

Teachers' Code-Switching to the L1 in EFL Classroom

Liu Jingxia*

English Department, College of Foreign Languages, Three Gorges University, China

Abstract: Based on the previous research and practice, the present paper conducts an investigation in three Chinese universities to find out the general situation of the switching to Chinese and attempts to test the positive role of the use of Chinese in the EFL classroom of Chinese universities. This case study focuses on revealing the attitudes of teachers and students towards the patterns, functions, factors and influence of the switching to Chinese in the EFL classroom of Chinese universities. The study integrates the qualitative and quantitative research methods to analyze teachers' code-switching to Chinese through the teachers and students' questionnaires and classroom recordings.

Based on the analysis of the data, this study concludes that the switching to L1 is prevalent in the EFL classrooms of some Chinese universities and that it plays a positive role in the process of teaching and learning of English language.

Keywords: Teacher's code-switching to L1, attitudes, patterns, functional uses, influencing factors, effect.

INTRODUCTION

Code-switching, one of the unavoidable consequences of communication between different language varieties, has long existed as a result of language contact widely observed especially in multilingual and multicultural communities [1]. Over the past decades, increasing interest in code-switching has triggered a variety of investigations and theoretical discussions [2], which have shed light on our understanding of bilingual speech behavior. Code-switching as a specific phenomenon and strategy of foreign language teachers received attention in the 1980s. From then on, there has been the heated debate between different views on whether it is helpful or impeding to switch back and forth between the target language and the native language in the foreign language learning classroom. Advocates of intralingual teaching strategy, such as Ellis (1984), Wong-Fillmore (1985), Chaudron (1988), Lightbown (2001), believe that teachers should aim at creating a pure foreign language environment since they are the sole linguistic models for the students and that code-switching will result in negative transfer in FL learning. On the contrary, researchers in support of crosslingual (code-switching) teaching strategy including Tikunoff and Vazquez-Faria (1982), Levine (2003), Chen Liping (2004), etc., argue that L1 (the first language) can promote the learning of TL (target language) and L1 deserves a place in FL classroom. Code-switching is a good strategy of efficiency in FL teaching.

Faced with conflicting opinions, the author of the present paper holds a positive attitude towards L1 use in FL classroom. The study gives empirical evidence regarding the positive influence of teachers' use of code-switching in EFL classroom by investigating the general situation of code-switching in English classroom of China's universities. The

paper attempts to prove that the use of code-switching contributes to teachers' teaching of EFL in universities.

A REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

Code and Code-switching

The concept of *code* was put forward by Bernstein (1971). It refers to any system of signals, such as numbers, words, signal, which carries concrete meaning. Wardhaugh [3] pointed out that the term *code* is a neutral term rather than terms such as *dialect*, *language*, *style*, *pidgin* and *creole* which are inclined to arouse emotions. Code can be used to refer to "any kind of system that two or more people employ for communication" (p.86). When a particular code is decided on, there is no need to stick to it all the time. People can and should shift, as the need arises, from one code to another [4].

In the studies of code-switching, there have been various definitions of the term "code-switching". Gumperz [2] referred to it as "the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems" (p.59). Cook [1] came up with the notion that code-switching is the process of "going from one language to the other in mid-speech when both speakers know the same languages" (p.83). As defined by Lightbown [5], it is "the systematic alternating use of two languages or language varieties within a single conversation or utterance" (p.598). To be brief, code-switching is the shift from one language to another within a conversation or utterance. In the context of foreign language classroom, it refers to the alternate use of the first language and the target language, a means of communication by language teachers when the need arises.

Types of Code-Switching

There have been many attempts to give a typological framework to the phenomenon of code-switching. One of the most frequently discussed is that given by Poplack [6]. Poplack identified three different types of switching which

*Address correspondence to this author at the English Department, College of Foreign Languages, Three Gorges University, 8 Daxue Road, Yichang, 443002, Hubei, PR, China; Tel: 86-13972605246; E-mail: clare04@126.com

occurred in her data, namely tag, inter-sentential and intra-sentential switching [6].

Tag-switching is the insertion of a tag phrase from one language into an utterance from another language. It seems that the fixed phrases of greeting or parting are quite often involved in switches. Since tags are subject to minimal syntactic restrictions, they may be inserted easily at a number of points in a monolingual utterance without violating syntactic rules [6].

Inter-sentential switching occurs at a clause or sentence boundary, where each clause or sentence is in one language or another. According to Romaine [7], 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 takes place within the clause or sentence and is considered to be the most complex form of switching. It seems most frequently found in the utterances, though it involves the greatest syntactic risk since the switching between languages occurs within the clause or sentence boundaries. According to Poplack [6], intra-sentential switching may be avoided by all but the most fluent bilinguals.

Gumperz [2] introduced the concepts of situational and metaphorical switching. Situational switching involves change in participants and/or strategies while metaphorical switching involves only a change in topical emphasis. Auer [8] offered two types of code-switching, namely, discourse-related alternation and participant alternation. Different from other researchers, Lin [9] categorized code-switching according to Halliday's point of view---clause, rather than sentence is the basic unit of code-switching. Therefore, he suggested two types of code-switching, which are alternational and insertional switching. Alternational switching belongs to intra-clausal switching while insertional switching is inter-clausal.

In the present study of Chinese and English code-switching in EFL classroom, Poplack's division of code switching, tag, inter-sentential and intra-sentential switching is adopted.

Resaerches on Teachers' Code-Switching in Foreign Language Classroom

Language Attitudes Towards Code-Switching in Foreign Language Classroom

Code-switching in foreign language classroom has recently been the subject of considerable debate. When researchers address the issue, especially the use or the role of the L1 and the TL, there appear to be two opposing language attitudes among them---- target language exclusivity and the opposition.

