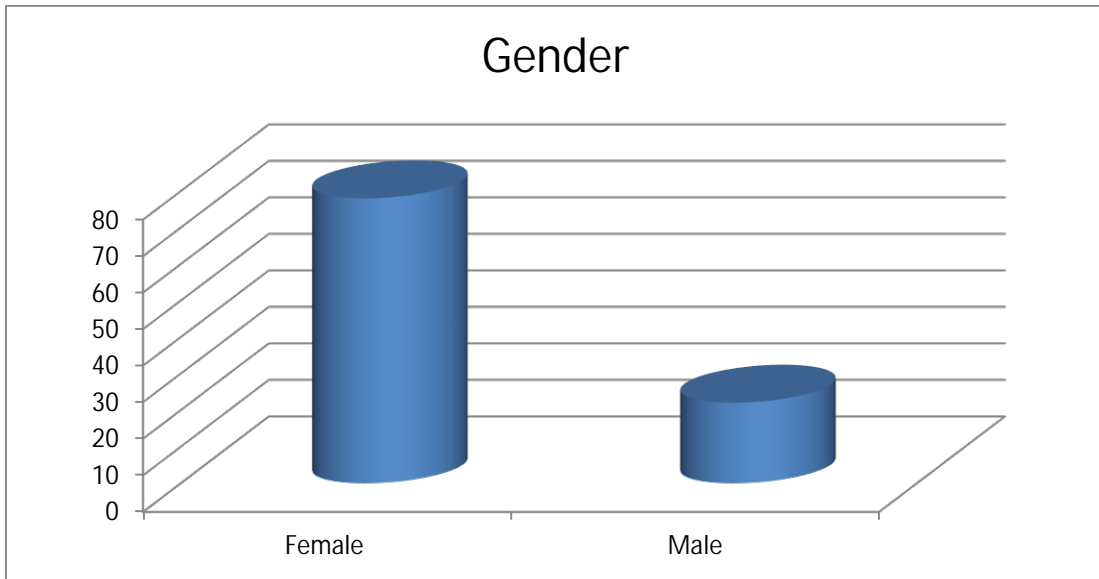
In the students' questionnaire the first question was about the gender. The second and third was about the use of code switching in conversations and social networks. The fourth asked about the use of code switching in the classroom. The third part of the questionnaire contains questions that turn around the attitudes toward the use of code switching in the classroom i.e. the relationship between the use of code switching and the development of the student's communication and his learning and understanding of the language.

### **Students' Questionnaire Analysis**

54 students answer this questionnaire. The results of the collected data are as follow:

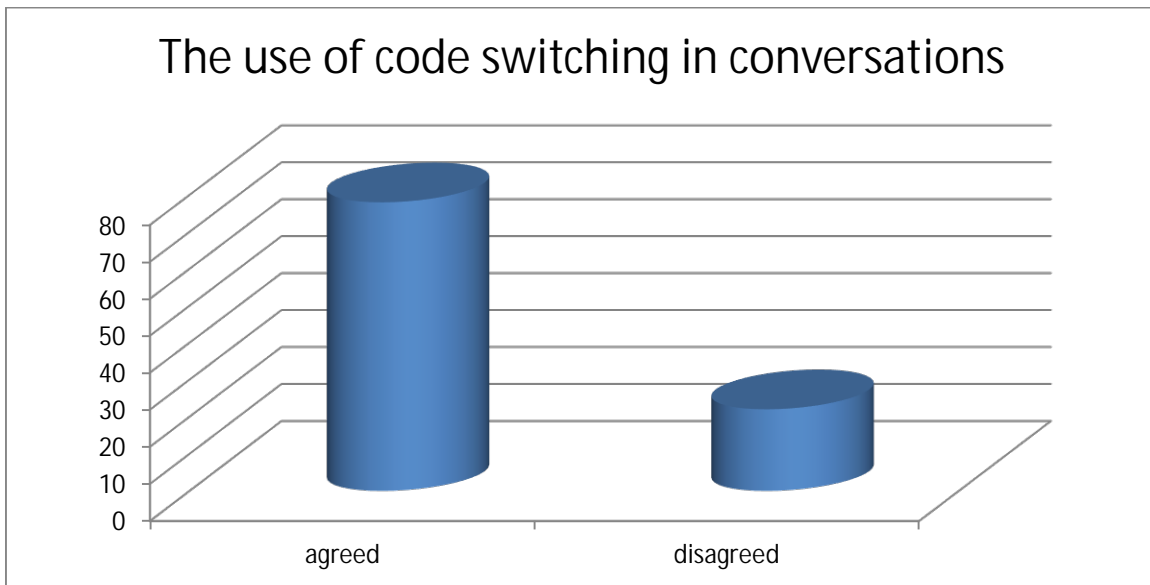
*Question1:* are you male or female?

42 participants were female which represents 78% from the entire sample and 12 were male representing 22%.



Question2: Do you use code switching in your conversations?

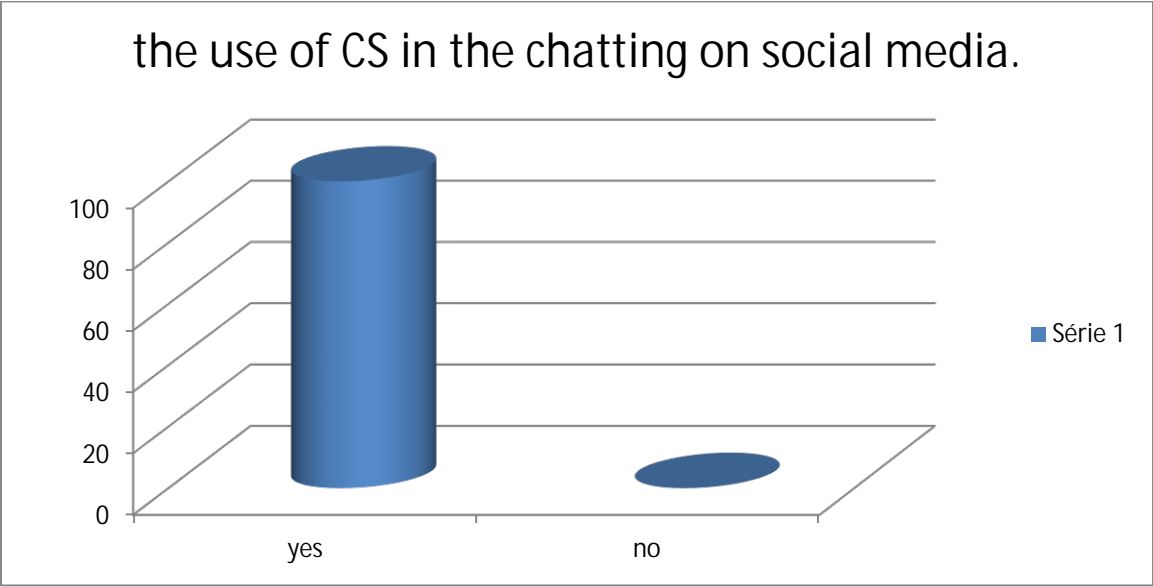
The participants' answers are summarized in the figure below:



The majority of students (78%) code switch in conversations and the remaining (22%) do not use code switching.

Question3: Do you use code switching in your chatting on social media?

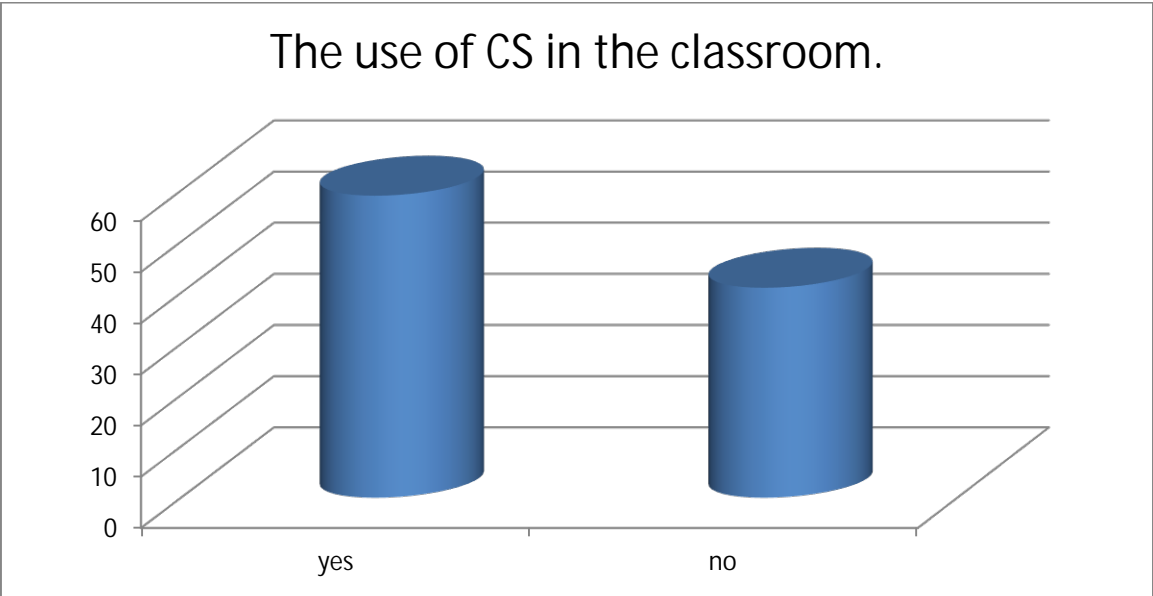
The results are summarized in the figure below.



