

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية
République Algérienne Démocratique et Populaire

Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur
et de la Recherche Scientifique
Université Akli Mohand Oulhadj - Bouira -
X·O·V·EX ·KIE Γ·X·HA H·X·X - X·Φ·E·O·I·E -



وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي
جامعة أكللي محمد أوحاج
- البويرة -

Faculté des Lettres et des Langues



كلية الآداب واللغات
القسم: الآداب و اللغة الإنجليزية

البويرة في: 2026/05/19

إذن بالإيداع خاص بمذكرة الماجستير

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الشعبة: لغة إنجليزية

التخصص: التعليمية و اللغات التطبيقية

عنوان

المذكرة: The Effect of Teachers' Code Switching on Students'

Vocabulary Retention: A Case of First Year Students at
Djounou Ali Elkhouni and his Brothers Middle School, Bouira

ملاحظة: تقدم هذه الوثيقة رفقة التصريح الشرفي ليتم ختمها معا في نفس اليوم



التصريح الشرفي الخاص بالالتزام بقواعد النزاهة العلمية



انا الممضي اسفله،

السيد(ة) سيدي علي...أ. صينة الصفة: طالب (ماستر / دكتوراه)

الحامل(ة) لبطاقة التعريف الوطنية 320003470003. 11.05.4032.000.03. 27.03.2023

المسجل(ة) بكلية / معهد الآداب و اللغات قسم اللغة الإنجليزية

تخصص: التعليم والتعلم واللغات التطبيقية

والمكلف(ة) بإنجاز اعمال بحث (مذكرة، التخرج، مذكرة ماستر، مذكرة ماجستير، اطروحة دكتوراه).

عنوانها: The Effect of Teachers' Code-switching on Students'

Vocabulary Retention: A Case Study of First year students at Djambi Ali
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أصرح بشرفي اني ألتزم بمراعاة المعايير العلمية والمنهجية الاخلاقيات المهنية والنزاهة الاكاديمية المطلوبة

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(Signature)

التاريخ: 2023/05/14

البويرة في 2023/05/14

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trn:oid=1:3568690682	23,662 كلمات
تاريخ الإرسال	144,932 حروف
May 13, 2026, 11:25 AM GMT+1	
تاريخ التنزيل	
May 13, 2026, 11:36 AM GMT+1	
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Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

University of Akli Mouhand Oulhadj, Bouira

Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

Department of English Language and Literature



**The Effect of Teachers' Code-switching on Students'
Vocabulary Retention: A Case Study of First Year Students at
Djoughri Ali Elkhouni and his Brothers Middle School, Bouira**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Language and Literature - University of
Bouira – in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirement of Master's Degree in
Didactics and Applied Languages**

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Academic Year 2025/2026

Abstract

The present study investigates the effect of teachers' code-switching on the vocabulary retention of first-year middle school learners. It is guided by the following research questions: What is the effect of teachers' code-switching on students' vocabulary retention? Is there a significant difference in vocabulary retention between students taught through code-switching and those taught through English-only instruction? What are teachers' perceptions and reasons for using code-switching during vocabulary instruction? In line with these questions, the following hypotheses were formulated: Teachers' code-switching has a significant effect on students' vocabulary retention, and there is a significant difference in vocabulary retention between the experimental and control groups. A quasi-experimental design within a mixed-methods approach was adopted. The quantitative component involved a pre-test and a post-test administered to two intact EFL classes, each comprising 34 students. One class was assigned as the experimental group and received instruction with code-switching, while the other served as the control group and received English-only instruction. The qualitative component included classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with four English teachers to explore their perceptions and classroom practices. The results of the pre-test and post-test revealed statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups, with higher performance observed in the experimental group. Findings from the interviews revealed that teachers perceive code-switching as a useful strategy that facilitates vocabulary explanation, reduces learner anxiety, and supports comprehension and retention. The study concludes with pedagogical recommendations for teachers and suggestions for further research.

Keywords: Code-switching, Vocabulary retention, EFL learners, Classroom interaction, English language teaching (ELT)

الملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في تأثير التناوب اللغوي (Code-switching) لدى المعلمين على اكتساب المفردات لدى متعلمي السنة الأولى من المرحلة المتوسطة. وقد تم توجيهها من خلال الأسئلة البحثية التالية: ما تأثير التناوب اللغوي لدى المعلمين على اكتساب المفردات لدى المتعلمين؟ هل توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في اكتساب المفردات بين المتعلمين الذين يُدرّسون باستعمال التناوب اللغوي والذين يتلقون تعليماً باللغة الإنجليزية فقط؟ وما هي تصورات المعلمين وأسباب استخدامهم للتناوب اللغوي أثناء تدريس المفردات؟ وفي ضوء هذه الأسئلة، تم صياغة الفرضيات التالية: للتناوب اللغوي لدى المعلمين تأثير ذو دلالة إحصائية على اكتساب المفردات لدى المتعلمين، كما توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في اكتساب المفردات بين المجموعة التجريبية والمجموعة الضابطة. اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج شبه التجريبي ضمن مقارنة المنهج المختلط. شمل الجانب الكمي اختباراً قبلياً واختباراً بعدياً طبقاً على قسمين من أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية كل واحد منهما يضم 34 تلميذاً. تم تعيين أحد القسمين كمجموعة تجريبية تلقت التعليم باستخدام التناوب اللغوي، بينما تلقى القسم الآخر تعليماً باللغة الإنجليزية فقط كمجموعة ضابطة. أما الجانب النوعي فقد تضمن ملاحظات صفية ومقابلات شبه موجهة مع أربعة أساتذة لغة إنجليزية لاستكشاف تصوراتهم وممارساتهم الصفية. أظهرت نتائج الاختبارين القبلي والبعدي وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين المجموعتين لصالح المجموعة التجريبية. كما بينت نتائج الملاحظات الصفية أن التلاميذ في المجموعة التجريبية كانوا أكثر تفاعلاً ونشاطاً وقدرة على استرجاع المفردات، في حين أظهرت المجموعة الضابطة مستوى أقل من المشاركة والثقة. وأكدت نتائج المقابلات أن المعلمين يرون أن التناوب اللغوي يسهم في شرح المفردات، وتقليل القلق، ودعم الفهم والاستيعاب. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن التناوب اللغوي له تأثير إيجابي على اكتساب المفردات لدى متعلمي السنة الأولى من المرحلة المتوسطة، وتقدم مجموعة من التوصيات البيداغوجية للمعلمين واقتراحات لأبحاث مستقبلية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التناوب اللغوي، اكتساب المفردات، متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، التفاعل الصفي، تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية.

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, we humbly express our profound gratitude to Allah, the Almighty, for the grace and ease He granted, which made it possible to complete this work successfully.

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to our respected supervisor, Dr. Amel Bouakaz, for her guidance and support throughout the preparation of this work. Her mentorship and valuable advice greatly contributed to the successful completion of this research.

Special thanks go to the jury members: Dr. Chenane, and Mrs. Kacimi, for their time and effort in reading and evaluating this work.

We also extend our sincere thanks to the teachers and students who participated in the survey and experiment, as well as to all those who, directly or indirectly, contributed to the accomplishment of this work.

Dedication

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

I dedicate this humble work to the loving memory of my aunt, who passed away this year. May Allah grant her eternal peace and paradise.

This work is dedicated to my dear parents for their continuous support and guidance.

It is also dedicated to my sisters and brothers, my beloved nephews and nieces, and all my dear friends for their encouragement.

Special thanks go to my supervisor, Dr. Amel Bonakaz, for her guidance and support in completing this work.

Finally, I dedicate this work to the girl I used to be, who kept believing and persevering until reaching this point.

Amina SIDI ALI

Dedication

First and foremost, all praise and gratitude are due to Allah for granting me the strength, patience, and blessings to complete this journey.

To the light of my life, my parents: I dedicate this work to you. Your endless love and prayers have been my greatest motivation and the foundation of my success.

To my dear brother, Sid Ali, and my sisters, Ouafaa, Soumia and Rym: thank you for your encouragement, your support, and for always being by my side.

I also extend my sincere gratitude to my extended family and cousins for their kindness and constant presence in my life.

A special thanks goes to my dear research partner Amina, for her collaboration and for the shared journey that made this achievement possible.

To all my friends, and to everyone who supported me, near or far: thank you for believing in me and for your constant encouragement.

Melissa BOUDISSA

List of Abbreviations

AA: Algerian Arabic

AD: Algerian Dialect

CA: Classical Arabic

CM: Code Mixing

CS: Code Switching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EL: Embedded Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

LLS: Language Learning Strategies

ML: Matrix Language

MLF: Matrix Language Frame

MSA: Modern Standard Arabic

VLS: Vocabulary Learning Strategies

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Vocabulary is widely recognized as one of the most fundamental components in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, since it provides learners with the necessary linguistic resources to understand and communicate meaning effectively. It serves as the cornerstone of the four essential language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Nation, 2001). Without an adequate range of vocabulary knowledge, learners often face significant difficulties in comprehending spoken and written input, as well as in expressing their ideas clearly and accurately in the target language. Consequently, vocabulary development is central to overall language proficiency and academic success in EFL contexts.

One of the major challenges in vocabulary acquisition is retention over time. Although learners may initially understand and recognize new lexical items during classroom instruction, they frequently struggle to recall or use these words in appropriate contexts after a period of time. This gap between short-term recognition and long-term retention highlights the importance of vocabulary retention as a key aspect of language learning. Retention reflects learners' ability not only to store new words in memory but also to retrieve and apply them effectively when needed in real communicative situations. In many EFL settings, including Algerian schools, first-year middle school learners often encounter persistent difficulties in retaining newly learned vocabulary, which may negatively impact their overall language development and communicative competence. To address these challenges, teachers employ a variety of instructional strategies during classroom interaction. One commonly used approach is code-switching, which refers to the alternating use of the learners' first language and the target language, English, within the same instructional context. In vocabulary teaching, teachers frequently use code-switching as a pedagogical tool to explain word meanings, clarify difficult or unfamiliar items, and facilitate learners' comprehension of new lexical content. According to Cook (2001), code-switching can function as a supportive strategy that helps connect gaps in understanding and reduces learners' cognitive load, especially at lower proficiency levels.

In light of these considerations, the present study aims to investigate the effect of teachers' code-switching on students' vocabulary retention among first-year middle school EFL learners in Algerian schools. More specifically, it seeks to explore whether the strategic use of learners' first language in vocabulary instruction contributes to improving their ability to retain and recall new words over time, and how this practice influences their overall learning process.

1.1. Background of the Study

Vocabulary retention has long been identified as a persistent challenge in EFL learning, particularly in learning environments where students have little opportunity to encounter or use the target language beyond classroom instruction (Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Ellis, 2008). Research emphasizes that the long-term retention of lexical items requires not only initial understanding but also effective processing and repeated reinforcement (Schmitt, 2000). Within this perspective, code-switching has been widely discussed as a pedagogical strategy in language classrooms. This strategy involves the use of two languages within the same stretch of discourse (Poplack, 1980), it is often used by teachers to ensure comprehension and facilitate learning. Classroom-based research indicates that the use of L1 can support learners in processing new information, particularly at lower levels of proficiency (Macaro, 2001). However, the effect of code-switching on vocabulary retention remains controversial. While some researchers argue that it enhances retention by making input more comprehensible (Cook, 2001), Others contend that it may lessen learners' engagement with the target language and restrict possibilities for meaningful practice. (Ellis, 2008). These contrasting perspectives suggest that the effectiveness of code-switching is not yet fully established.

In the Algerian EFL context, where English is primarily learned in formal educational settings, code-switching is frequently employed as a practical classroom strategy. Nevertheless, its impact on students' vocabulary retention has not been sufficiently examined, particularly at the middle school level. Therefore, further investigation is needed to explore the effect of teachers' code-switching on students' vocabulary retention in EFL classrooms.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In EFL classrooms, teachers frequently use code-switching as a pedagogical strategy during vocabulary instruction to support learners' comprehension and facilitate learning. Despite its widespread use, its actual effect on students' vocabulary retention remains unclear. While code-switching may help learners understand word meanings during instruction, it is not yet established whether this immediate support leads to effective long-term retention of vocabulary items. In other words, there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding whether exposure to code-switching enhances or hinders learners' ability to retain newly acquired vocabulary over time. This uncertainty highlights a gap in current research, particularly in contexts where English is learned primarily in formal classroom settings.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effect of teachers' code-switching on students' vocabulary retention among first-year middle school EFL learners.