The proponents of target language exclusivity argue that it is not necessary for learners to understand everything that is said to them by the teacher and that switching to the first language undermines the process of learning (F. Chambers, 1991; Halliwell & Jones, 1991; Macdonald, 1993). For them, teaching entirely through the TL makes the language real, allows learners to experience unpredictability, and develops the learners' own in-built language system. The researchers,

like Chaudron [10], Ellis [11] and Wong-Fillmore [12] emphasized that it is important for second language (SL) and foreign language (FL) teachers to expose learners to as many language functions as possible in the target language. Ellis [11] argued that the use or overuse of the L1 by SL and FL teachers will deprive learners of valuable TL input. Wong-Fillmore [12] thought that learners who are used to hearing their teacher use the L1 tend to ignore the TL and therefore do not benefit fully from valuable TL input. At the meantime, avoidance of the L1 does lie behind many teaching methods. For example, the Direct Method, which has been used in the classroom since 19th century, permits only the target language to be used in language classroom, including the language of the exercises and teacher talk used for classroom management, as it has one very basic rule: no translation is allowed. Like the Direct Method, the Audio-Lingual Method is also an oral-based approach according to which the target language is used in the classroom, not the students' native language for fear that the habits of the students' native language might interfere with the students' attempts to master the target language [13].

On the other side of the issue, more and more researchers, such as Stern (1992) and Cook (2000, 2001) argued that students' L1 deserves a place in FL classrooms. They attempted to question the long-held belief of excluding the L1 from the classroom. Cook [1] believed that to let students use their mother tongue is a humanistic approach, as it permits them to say what they really want to say. The use of students' L1 is a "learner-preferred strategy" (p.242). Stern [14] suggested that it may be the time to "reconsider" the use of crosslingual strategy (i.e., use of both the L1 and the TL), though in theory language teaching today is entirely intralingual (i.e., exclusive use of the TL). The learner inevitably works from an L1 reference base, so it can be helpful for him to "orient himself in the L2 through the L1 medium or by relating L2 phenomena to their equivalents in L1" (p.285). Moreover, Stern quoted several students' far less positive opinions on the exclusive use of the TL. Most of the students felt that their failure to understand the TL was due to insufficient explanation being given in the L1 and implicitly express a need for the techniques that would integrate more use of the L1. Cook [15] contended that the tradition of excluding the L1 from the language classrooms which had long been taken for granted had sharply limited "the possibilities of language teaching" (p. 405) and made language teachers fail to look rationally at ways in which the L1 can be integrated in the classroom. Based on his teaching experiences, he argued that regarding the students' L1 as a resource instead of a barrier to successful learning would help to create more authentic users of the TL. For him, the classroom is "a natural code-switching situation" (p.406) and code-switching is "a highly skilled activity" (p.408). He [15] suggested that teachers should resort to the L1 if it is apparent using the TL would be inefficient and cause problems for the students. He [15] encouraged the teachers to use the L1 when explaining grammar, organizing tasks, disciplining students, and implementing tests. Cook [15] believed that teachers should use the L1 when "the cost of the TL is too great" (p. 418) - whenever it is too difficult or time-consuming for the students to process and understand the TL. The other researchers, like Skinner [16], Duff & Polio [17] also presented the problems associated with the exclusive use of the TL in FL

classrooms. In short, it is not only impractical to exclude the L1 from the classroom but it is also likely to deprive students of an important tool for language learning.

Empirical Studies of Code-Switching in FL Classroom

Apart from the debates of the necessity of code-switching in second/foreign language classrooms, empirical studies have also been carried out since the 1980s, focusing on observing and analyzing the use and the “grammar” of the TL and L1, either calculating the amount of the native language spoken by teachers or classifying the various functional uses of the native language in teacher talk [18].

One of the earliest studies to break ground on classroom TL use was conducted by Guthrie [19]. Exploring the question of optimal classroom conditions for L2 acquisition, the researcher investigated the TL use of 6 university French instructors and found that most instructors used the TL in a great deal of the time. Of the 6 instructors, 5 apparently used the TL 83% to 98% of the time.

Through their observation of thirteen different L2 classes, including many typologically unrelated languages, at the University of California, Los Angeles, Duff and Polio [17] found that there was a range of from ten to 100 percent FL use by teachers, which represented a wider range than reported previously. Furthermore, they found that most students were satisfied with the status with regard to English /L2 use, while teachers’ attitudes and opinions differed markedly. What is interesting is that some teachers seemed to be unconscious that they had really switched codes. The two researchers reckoned that teachers’ using their mother tongue was to deprive their students of many opportunities to be exposed to and deal with the target language.

Opposite to them, Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie [18] concluded that the use of the native language was conducive to the correct understanding of the newly-input target language for the students by describing 4 high school classes. Also in Macaro’s [20] study, most students, except a small group of academically-inclined girls, reported that they expected their teachers to speak the L1 sometimes to facilitate their understanding; many indicated that they could not learn if they could not understand their teacher.

Attempts have been made to describe and classify the various reasons and functions of the uses of the L1 in teacher speech. Macaro [20] used surveys, interviews, and classroom observation to explore the L1 and TL use among student teachers of foreign languages in secondary schools. It was revealed that teachers switched to the L1 most often to give and clarify instructions for classroom activities, to give feedback to students, for translating and checking comprehension. Duff and Polio [17] discovered that the teachers switched to the L1 mainly to explain grammar, to manage the class and maintain discipline, to index a stance of empathy or solidarity towards students, to translate unknown vocabulary items, and to help students when they have problems of understanding. They also found that teachers were quite unaware of “how, when, and the extent to which they actually use English (the L1) in the classroom” (p. 320). Thus teachers’ lack of awareness caused inconsistencies of the TL/L1 use in the classroom. Some teachers, who apparently believed they used the TL exclusively and urged the

students to speak the TL, would themselves at times switch to the L1 for help.