All the informants said that they use code switching in their daily chatting on social networks.

Question4: Do you use code switching in the classroom?

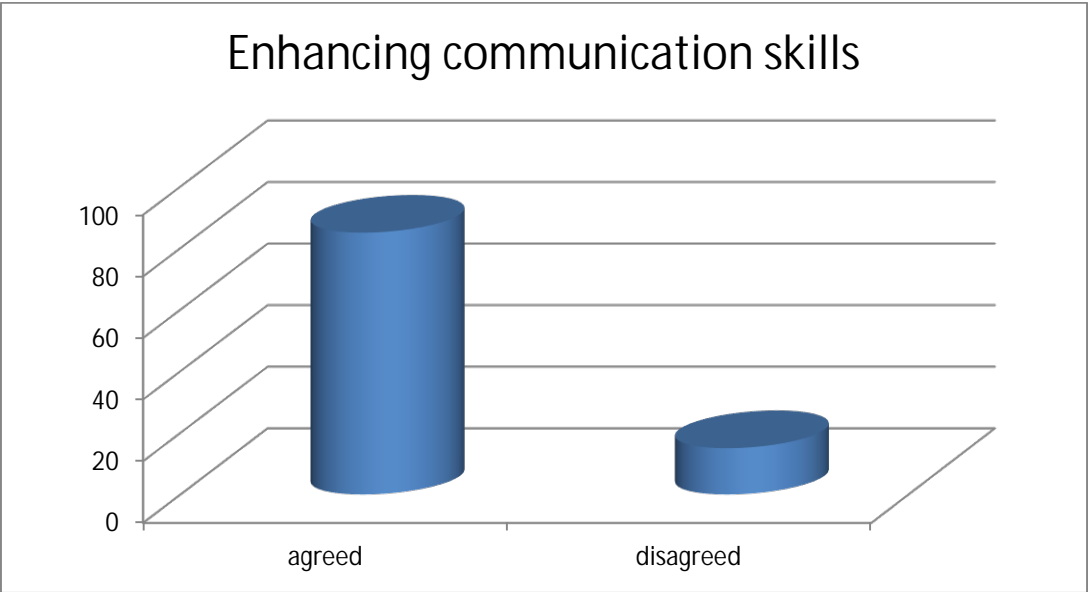
The results are summarized in the figure bellow:



(59%) of the students said that they use code switching in the classroom while (41%) said that they don't.

Question5: Code switching enhances my communication skills?

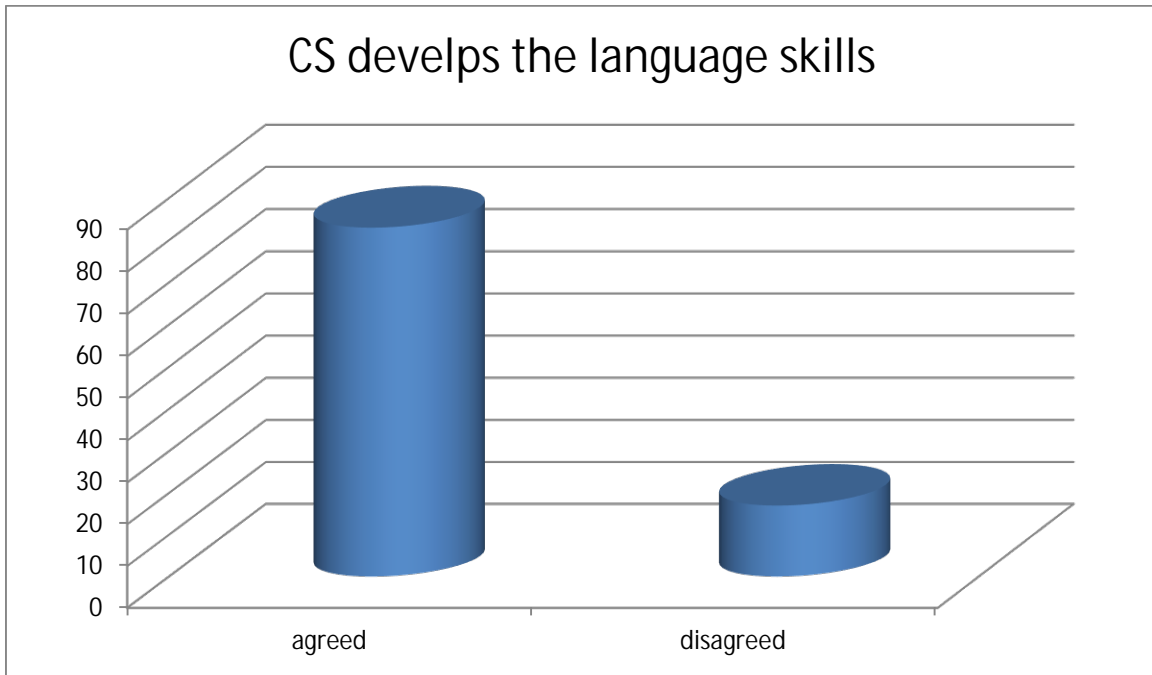
The figure bellow summarizes the results:



The majority of informants (85%) agreed that code switching enhances their communicative skills and (15%) disagreed about that.

Question6: Code switching helps me to develop my language skills

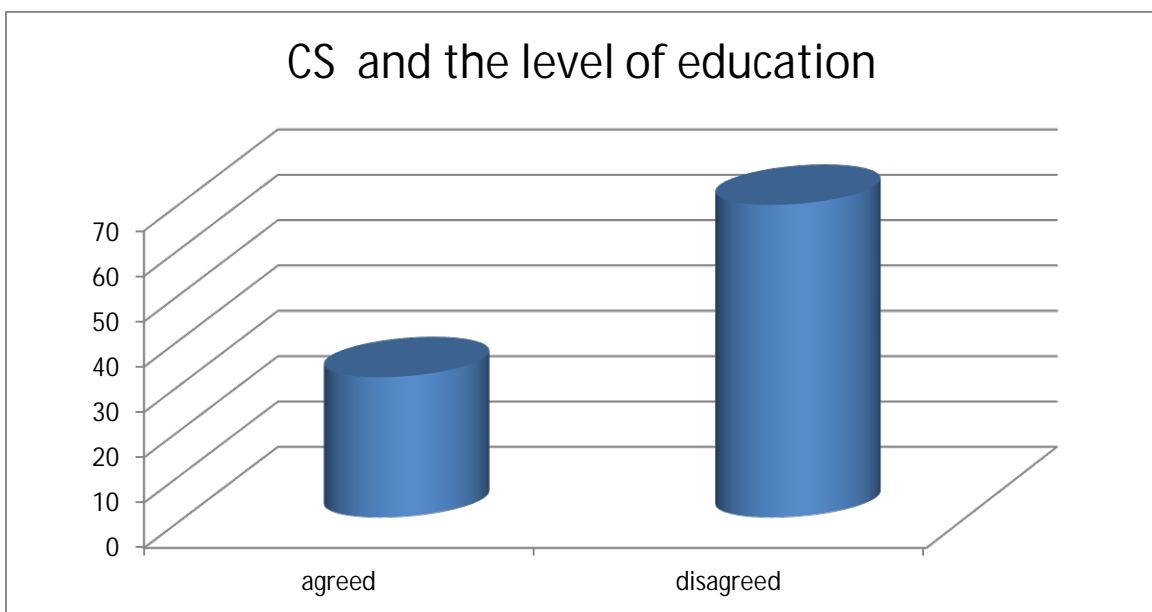
The following figure summarizes the students' answers:



The majority of learners (83%) said that code switching helps them to develop their language skills and (17%) said that it does not help.

Question7: Using code switching shows that I am well educated?