1.3. Research Objectives

The present study aims to examine whether teachers' use of code-switching during vocabulary instruction has an effect on vocabulary retention among first-year middle school learners. More specifically, it attempts to determine if there are differences in vocabulary retention between learners taught through code-switching and those taught through English-only instruction. Furthermore, the study seeks to explore teachers' perceptions of code-switching and understand the main reasons that lead them to use it during vocabulary instruction.

1.4. Research Questions

In order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, the following research questions are formulated:

1. What is the effect of teachers' code-switching on students' vocabulary retention among first-year middle school learners?
2. Is there a significant difference in vocabulary retention between students taught through code-switching and those taught through English-only instruction?
3. What are teachers' perceptions and the primary reasons for using code-switching during vocabulary instruction?

1.5. Research Hypotheses

1.5.1. Alternative Hypotheses (H1):

1. **H1₁**: Teachers' code-switching significantly improves students' vocabulary retention among first-year middle school learners.
2. **H1₂**: There is a significant difference in vocabulary retention between students taught through code-switching and those taught through English-only instruction.

1.5.2. Null Hypotheses (H0):

1. **H0₁**: Teachers' code-switching has no significant effect on students' vocabulary retention among first-year middle school learners.
2. **H0₂**: There is no significant difference in vocabulary retention between students taught through code-switching and those taught through English-only instruction.

1.6. Significance of the Study

This study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the role of teachers' code-switching in EFL classrooms, particularly in relation to vocabulary retention and classroom comprehension. By examining the effectiveness of strategic alternation between the native language and English, it aims to provide insights into how this practice can be used as a purposeful pedagogical tool. Such insights may help first-year middle school learners overcome some of the cognitive challenges associated with learning a new language, while supporting teachers in refining their instructional practices beyond rigid traditional approaches. Furthermore, this research is expected to offer valuable implications for the Algerian EFL context, where code-switching is commonly used but not sufficiently examined. It may assist teachers in adopting more informed strategies that connect learners' prior knowledge with new lexical items, thereby facilitating vocabulary learning and improving classroom interaction. In addition, the study may contribute to addressing common difficulties faced by young EFL learners, such as learning anxiety, difficulties in understanding abstract vocabulary, and challenges in retaining new words. The findings could also inform curriculum design and teacher professional development by highlighting the pedagogical value of code-switching when used appropriately.

Ultimately, this research aims to bridge the gap between theoretical perspectives on code-switching and actual classroom practices, contributing to more effective and supportive language learning environments. It is also expected to enhance the overall quality of English language instruction at Djouhri Ali Elkhouni and His Brothers Middle School.

1.7. Research Methodology

1.7.1. Research design

To address the research questions, the researcher selected appropriate methods and procedures that allow for the collection of valid and reliable data. In this regard, the present study adopts a quasi-experimental, non-equivalent pretest–posttest control group design within a mixed-methods approach. This approach combines both quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the effect of teachers' code-switching on students' vocabulary retention. The quantitative component involves the administration of a pre-test and a post-test to measure students' vocabulary retention before and after the intervention. The qualitative component is supported through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews, which provide deeper insights into the teaching and learning processes. Therefore, the mixed-methods approach enables a more comprehensive

understanding of the research problem by integrating numerical data with qualitative descriptions, allowing for a more complete interpretation of the findings.

Furthermore, the combination of experimental and descriptive methods ensures methodological triangulation, which enhances the credibility and validity of the study's findings. By integrating quantitative data from tests with qualitative data from observations and interviews, the researcher is able to cross-verify results and obtain a more accurate representation of the impact of code-switching on vocabulary retention in real classroom settings.

1.7.2. The Sample Population

The study involves first-year middle school learners from Djouhri Ali Elkhouni and His Brothers Middle School, Bouira, as participants. The sample consists of 68 learners, divided into two groups. An experimental group of 34 learners is exposed to teachers' code-switching during vocabulary instruction, while a control group of 34 learners receives English-only instruction. In addition, four (04) English teachers are included in the study and are interviewed to provide qualitative insights into their classroom practices and the use of code-switching in vocabulary teaching. These participants were selected to ensure a balanced comparison between both groups and to enrich the qualitative dimension of the study.

1.7.3. Data Collection Methods

Three complementary instruments were used for data collection in this study: interviews, classroom observation, and pre-test/post-test. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers to explore their perceptions of code-switching and the reasons for its use in vocabulary instruction. Classroom observation was used to examine teachers' code-switching practices and students' reactions during vocabulary lessons. In addition, pre-test and post-test were administered to assess students' vocabulary retention before and after the implementation of code-switching. The use of multiple instruments enabled data triangulation, thereby strengthening the validity and reliability of the findings and offering a more comprehensive understanding of the research.

1.7.4. Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study is subject to several limitations that should be taken into account. The research was undertaken in a single middle school and involved a relatively small sample size, which may limit the external validity of the findings. Furthermore, the absence of random assignment, the short duration of the study, and some incomplete responses in the teacher

interviews may have affected the depth and comprehensiveness of the data. Therefore, further research in broader contexts is needed to confirm and extend these findings.

1.7.5. Structure of the Study

This dissertation consists of two main chapters, in addition to a general introduction and a general conclusion. The general introduction presents the background of the study, research questions, objectives, significance, research design, and the structure of the study. Chapter One is dedicated to a literature review structured in two sections: the first outlines the theoretical framework of code-switching from structural and sociolinguistic perspectives, while the second focuses on vocabulary retention. Chapter Two, entitled Field Work, presents the research design, participants, instruments, procedures, and data analysis. This is followed by a discussion of the findings, as well as the study's limitations and recommendations for future research. The dissertation concludes with a general conclusion summarizing the main findings.

Chapter One: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on *the effect of teachers' code-switching on students' vocabulary retention*, focusing on first-year students at Djouhri Ali El Khouni and His Brothers Middle School in Bouira. As indicated by the title of the current research, the chapter is divided into two main sections.

The first section provides a concise overview of code-switching (CS), presenting its theoretical framework through both the structural and sociolinguistic approaches. It begins with a definition of code-switching and examines its relationship with related concepts such as borrowing, code-mixing, and diglossia. It also outlines the Algerian sociolinguistic profile, highlighting the roles of Berber, Arabic, French, and English. Furthermore, this section discusses the main types of code-switching, including tag-switching, intra-sentential switching, inter-sentential switching, metaphorical switching, and situational switching. In addition, it explores the reasons behind code-switching, its role in language learning, and its functions from both teachers' and students' perspectives. Finally, it presents both the positive and negative views regarding the use of code-switching in educational contexts.

The second section focuses on vocabulary retention. It begins by defining vocabulary and distinguishing between its types, namely receptive and productive vocabulary. It also addresses vocabulary teaching and learning strategies, classifying teaching strategies into planned and unplanned approaches. Moreover, this section emphasizes the importance of vocabulary in the EFL classroom and discusses the factors affecting vocabulary learning, including cognitive and instructional factors. It further defines retention and vocabulary retention, and explains the relationship between memory and retention through the three stages of memory: encoding, storage, and retrieval. Finally, it examines the impact of code-switching on vocabulary retention, highlighting both its positive and negative effects.

2.2. A Theoretical Framework for Code-Switching

There are two main, interrelated approaches to the study of code-switching: the structural (grammatical) approach and the sociolinguistic (functional) approach.

2.2.1. The Structural Approach to Code-Switching

Code-switching (CS), defined as the alternation between two languages or language varieties within a single interaction, is a common phenomenon in bilingual and multilingual contexts. In the

1950s, this practice received little scholarly attention and was often associated with speakers' inadequate proficiency in one or both languages. It was commonly perceived as a random mixture of languages produced by bilingual individuals (Nakamura, 2005). However, by the 1970s, researchers began to recognize code-switching as a systematic and meaningful linguistic behavior, Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982, p. 115) argued that "code-switching itself does obey strict structural rules in addition to the grammatical rules of each component language," suggesting that it is governed by specific constraints rather than occurring randomly.

During this period, structural linguists focused on the grammatical aspects of code-switching, examining the syntactic and morpho-syntactic constraints that regulate it. Among the most influential contributions is Poplack's (1980) classifications of code-switching, which distinguishes between inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag switching. She also proposed two important constraints: the free morpheme constraint and the equivalence constraint. The free morpheme constraint holds that switching is disallowed between a lexical stem and a bound morpheme, such as an affix, unless the lexical item has been phonologically adapted to the morphology of the target language. In contrast, the equivalence constraint maintains that code-switching can only occur when the syntactic structures of both languages are aligned (Poplack, 1980, pp. 585–586).

Another major contribution to the structural approach is the Matrix Language Frame (MLF) Model proposed by Myers-Scotton (1993), which accounts for intra-sentential code-switching. The model posits an asymmetrical relationship between the languages involved in code-switched utterances. According to Myers-Scotton (1993), the Matrix Language (ML) serves as the source of grammatical structure, whereas the Embedded Language (EL) provides lexical element. Eastman (1992) refers to the Matrix Language as the speaker's first language, while the Embedded Language corresponds to the second language used in the same communicative context.

Myers-Scotton (1993) proposed three key principles for identifying the Matrix Language:

- **The Morpheme Order Principle**, which states that the word order in mixed utterances is determined by the Matrix Language.
- **The System Morpheme Principle**, which states that all system morphemes, defined as grammatical markers that express relationships outside their head constituents, are required to originate from the Matrix Language.

- **The Blocking Hypothesis**, which posits that certain Embedded Language content morphemes are blocked if they are not compatible with the Matrix Language at specific levels of grammatical structure.

In addition, Myers-Scotton identified three types of code-switching constituents:

- **Mixed ML + EL constituents**, which include linguistic units that combine morphemes from both the Matrix Language and the Embedded Language.
- **ML islands**, which consist of sequences of speech that are entirely built from the Matrix Language.
- **EL islands**, which consist entirely of morphemes from the Embedded Language (Myers-Scotton, 1993, pp. 77–78).

2.2.2. The Sociolinguistic Approach to Code-Switching

From a sociolinguistic perspective, code-switching (CS) is viewed as a communicative strategy used by bilingual speakers to convey meaning effectively and appropriately within specific social contexts. This approach primarily seeks to understand the motivations behind language alternation and the social functions it serves in interaction.

Research in this field generally operates on two complementary levels: the **macro-level** and the **micro-level**. At the macro-level, scholars examine language choice within broader social and community contexts. A key contribution in this area is Ferguson's (1959, p. 327) concept of **diglossia**, which distinguishes between a High (H) variety, used in formal social contexts, and Low (L) varieties, used in informal social contexts. This perspective highlights how societal norms and cultural expectations influence language use. At the micro-level, code-switching is analyzed as a discourse phenomenon, with particular attention to how speakers use it to construct meaning in interaction. Researchers at this level investigate how CS operates within conversation and how it expresses speakers' intentions, identities, and social relationships (Abdul-Zahra, 2010, p. 287).

A significant contribution to this approach is the work of Blom and Gumperz (1972), where a distinction between situational and metaphorical code-switching was established. Gumperz's (1982) work on metaphorical code-switching was further developed. He introduced the term conversational code-switching and characterized it through several features, "including quotations, addressee specification, interjections, reiteration, message qualification, and personalization

versus objectivization” (Gumperz, 1982, p. 75–84). In addition, several theoretical models have been proposed in order to account for the social motivations behind code-switching. These include the Communication Accommodation Theory, proposed by Giles (1973), which focuses on how interactional language use shifts depending on social context, leading to convergence with or divergence from interlocutors’ speech patterns; the Social Arena Model by Myers-Scotton and Ury (1977), explains how speakers’ language choices are shaped by their social roles and the situational context. contexts; and the Matrix Language Frame Model by Myers-Scotton (1993), which, while primarily structural, also incorporates sociolinguistic dimensions of language use.