Levine [21] also granted L1 the right position and pointed the L1 apparently serves numerous functions in the FL class, such as, managing class, discussing grammar, vocabulary and usage, and discussing tests, quizzes and other assignments. In Duff and Polio’s study [17], it was found that the factors which may have played a role included “language type” (the distance between the linguistic systems of the L1 and the TL), department policy on TL use, lesson content and objectives, pedagogical materials, and formal training (p.161).

Benefiting from the previous studies, Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie [18] conducted an analysis of the 5 classes in 4 teachers’ French class quantitatively and qualitatively and concluded that code-switching mainly involved in 3 functions: translation, meta-linguistic uses and communicative uses. Storch and Wiggleworth [22] studied the use of L1 in task solving process of adult second language learners and found four functions of L1 use: task management, task clarification, vocabulary and meaning exploration, and grammar presentation.

The studies above have made great contributions to the studies of teachers’ code-switching in FL classroom. However, much of the research is concerned about the situations in English-speaking countries, where English is the L1 and French, in most cases, the TL [23]. These findings cannot be generalized before more experiments are repeated in other environments in order to account for classroom code switching, as the discrepancy between these two language systems is much smaller than that between other languages, e.g. Chinese and English, when Chinese is the first language and English is the foreign language in China’s context. There may be a different picture due to the greater language and cultural differences. In the next section, the author conducts an investigation to find out the true situation of teachers’ code-switching, from the TL to the students’ L1 in EFL classrooms of Chinese universities.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Objective and Questions

The present paper aims to prove that teachers’ code-switching to the L1 plays a positive role in the EFL classroom of Chinese universities by investigating the terms of the attitudes of the teachers and students towards, the patterns, the factors, the functions and the influence of the code-switching to the L1.

The research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What are the attitudes of the teachers and students towards teachers’ switching to the L1?
2. What is the dominant pattern of teachers’ switching to the L1?
3. What are the factors influencing teachers’ switching to the L1?
4. What are the functions of teachers’ switching to the L1 in practice?
5. What is the influence of teachers’ switching to the L1 on EFL learning and teaching?

Lesson Type

According to Levine's experiment [21], there are three typical lesson contents ---- themed-based activities, instruction of vocabulary and grammar as well as discussion of tests and other assignments. In traditional integrated English classes of Chinese universities, themed-based activities and instruction of vocabulary and grammar are often included in "teaching a text", which is the most typical activity for teaching EFL and also takes up the largest portion in English teaching in Chinese universities. The discourse in "teaching a text" is teacher-led where the teacher talks much. Therefore, to control "the type of activity", the "teaching of a text" was chosen as the type of lesson to be recorded.

The "discussion of tests and other assignments" is not what the present study concerns.

Subjects

The subjects, both the teachers and students, were chosen from the three Chinese universities: Three Gorges University, Hubei University and Zhenjiang Normal University. The subjects are native speakers of Chinese.

Altogether 261 undergraduates from the three universities were randomly chosen from different majors amongst four grades (1-4). They are from different districts of China and characterize different families, study backgrounds, cognitive styles and experiences. So they represent most of for-

eign language learners in Chinese universities and ensure a wide range of variation with respect to the comprehensive investigation of code-switching in Chinese universities. For information in details about the student subjects, please see Table 1.

Table 1 shows that 60 teachers were involved in the study. They graduated from universities with a master's degree or doctor's degree in English Education, English Literature or English Linguistics and all received training in English pedagogy. Their teaching experience ranged from 5 to 20 years. They taught students of different education levels and different majors. Their academic ranks varied from professor to assistant teacher. Hence to great extent, they are representatives of the majority of foreign language teachers in higher education of China. Table 2 is the description of the teacher subjects.

Methods and Instruments

In order to have a general and genuine reflection of teachers' code-switching in classroom, both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used, consisting of two questionnaires and classroom recordings.

Questionnaires

Two questionnaires were for the students and teachers respectively, and they were used for collecting quantitative data on the study of code-switching to the L1.

Table 1. The Proportional Distribution of the Student Subjects

	Number	Percentage
<i>Distribution of the subjects by schools</i>		
Three Gorges University	97	37.1%
Hubei University	83	31.9%
Zhenjiang Normal University	81	31%
Total	261	100%
<i>Distribution of the subjects by majors</i>		
English	62	23.7%
Chinese	40	15.3%
Mathematics	41	15.7%
Chemical Engineering	35	13.4%
Business	39	14.9%
History	44	17%
Total	261	100%
<i>Distribution of the subjects by grades</i>		
First-year students	85	32.6%
Second-year students	74	28.3%
Third-year students	66	25.3%
Fourth-year students	36	13.8%
Total	261	100%

Table 2. The Description of the Teacher Subjects

	Number	Percentage
<i>Education Background</i>		
Ph. D.	5	8%
M.A.	55	92%
Total	60	100%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	16	26.7%
Female	44	73.3%
Total	60	100%
<i>Years of Teaching</i>		
15-20	12	20%
10-15	30	50%
5-10	18	30%
Total	60	100%
<i>Academic Rank</i>		
Professor	4	6.7%
Associate Professor	20	33.3%
Lecturer	29	48.3%
Assistant Teacher	7	11.7%
Total	60	100%

Both the questionnaires (See Appendix A and B) were designed with some modifications based on the studies of Duff & Polio [17], Macaro [20] and Levine [21]. They both have three parts: personal background, guidance and questions. In the first part of personal background, the subjects were asked to give their personal information. While in the guidance, in order to eliminate the subjects' possible misunderstanding of the term "code-switching", and to further ensure the right feedback, the definition was given. The last part of questions was the key part which gave the most specific information as the basis of the following data analysis. It was used to examine the frequency of Chinese code used in English classes, the attitude towards teachers' code-switching to Chinese, and the views on the main patterns, functions, factors and influence of teachers' code-switching to Chinese in practice.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the survey, both the questionnaires were piloted on a sample group of 6 teachers and 15 students respectively. According to the feedback, the questionnaires were revised in some aspects, including the addition or deletion of some items and the way to express a certain idea.