The graph bellow shows the students' answers:

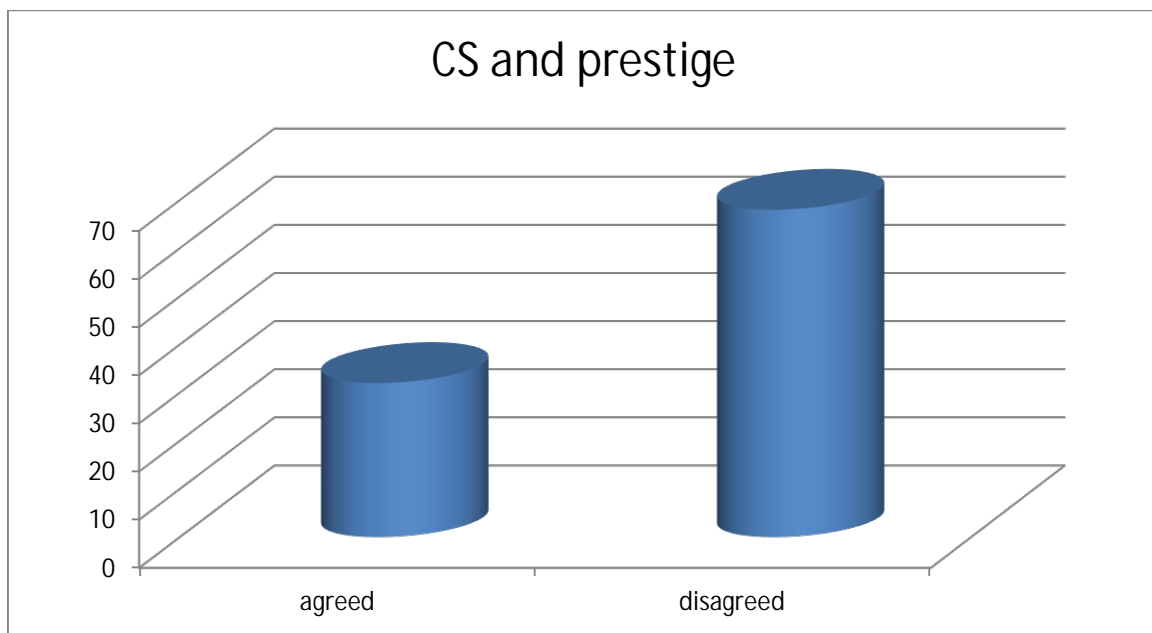




Most of the informants (69%) disagree that the use of code switching shows that they are well educated, whereas (31%) said that using code switching shows that they are well educated.

Question 8: Using code switching shows that I am prestigious?

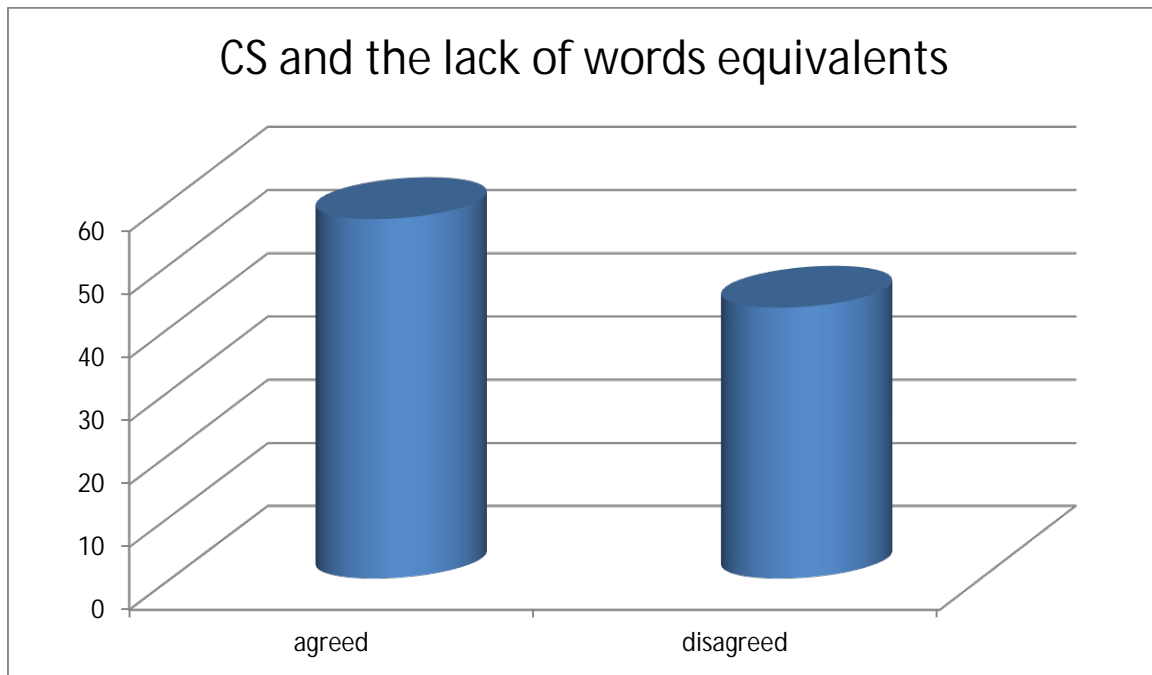
The following figure summarizes the informant's answers:



(31%) of the informants claimed that using code switching shows that they are prestigious, while (67%) disagree on that.

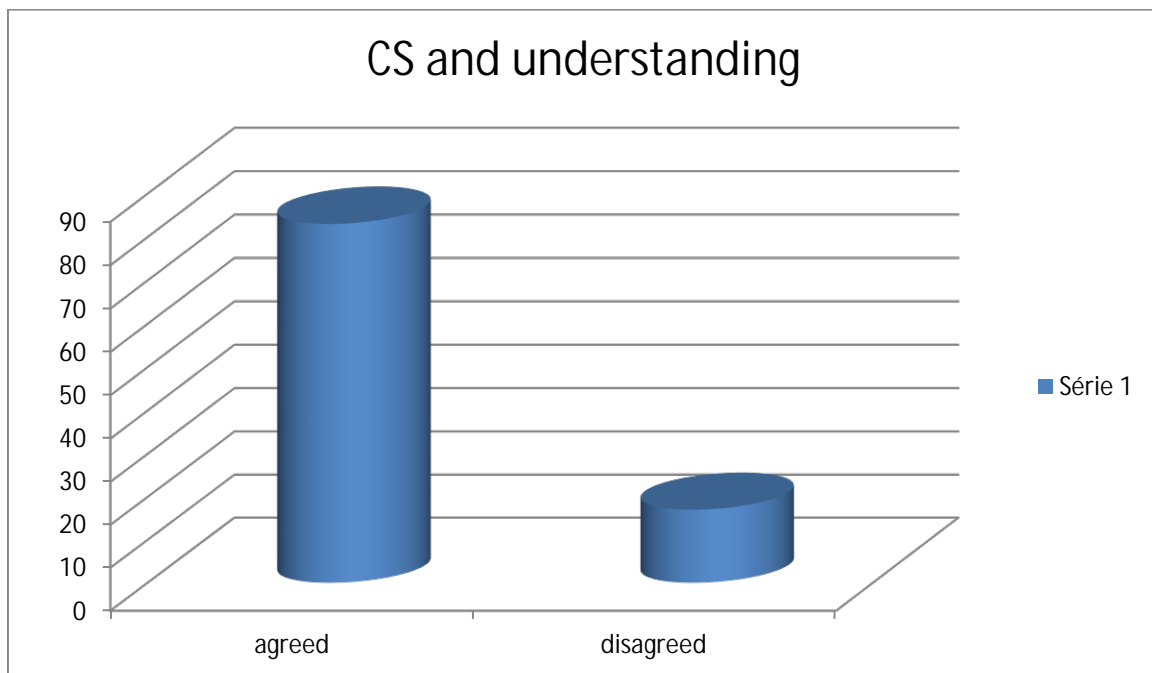
Question 9: I code switch due to the lack of English words equivalents?

The participants' answers are summarized in the figure below:



Most of the participants (57%) agreed that they code switch due to the lack of English words equivalents, and (43%) disagreed on that.