Overall, the sociolinguistic approach emphasizes that code-switching is not random but rather a purposeful and meaningful practice shaped by social, cultural, and interactional factors. In light of these perspectives, it becomes essential to clearly define what code-switching entails in order to better understand its nature and role in bilingual communication.

2.3. Definition of Code Switching

Code-switching is a concept that has been defined in various ways by researchers in sociolinguistics, Heller (1988, p.1). Before exploring these definitions, it is important to clarify the terms that make up the concept: *code* and *switch(ing)*.

The term *code* refers to different languages, dialects, or varieties of the same language, Wardhaugh (2010, p.1) such as Algerian Arabic and Berber in Algeria. “Hudson (1996, p. 51) defines a code as “a set of linguistic items with similar” social “distribution,” while Crystal (2008, pp. 83–85) describes it as “a neutral label used in sociolinguistics to refer to any system of communication involving two or more parties.”

The term *switch(ing)* refers to the act of changing between languages (Milroy and Muysken (1995, p.7). This means that a speaker shifts between various languages while communicating. Code-switching (CS) is therefore a key aspect of sociolinguistics, occurring primarily in spoken conversations but also in written forms. Haugen (1956) defines code-switching as “the point where a speaker switches from one language to another,” whereas Poplack (1980, p. 583) describes it as “the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence, or constituent.” Similarly, Gumperz (1982, p. 59) defines code-switching as “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems.” Moreover, Milroy and Muysken (1995, p. 7) describe CS as “the alternative use by bilinguals of two or more languages in the same conversation.” Wardhaugh (2010, p. 101) defines it as “the

process of moving from one code to another as the occasion warrants, whether the codes are different languages or different dialects of the same language,” and Nilep (2006, p. 1) views it as “the practice of selecting or altering linguistic elements so as to contextualize talk in interaction.”

Overall, these various definitions show that code-switching is a dynamic sociolinguistic phenomenon involving the systematic alternation between multiple linguistic systems depending on the specific needs of the communicative environment.

2.4. Code switching and other concepts

Within the study of language contact, code-switching (CS) frequently is linked with other linguistic processes, such as borrowing, code-mixing (CM), and diglossia. Despite their similarities, each process reveals specific linguistic characteristics.

2.4.1. Code Switching and Borrowing

The term borrowing describes the process where a speaker incorporates from a foreign tongue into their native language (L1). This transition is usually driven by a functional requirement for new terminology or the social prestige of a dominant language. In Algeria, Algerian Dialect (AD) contains numerous borrowed terms from past conquerors, with the most significant influence coming from French (Bouamrane, 1986 p.24). Borrowing is often confused with CS, leading scholars to clarify distinctions between these phenomena.

Although code-switching and borrowing both involve the use of elements from different languages, they are not considered identical phenomena. Researchers have proposed several criteria to distinguish between them. Three main features differentiate CS from borrowing:

2.4.1.1. Single versus multiple words: The incorporation of single words from a foreign language into L1 is typically considered borrowing, while the use of multiple words constitutes CS (Gingras, 1974; Reyes, 1974, as cited in Pfaff, 1979). Idiomatic expressions are sometimes treated as single units and classified as borrowing (Bouamrane, 1986).

2.4.1.2. Phonological adaptation: Borrowed words often undergo phonological adjustment to fit L1, while CS tends to preserve the original form. For example, French words such as *Banka* (bank), *Karta* (card), and *Chambra* (room) are phonologically adapted in AD (Bouamrane, 1986, p.127).

2.4.1.3. Morphological adaptation: Borrowed words may also undergo morphological changes, whereas CS preserves the original grammatical forms (Reyes, 1974, as cited in Pfaff, 1979;

Poplack, 1980; Gumperz, 1982). Some scholars argue that CS and borrowing exist on a continuum, with frequency of use determining whether a linguistic item become fully integrated into L1 (Thomason, 2001, p.11).

2.4.2. Code Switching and Code-Mixing

The theoretical distinction between CS and CM remains a subject of ongoing debate. Several scholars, including Fasold (1984), Muysken (2000), Holmes (2001), and Richie and Bhatia (2013), argue that they should be treated as separate concepts, whereas others, such as Myers-Scotton (1992), use the terms interchangeably. According to Fasold (1984), these concepts exist on a linguistic continuum, with CM as an intermediate category. Grammatically, CM involves the integration of foreign lexical or grammatical items into the framework of another language. In contrast, CS occurs when clauses follow the grammatical rules of different languages within the same discourse (Blom & Gumperz, 1972).

Muysken (2000, p. 1) conceptualizes code-switching as “the rapid succession of several languages in a single speech event.” Conversely, he defines code-mixing as “all cases where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentence. Holmes (2001, p.42) suggests that CM may reflect speaker limitations, while CS is typically purposeful. Richie and Bhatia (2013, p.375) distinguish between code-switching and code-mixing by noting that the former occurs between sentences, whereas the latter takes place within a single sentence.

2.4.3. Code Switching and Diglossia

Diglossia is distinguished from CS by its focus on the functional distribution of two specific language varieties within a society. In a diglossic situation, a high variety is the standardized and codified form used in formal contexts, and a low variety is the form typically used in informal, everyday communication. CS, on the other hand, involves the integration of different languages in a single interaction (Fishman, 1968). Nevertheless, both phenomena often coexist and overlap within bilingual communities.

In summary, bilingual speakers navigate multiple linguistic systems, drawing on various resources to meet communication needs. CS serves sociolinguistic functions, such as expressing solidarity, signaling social status, or excluding others. In educational contexts, CS is an influential tool in the pedagogical process, particularly in classrooms where multiple languages are used simultaneously.

2.5. The Algerian Sociolinguistic Profile

Algeria is characterized by multilingualism, reflecting linguistic diversity. Several languages coexist within Algerian society, including Arabic (in its different varieties), Berber, French, and English. Each of these languages plays a distinct role shaped by historical, social, and political factors.

2.5.1. Berber

According to Taleb Ibrahimi (2000, p. 71), the Berber people, who identify themselves as Amazigh (plural: Imazighen)-are the original indigenous population of the North Africa region. They are mainly located in Algeria and Morocco, as well as in parts of Niger and Mali. Tamazight is classified within the Afro-Asiatic language family, a broad linguistic group that also comprises branches such as Semitic, Chadic, Cushitic, Berber, and Ancient Egyptian languages (Greenberg, 1963, p. 17).

Several Berber varieties are spoken across Algeria. In Kabylie, there are approximately five million speakers distributed across areas such as Tizi-Ouzou, Béjaïa, Bouira, and parts of Algiers, Sétif, and Boumerdès. The Chaoui dialect is spoken in the Aurès region, particularly in Batna, Khenchela, Souk Ahras, Oum El Bouaghi, and Tébessa, with around two million people (Taleb Ibrahimi, 2000). Other varieties include Tamasheq in the Sahara, Tamahaq among the Tuareg in the Hoggar region, Mozabite in the M'zab valley, and Taznatit in Touat and Gourara. Historically, Berber languages were written using the Tifinagh script. Berber has gained increasing institutional recognition in Algeria. After being established as a national language in 2002, it was later elevated to official status alongside Arabic in the 2016 constitutional amendment. Today, the majority of Algerians speak either Algerian Arabic or Berber as their primary native language.

2.5.2. Arabic

Arabic is considered the official and principal language of Algeria, while also maintaining a broad presence across the Arab world. As a member of the Semitic branch of the Afro-Asiatic language family, it fulfills both communicative functions in daily life and a significant religious role, since it is the language of the Qur'an (Fezzioui, 2013). Traditionally, Arabic has been divided into Classical Arabic and colloquial varieties. However, contemporary classifications distinguish three main forms:

2.5.2.1. Classical Arabic (CA): This specific variety is primarily linked to religious texts and classical literature. Although it shares many features with Modern Standard Arabic, it differs in style, vocabulary, and certain grammatical aspects. McLoughlin (1999) notes the remarkable continuity of Arabic over more than fourteen centuries.

2.5.2.2. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA): frequently referred to as Modern Written Arabic, MSA has held its status as Algeria's official administrative language since the nation gained the independence in 1962. It is the primary medium used in formal environment including the national education system, administration, media, and official communication. Ennaji (1991) defines MSA as a standardized variety widely understood across the Arab world. Its usage is largely confined to formal and professional contexts, particularly among educated speakers (Cowan, 1986).

2.5.2.3. Algerian Arabic (AA): Commonly referred to as Darija, Algerian Arabic is the everyday spoken variety used for informal communication. It is primarily oral and reflects significant influence from Berber, French, Spanish, and Turkish. Despite its widespread use, it is generally considered less prestigious than MSA.

2.5.3. French

French occupies an important position in Algeria due to the historical legacy of French colonization (1830–1962). It remains the primary foreign language introduced in the school curriculum and is extensively used in high-level administration, university education, and specialized professional fields. French is widely spoken among Algerians, where it is often viewed as a symbol of social prestige and a means of accessing modern scientific and educational knowledge (Fezzioui, 2013).

2.5.4. English

English has gained increasing importance in Algeria as a vital instrument for international interaction, particularly evident in the domains of scientific research, technological advancement, business, and media. It is recognized as the second compulsory foreign language in the Algerian educational system and is introduced at the primary school level. Although its use is still largely confined to formal and educational contexts, there is growing emphasis on promoting English due to its role in accessing scientific knowledge and supporting national development. In response to globalization demands, the Ministry of National Education has underscored the necessity of strengthening the teaching of English as a foreign language (Haddam-Bouabdallah, 2022, p.86).

Given this rich sociolinguistic landscape in Algeria, where multiple languages coexist and interact in everyday communication, code-switching naturally emerges as a common linguistic practice. To examine how this phenomenon operates in real contexts, it is important to examine the various types of code-switching.

2.6. Types of Code Switching

Code-switching occurs in various forms, each distinguished by linguistic and social characteristics. Researchers have identified several main types, including tag-switching (or extra-sentential switching), intra-sentential switching, inter-sentential switching, metaphorical code-switching, and situational code-switching.

2.6.1. Tag-Switching (Extra-Sentential Switching)

Tag switching, also referred to as label switching, is defined by Romaine (1995) as “the insertion of a tag in one language into an utterance which ... is in the other language” (p. 22). Examples include connectors and interjections such as *and*, *also*, *for example*, *yay!*, or *wow!* Poplack (1980). This type of switching is considered relatively easy to produce because it does not require complex syntactic coordination. For example: “I will see you at the cafe at 5:00, *inchallah*” (English base with an Arabic tag) (Holmes and Wilson, 2022, p. 40).

2.6.2. Intra-Sentential Switching

According to Myers-Scotton (1993) intra-sentential is “the use of any two or more linguistic varieties in the same utterance or conversation” (p. 4). In the study of contact linguistics, code-switching does not happen in isolation. Instead, it involves higher levels syntactic complexity and is typically produced by bilingual speakers who possess high fluency in both languages. An example is: “Did you see that post *li-partageat-ou* yesterday?” where the French root *partageat* is combined with Arabic conjugation (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2013, p. 375).

2.6.3. Inter-Sentential Switching

This type of switching takes place inside a sentence or clause boundary, where alternation happens at the level of phrases, nouns, or adjectives (Poplack, 1980). Jendra (2010) describes it as a form of mechanical switching, often unconscious. For example: “The weather is so beautiful today. *Hayla bezzaf, lzm nkherejou n’profitiw*” (Holmes and Wilson, 2022, p. 39).