Classroom Recordings

All the class records were collected in Three Gorges University where the author is teaching. Eight periods (50 minutes each period) of English classes for both English

majors and non-English majors were recorded by using MP3 players. 8 teachers were randomly chosen for the recordings, 2 teachers from each grade respectively. In order not to give pressure to the subject teachers and students, and to gain as authentic materials as possible, the MP3 player was simply placed before the subject teacher without the author's personal participation and observation on the spot, as it is said that direct observation is not always the most appropriate way to gather classroom data and sometimes it seems too risky because of the likelihood that being observed will change people's behavior [13]. Besides, the purpose of the recording had not been told beforehand.

All the classes shared two characteristics: 1) the main language of instruction was English, 2) lesson type was "teaching a text".

Classroom recordings are mainly used to collect the data on the dominant patterns and functions of code-switching to Chinese and enrich the data from the questionnaires in these two aspects as well. Some of the materials recorded have been transcribed into written forms which are used as examples to support the author's analysis.

Data Collection

With the help of the author's colleagues and friends, both the questionnaires were administrated to the students (261) and subject teachers (60) of the three universities in October,

Table 3. Feedback on Frequency of Code-switching to Chinese

Frequency of Code-switching to Chinese	Teachers' Response		Students' Response	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
always	0	0%	0	0%
sometimes	42	70%	195	75%
occasionally	18	30%	64	25%
never	0	0%	0	0%
total	60	100%	259	100%

2008. All participants received uniform instructions on how to complete the survey. Prior to completing the survey, they learned that (a) the study was not a test; (b) there were no right or wrong answers; (c) the responses would be handled with absolute confidentiality. All the copies were returned. 60 copies of teachers' questionnaire and 259 copies of students' questionnaire were found valid.

8 teachers' classes were audio-recorded over a period of 4 weeks in November, 2008. The subject teachers were informed that their lessons would be recorded for a study of classroom discourse, and that the study was interested in examining teacher talk in the normal content-based, and hence no change should be made in their lessons. Of course, the teachers were not informed about the specific aim of the study; thus, their teaching activities were, possibly, the same as in normal classroom discourse when no visitor was present.

Procedures of Data Analysis

This research primarily used qualitative and quantitative analysis. The answers from the questionnaires were counted by hand and the percentage of each choice was calculated using Microsoft Excel. They were used in analyzing teachers' code-switching in the following analysis.

Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were used for the data from the classroom recordings. All the classroom recordings were transcribed and the amount of Chinese (the L1) /English (the TL) spoken by the teacher was quantified by listening to the records. A starting point, where the instructor seemed to address the entire class, was chosen and counted as 0:00. From then on, every switch from English to Chinese was noted. An utterance was determined by intona-

tion contours. The measurement of code-switching was undertaken only for the teachers' discourse (excluding students' questions and answers).

Results and Analysis

This section displays the results of qualitative and quantitative analysis of data collected with different research instruments. Quantitative analysis of the responses to the questionnaires indicates the participants' feedbacks on teachers' code-switching to Chinese in class. Qualitative and quantitative analysis of teachers' code-switched discourse in terms of patterns and functions shows some features of teachers' use of the mother tongue.

The Results and Analysis of the Questionnaires

1. Frequency of Code-switching to Chinese

Both the questionnaires for the students and teachers show that teachers' code-switching to Chinese occurs in almost all English classes of the universities where this study was conducted.

Table 3 indicates the ideas of the teachers and students on the frequency of code-switching to Chinese in English class. It seems that the teachers and students share the same view on the frequency of code-switching to Chinese.

2. Consciousness of the Use of Chinese Code

Table 4 indicates that most of the teachers (85%) are sometimes or occasionally conscious of code-switching to Chinese. This indicates that English teachers do not always use Chinese code in class consciously. Instead, in many cases, code-switching to Chinese occurs automatically or unconsciously. Unlike the teachers, more students (94.2%)

Table 4. Feedback on Consciousness of the Use of Chinese Code

Consciousness of the Use of Chinese Code	Teachers' Response		Students' Response	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes, always	5	8.3%	85	32.8%
Yes, sometimes	27	45%	107	41.3%
Yes, occasionally	24	40%	52	20.1%
No, never	4	6.7%	15	5.8%
total	60	100%	259	100%

Table 5. Feedback on Attitudes Towards Code-Switching to Chinese

Attitudes Towards Code-switching to Chinese	Teachers' Response		Students' Response	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
extremely agree	6	10%	13	5%
agree	42	70%	158	61%
do not care	7	11.7%	70	27%
disagree	5	8.3%	18	7%
total	60	100%	259	100%

are conscious of code-switching to Chinese to different extents. It implies that the students notice the switching from English to Chinese, thus they are clear about the situations where the teachers make the switches.

3. Attitudes Towards Code-Switching to Chinese

According to Table 5, the teachers and students stay nearly the same stance on the attitudes towards code-switching to Chinese. A high percent (80%) of the teachers agrees with the use of Chinese, while the percentage in the students (66%) is relatively lower. At the same time, 11.7% of the teachers and 27% of the students have the neutral views. Only a small percent of teachers (8.3%) and students (7%) disagree with the use of Chinese. However, we can see that most of the teachers and students hold a positive attitude towards code-switching to Chinese. This result is in accordance with the study of Macaro [20].

4. Ideal Frequency of Code-Switching to Chinese

Table 6 shows that most of the students prefer their teachers to use Chinese sometimes or occasionally. As to the item "occasionally", there is an increase in the number of the students than that in Table 3. This indicates that the students really want to be exposed to as much English as possible. However, they think it important for their teachers to use Chinese sometimes or occasionally to meet for their needs as

we know their textbooks are generally a little beyond their comprehension.