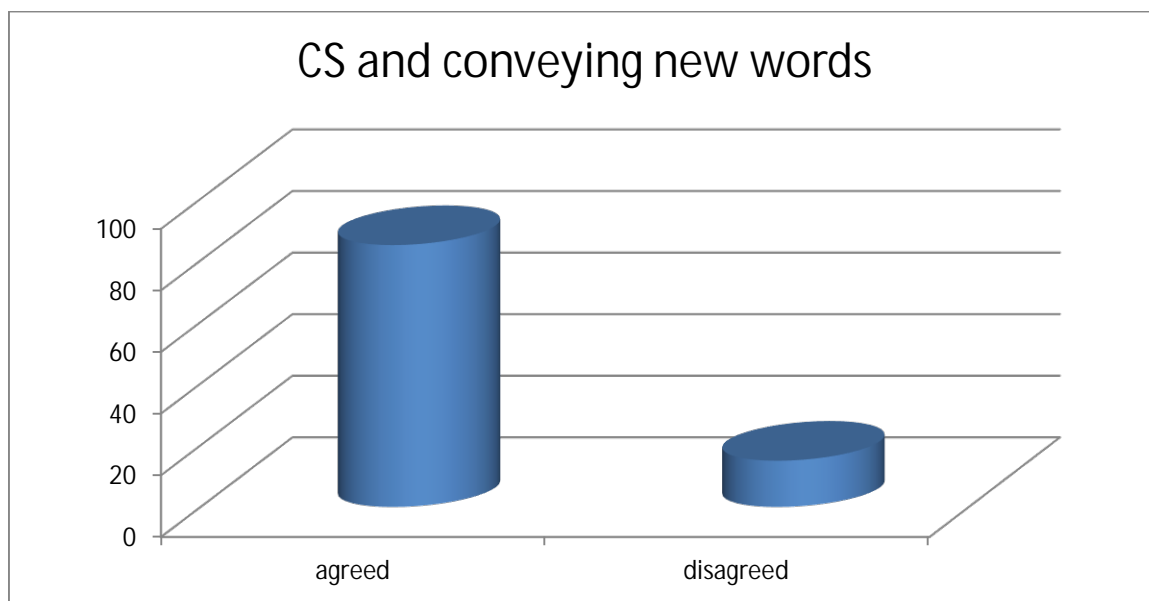
Question 10: Code switching allows me to understand better?



The majority of students (83%) said that code switching allows them to understand better and (17%) disagreed on that.

Question 11: Code switching helps me to convey new words easily?

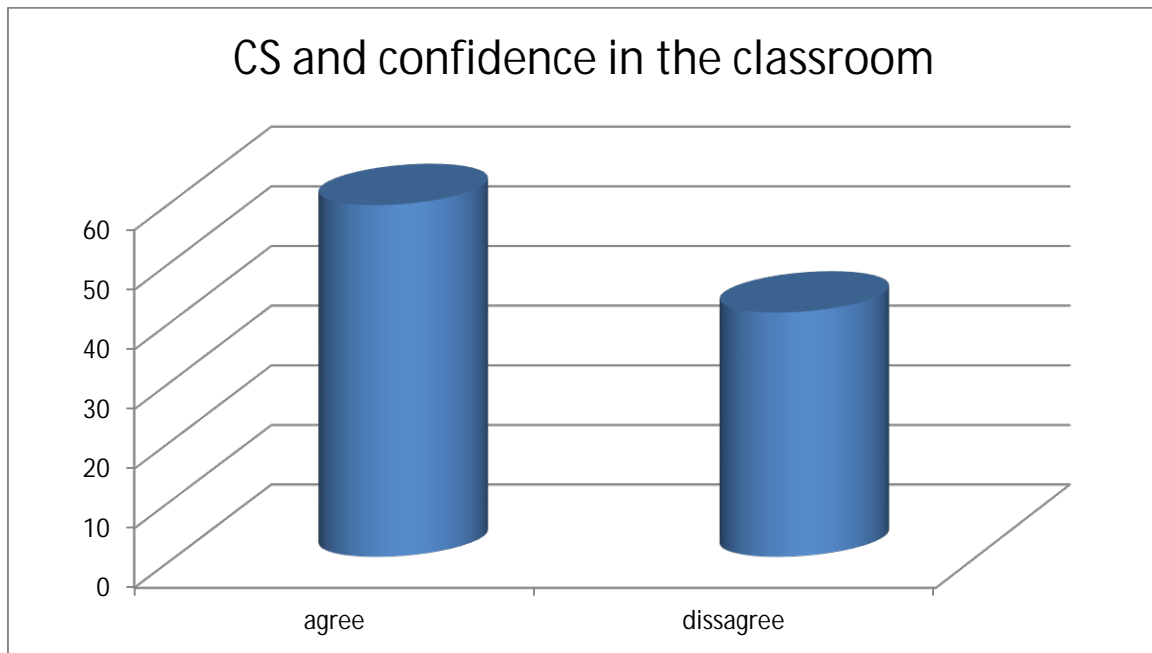
The table below shows the students' answers:



The majority of learners (85%) said that code switching help them to convey new words easily, while (15%) claimed that code switching does not help them to convey new words easily.

Question 12: Code switching makes me feel more comfortable and confident in classrooms?

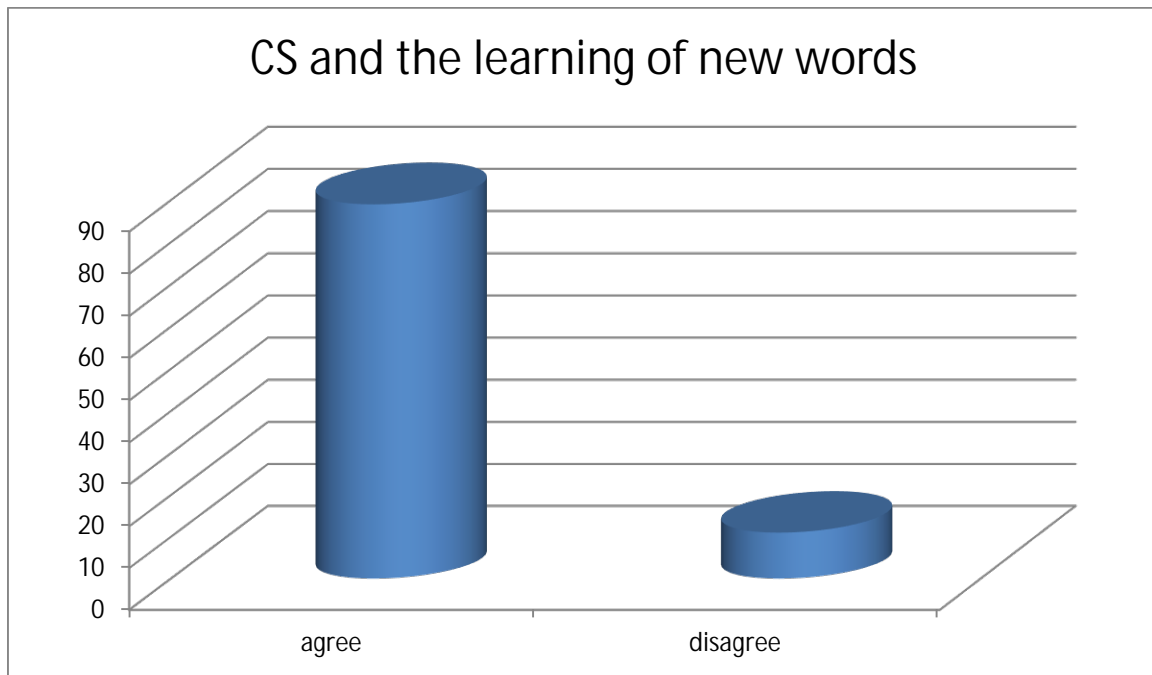
The results are shown in the figure bellow:



(59%) of the whole sample said that CS makes them feel more comfortable and confident in classrooms and (41%) said that it not CS that makes them feel comfortable and confident in the classroom.

Question 13: Code switching helps me in learning new words from the teachers while they are switching between English and Arabic/French?

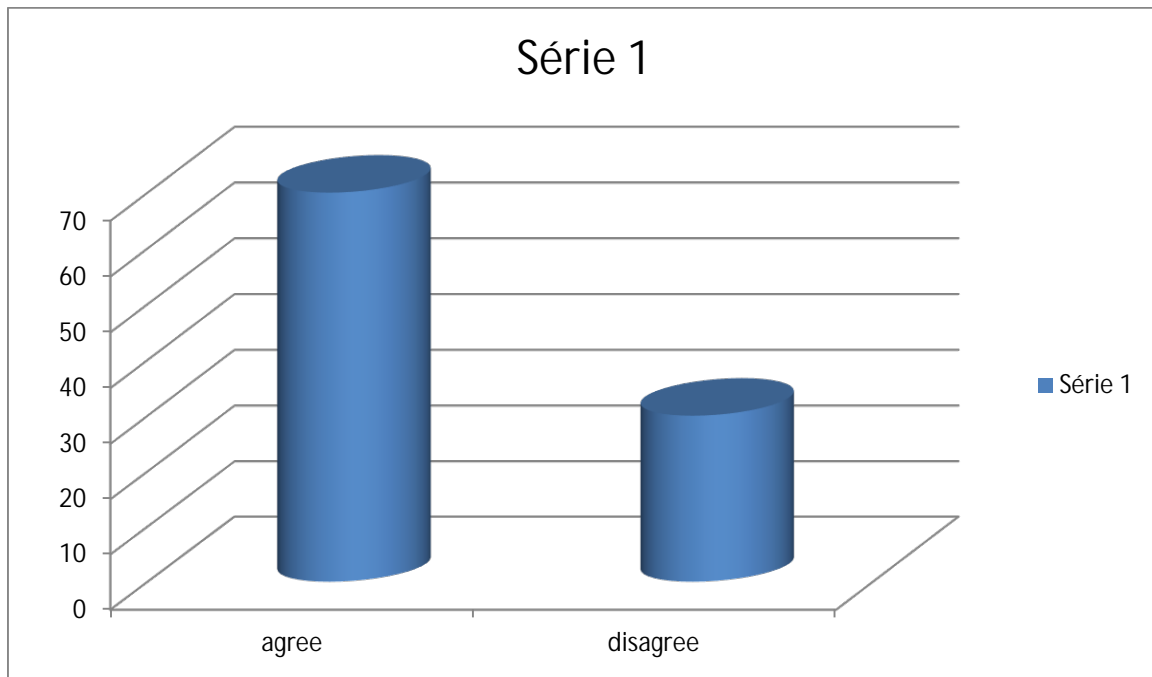
The graph bellow shows the students' answers:



The majority of learners learn new words from the teacher while he is switching between English and Arabic/French, whereas (11%) don't learn from the teacher while he is switching.