2.6.4. Metaphorical Code-Switching

Metaphorical code-switching involves changing languages to convey social meanings or enrich the conversational context without altering the external situation (Blom & Gumperz, 1972; Wardhaugh, 2010). Wardhaugh clarifies that while external factors trigger situational switching, metaphorical switching is “internal,” where the choice of language itself enriches the social atmosphere. (p. 104). For example, in a conversation between a father and son:

- Son: “Hey dad, I am back. The traffic was just crazy tonight, I am sorry I am late.”
- Father: “I have told you before, you need to leave earlier if you know the roads are busy.”
- Father (switch to Algerian Arabic): “Chouf hna, l’hadra li golteha lak l’bareh ma t’zidtech t’awedha; ma lazemch t’fout lwaqt li t’feqna alih!” (Translation: “Look here, the words I told you yesterday do not let this happen again; you must not waste the time we agreed on!”) (Holmes and Wilson, 2022, p.43).

2.6.5. Situational Code-Switching

This type occurs when language alternation is influenced by contextual factors, including the interlocutors, the communicative setting, or the discourse topic (Myers – Scotton & Ury, 1977). For example, a bilingual speaker might choose different languages according to the situation, using one at home and switching to another when at work. Examples include:

- To a receptionist: “Sahiti khti, nfout ndir la réunion w nji nkhales l’abonnement.” (Translation: “Thank you sister, I will go attend the meeting and come back to pay the subscription.”)
- In a Zoom call: “Good morning everyone, let’s look at the quarterly growth metrics on slide four (Holmes and Wilson, 2022, p.42).

These examples demonstrate how the linguistic variety selected by a speaker is fundamentally dictated by the surrounding social context.

2.7. Reasons for code switching

It is common for bilingual individuals to alternate between linguistic systems for a diverse range of social and communicative purposes. One key function is to convey precise meanings or to demonstrate solidarity with social or ethnic groups. Holmes (2001, p.35) notes that speakers may switch languages to signal belonging and shared ethnicity with the listener. Additionally,

code-switching can occur when addressing specific topics, especially within focused speech events where one language may provide more suitable terminology.

Code-switching can also serve rhetorical purposes, enhancing persuasive effectiveness by attracting attention and reinforcing arguments. This practice is essential in managing interpersonal relations and emotional expression, allowing speakers to convey feelings such as happiness, love, or sadness. Code-switching helps bilingual individuals to communicate ideas using the language in which the concept is more naturally expressed, or compensate for gaps in vocabulary (Gumperz, 1982).

Gumperz (1982, pp.75-81) identifies a set of specific roles for the practice of code switching:

- **Interjection:** inserting exclamations, sentence fillers, or tag words from another language for emphasis or focus.
- **Reiteration:** repeating the same message in a second language to clarify a point.
- **Message qualification:** switching languages to add extra details or express personal opinions.

On his part, Trudgill (2000, p.105) views code-switching as a mechanism through which speakers negotiate social identity and manage relationships with others. Similarly, Auer (2002, p.4) explains that code switching frames utterances by creating a contrast between the language currently in use and the language that preceded it, facilitating interpretation. Lipski (1985) emphasizes that code-switching is structured and rule-governed, influenced by both social and linguistic contexts. Spolsky (1998) identifies topic-specific vocabulary as another reason for code-switching; bilinguals may have specialized terminology in a second language that cannot be easily translated into their first language.

Hoffman and Kisno (2012, p.45) categorize reasons for code switching into several functions:

1. **Emphasis:** to express strong feelings.
2. **Topic-specific discussion:** one language may provide more suitable terms for particular subjects.
3. **Clarification:** repeating information to ensure understanding.

Overall, the primary aim of alternating between linguistic codes is to facilitate successful interaction among interlocutors and their listeners. In educational contexts, particularly in

classroom where a second language is being taught, the practice of code-switching can prove beneficial for acquisition, comprehension, also maintaining engagement.

2.8. Code switching in language learning

The use of code-switching (CS) by speakers has been the subject of considerable debate. Often, it occurs unconsciously, becoming an automatic aspect of bilingual communication. Despite its spontaneous nature, CS serves several important functions, particularly in educational contexts. Teachers frequently employ CS as a pedagogical strategy to create opportunities for students to communicate more effectively and enhance their comprehension, Ferguson (2003, pp.38-51). Research indicates that the effectiveness of CS depends on the language proficiency of the students involved. For instance, learners with low English proficiency tend to benefit most from their teachers' use of code-switching, as it provides linguistic support and reduces comprehension barriers. "This suggests that CS" can be a highly "effective" instructional tool, particularly in classrooms with low to intermediate proficiency learners (Cook, 2001, p.403).

2.9. Teachers' and Students' Code-Switching Functions

Code-switching plays a significant role in classroom interaction, where both teachers and students employ it to facilitate communication and enhance understanding. Its functions are varied and include entertaining, translating, questioning, highlighting linguistic elements, enhancing vocabulary, clarifying concepts, making inferences, explaining, verifying comprehension, providing feedback, encouraging discussion, and repetition (Hanafiah et al., 2021). As noted by Hanafiah et al. (2021, p. 445), both teachers and students use code-switching "to maintain the continuity and smoothness of interaction and to ensure that messages are clearly understood."

2.9.1. The Functions of Teachers' Code-Switching

Teachers' use of code-switching is not always deliberate; in many cases, it occurs unconsciously, without explicit awareness of its functions or outcomes (Sert, 2005, p. 2). Despite this, it serves several important pedagogical purposes that can support language learning.

According to Mattson and Burenhult (1999, p. 61), teachers' code-switching fulfills three main functions: topic switch, affective function, and repetitive function.

2.9.1.1. Topic Switch: This occurs when the teacher changes language according to the subject matter being discussed. It is particularly common in grammar instruction, where teachers may switch to the students' first language to explain complex rules or concepts. This practice helps

direct learners' attention to new information and facilitates comprehension by creating a bridge between the known (L1) and the unknown (L2). As Cole (1998, p. 11) suggests, teachers can draw on students' prior knowledge of their first language to enhance their understanding of the target language.

2.9.1.2. Affective Function: Code-switching also allows teachers to express emotions and build rapport with students. By occasionally using the learners' native language, teachers can create a more relaxed and supportive classroom atmosphere, fostering a sense of solidarity and reducing learners' anxiety (Sert, 2005; Mattson & Burenhult, 1999).

2.9.1.3. Repetitive Function: In this case, teachers repeat or rephrase information in the students' first language to ensure clarity and reinforce understanding. After presenting instructions or explanations in the target language, switching to the native language helps emphasize key points and prevent misunderstanding (Sert, 2005).

However, excessive reliance on repetition in the first language may reduce students' exposure to the target language and potentially decrease their engagement with it (Sert, 2005).

2.9.2. The Functions of Students' Code-Switching

Similar to teachers, students are not always consciously aware of their use of code-switching or its underlying functions and effects. Whether used deliberately or unconsciously, code-switching serves several communicative purposes, which may have both positive and negative implications for language learning. Eldridge (1996, pp. 305–307) identifies four main functions of students' code-switching: equivalence, floor-holding, reiteration, and conflict control.

The first function, equivalence, occurs when students use a lexical item from their native language as a substitute for a missing term in the target language. This often reflects limited proficiency, prompting learners to rely on their first language when they are unable to express themselves adequately in the target language (Eldridge, 1996, p. 305). In this sense, equivalence functions as a compensatory strategy that enables learners to maintain communication despite linguistic gaps. The second function, floor-holding, refers to the use of the native language to fill pauses during speech in the target language. This strategy allows students to maintain the flow of conversation and avoid breakdowns caused by hesitation or lack of fluency (Eldridge, 1996, p. 305). While effective in sustaining interaction, frequent reliance on this strategy may hinder the development of fluency in the target language over time. The third function, reiteration, involves

repeating or rephrasing a message in the native language to emphasize or clarify meaning. According to Eldridge (1996, p. 306), this occurs when students seek to reinforce their message or ensure that it has been properly understood. It may also indicate that learners believe switching to their first language demonstrates comprehension to the teacher. Finally, conflict control arises when students use code-switching to avoid misunderstandings or to express ideas more precisely. In such cases, switching to the native language helps learners convey their intended meaning more effectively, especially when there is no direct equivalent in the target language or when cultural differences create ambiguity (Eldridge, 1996, p. 307).

Overall, students' use of code-switching is influenced by various factors, including their linguistic competence, communicative needs, and the availability of equivalent expressions across languages. While it can facilitate communication and comprehension, overreliance on code-switching may limit opportunities for developing proficiency in the target language.

2.10. Different Views *Vis-à-Vis* the Use of Code-Switching

Scholarly perspectives on the use of code-switching (CS) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom can generally be grouped into three major theoretical orientations: the monolingual view, the bilingual view, and the optimal (balanced) view.

The monolingual view, often associated with the “English-only” approach, which is based on the principle that effective instruction is achieved when classroom discourse is fully sustained in L2. Proponents argue that maximizing exposure to L2 is essential for successful acquisition and that the use of the first language (L1) may hinder learners' development of fluency and structural competence (Ellis, 1984, p. 95; Harbord, 1992, p. 353; Liu, 2010, p. 10). From this perspective, L1 is often regarded as an obstacle rather than a resource. In contrast, the bilingual view considers L1 as a valuable cognitive and pedagogical tool. Supporters of this perspective argue that code-switching facilitates comprehension, supports learners' cognitive processes, and helps bridge lexical and conceptual gaps, especially for students with lower proficiency levels (Cook, 2001, pp. 402–405). It further contributes to shaping a learning space that is both inclusive and conducive to student engagement. Seeking a balanced position, the optimal view suggests that while L2 exposure should be maximized, code-switching can be employed strategically and judiciously as a flexible instructional tool. According to this perspective, teachers may resort to L1 when it enhances understanding, particularly when explaining complex concepts more efficiently than through L2 alone.

These differing theoretical orientations reflect the ongoing debate regarding code-switching as a teaching practice in EFL classrooms. In line with these perspectives, researchers have further examined its pedagogical value by highlighting both its advantages and its potential drawbacks in language learning contexts.

2.10.1. Positive Perspectives on the Use of Code-Switching

Positive perspectives on code-switching emphasize its role as a significant cognitive, pedagogical, and affective resource in language learning, Sert (2005). From a humanistic standpoint, “CS is viewed as a natural” expression of learners’ “bilingual” identity, enabling them to convey their thoughts and emotions more accurately when their L2 proficiency is limited (Cook, 2001, p. 405). Pedagogically, the strategic “use of L1” functions as a form of “cognitive scaffolding”, facilitating the comprehension of complex instructions and abstract grammatical concepts more effectively than L2 alone (Macaro, 2001, p. 531; Shafi, 2020, p. 845). In addition, within the affective domain, code-switching helps reduce learners’ anxiety, fosters teacher–student rapport, and creates a supportive classroom atmosphere where all learners, particularly those with lower proficiency, feel included (Sert, 2005, p. 2).

2.10.2. Negative Perspectives on the Use of Code-Switching

Despite its benefits, code-switching has also been criticized for its potential drawbacks in EFL contexts. Negative perspectives are largely rooted in the belief “that CS” reduces “learners’ exposure to the target language”, thereby limiting opportunities for acquisition (Jingxia, 2010, p. 10; Nurhamidah, Fauziati, and Supriyadi (2018, p. 79). Advocates of the monolingual approach argue that teachers, as primary linguistic models, should maintain a “pure” target language environment to promote effective learning (Ellis, 1984, p. 95; Harbord, 1992, p. 353). Historically, code-switching has sometimes been perceived as a sign of linguistic deficiency or lack of competence. In particular, intra-sentential switching has been associated with insufficient proficiency in the target language (Amanda, Fediyanto, & Ashurovna, 2025, p. 4; Nurhamidah et al., 2018, p. 80). Moreover, excessive reliance on L1 “may negatively affect” learners’ motivation, as “students” might come to expect constant translation and consequently disengage from the target language (Jingxia, 2010, p. 11).

In the long term, frequent “code-switching may lead to” the internalization of incorrect forms, a phenomenon referred to as error stabilization, which can hinder learners’ ability to communicate effectively in formal or professional contexts (Zhu, “2008, as cited in Nurhamidah et al., 2018”,

p. 81). Furthermore, code-switching may unintentionally reinforce social or cultural inequalities within the classroom, particularly when some learners' native languages are excluded, potentially leading to feelings of marginalization (Mustapha, 2025, p. 14).