5. Influence of Code-Switching to Chinese

Table 7 shows that the majority of the teachers (81.7%) and students (75.3%) believe that code-switching to Chinese greatly benefit the EFL class. While only 11.7% teachers and 14.3% students remain neutral in this respect. On the other hand, a small number of teachers (6.6%) and students (10.4%) consider code-switching to Chinese to be harmful.

As manifested in Table 8, the overwhelming majority of the teachers (91.7%) and students (89.2%) consider code-switching to Chinese as a good strategy of efficiency in EFL class.

6. Dominant Pattern of Code-switching to Chinese

As it is shown in Table 9, the dominant pattern used by the majority of the teachers is inter-sentential code-switching.

7. Situations of Code-Switching to Chinese

From Table 10, we can see that as regards code-switching to Chinese, the students have different choices. The results go in the following order: "to give grammar instruction", "to translate unknown vocabulary items", "to

Table 6. Students' Feedback on Ideal Frequency of Code-switching to Chinese

Ideal Frequency of Code-switching to Chinese	Always	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never	Total
number	9	117	125	8	259
percentage	3.5%	45.1%	48.3%	3.1%	100%

Table 7. Feedback on Influence of Code-switching to Chinese

Influence of Code-switching to Chinese	Teachers' Response		Students' Response	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
greatly beneficial	15	25%	64	24.7%
beneficial	34	56.7%	131	50.6%
no influence	7	11.7%	37	14.3%
harmful	4	6.6%	27	10.4%
total	60	100%	259	100%

Table 8. Feedback on Whether Code-switching to Chinese is a Good Strategy of Efficiency

Whether Code-switching to Chinese is a Good Strategy of Efficiency in EFL Class	Teachers' Response		Students' Response	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	55	91.7%	231	89.2%
No	5	8.3%	28	10.8%
total	60	100%	259	100%

Table 9. Teachers' Feedback on Dominant Pattern of Code-switching to Chinese

Pattern Number & Percentage	Inter-Sentential Code-Switching	Intra-Sentential Code-Switching	Tag Code-Switching	Total
Number	33	17	10	60
Percentage	55%	28.3%	16.7%	100

Table 10. Students' Feedback on Situations of Code-switching to Chinese

Situations Number & Percentage	To Manage Class	To Translate Unknown Vocabulary Items	To Introduce Background Information	To Check Comprehension	To Give Grammar Instruction
Number	150	160	132	62	211
Percentage	57.9%	61.8%	51%	23.9%	81.5%

manage class”, “to introduce background information”, and “to check comprehension”. The students also mentioned the other situations of code-switching to Chinese, such as “to make comparison between two languages and cultures”, “to express state of mind (jokes, teacher’s emotion)”, “to give feedback to students”, “to translate difficult sentences”, “to create a humorous atmosphere”, “to reduce students’ nervousness”. The students’ view on the situations of code-switching to Chinese may reflect the functional categories of code-switching to Chinese.

8. Factors that Trigger Code-Switching to Chinese

The result in Table 11 indicates that “students’ English proficiency” and “the distance between Chinese and English” are the most significant variable influencing code-switching to Chinese. As is seen from the table, 85% of the teachers claimed that “students’ English proficiency” is the first factor leading them to alternate codes from English to

Chinese, and 70% of the teachers considered “the distance between the languages” to be another important factor. In addition, “pedagogical materials”, “lesson contents and objectives”, “teachers’ English proficiency” and “department policy on TL use” also contribute to code-switching to Chinese. Finally, the teachers mentioned the other factors, such as “teachers’ attitudes towards code-switching to Chinese”, “traditional teaching methods”, “testing systems” and “situational factors”, which might all integrate to affect code-switching to Chinese in practice.

9. Functions of Code-Switching to Chinese

Table 12 presents the teachers’ views on the functions of code-switching to Chinese. It seems that most of the teachers believed that code-switching to Chinese plays the important roles as “to translate unknown vocabulary items”, “to explain grammar” and “to manage class”. The teachers employed Chinese mostly in vocabulary explanation, grammar

Table 11. Teachers' Feedback on Factors to Trigger Code-switching to Chinese

Factors Number & Percentage	Students' English Proficiency	Teachers' English Proficiency	The Distance Between Chinese and English	Department Policy on TL Use	Pedagogical Materials	Lesson Contents and Objectives
Number	51	26	42	20	30	28
Percentage	85%	43.3%	70%	33.3%	50%	46.7%

Table 12. Teachers' Feedback on Functions of Code-switching to Chinese

Functions, Number & Percentage	To Explain Gram- mar	To Manage Class	To Index a Stance of Empathy or Solidarity Towards Students	To Translate Un- known Vocabulary Items	To Help Students When they have Difficulty in Understanding
Number	43	38	25	48	26
Percentage	71.7%	63.3%	41.7%	80%	43.3%

instruction and class management. Nearly half the teachers thought that “to help students when they have difficulty in understanding” and “to index a stance of empathy or solidarity towards students” are the other two possible functions of the switching to Chinese. Besides the items in the table, the teachers gave the other functional uses, e.g. “to emphasize some points”, “to quote other’s words”, “to change topics”, “to draw students’ attention”, “to check comprehension”, etc.

The Results and Analysis of the Classroom Recordings

It is shown in the data from the transcriptions of the 8 audio-recordings that none of the 8 teachers conducted “pure” target language class in practice, and all the teachers more or less used Chinese in their class.

As mentioned previously, classroom recordings were mainly used to examine the patterns and functions of code-switching to Chinese. Thus, the analysis of this section focuses on these two aspects.

1. Frequency Analysis of the Patterns of Code-Switching to Chinese

Paplack’s division of code-switching [24] is employed in this analysis of linguistic features of code-switching. The calculation of the frequency of the three patterns is based on one period of class of each subject teacher.