Question 14: I code switch with my classmates due to the complexity of some words in English?

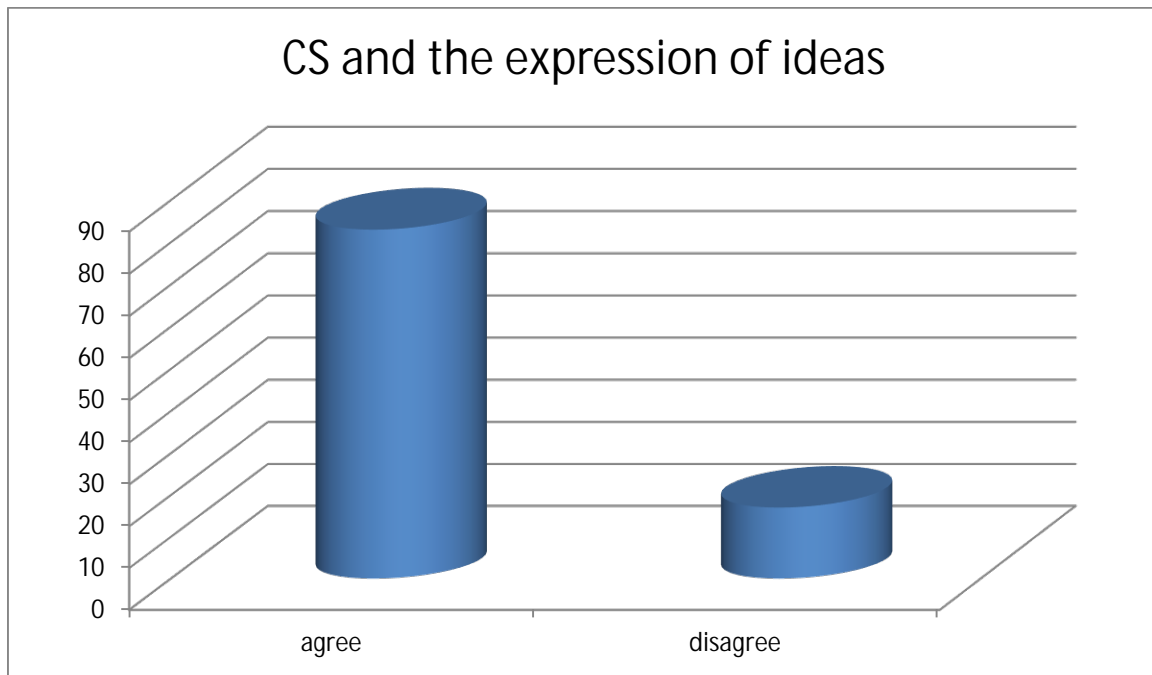
The figure bellow summarizes the results:



(70%) code switch due to the complexity of some words in English, and (30%) of the participants do not code switch for that reason.

Question 15: Usage of Arabic/French allows me to express the idea that I can't express in English?

The figure bellow shows the students' answers:



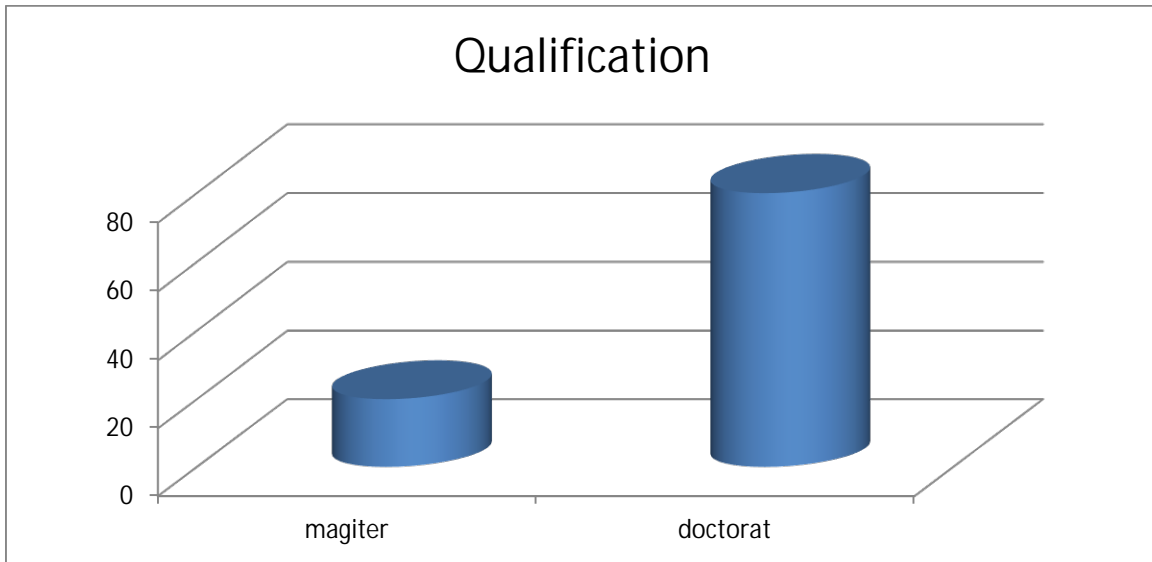
(83%) said that the usage of Arabic and French allows them to express the idea that they can't express in English, and (17%) disagree about that.

### **The Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire**

Question1: are you male or female?

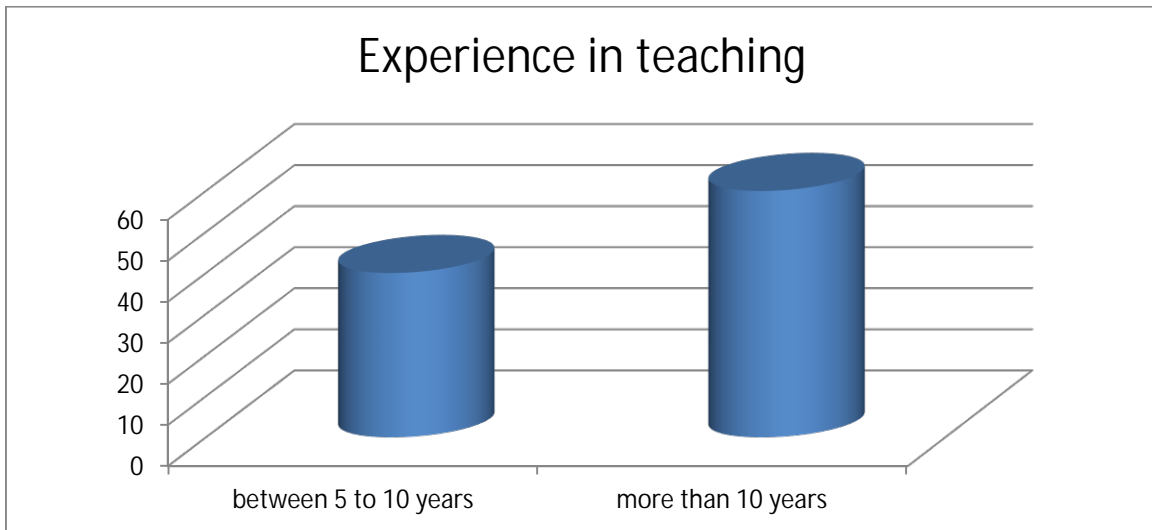
(40%) of the teachers were male and (60%) were female.

Question2: What is your qualification?



(20%) of the teachers have a magister degree and (80%) are doctors at university.