Having examined the concept, types, and functions of code-switching in bilingual and EFL classrooms, it is clear that this linguistic strategy serves not only as a means of facilitating communication and social interaction but also as a potential catalyst for language learning. One area in which code-switching can have a particularly notable effect is vocabulary acquisition. Since vocabulary is central to both comprehension and language production, teachers' strategic use of code-switching can support learners in understanding new words, clarifying meanings, and retaining terms more effectively. The following section, therefore, focuses on vocabulary as a fundamental component of language learning, emphasizing its definitions, types, and critical role in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language.

2.4. Definition of Vocabulary

Vocabulary knowledge is widely recognized as a fundamental component of effective language communication, as it directly influences the ability to convey and interpret meaning. A sufficient lexical repertoire is essential for both understanding input and producing language appropriately. When learners lack adequate vocabulary knowledge, they often encounter difficulties in comprehending messages and expressing their ideas clearly, which can hinder overall language development (Alqahtani, 2015; Rashid, Lan, & Hui, 2022). For this reason, vocabulary remains a central focus in language teaching and learning. Richards and Renandya (2002) defined vocabulary as "a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write" (p. 255). In this sense, vocabulary is not merely an additional aspect of language; rather, it is a fundamental component that underpins the development of all language skills. Hatch and Brown (1995) state that "The term vocabulary refers to a list or set of words for a particular language or a list or set of words that individual speakers of a language might use" (p. 1).

Ur (1998, p.71) adds that vocabulary is the set of words in a language, noting that a single lexical item may include multiple words for example, expressions like "mother-in-law" or "post office," which convey a single concept and are typically retained in memory as complete units. Moreover, Lehr et al. (2004, p. 5) highlight that vocabulary knowledge operates across two domains: oral and print. The oral dimension involves the words learners use and understand

through listening and speaking, whereas the print dimension relates to the words they identify and use in reading and writing.

2.5. Types of Vocabulary

Research consistently shows that vocabulary knowledge plays a fundamental role in developing all language skills, particularly reading, listening, speaking, and writing (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2000; Laufer, 1992; Meara, 1996). In this context, a distinction is made by Haycraft (as cited in Hatch & Brown, 1995, p. 370) between two types of vocabulary: receptive vocabulary and productive vocabulary.

2.5.1. Receptive Vocabulary

Receptive vocabulary includes lexical items that students are able to recognize and interpret when it appears in a text or situation, but they are not yet capable of using it in their own speaking or writing (Webb, 2005, as cited in Muflihah & Authar, 2019, p. 184). Similarly, Haycraft (as cited in Hatch & Brown, 1995, p. 370) explains that receptive vocabulary consists of words that learners can identify and comprehend in context but cannot pronounce or use correctly. In essence, receptive vocabulary is fundamental to comprehension and provides the basis for subsequent productive use.

2.5.2. Productive Vocabulary

Productive vocabulary refers to the words that learners can actively use in communication. These are words that learners not only understand but can also pronounce correctly and apply appropriately in both spoken and written language (Webb, 2005, as cited in Muflihah & Authar, 2019, p. 184). Haycraft (as cited in Hatch & Brown, 1995, p. 370) states that productive vocabulary includes words that learners understand, pronounce accurately, and use effectively in communication. Thus, productive vocabulary is closely linked to active language use and overall language proficiency.

2.6. Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Language learning strategies (LLS) are techniques that learners adopt to actively manage, enhance, and optimize their language acquisition. According to Oxford (1990), LLS are “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations” (p. 8). Similarly, Cohen (1998, as cited in Khosravi, 2012, p. 2123) defines them as “processes consciously selected by learners that result

in actions aimed at enhancing the learning or use of a second or foreign language, through the storage, recall, and application of information about that language.” Within this broader framework, Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) are specialized techniques designed to facilitate the understanding, acquisition, and retention of new words. According to Cameron (2001, p. 92), vocabulary learning strategies are ways in which learners take responsibility for processing and retaining new vocabulary. Nation (2001, p. 217) add that “learners not only need to know about these strategies, but need to have skill in using them.”

Several classifications of VLS have been proposed in the literature. Gu and Johnson (1996, as cited in Goundar, 2019) categorize them into metacognitive regulation and cognitive strategies. Metacognitive regulation includes strategies such as selective attention, which allows learners to identify words that are important to learn, and self-initiation, whereby learners actively seek opportunities to discover the meanings and uses of unfamiliar vocabulary. Cognitive strategies are concerned with how vocabulary items are processed and retained, including guessing from context, using dictionaries, and note-taking strategies. Memory strategies, as a subset of cognitive strategies, are further divided into rehearsal strategies such as repetition and rote memorization and encoding strategies, which rely on association, imagery, and semantic processing. Finally, activation strategies focus on applying vocabulary that has been recently acquired in a range of contexts to reinforce retention and practical usage.

In addition, Schmitt (1997) provides another influential classification, dividing VLS into discovery strategies and consolidation strategies. Discovery strategies help learners determine the meanings of unfamiliar words and are subdivided into determination strategies, where learners independently identify word meanings, and social strategies which are based on interaction, as vocabulary learning is supported through engagement with others. In contrast, consolidation strategies are directed toward strengthening and maintaining vocabulary knowledge once meaning has been established. These are further divided into four subcategories:

- **Social strategies:** Using interaction with peers or teachers to practice and reinforce vocabulary knowledge (Schmitt, 1997, p. 203).
- **Memory strategies:** Also known as mnemonics, function by linking new lexical items to existing knowledge, often through imagery or grouping. (Schmitt, 1997, p. 203).
- **Cognitive strategies:** Manipulating and practicing words via repetition, organization, or note-taking to increase familiarity (Schmitt, 1997, p. 203; Gu & Johnson, 1996, as cited in Goundar, 2019).

• **Metacognitive strategies:** The processes through which learners plan, monitor, and evaluate their own vocabulary learning to optimize outcomes (Schmitt, 1997, p. 203; Oxford, 1990, p. 8). Together, these strategies equip learners with different ways to actively engage with vocabulary, supporting both immediate comprehension and long-term retention.

2.7. Vocabulary Teaching Strategies

Vocabulary teaching strategies consist of the methods teachers employ, or are expected to employ, to assist learners in learning target language vocabulary (Hatch & Brown, 2000, as cited in Takač, 2008, p. 106). According to Takač (2008, p. 106) vocabulary teaching strategies include “introducing and presenting the meaning and form of a lexical item, stimulating learners to revise, practice and consolidate, i.e. recycle vocabulary through various tasks, as well as other procedures related to vocabulary teaching, such as giving advice to learners on how to memorise lexical items, monitoring, and evaluating learners’ progress” (Takač, 2008, p. 106). In line with this, teachers are expected to select effective and engaging strategies that ensure classroom activities foster a supportive and stimulating learning environment (Curtis & Longo, 2001).

Vocabulary teaching strategies can be broadly classified into planned and unplanned strategies, a distinction proposed by Seal (1991). According to Seal, vocabulary may either be taught intentionally as part of lesson preparation or spontaneously when lexical difficulties arise during classroom interaction.

2.7.1. Unplanned Vocabulary Teaching Strategies

Unplanned vocabulary teaching occurs when new words emerge unexpectedly during a lesson, prompting the teacher to provide immediate clarification. Seal (1991) outlines three primary procedures for this approach :

1. **Conveying meaning:** The teacher explains the new word using synonyms, antonyms, examples, gestures, or brief explanations.
2. **Checking comprehension:** Learners’ understanding is assessed through questions or by having students demonstrate their grasp of the term.
3. **Consolidating meaning:** The teacher links the new word to the lesson context or to learners’ personal experiences to reinforce understanding.

This strategy is responsive and context-driven, allowing learners to acquire vocabulary in meaningful, real-time situations.

2.7.2. Planned Vocabulary Teaching Strategies

Planned vocabulary teaching, in contrast, involves deliberate and structured instruction that is prepared before the lesson. Seal (1991, p. 298) explains that teachers identify specific lexical items in advance, present their meaning and form systematically, and design activities that enable learners to practice and apply the new words. This approach ensures a focused and coherent introduction of vocabulary, providing learners with repeated exposure and structured opportunities for retention.

2.8. The Importance of Vocabulary in the EFL Classroom

Vocabulary knowledge is a major contributor to the development of foreign language learners' proficiency, as limitations in lexical repertoire can significantly hinder effective communication. Coxhead (2006, as cited in Somathasan, 2021, p. 2) states that the development of literacy in both ESL and EFL contexts largely depends on learners' vocabulary knowledge. Similarly, Cameron (2001) asserts that "*vocabulary is the central element of learning a foreign language and primarily level*" (p. 72). In other words, vocabulary constitutes the core of foreign language learning, serving as the foundation around which other linguistic skills are organized.

Research consistently highlights that vocabulary acquisition functions as an integral part in language learning, as it directly influences learners' ability to process and use language in both comprehension and production tasks across different modalities (Nation, 2001, pp. 127–144). (Nation, 2001, pp. 127–144). Schmitt (2019, as cited in Biseko, 2025, p. 3) further stresses that EFL learners require a strong vocabulary foundation to achieve proficiency in English. Scrivener (2005, pp. 229–230) outlines several key points emphasizing the importance of vocabulary in classroom instruction:

1. Lexis should be addressed as an independent element of language instruction, rather than being limited to grammar or skills-based lessons.
2. Teachers are expected to provide continued support after the initial introduction of new vocabulary by helping learners practise, learn, store, recall, and use lexical items effectively.
3. The use of English-English dictionaries should be developed among learners as a strategy to encourage autonomous vocabulary learning.
4. Vocabulary for productive use and receptive recognition needs to be clearly distinguished, with classroom activities designed in line with this difference.

5. Instruction should cover both single-word items and longer, multiword lexical units.

From these perspectives, it is evident that language learning relies heavily on vocabulary, which enables learners to comprehend and express meaning effectively in the target language. Without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, learners cannot successfully develop the four core language skills. Therefore, effective vocabulary learning requires systematic classroom attention, including structured practice and the use of strategies that support both receptive and productive vocabulary use.

After understanding the importance of vocabulary in language acquisition, it is crucial to examine the various factors that can influence how learners acquire and retain new words. The following section explores the key factors affecting vocabulary learning

2.9. Factors Affecting Vocabulary Learning

Vocabulary acquisition in a foreign language is shaped by a combination of linguistic, cognitive, and instructional factors that influence how learners internalize and use new words. According to Takač (2008, pp. 4–6), the characteristics of lexical items such as pronunciation, spelling, word length, morphological complexity, and grammatical category affect how easily words are perceived and represented in the learner's mind. Words with complex forms or irregular patterns generally demand greater cognitive effort, whereas simpler and more regular words tend to be acquired more readily.

Semantic properties, including abstractness or multiple meanings, further impact the learning process, as learners must develop a clear conceptual understanding before using such words confidently. The learner's first language (L1) also plays a significant role; L2 vocabulary learning often involves linking new lexical forms to meanings and concepts already established in the L1 (Takač, 2008, p. 9). Additionally, the organization of vocabulary in the mental lexicon influences how efficiently words are stored, retrieved, and applied in communication, since meaningful connections to existing knowledge strengthen retention and use (Takač, 2008, p. 11). Instructional factors influence vocabulary learning through the teaching approaches adopted in the classroom, emphasizing that vocabulary acquisition is shaped by how instruction is delivered. In this regard, both explicit teaching and implicit learning are considered essential, as explicit instruction provides direct focus on lexical items while implicit learning supports acquisition through exposure and context (Takač, 2008, pp. 18–19).

Having examined the factors that influence vocabulary learning, it is equally important to consider how learners retain the words they acquire. The concept of retention provides insight into the processes that determine whether newly learned vocabulary is stored effectively for long-term use. The following section defines retention in the context of language learning.