Table 13 presents the total times of each teacher’s code-switching to Chinese. It is obvious that the instances of inter-sentential pattern (with the average of 18.1) occur the most frequently among the three patterns. This result is in accord

with that of Table 9, but congruent with what Poplack and Scheu have found in breaking code-switching up into the three types. They regard intra-sentential switching as the most frequently type despite the difficulty in trying to conform to different syntactic rules [25]. The present data were collected when all of the subject teachers were dealing with text analysis which is their usual focus in teaching. Hence they explained the English sentences of the text and discussed them together with the students including translating them sometimes to boost the students’ comprehension. As a natural result, the inter-sentential pattern happened more times than the other two patterns.

2. Analysis of the Functions of Code-Switching to Chinese

The result in terms of functions of code-switching to Chinese in the questionnaires may support the previous findings (e.g. Duff & Polio, 1990; Macaro, 1997; Levine, 2003), which suggest the switching to L1 necessarily serves some basic functions which may be beneficial in foreign language learning environments. The data from classroom recordings reinforce the views on the functional uses and enrich the data from the questionnaires. In this part, the author will firstly calculate the frequency of functions of the use of Chinese and then adopt the samples from the collected data to illustrate the functions of code-switching to Chinese.

By the careful calculation and analysis, the functional uses of code-switching to Chinese can be found in the following categories: 1) translating unknown vocabulary items, 2) explaining grammar, 3) class managing, 4) emphasizing some points, 5) expressing a stance of empathy or solidarity

Table 13. Frequency of Switching to Chinese

Teachers	Patterns	Inter-Sentential Code-Switching	Intra-Sentential Code-Switching	Tag Code-Switching	Total
A		21	15	6	42
B		10	11	2	23
C		19	8	9	36
D		19	28	8	55
E		30	7	2	39
F		8	15	5	28
G		14	6	1	21
H		24	9	14	47
Average		18.1	12.4	5.9	36.4

Table 14. Frequency of the Functions of Code-Switching to Chinese

Functions	Times of Occurrence	Percentage
Translating Unknown Vocabulary Items	139	56.5%
Explaining Grammar	55	22.4%
Managing Class	24	9.8%
Emphasizing Some Points	12	4.8%
Expressing a Stance of Empathy or Solidarity Towards Students	9	3.7%
Facilitating Understanding by Quoting Other's Words	7	2.8%
Total	246	100%

towards students, 6) facilitating understanding by quoting other's words.

Table 14 represents the frequency of the functions of code-switching to Chinese in the data from the classroom recordings. It shows most the teachers (56.5%) tended to alternate to Chinese to explain new vocabulary or vocabulary they thought would be difficult for the students to understand. They frequently provided L1 equivalents to ensure comprehension. As to the other functional uses, they happened to varying degrees. Next, the author will provide the description of samples.

1) Translating Unknown Vocabulary Items

The age-old problem for teachers is how to convey the new meanings of the second language or foreign language to the learner, whether for words, sentences or language functions [15]. Switching to Chinese to convey meanings is not to say that teaching should relate all kinds of meaning to Chinese but that the use of Chinese does extend to the checking of comprehension. To convey the meaning of foreign language through translation may be an efficient way of helping the learner feel natural in an EFL classroom.

Example 1

T: (Read the sentences of the text) "... When they came to arrest him on grounds of malfeasance in office, it was, fortunately, for something that had taken place 10 years ago." What does 'on grounds of' mean?"

Ss: (silence)

T: "It means 由于, 因为 (because of)."

Example 2

T: "The *International Herald Tribune* is a very famous newspaper in America. Do you know this newspaper?"

Ss: (silence)

T: "It's 国际先驱论坛报 (The Chinese version of the newspaper)."

Translation of words and phrases may occur during the interaction between the teacher and students. The teachers were found to switch to Chinese when the students seemed not to understand their questions. In examples 1 and 2, without receiving any responses from the students, the teachers realized the words might not be in the students' repertoire. So they gave the Chinese equivalent to the words.

Sometimes, translating vocabulary happened when the teacher used other teaching strategies in English before or after translating the word or phrase.

Example 3

T: "The man who bought his farm was a contented man, who made the most of his surroundings... 'Make the most of' means 'make full use of', 利用, 充分利用。"

Example 4

T: "Do you know cause and effect? For example, he works very hard and he got high scores in the examination. In this sentence, 'he works very hard' is cause, and 'he got high scores in the examination' is effect. 这就是因果关系, 因果关系。 (This is cause and effect, cause and effect.)"

In these two examples, the meanings of English vocabulary items were conveyed not only through the switch to Chinese equivalents but also through the use of other teaching strategies, such as definition, exemplification and repetition. The integration of code-switching with other strategies fulfilled the purpose of ensuring comprehension.

Translating vocabulary is found to be the main feature in all of the eight teachers' practice. It partly gives the Chinese equivalents of English words, phrases and even sentences, and partly provides English explanation of comprehension by Chinese repetition. It may be the efficiency of comprehension, as argued by Cook [15], the mother tongue is efficient when teaching vocabulary items.

2) Explaining Grammar

Whether L1 or L2 is better for explaining grammar is a practical issue. According to Polio and Duff [17], teachers are very unwilling to "teach grammar in the TL" for various reasons, such as time-saving, grammar-oriented exams and worries about too much pressure on the studies. Martin Jones [26] also reported that teachers teach grammar in L2-L1-L2 sequence. The following examples will provide considerable support for the conclusion drawn from the previous studies.

Example 5

T: "Please look at this sentence. 'Then came a revolt against the government rule.' 本句是倒装句。以 here, there, now, then 引起的句子, 需使用倒装。 (This is an inverted sentence. With the words like 'here', 'there', 'now' or 'then' at the head of the sentence, the sentence is usually inverted.)"