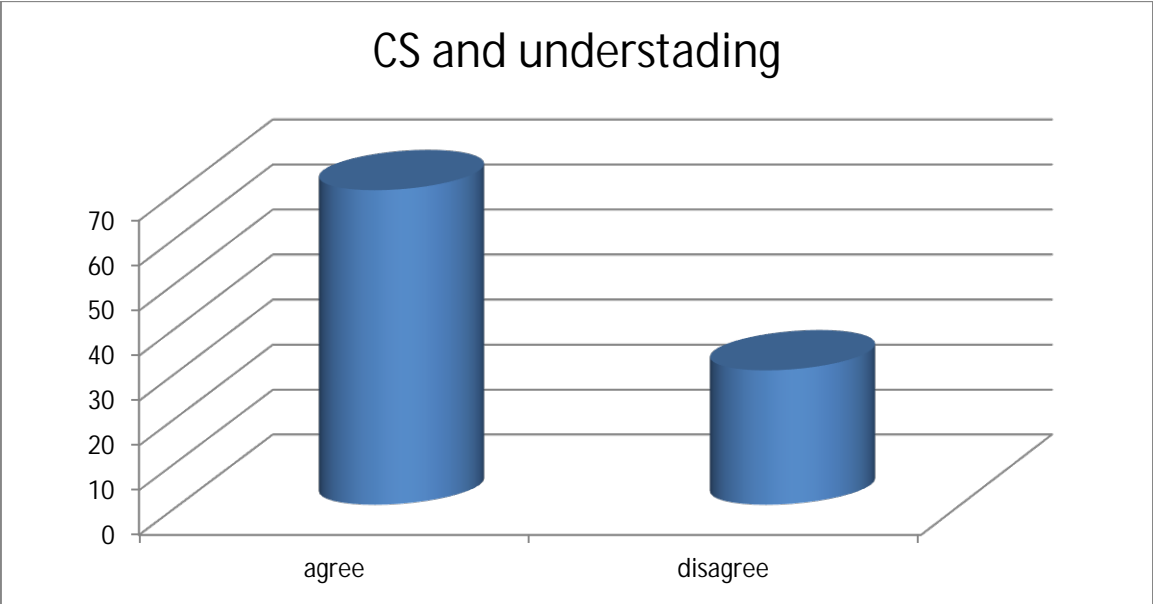
Question3: experience in teaching?



(60%) of the teachers teach for more than 10 years and (40%) had an experience of teaching between 5 to 10 years.



Question 4: I code switch while teaching in order to help my students understand better.

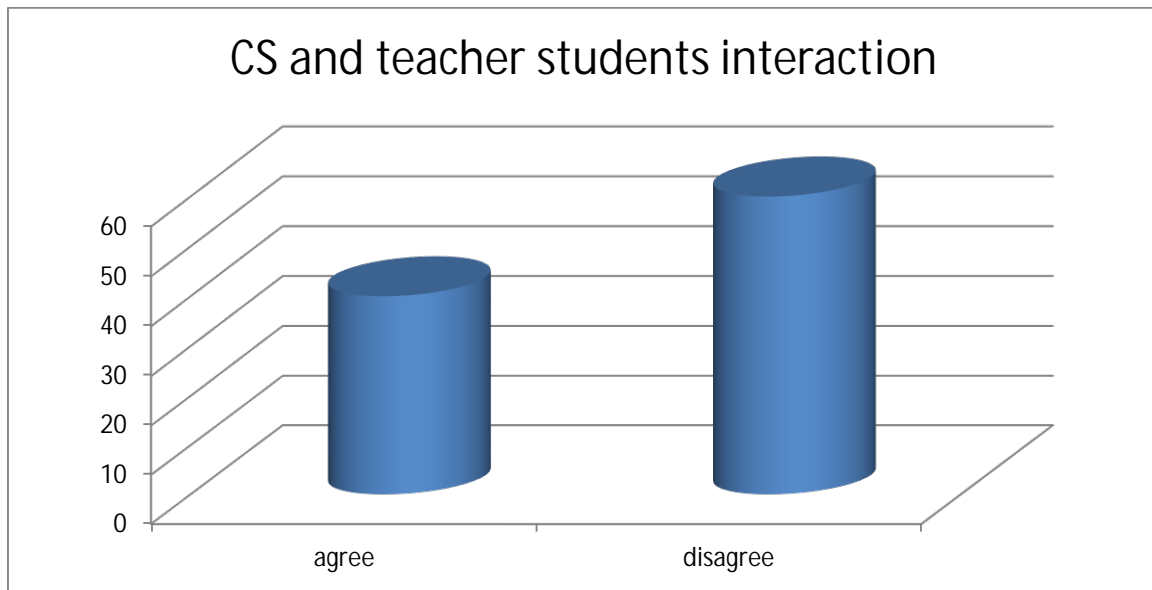


Most of the teachers (70%) said that they code switch while teaching in order to help their students understand better, while (30%) disagree on that.

Question 5: I code switch due to the lack of equivalents in the English language?

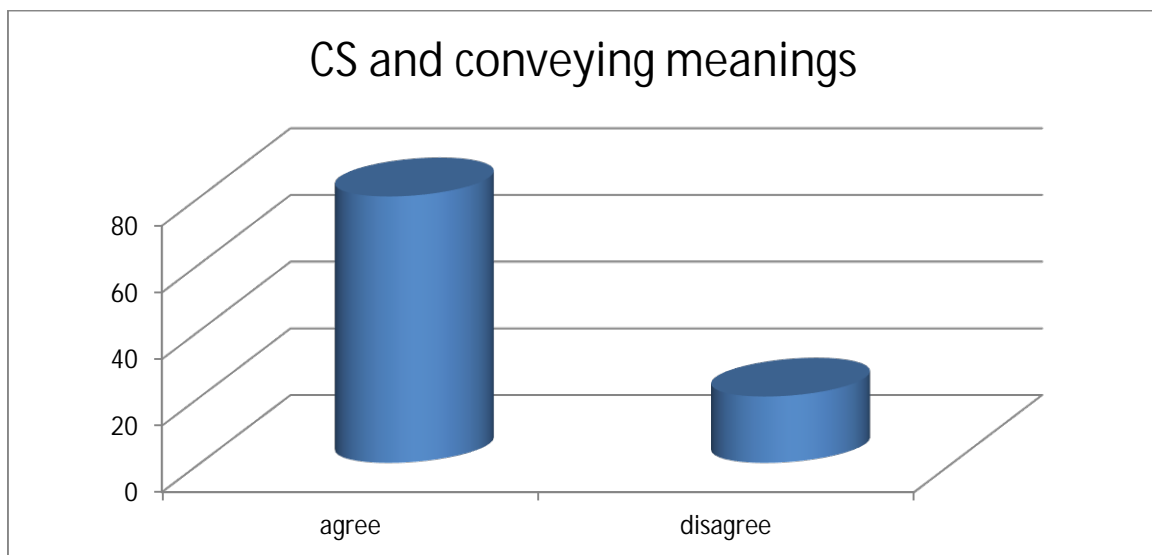
All the teachers (100%) claimed that they don't code switch due to the lack of equivalents in the English language.

Question 6: Code switching helps to bond strongly with my students?



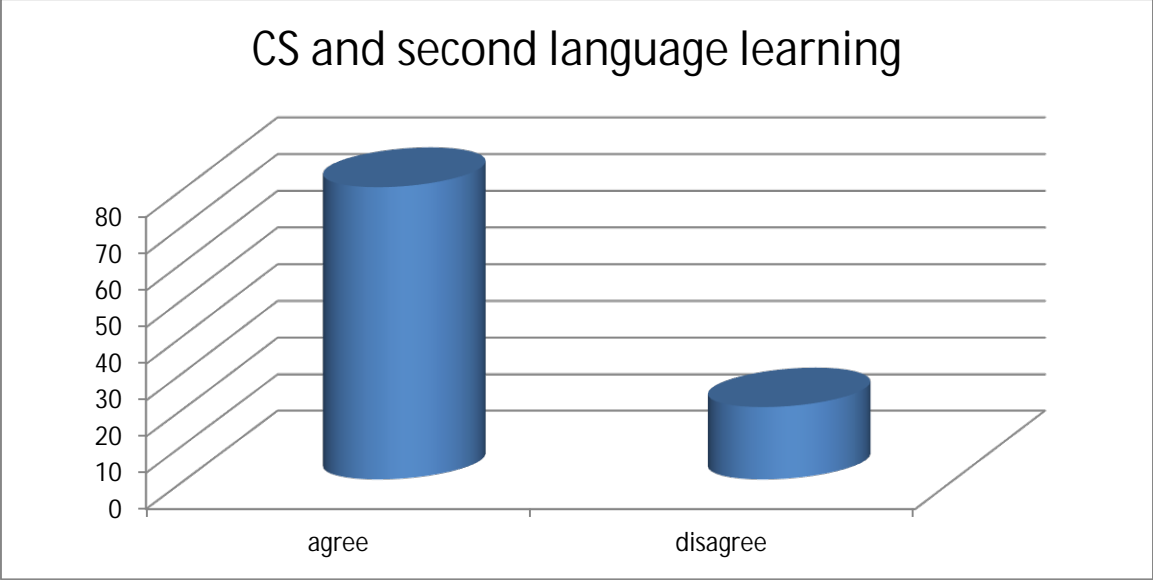
(40%) of the teachers said that code switching help them to bond strongly with their students, and (60%) disagree on that.