2.10. Definition of Retention

Retention is generally understood as the capacity to maintain information over time. According to the Oxford University Press (n.d.), retention is “the ability to remember things,” highlighting its role as a cognitive process. Similarly, the American Psychological Association (2023) defines retention as “persistence of learned behavior or experience during a period when it is not being performed or practiced, as indicated by the ability to recall, recognize, reproduce, or relearn it.” In educational contexts, retention specifically refers to students’ ability to recall or retrieve knowledge that has been taught after a period of time, serving as an indicator of their learning progress (Eze, Ezenwafor, & Obidile, 2016, p.635).

2.11. Vocabulary Retention

Given that vocabulary forms the core of language proficiency, its retention is a critical concern in second and foreign language acquisition. Wilkins (1972, p. 111) emphasizes that “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed,” underscoring the central role of lexical knowledge in communication. Likewise, Palmer (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2002, p. 37) views vocabulary as a fundamental element in learning a foreign language. Richards and Schmidt (2002, p.457) define vocabulary retention as the capacity to remember or retrieve information after a delay. In language teaching, the extent to which material is retained depends on several factors, including instructional quality, learner motivation, and the degree of meaningfulness of the content. Mohammed (2009, as cited in Linh & Pham, 2025) further explains that vocabulary retention consists of keeping newly acquired words in memory and retrieving them later when needed in different language situations.

Nation (2001, p.63) suggests that successful vocabulary retention depends on three interrelated processes:

- **Noticing:** Learners must consciously attend to new lexical items to convert input into intake.
- **Retrieval:** Recalling a word’s form or meaning from memory strengthens memory traces, improving long-term retention.

- **Creative (generative) use:** Applying vocabulary in new contexts or in novel ways deepens cognitive processing, enhancing the durability of retention.

2.12. Memory and Retention

Memory is the mental system responsible for encoding, storing, and retrieving information as needed. Squire (as cited in Zlotnik & Vansintjan, 2019, p.2) defined memory as the capacity to take in information, retain it in memory, and retrieve it when needed. Additionally, Sternberg (1999, p. 187) emphasizes that memory is “the means by which we retain and draw on our past experiences to use that information in the present.” Retention is closely linked to memory, as it represents the continued accessibility of stored information. Munn (1962) notes that memory ensures learned material remains available after initial acquisition. Together, memory and retention form interdependent processes: memory provides the system for storing information, while retention ensures that the information remains accessible and usable over time.

2.13. Stages of Memory

Memory is understood in psychological theory as a multi-stage process, involving encoding, storage, and retrieval as its core mechanisms (Melton, 1963).

2.13.1. Encoding

Memory begins when information is received and mentally processed so that it can be stored for later use; this initial stage is known as encoding (Searleman & Herrmann, 1994, as cited in Beckner, 2004, p. 19). This process involves labeling or coding sensory information so it can later be retrieved. Encoding can occur in two main forms: automatic encoding and effortful encoding.

2.13.1.1. Automatic encoding requires minimal attentional resources and occurs without conscious intention, allowing information to be encoded without disrupting other cognitive activities. As part of normal cognitive functioning, the encoding of some information, including spatial position, temporal sequencing, and repetition, takes place automatically rather than through deliberate effort (Hasher & Zacks, 1979).

2.13.1.2. Effortful encoding is a capacity-limited, strategically controlled process that requires deliberate allocation of attention. It relies on intentional strategies such as rehearsal and elaborative mnemonic techniques, and it is sensitive to practice effects. According to Craik and Lockhart (1972), analysis at a meaning-based level during effortful encoding results in more durable long-term memory representations.

2.13.2. Storage

After encoding, information enters the storage stage, where it is kept in memory (Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 2009, p. 272). Memory is not a single uniform system but rather consists of multiple, distinct stores. According to Atkinson and Shiffrin (1968), memory is composed of three separate systems: the sensory store, short-term store, and long-term store.

- Sensory information is initially retained for a very short time in the sensory store, where stimuli are registered before either decaying away or moving into short-term store (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968).
- The short-term store allows a restricted amount of information to remain active for a short time. When rehearsal occurs, this information can eventually be stored in long-term store (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968).
- The long-term store provides relatively permanent storage with a much larger capacity, enabling the preservation of knowledge and experiences over extended periods (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968).

2.13.3. Retrieval

Retrieval forms the last step in the memory process, involving accessing information that has been previously encoded and stored (Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 2009, p. 272). Goldstein (2011, p. 215) explains that once memories have been created through encoding and storage, retrieval is necessary, and that most memory failures occur because of retrieval difficulties rather than loss of information. Tulving (1991) emphasizes that “the key process in memory is retrieval” (p. 347), highlighting that remembering depends not only on how information is stored but also on the ability to access it effectively.

Retrieval is often facilitated by retrieval cues, which are stimuli that help activate relevant memory traces. For example, remembering the word *apple* may cue other related items, such as *grape* or *plum*, illustrating how cues help organize recall (Goldstein, 2011, pp.203- 204). According to the encoding specificity principle proposed by Tulving and Thomson (1973), retrieval becomes more effective when the cues present at recall match those that were present during encoding.



Figure 01: Three Stages of Memory (In Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 2009, p. 273)

Having examined the processes underlying vocabulary retention and the role of memory in storing and retrieving lexical knowledge, it becomes important to explore the strategies that can influence these processes in the EFL classroom. One such strategy is code-switching, which has been shown to both support and hinder vocabulary retention depending on how it is implemented. The following section discusses the effect of code-switching on learners' ability to retain new vocabulary.

2.14. The Effect of Code-Switching on Vocabulary Retention

Code-switching refers to the use of two languages interchangeably within a single conversation or discourse (Gumperz, 1982; Poplack, 1980). Code-switching is a prevalent strategy in many EFL classrooms and plays a significant role in shaping vocabulary acquisition. It occurs when learners or teachers shift from the target language (L2) to their first language (L1) within a sentence, conversation, or classroom activity. Researchers noted that code-switching may fulfill multiple pedagogical functions, such as providing clarification of complex concepts, reducing cognitive load, scaffolding understanding, and facilitating connections between new L2 vocabulary and learners' existing knowledge base. By allowing learners to relate unfamiliar words to concepts they already understand in their L1, code-switching can create a bridge that makes lexical input more comprehensible and meaningful.

Research has highlighted several positive effects of code-switching on vocabulary retention. For instance, Macaro (2009) highlights that teachers who deliberately use the first language to support explanations of new vocabulary or grammar structures can make learning more accessible, as learners are more likely to form accurate form–meaning associations. Nation (2013) adds that such carefully managed L1 use can provide learners with opportunities to notice subtle differences in meaning, pronunciation, or usage, which strengthens mental representation and helps in consolidating vocabulary over time. In addition, code-switching can help learners process language more efficiently by reducing anxiety and cognitive overload, particularly when dealing with abstract or highly complex vocabulary. This facilitation allows learners to focus more on

retention and retrieval processes, reinforcing memory traces and making it easier to recall words in future communication.

On the other hand, overreliance on code-switching may negatively affect vocabulary development and retention. When L1 explanations are overused, learners tend to experience reduced contact with L2 forms. This leads to fewer repeated encounters with vocabulary items and may weaken memory consolidation over time (Macaro, 2009; Krashen, 1985). Excessive use of code-switching can also reduce learners' confidence and autonomy in using the target language, as they may become accustomed to relying on L1 support instead of developing strategies for comprehension and retention directly in L2. Furthermore, frequent code-switching may interrupt the flow of communication, making it more difficult for learners to engage with L2 input in authentic contexts and slowing the internalization of vocabulary patterns.

Therefore, while code-switching can be a highly effective tool for supporting vocabulary retention, its impact is contingent upon thoughtful and limited integration into classroom instruction. Teachers are encouraged to use code-switching strategically for clarification, scaffolding, or emphasizing connections between L1 and L2 while ensuring that learners are still exposed to sufficient L2 input and opportunities to practice new vocabulary independently. When applied judiciously, code-switching not only enhances comprehension but also strengthens the mental representation of words, ultimately improving learners' ability to retain and use new vocabulary across different contexts.

2.15. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has provided a comprehensive review of the main theoretical concepts related to code-switching and vocabulary retention in EFL contexts. It began by introducing the concept of code-switching, including its definitions, types, and functions, and clarified its relationship with related notions such as borrowing, code-mixing, and diglossia. The chapter also highlighted the Algerian sociolinguistic profile and examined how code-switching is employed in language learning, considering both teachers' and students' practices, as well as different perspectives on its classroom use. Furthermore, the chapter addressed vocabulary as a core component of language learning, discussing its definitions, types, and learning and teaching strategies, while emphasizing its crucial role in EFL classrooms. It then explored vocabulary retention by defining the concept, explaining its relationship with memory, and examining the

main stages of memory involved in learning. Finally, the chapter considered the effect of code-switching on vocabulary retention, highlighting both its potential benefits and possible drawbacks.

Having laid this theoretical foundation, the study proceeds in the next chapter to its practical component. It presents the fieldwork conducted to investigate the effect of teachers' code-switching on students' vocabulary retention in classroom contexts.

Chapter Two: Field Work

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the practical aspect of the research by outlining the procedures followed during the fieldwork. The study investigates the effect of teachers' code-switching on students' vocabulary retention. To address the research questions and identify potential areas for confirmation or refutation of the hypothesis, three main data collection tools were employed: a teachers' interview, pre-test and post-test, and classroom observation.

The selection of these instruments was motivated by the need to gather both teachers' and students' perspectives, as well as to obtain measurable evidence of vocabulary development. First, a semi-structured interview was conducted with a sample of four (4) teachers from Djouhri Ali Elkhouni and His Brothers Middle School in order to collect in-depth insights into their use of code-switching in the classroom. As Griffiee (2012, p. 159) defines it, an interview is "a person-to-person structured conversation for the purpose of finding and/or creating meaningful data." In addition, an experimental design was adopted through the administration of a pre-test and a post-test to 68 first-year middle school students. This procedure enabled the researcher to measure the impact of teachers' code-switching on students' vocabulary retention over a specific period of time. Furthermore, classroom observation was carried out during English sessions to examine teacher–student interaction and to capture how code-switching occurs in real classroom contexts.

Overall, this chapter is mainly descriptive, presenting both quantitative and qualitative data. The analysis and interpretation of the results obtained from these instruments aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of how teachers' code-switching influences students' vocabulary retention.

3.2. Research Design

Research design constitutes a fundamental component of any research study, as a well-structured plan guides the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. For this reason, the design must align closely with the research questions, the phenomena under investigation, and the overall objectives of the study. As Bryman (2016, p. 44) explains, a research design provides a structured framework that directs how data are gathered and analyzed throughout the research process.

The present study aims to examine the effect of teachers' code-switching on students' vocabulary retention. Accordingly, a quasi-experimental design specifically, a non-equivalent

pretest–posttest control group design is adopted. This choice is justified by the constraints of the educational context, where random assignment of participants to experimental and control groups is not feasible. In such cases, quasi-experimental designs are appropriate, as they rely on groups that exist prior to the research process instead of randomly assigning participants (Gay et al., 2012, p. 270). Moreover, the pretest–posttest design is particularly suitable for examining how changes in an independent variable are reflected in a dependent variable, as it allows researchers to compare learners’ performance before and after the intervention (Claxton & Barthlow, 2024). Due to the quasi-experimental design of the research, adopting a mixed-methods approach is considered the most suitable choice. This methodological framework integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to achieve a more complete and in-depth understanding of the research problem. It also enables data triangulation, which, according to Bryman (2016), helps strengthen the reliability and validity of the study results by bringing together multiple perspectives.

On the one hand, quantitative data are collected through pre-test and post-test measures designed to evaluate students’ vocabulary retention. Such methods are effective in identifying patterns of variation and providing objective, statistical evidence (Kumar, 2011). On the other hand, qualitative data are obtained through classroom observation and teachers’ interviews. These methods allow for an in-depth exploration of classroom practices and participants’ experiences. As Patton (2015, p. 67) notes, qualitative research enables the investigator to approach the field without rigid, pre-established categories, thereby fostering openness and facilitating a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study.

3.3. Context and Sampling

This section presents an overview of the sampling procedure, the participants involved in the study, and the research setting in which the data were collected.