Example 6

T: "Let's take one sentence for example for the use of subjunctive mood. 'One would think he had seen a ghost.' 本句使用would, 表示虚拟。(With 'would' in it, this sentence expresses subjunctive mood.) "

Example 7

T: "Later the horrible realization comes to him that the Morlocks live on Eloi meat, carrying off their victims at night. 这里的that引导一个同位语从句。(The word 'that' introduces an appositive clause.) "

To the students, esp. non-English-major students, they are not very familiar with the terms of English grammar. If the teachers use grammatical terms in English to explain the complicated sentence structure, he is running the risk of making more trouble for it takes more time and causes problems with the students' understanding.

It seems that in Chinese context, teachers tend to switch to the L1 promptly with no or little instruction in the TL.

3) Managing Class

The ways in which the teacher organizes the class also involve a choice of language. Some teachers resorted to L1 after having tried in vain to get the activity going in L2 (Macaro, 1997). Franklin [27] found 68% of the teachers preferred 8% L1 for activity instruction. The data of the present study shows that there is 9.6 percent of the occurrence of managing class, which is higher than Franklin's finding.

Example 8

T: "OK, everybody, next I'll divide you into several groups so that you could work together to finish this oral exercise. 第一排为第一组, 第二排为第二组, 第三排为第三组... (The first row will be the first group, and the second row the second group, and the third row the third group...)"

To give directions to activities, the teacher switched to Chinese for the arrangement of the students. Because using Chinese directions would be concise and save a lot of time in managing class.

Example 9

T: "Now, it's time for class. 不要讲话了。(Be silent.)"

Example 10

T: (asked a student to answer the question) "What does this sentence mean?"

S: (Silence)

T: "Could you paraphrase this sentence?"

S: Sorry.

T: (go to the student nearer) You forgot to take the reading stuff? 下次记着带阅读材料。(Please remember to take the reading material the next time.)

When the students did something that violated classroom discipline, the teachers tended to switch to Chinese for criticism and maintenance of discipline. The teachers' displeasure expressed in Chinese seemed to be more serious threat.

4) Emphasizing Some Points

Important messages can be reinforced or emphasized when they are transmitted in the L1 (Macaro, 1997). The

present data shows that the use of Chinese can lay stress on some instructions or direct students' attention to important contents. Code-switching to Chinese can be used to give emphasis.

Example 11

T: "Let's come to the next sentence. 'Hoping to find a greatly advanced civilization, the Time Traveler sees in the misty, warm air only an ominous, giant white sphinx on a huge pedestal.' 请大家注意这一句的描述。(Please pay attention to the description of this sentence.) Can anyone paraphrase this sentence?"

Here, the teacher used the Chinese switching to get the students' attention. She emphasized what she thought was important by inserting a Chinese sentence and drawing the students' attention to the description.

5) Indexing a Stance of Emphathy or Solidarity Towards Students

The teachers in our data appear to switch to build solidarity and intimate relations with the students and to show some concerns when students seemed to have problems. This finding is consistent with that of Polio and Duff [17]. They concluded that many of the teachers resorted to the L1 for rapport building with the students and "to temporarily background their role as a teacher, to perhaps foreground their role as an empathetic peer, and to digress from instructional sequences".

Example 12

T: "Have you read or heard of *Great Expectations*?"

S: "Sorry, I don't know."

T: "It's written by Charles Dickens. It's 远大前程 (the Chinese version of *Great Expectations*) ."

In this example, the student felt nervous, as he didn't know the book. The teacher switched to Chinese to build solidarity and give support to the student.

Example 13

T: "Now, let's review what we have learned last week. Who wrote *The Joys of Writing*?"

S: (Silence. He looks nervous.)

T: "不着急, 慢慢来。(Take it easy.) He was the prime minister of Britain. 好好想一想。(Think it over.)"

S: "Ah, Winston Churchill!"

T: "Good. You're right."

Here, when the teacher asked the question, the student was so nervous and anxious that he didn't know how to answer the question. He was scared of being criticized. Instead of reminding him solely in English, the teacher consciously switched to Chinese to encourage the student and help him build his confidence.

Although the frequency of code-switching to Chinese for solidarity or empathy is not high, it was of great value to guarantee the effective communication between the students and teachers.

6) Facilitating Students' Understanding by Quoting Others' Words

Quoting others' words is also used in the switching to Chinese. It is more efficient, powerful and specific to cite the language originally used by other people compared with its near-synonymous counterpart [1].

Example 14

T: "Every parent watches eagerly the child's acquisition of each new skill. A baby might be forced to use a toilet too early, and a young child might be encouraged to learn to read before he knows the meanings of the words he reads, just as someone says, '揠苗助长, 超前学习常常诱惑者家长。'"

To express his idea and feeling directly and vividly, the teacher quoted other's words. Thus, the students might have deeper understanding about what the teacher said and the teacher could get more resonance from the students as well.

FINDINGS

The questionnaires and classroom recordings both greatly contribute their share to shaping the following findings:

First, the data from the questionnaires and classroom recordings reflect that teachers' code-switching to Chinese does exist in EFL classroom of Chinese universities, both for English majors and non-English majors, though the teachers use English as the main medium in practice. All the teachers and students claim that there is the switching to Chinese sometimes or occasionally in their classes and it is used consciously or unconsciously. In addition, most the teachers (80%) and students (66%) hold a positive view on teacher's code-switching to the L1. This finding is consistent with that of Macaro (1997).

Second, the three patterns of code-switching do occur in class, including tag, inter-sentential and intra-sentential patterns. However, the dominant pattern is inter-sentential code-switching. This is different from the view of Poplack and Scheu (2000) who think the most frequently pattern is intra-sentential.