Question 7: code switching helps me to convey meaning easily to students.



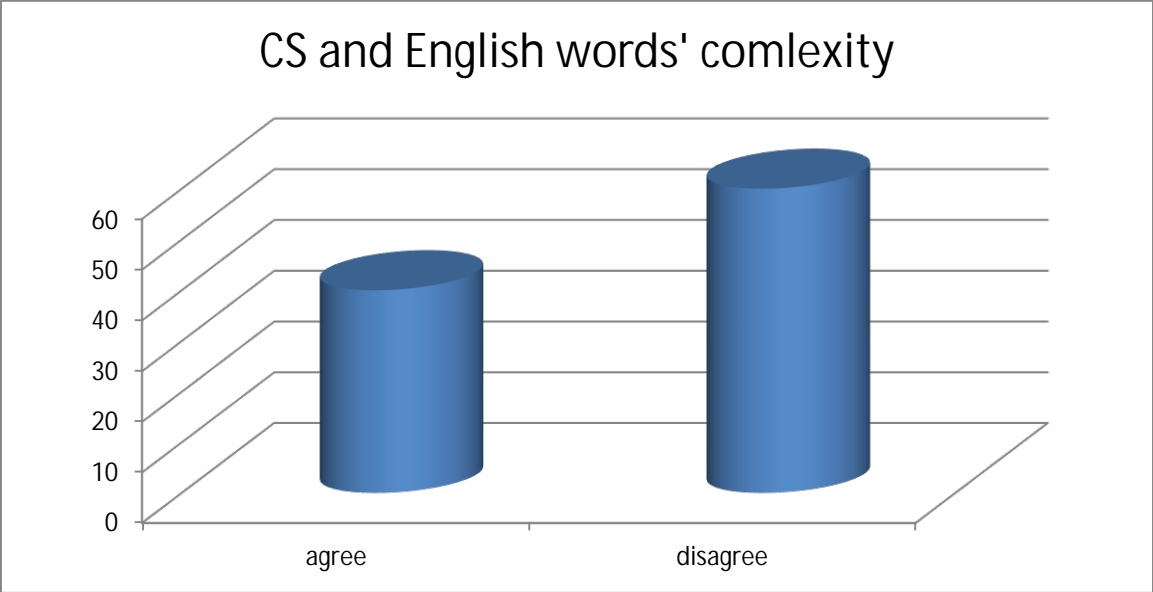
The majority of the informants (80%) said that code switching helps them to convey meaning easily to students whereas (20%) disagree on that.

Question 8: usage of code switching helps the students in learning the second language.



(80%) of the teachers said that CS helps the students in learning the second language, and (20%) said that it does not help.

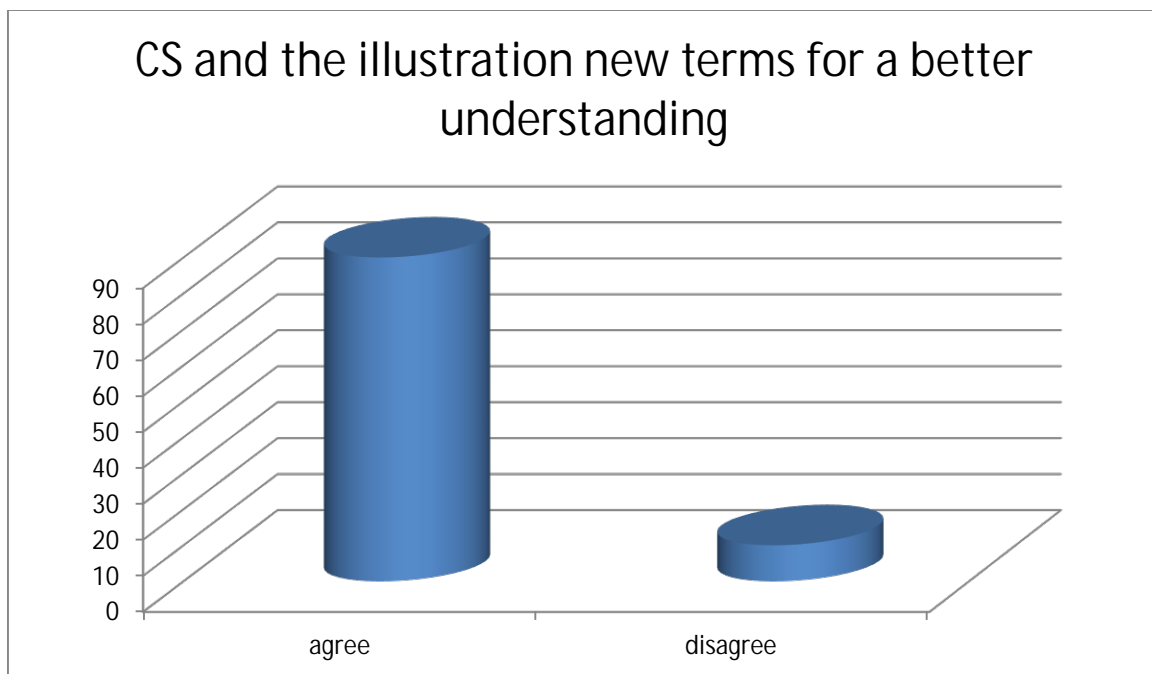
Question 9: I code switch due to the complexity of certain words in English.



Question 10: I code switch because I feel that students are not exposed to English.

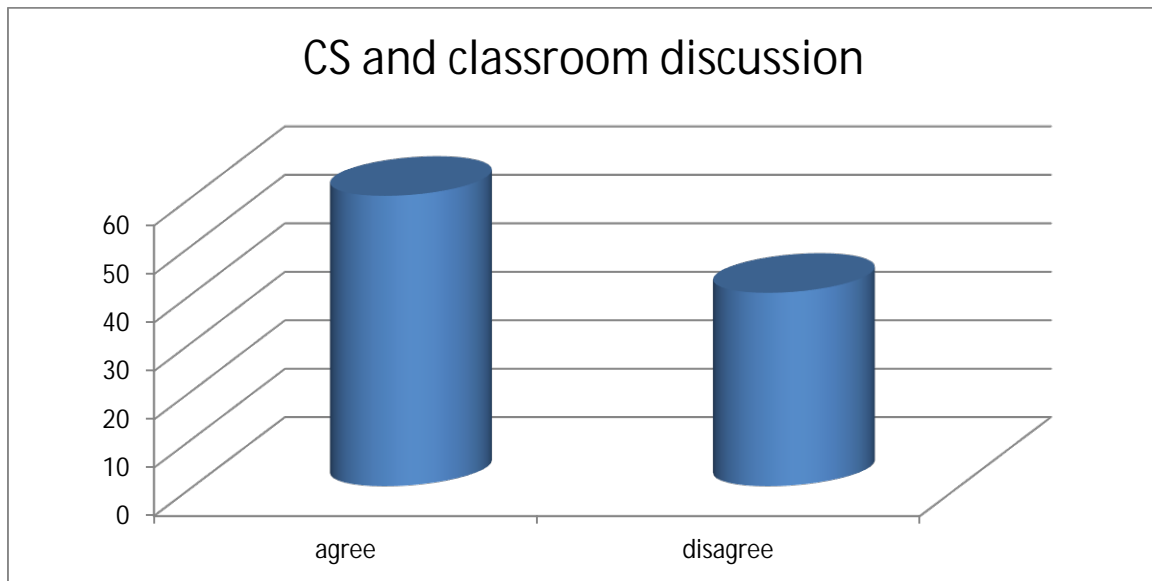
All the teachers (100%) disagree that they code switch because they feel that students are not exposed to English.

Question 11: using code switching while illustrating new terms helps the students to learn better.



The majority of teachers (90%) claimed that using code switching while illustrating new terms helps the students to learn better, while (10%) said that CS does not help.

Question 12: Code switching makes the discussion more interesting.