3.3.1. Participants

The present study involved two categories of participants: four (4) English language teachers and sixty-eight (68) first-year middle school students from “Djohri Ali Elkhouni and His Brothers” Middle School in Bouira. To select the participants, convenience sampling was adopted. This non-probability sampling technique involves choosing participants based on their accessibility and availability within the research context. As Creswell and Creswell (2018, p. 212) explain, convenience sampling refers to selecting respondents who are readily available to the researcher. Likewise, Merriam (2009, p. 79) emphasizes that this method relies on practical

considerations such as time, cost, and ease of access. The use of convenience sampling facilitated the data collection process and allowed the study to be conducted within its natural classroom setting. The selection of first-year middle school students is particularly relevant, as teachers at this level frequently rely on code-switching as a pedagogical strategy to support vocabulary explanation. Consequently, these learners constitute an appropriate population for examining the effect of code-switching on vocabulary retention, given that they are still developing their foundational vocabulary knowledge.

3.3.2. Setting

The data for this study were collected during vocabulary-focused English classroom sessions at “Djoughri Ali Elkhouni and His Brothers” Middle School in Bouira, where the researcher is currently enrolled. The institution was established during the academic year 1985–1986 and is considered one of the oldest middle schools in the area. At the time of the study, the school comprised approximately forty-five (45) teachers, including four (4) English language teachers with varying levels of professional experience, ranging from 7 to 30 years. These teachers have experience teaching across all middle school levels (1MS to 4MS), which enriches the teaching environment and provides diverse instructional practices. This setting offered a suitable and authentic context for observing classroom interaction and examining the role of teachers’ code-switching in vocabulary instruction.

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

To gather comprehensive data that effectively address the research questions, this study adopted a triangulation approach by employing three main research instruments: teachers’ interviews, classroom observation, and pre-test and post-test measures, as illustrated in Figure 2. The use of multiple instruments allows for the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings through the integration of different sources of evidence

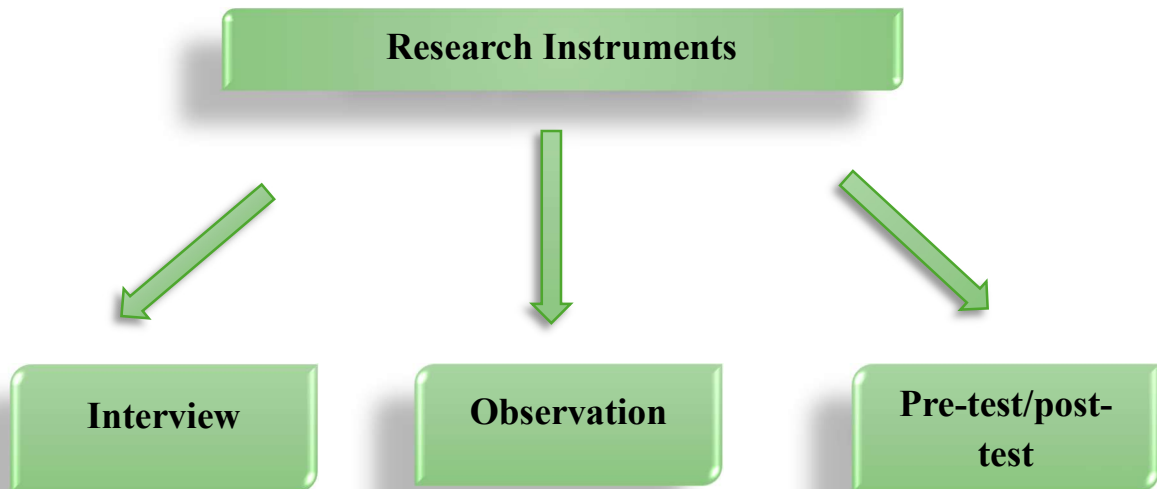


Figure 02: Data Collection Instruments

The following subsections provide a detailed description of each research instrument.

3.4.1. Teachers' Interview

Interviews are defined as “a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused on content specified by research objectives” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 506). In the present study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with middle school English teachers to gain deeper insights into their perspectives and classroom practices regarding code-switching. The choice of semi-structured interviews allowed for a balance between guided questioning and open-ended discussion, giving teachers the flexibility to elaborate on their experiences, challenges, and instructional strategies. Through these interviews, teachers provided valuable background information on how and why they use code-switching, as well as its perceived impact on students' vocabulary learning and classroom engagement. Moreover, the data obtained from the interviews complemented the quantitative findings from the pre-test and post-test, as well as the observations conducted in the classroom. Teachers' contributions helped to enrich the analysis by highlighting consistencies or discrepancies between their reported practices and students' actual performance and behavior. This, in turn, strengthened the overall interpretation of the results and contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

3.4.1.1. Description of Teachers' Interview

The teachers' interview was organized into four coherent sections, progressing from general professional information to more in-depth pedagogical reflection. This structure was designed to ensure a logical flow of ideas and to facilitate the collection of rich, relevant data.

Section A: Background Information

This initial section consists of one question addressing the participants' teaching experience and the levels they have taught. Its purpose is twofold: first, to explore the possible relationship between years of experience and the use of code-switching; and second, to serve as an ice-breaker. By inviting teachers to speak about their professional background, this section helps create a comfortable atmosphere and encourages them to engage more openly in the interview.

Section B: Frequency and Purpose of Code-Switching

The second section (Q2–Q3) focuses on teachers' actual classroom practices. It aims to identify how frequently teachers resort to code-switching, particularly the use of Arabic (L1), and to explore the reasons behind this practice. More specifically, it examines whether code-switching is employed as a deliberate pedagogical strategy or as a spontaneous response to immediate classroom needs.

Section C: Effects on Students' Vocabulary Learning

The third section (Q4–Q6) represents the core of the investigation. It explores teachers' observations regarding the impact of code-switching on students' vocabulary acquisition. This section seeks to determine whether the use of the first language enhances the clarity of new lexical items, improves students' confidence, and supports long-term retention. By comparing English-only instruction with lessons that incorporate code-switching, it evaluates the effectiveness of using the first language as a cognitive support in the learning process.

Section D: Best Practices and Challenges

The final section (Q7–Q8) addresses teachers' professional attitudes toward code-switching, as well as the challenges they encounter in practice. It examines how teachers attempt to strike a balance between using code-switching as a supportive instructional tool and avoiding over-reliance that may hinder students' language development. Additionally, it highlights common challenges such as students' dependency on the first language and the difficulty of managing

mixed-ability classes. This section provides valuable insights into the practical realities teachers face in maintaining an effective balance in their instructional approaches.

3.4.2. Classroom Observation

In the present study, classroom observation was employed as a qualitative data collection method, conducted after obtaining consent from the participating teacher. Observation is defined by Satapathy (2019, p. 152) as “a data collection tool used by the researcher for collecting live data through the senses in controlled or naturalistic settings where events occur.” This method allows the researcher to capture authentic classroom interactions and practices as they unfold in real time. In qualitative research, observers may adopt different roles, ranging from non-participant to complete participant, each with its own advantages and limitations (Nørskov & Rask, 2011). In this study, the complete observer role was adopted. This approach enabled the researcher to remain detached from the classroom activities, thereby minimizing any potential influence on participants’ behavior. As a result, the data collected reflect more natural and unbiased classroom practices, particularly regarding the use of code-switching and its impact on students’ vocabulary learning.

3.4.2.1. Description of Classroom Observation

The primary aim of employing classroom observation in this study is to systematically record and describe instructional practices related to teachers’ code-switching and students’ vocabulary responses during lessons. This method provides direct, observable evidence that complements the quantitative data obtained from the pre-test and post-test. The observation was conducted during regular classroom sessions over a period of one month, from 9 February 2026 to 2 March 2026. During this timeframe, four observation sessions were carried out for both the experimental and control groups to allow for meaningful comparison.

In qualitative research, various techniques are used to ensure the systematic recording and analysis of observed data. In the present study, a checklist was selected as the primary observation instrument. As noted by Lodico et al. (2010), checklists offer a structured format for recording specific behaviors, thereby ensuring consistency and completeness in data collection. They enable the researcher to document classroom practices in an organized and objective manner while capturing all relevant aspects of the teaching and learning process. In this study, the checklist was used to collect real-time data during classroom sessions and to provide detailed evidence of classroom interaction.

The observation checklist (see Appendix B) was designed by the researcher and adapted from well-established theoretical frameworks on classroom code-switching and vocabulary instruction. Its items were informed by Ferguson's (2003) classification of code-switching functions, Richards and Farrell's (2011) classroom observation frameworks, and Nation's (2001) principles of vocabulary teaching. The checklist was further refined to suit the specific context and objectives of the present study. The checklist is organized into four main sections.

The first section, Teachers' Code-Switching Practices, examines how teachers use the first language (L1) during vocabulary instruction. It focuses on functions such as explaining new vocabulary, translating lexical items, giving instructions, and checking students' understanding, as well as identifying when and how teachers switch between the first language and the target language.

The second section, Vocabulary Teaching Strategies, explores the methods used to introduce and reinforce new vocabulary items. It considers techniques such as the use of visual aids, repetition, and contextualized examples, with particular attention to how vocabulary is presented and practiced following instances of code-switching.

The third section, Students' Vocabulary Response, focuses on learners' reactions to vocabulary instruction. It examines students' level of comprehension after first-language explanations, their participation in classroom activities, and their ability to accurately use newly acquired vocabulary. It also considers their engagement through questioning and the recall of previously learned items.

The fourth section, Overall Classroom Interaction, addresses the general dynamics of the classroom. It evaluates students' level of engagement and their confidence in using new vocabulary during the lesson, thereby providing a broader perspective on the effectiveness of instructional practices.

3.4.3. The Experiment

The present study adopted a quasi-experimental design involving two groups: an experimental group and a control group. At the outset of the study, a pre-test was administered to both groups on 05/02/2026 in order to assess students' initial vocabulary knowledge and ensure comparability between the two groups. Prior to the implementation of the experiment, official approval was obtained from the school administration, and informed consent was secured from both the

participating teachers and students. The treatment phase was conducted over a period of approximately one month, from 09/02/2026 to 02/03/2026. During this period, the experimental group received vocabulary instruction that incorporated code-switching, while the control group was taught using an English-only approach. It is important to note that both groups were exposed to the same vocabulary items to ensure consistency in content delivery.

At the end of the treatment, a post-test was administered on 09/03/2026 to both groups in order to evaluate students' vocabulary retention and measure any changes in performance. In addition, classroom observation was carried out throughout the treatment phase in both groups to monitor teachers' instructional practices and to examine students' participation and responses to vocabulary instruction. This combination of experimental procedures and observational data contributed to a more comprehensive analysis of the impact of teachers' code-switching on students' vocabulary retention.

3.4.3.1. Description of Pre- Test and Post- Test

In order to assess pupils' prior knowledge, a pre-test was administered before the treatment to both the experimental and control groups at Djouhri Ali Elkhouni and His Brothers Middle School, Bouira. The pre-test consisted of four tasks designed to evaluate different aspects of students' vocabulary knowledge. The first task focused on word-image association, where pupils were required to match written vocabulary items with their corresponding pictures. The second task aimed at assessing syntactic awareness by asking learners to circle the correct vocabulary item to complete given sentences. The third task focused on identification, requiring pupils to label pictures by writing the appropriate word from a provided box under each illustration. Finally, the fourth task assessed comprehension and semantic understanding by asking pupils to complete a short text with suitable vocabulary selected from a given word list.

To measure the effectiveness of the treatment, a post-test was administered to both the experimental and control groups after the intervention. The post-test was designed to evaluate students' vocabulary retention and consisted of three tasks. The first task assessed learners' ability to retain and recall vocabulary by asking them to complete sentences based on pictures using words from a given list. The second task focused on the correct use of vocabulary items through gap-filling exercises using a word box. The third task consisted of two parts: the first required students to describe pictures by completing sentences, while the second involved completing a short paragraph using appropriate vocabulary to form meaningful sentences.