Third, the data from the questionnaires identify the students' English proficiency as the most significant factor influencing the teachers' switching to Chinese. The other factors, e.g. differences between English and Chinese, teaching materials, lesson contents and objectives, department policy on the TL use, which have been tested by Duff and Polio (1990) also affect the teachers' switching to Chinese. Besides, the research found that factors like teachers' attitudes towards code-switching, traditional methods, and situational factors also contribute to the occurrence of the switching to the L1.

Fourth, code-switching to Chinese has been found to serve various functions like translating vocabulary items, explaining grammar, managing class, and building close relation with students which are in accord with the findings of Macaro (1997) and Levine (2003). In addition, quoting others' words, emphasizing some points are also the functional uses in EFL class.

Fifth, code-switching to Chinese is a good strategy of efficiency and benefits EFL classroom.

CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

The present study is meant to report on an investigation of the general situation of code-switching to Chinese in Chinese universities. It finds that code-switching to Chinese is a prevalent phenomenon in EFL classroom of Chinese universities, and that it plays a significant role in English learning and teaching process.

The study provides a detailed description and analysis on the general situation and positive role of code-switching to Chinese in EFL classroom of some Chinese universities. However, there are admittedly still some limitations which may give some directions for further studies.

The first limitation relates to the data source. The sample of this paper is relatively small, as the survey was conducted in three universities, involving 60 teachers and 259 students. Therefore, it could not fully represent the whole population of EFL teachers and students. To portray a full picture of EFL teaching in China, teachers and students from more universities need to be involved.

Second, the findings of the questionnaires are based on the respondents' general perceptions and beliefs about English instruction, not on one definite period. This means that the respondents may have answered the questions in the questionnaires with subjective minds.

Third, due to the fact that data collection was restricted, the categories of patterns, factors, functions of the switching to Chinese could not all be covered, and maybe there are other kinds of code-switching with different patterns, factors, functions in EFL classrooms.

Fourth, some variables were not accounted for in this study, such as students' education level, gender, personality traits, learning styles or learning motivation, and teachers' belief, assumptions, etc., which in fact may influence their attitudes towards teachers' switching to Chinese.

This study represents the tip of an iceberg, from which inspirations can be drawn for further studies. It is thus a preliminary study in the research field of code-switching in EFL classrooms of China, and there is extensive work waiting for those who are interested in this field to examine.

APPENDIX A:

Students' Questionnaire

I. Personal Background

Major:

Education Level: () First-year student () Second-year student

() Third-year student () Fourth-year student

II. Guidance

In foreign language classes, sometimes teachers may shift from one language to another (e.g. from English to Chinese) in their teaching. This phenomenon is called code-switching (CS) which refers to the alternate use of the first language and the target language.

III. Questions

1. How often does your teacher use Chinese in the EFL class?

- A. always B. sometimes C. occasionally D. never
2. Are you conscious of teacher's CS to Chinese in the EFL class?
- A. Yes, always. B. Yes, sometimes. C. Yes, occasionally. D. No, never.
3. What's your attitude towards the use of Chinese in the EFL class?
- A. extremely agree B. agree C. do not care D. disagree
4. What's the ideal frequency of teachers' use of Chinese in the EFL class?
- A. always B. sometimes C. occasionally D. never
5. Do you think CS to Chinese is an efficient strategy of learning and teaching English?
- A. Yes. B. No.
6. How does CS to Chinese influence the EFL class?
- A. greatly beneficial B. beneficial C. no influence D. harmful
7. In what situations does your teacher switch to Chinese?
(You may give more than one choice.)
- A. to manage class
B. to translate unknown vocabulary items
C. to introduce background information D. to check comprehension
E. to give grammar instruction F. others

APPENDIX B

Teachers' Questionnaire

I. Personal Background

Education Level:

Academic Level:

Years of Teaching:

II. Guidance

In foreign language classes, sometimes teachers may shift from one language to another (e.g. from English to Chinese) in their teaching. This phenomenon is called code-switching (CS) which refers to the alternate use of the first language and the target language.

III. Questions

1. How often do you use Chinese in the EFL class?
- A. always B. sometimes C. occasionally D. never
2. Are you conscious of Chinese switching in the EFL class?
- A. Yes, always. B. Yes, sometimes. C. Yes, occasionally. D. No, never.
3. What's your attitude towards the use of Chinese in the EFL class?
- A. extremely agree B. agree C. do not care D. disagree
4. Do you think CS to Chinese is an efficient strategy of learning and teaching English?

- A. Yes. B. No.
5. How does CS to Chinese influence the EFL class?
- A. greatly beneficial B. beneficial C. no influence D. harmful
6. Which of the following is the pattern of CS to Chinese you use most in the EFL class?
- A. intra-sentential CS (it occurs at a clause or sentence boundary.)
B. inter-sentential CS (it takes place within the clause or sentence.)
C. tag-switching (it is the insertion of a tag phrase from one language into an utterance from another language)
7. What are the factors may influence CS to Chinese in the EFL class?
(You may give more than one choice.)
- A. students' English proficiency B. teachers' English proficiency
C. the distance between the linguistic systems of Chinese and English
D. department policy on TL use E. pedagogical materials
F. lesson contents and objectives G. others
8. What are the functions of CS to Chinese in the EFL class?
(You may give more than one choice.)
- A. to explain grammar B. to manage class
C. to index a stance of empathy or solidarity towards students
D. to translate unknown vocabulary items
E. to help students when they have difficulty in understanding
F. others

A brief bio: Liu Jingxia is an associate professor in College of Foreign Languages, Three Gorges University, in Hubei Province, China. She did her MA studies majoring in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics at Hubei University, China. She is interested in English teaching and discourse studies.

e-mail: clare04@126.com

Address: Ms. Liu Jingxia
College of Foreign Languages
China, Three Gorges University
8 Daxue Road
Yichang
443002
Hubei
PR, China

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