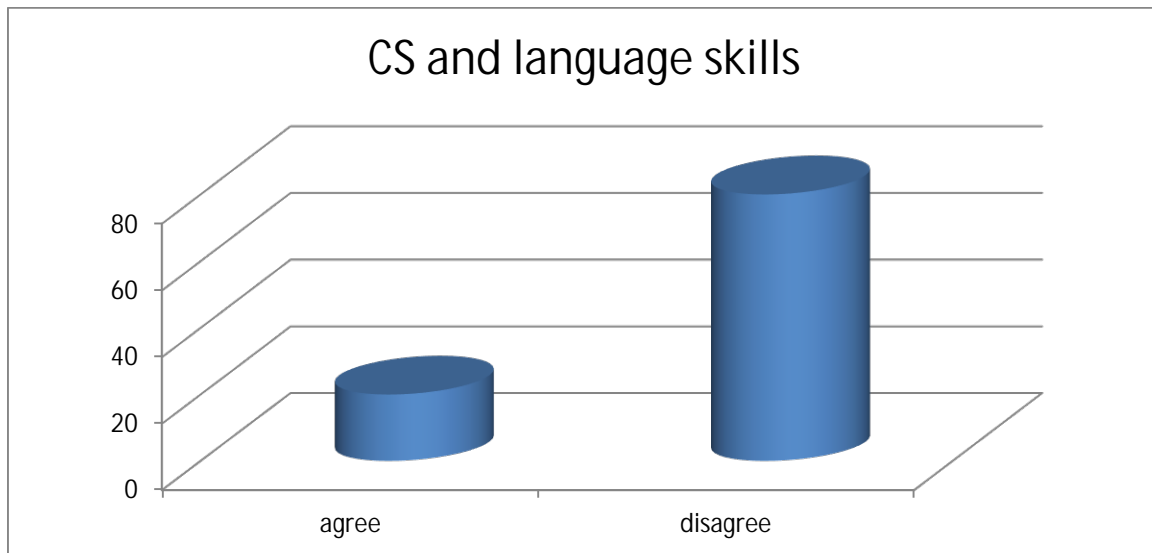


(60%) of the teachers said that code switch makes the discussion more interesting, and (40%) said that it does not make it interesting.

Question 13: Code switching enhances my communicative skills with the students.

All the teachers (100%) disagree that CS enhances their communicative skills with the students.

Question 14: Code switching enables the students to boost up their second language skills.



(80%) of the teachers disagree on that CS enables the students to boost up their second language skills, and just (20%) said that CS enables the students to boost up their second language skills.

Question 15: Code switching makes the students feel more comfortable and confident while learning.

All the teachers (100%) said that CS makes the students feel more comfortable and confident while learning.

## 2.6 Results and Discussion

Overall, the students confirmed that code-switching was used widely to perform these functions. 83 percent of the respondents indicated that codeswitching was used when the teachers were checking for understanding. A total of 80 percent of the respondents indicated that the teachers codeswitch when explaining difficult concepts. Besides that, a total of 72 percent of the

respondents acknowledged that codeswitching was used when the teachers were explaining the meaning of new words. More than 70 percent of the respondents also acknowledged that code-switching is used when the teachers were elaborating on matters pertaining to the classroom management.

In addition, 60 percent of the respondents indicated that code-switching was used when the teachers provided explanations on different contexts.

The function for which code-switching was least used was when the teachers were giving instructions to complete tasks; the figure was 64.6 percent. It can be seen that code-switching was used by the teachers to perform various classroom functions. These results are similar to the various classroom or pedagogical functions in which code-switching can be best used as discovered by other researchers (Schweers, 1999; Burden, 2001; Tang, 2002).

In short, the teachers' code-switching is important in providing a psychologically conducive learning environment for the learners (Lai, 1996; Schweers, 1999), providing a strong foundation to learners' affective satisfaction.

Generally, the respondents perceived that code-switching has helped to ensure that they achieve their intended success due to a high percentage of respondents who were undecided in their choice. The respondents were most united when indicating that code-switching has helped them understand difficult concepts faced in their learning. Of a total of 54 respondents, 83 percent of the

respondents indicated that code-switching has helped them understand new words, the respondents perceived that code-switching has assisted them in understanding any difficult concepts contained in the lesson while nearly Sixty-nine percent (68 %) of the respondents also perceived that the teachers' code-switching has helped them understand the grammar being taught. Some 67 percent of the respondents acknowledged that their teachers' code-switching has assisted them in learning English in the classrooms.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter, two questionnaires were administered to both teachers and students to investigate their attitudes toward the use of code switching in the classroom. The findings of the collected data show that using code switching in the classroom make learning more effective. As a result, it enhances the learning of English. They also reveal that code switching is one of the useful techniques used in language learning.

Regarding the first hypothesis which supposed that the actual use of code switching in Algeria enhances the learning of English, the question n: 10 from the students' questionnaire resulted that (83%) of the students understand better when the teacher uses code switching. And as a result, the first hypothesis is confirmed.

Regarding the second hypothesis which supposed that the use of code switching in the classroom should be a material with appropriate learning strategies,



question n12 from the students' questionnaire resulted that (59%) of the students said that code switching makes them feel more comfortable and confident in the classroom. In addition to question n:7 of the teachers' questionnaire that revealed (80%) of the teachers said that using code switching helps them convey meaning easily to students. Therefore, the results confirm the second hypothesis.

As a result, code switching is an efficient learning material that enhances the learning in second and foreign languages classrooms.

## **General Conclusion**

The major concern in this research is to explain the influence of code switching on the comprehension and the lexical acquisition of EFL learners. To reach this end, two research questions have been drawn to be answered. The first one was to know if the use of code switching in the classroom enhances or inhibits the learning of English. The second tries to find if code switching can be used as a strategy to ameliorate learning. Therefore, two hypotheses have been formed. As predicted, the actual use of code switching enhances the learning of English; and it utilized as a strategy to improve the process of language learning.

This work was divided into two chapters. The first one was concerned with the literature review which dealt with defining key concepts related to code switching and English learning. The second chapter was the practical phase which dealt with the data collection, the analysis, and data interpretation.

The analysis of the results have shown that the teachers code switch while teaching because code switching creates a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom and it makes the students understand better. As a result, code switching if used as a teaching strategy will significantly improves language learning.

It would be of a great interest to make further research about code switching and language learning, and the attitudes toward its use during the class.

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# Appendix

## Students' Questionnaire

The aim of this questionnaire is to examine your attitudes and beliefs towards the use of Code-Switching (i.e. the use Arabic/French words in the English classroom conversations) at University settings. We will be grateful if you respond to all the following questions honestly as your answers will be helpful to better understand your attitudes.

### Part 1: Personal Information

1 Gender:

Male.  Female.

### Part 2: Usage of Code-Switching

2. Do you use Code-Switching in your conversation?

Yes

No

4. Do you use Code-Switching in your chatting on social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Google+, etc)?

Yes.

No.

5. Do you use Code-Switching in classroom?

Yes.

No.

### Part 3: Attitudes towards the use of Code-Switching

Code-Switching enhances my communication skills.

Agree  Disagree.

Code-switching helps me to develop my language skills.

Agree  Disagree

Using Code switching shows that I'm well-educated.

Agree  Disagree

Using Code switching shows that I'm prestigious.

Agree  Disagree

I Code-switch due to the lack of English words equivalents.

Agree  Disagree

Code-switching allows me to understand better.

Agree  Disagree

Code-switching helps me to convey new words easily.

Agree  Disagree



Code –switching makes me feel more comfortable and confident in classrooms.

Agree  Disagree

Code-switching helps me in learning new words from the teachers while they are switching between English and Arabic/French

Agree  Disagree

I Code-switch with my classmates due to the complexity of some words in English

Agree  Disagree

Usage of Arabic/French allows me to express the ideas that I can't express in English.

Agree  Disagree

## Teachers' Questionnaire

The aim of this questionnaire is to examine your attitudes and beliefs towards the use of Code-Switching (i.e. the use Arabic/French words in the English classroom conversations) at University settings. We will be grateful if you respond to all the following questions honestly as your answers will be helpful to better understand your attitudes

### Part 1: Personal Information

Gender:

Male.  Female.

Qualification:

Magister.                       Master + (1,2,3...)

Doctorate.

Experience in Teaching:

Less than 5 years.  Between 5 to 10 years.

More than 10 years.

### Part2: Attitudes towards the use of Code-Switching

I Code-switch while teaching in order to help my students understand better.

Agree                       Disagree

I Code-switch due to lack of equivalents in English language

Agree       Disagree

Code-switching helps me to bond strongly with my students.

Agree       Disagree

Code-switching helps me to convey meaning easily to students.

Agree       Disagree

Usage of Code switching helps the students in learning the second language.

Agree       Disagree

I Code-switch due to the complexity of certain words in English.

Agree    Disagree

I Code switch because I feel that the students are not exposed to English.

Agree       Disagree

Using Code-switching while illustrating new terms helps the students to learn better.

Agree       Disagree

Code-switching makes the discussions more interesting.

Agree       Disagree

Codes witching enhances my communication skills with the students.

Agree       Disagree

Code-switching enables the students to boost up their second language skills.

Agree       Disagree

Code-switching makes the students feel more comfortable and confident while learning.

Agree       Disagree