The pre-test and post-test (see Appendix C) were adapted from the Cambridge Assessment English YLE Pre-A1 Starters framework and modified to suit the objectives of the present study. The data collected from both tests were analyzed using SPSS software in order to ensure accurate and systematic statistical interpretation of the results.

3.4.3.2. Description of the Treatment

The treatment consisted of four (04) instructional sessions conducted with the experimental group, where code-switching was systematically used as a teaching strategy throughout the learning process. Each session lasted one hour and was implemented during regular English classes as part of Sequence Three of the first-year middle school syllabus entitled “*Past Holidays and Trips.*” The instructional content focused on vocabulary and expressions related to past holidays and travel experiences. This included lexical items associated with means of transport, weather conditions, places, and holiday activities. These vocabulary items were carefully selected in accordance with the objectives of the sequence, aiming to enable learners to describe their past experiences in English. The main purpose of the treatment was to investigate the effect of teachers’ code-switching on students’ vocabulary retention.

The sessions were organized in a progressive manner following the structure of the sequence. The first session focused on introducing the topic and presenting the target vocabulary. During this stage, the teacher frequently alternated between English and Arabic to facilitate understanding and clarify meanings. The second and third sessions emphasized comprehension and practice, where learners engaged in activities such as matching vocabulary with meanings, completing gap-filling exercises, and answering comprehension questions based on short texts about holidays and trips. The final session focused on production, where learners were required to write short paragraphs describing their past holidays or trips, using the vocabulary acquired throughout the previous sessions. The emphasis was placed on the accurate and meaningful use of the target vocabulary in context. Throughout the treatment, the teacher continuously monitored learners’ progress, provided guidance, and ensured that code-switching was used intentionally as a supportive pedagogical tool rather than a replacement for the target language.

In contrast, the control group was taught the same sequence and exposed to the same vocabulary items; however, instruction was delivered exclusively in English without the use of code-switching. This allowed for a clear comparison between the two teaching approaches in terms of their impact on learners’ vocabulary retention.

4.1. Data Analysis

4.1.1. Analysis of Teachers' Interview

4.1.1.1. Section One: Background Information

Question 01: Can you briefly describe your teaching experience, including how long you have taught and the levels you have taught?

The first teacher reported that she has been teaching English for more than 30 years at the middle school level and stated that she has taught all four levels using different programs. The second teacher reported having 7 years of teaching experience, specifying that she has mainly taught middle school students, particularly first- and second-year learners. The third teacher indicated that she has been teaching English at middle school for 16 years and added that she has taught all levels (1, 2, 3, and 4 MS) throughout her career. She further noted that teaching different levels has helped her develop a deeper understanding of the curriculum and syllabus. The fourth teacher reported 12 years of teaching experience and stated that she has also taught all four middle school levels. This variation shows that the participants differ in terms of teaching experience, ranging from early-career to highly experienced teachers. Such diversity may reflect differences in pedagogical approaches, classroom management styles, and familiarity with instructional strategies, including code-switching.

The responses to this question reveal a heterogeneous sample in terms of teaching experience, which is valuable for the present study. Indeed, differences in years of experience may influence how teachers perceive and implement code-switching in vocabulary instruction. More experienced teachers may rely on a wider repertoire of classroom strategies developed over time, while less experienced teachers may depend more on recent training or standard instructional practices. Therefore, this diversity strengthens the study by providing multiple perspectives on classroom practices and allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how code-switching is applied across different teaching profiles.

4.1.1.2. Section Two: Frequency and Purpose of Code-Switching

Question 02: How often do you use Arabic (L1) when teaching new English vocabulary to first-year middle school students?

The responses indicate a generally limited and selective use of Arabic (L1) during vocabulary instruction. All teachers reported that they occasionally resort to Arabic mainly when students experience difficulties in understanding new or complex vocabulary, particularly after the use of other strategies such as gestures, visuals, and contextual explanations. This suggests that Arabic is not used as a dominant instructional language but rather as a supportive tool to ensure comprehension when English-based explanations are insufficient. Overall, the findings reflect a pedagogical preference for maintaining English as the main medium of instruction, while code-switching is applied in a reactive and need-based manner to facilitate understanding and bridge comprehension gaps among learners.

Question 03: What are your main reasons for using code-switching during vocabulary instruction?

The first teacher reported that she uses code-switching to increase students' confidence and participation, as well as to ensure comprehension and clarify meaning more quickly. The second teacher explained that she employs code-switching to facilitate rapid understanding of vocabulary, save time during explanations, and reduce students' anxiety and confusion. Similarly, the third teacher identified several pedagogical reasons for using code-switching, including ensuring immediate comprehension of unfamiliar or abstract words, saving instructional time due to limited session duration, and reducing learners' anxiety. The fourth teacher reported that she uses Arabic when students struggle to understand new vocabulary, in order to reduce frustration and maintain their engagement in the lesson.

Overall, the responses reveal that code-switching is primarily used for pedagogical and practical reasons closely related to learners' needs. Teachers consistently associate its use with facilitating comprehension, reducing cognitive load, and addressing affective factors such as anxiety and frustration. It also appears to serve time-management purposes within the constraints of the classroom context. Therefore, code-switching is perceived not as a habitual practice but as a strategic instructional tool aimed at supporting vocabulary acquisition and maintaining student engagement during lessons.

4.1.1.3. Section Three: Effects on Students' Vocabulary Learning

Question 04: In your experience, how does using Arabic help students understand new English vocabulary?

The responses indicate a clear perception among teachers that the use of Arabic facilitates students' understanding of new English vocabulary. L1 support is seen as a cognitive bridge that helps learners connect unfamiliar English words to familiar concepts in their native language, thereby making meaning more accessible and reducing misunderstanding. Teachers also suggest that this immediate clarification of meaning increases students' confidence and may contribute to better long-term retention by strengthening mental associations between new and existing knowledge. Overall, the findings show that code-switching is perceived as a useful supportive strategy that enhances comprehension and facilitates the initial stages of vocabulary learning.

Question 05: Do students use newly learned vocabulary more accurately or confidently after lessons that include Arabic?

The responses indicate that students tend to use newly learned vocabulary more accurately and confidently when Arabic is strategically incorporated into instruction. All teachers reported that L1 support helps learners, particularly at beginner and lower-intermediate levels, feel more secure in their understanding of word meanings, which in turn facilitates more accurate use of vocabulary. They explained that Arabic clarification reduces ambiguity and allows students to establish a clear link between form and meaning before using new lexical items in production. One teacher also noted that while Arabic contributes to confidence, continued practice and repeated exposure to English remain essential for strengthening fluency. Overall, the findings suggest that code-switching plays a supportive role in enhancing both accuracy and confidence in vocabulary use by ensuring clearer comprehension during the initial stages of learning.

Question 06: Have you noticed any difference in students' vocabulary recall between lessons with Arabic and lessons conducted entirely in English?

The responses consistently indicate that students demonstrate stronger vocabulary recall in lessons where Arabic is used compared to lessons conducted entirely in English. All teachers reported that L1 support enhances students' ability to remember and retrieve the meanings of newly learned vocabulary more accurately and quickly. They explained that Arabic helps reduce misunderstanding and prevents incorrect guessing of word meanings, particularly among weaker or beginner learners. In contrast, English-only instruction may lead to slower or less accurate recall due to difficulties in inferring meaning from context alone. Overall, these findings suggest that linking new vocabulary to learners' first language facilitates more effective retention and retrieval of lexical items, highlighting the supportive role of code-switching in vocabulary learning.

4.1.1.4. Section Four: Best Practices and Challenges

Question 07: How can teachers use code-switching effectively to support vocabulary retention while avoiding overuse?

The first teacher believed that teachers can use code-switching effectively by making it intentional and brief. She explained that the objective is to support vocabulary retention while keeping English as the main language of learning. The second teacher stated that teachers can use code-switching only, when necessary, such as when explaining difficult or abstract words, and added that it should be brief and followed by practice in English. The third teacher explained that code-switching is effective when used strategically and stated that teachers should use it to ensure understanding, but not for every word so that students still develop independent vocabulary learning skills. The fourth teacher did not offer any response to this question.

There is a common agreement that code-switching is most effective when it is used selectively rather than frequently. It is mainly justified in situations where vocabulary is difficult and students cannot grasp meaning through English alone. However, this support is expected to remain brief and always followed by continued English use. This indicates that code-switching is viewed as useful only when it helps understanding without reducing learners' exposure to the target language.

Question 08: What challenges do you face when using or limiting code-switching during vocabulary lessons?

The first teacher reported that she faces several challenges when using or limiting code-switching, including learners' comprehension difficulties, especially with abstract vocabulary, increased anxiety when Arabic is reduced, and slower vocabulary acquisition as some words take more time to understand and retain. The second teacher explained that one main challenge is balancing students' needs, as some students rely too much on Arabic while others benefit more from English explanations. She also added that classroom management is challenging since avoiding Arabic sometimes requires longer explanations, while using it too much may reduce exposure to English. The third teacher stated that the real challenge is maintaining balance in code-switching because students may become dependent on Arabic and stop making effort to understand new vocabulary using English. No data was obtained from the fourth teacher regarding this question.

The findings show a tension between supporting comprehension and maintaining English exposure. While Arabic helps understanding, its overuse may reduce learners' effort, whereas

limiting it can slow learning and increase difficulty. Thus, the main challenge is balancing support with sufficient use of English in vocabulary lessons.

The analysis and discussion of the results obtained from the classroom observation and pre-, post-test are presented in the following lines.

4.1.2. Analysis of Classroom Observation

This section is intended to provide additional evidence and to gather data that allow the researcher to confirm and cross-check the main findings obtained through other research instruments. Classroom observation is a commonly used method in qualitative research, particularly in the field of language teaching and learning, as it enables researchers to examine real classroom practices as they naturally occur. During the observation process, the researcher used a checklist with Yes/No items, and the collected data were analyzed descriptively. Classroom observation offers valuable insight into classroom dynamics, including interaction patterns, learning behaviors, and teaching practices. As Lasagabaster and Sierra (2011, p. 90) state, “Classroom observation gives us a view of the climate, rapport, interaction, and functioning of the classroom available from no other source.” Similarly, Merriam (2002, p. 13) highlights that observation is “the best technique when an activity, event or situation can be observed firsthand, when a fresh perspective is desired, or when participants are not able or willing to discuss the phenomenon under study.”

Moreover, observation is widely recognized as an essential research method used across various research designs, particularly for its ability to provide direct and authentic data from the field. As Kothari (2004, p. 96) notes, it offers several advantages that make it a valuable tool in educational research. In the present study, classroom observation played a crucial role in complementing the other data collection instruments and in strengthening the overall validity of the findings. The following tables present the results of the classroom observation conducted with the experimental group.

4.1.2.1. Classroom Observation of the Experimental Group

Items	Session 1		Session 2	
Experimental Group	Yes	No	Yes	No
Section A: Teacher’s Code-Switching Practices				

Teacher switches to L1 to explain new vocabulary	✓		✓			
Teacher switches to L1 to translate vocabulary items	✓		✓			
Teacher uses L1 to give instructions	✓				✓	
Teacher switches to L1 to check understanding		✓			✓	
Teacher switches back in English after explanation	✓		✓			
Teacher limits L1 use to short explanations	✓		✓			
Section B: Vocabulary Teaching Strategies						
New vocabulary is presented with pictures or objects		✓	✓			
Vocabulary is repeated in English after L1 explanation	✓		✓			
Teacher asks students to repeat new words	✓		✓			
Teacher provides examples using new vocabulary	✓		✓			
Section C: Students' Vocabulary Response						
Students show understanding after L1 explanation	✓		✓			
Students correctly use new vocabulary orally	✓		✓			
Students participate more often after code-switching	✓		✓			
Students ask questions about vocabulary	✓				✓	
Students recall previously taught vocabulary without prompts	✓				✓	
Section D: Overall Classroom Interaction						
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
Students' engagement during vocabulary lesson			✓		✓	

Students' confidence in using new words			✓		✓	
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Table 01: Observation Checklist Results for the Experimental Group (Sessions 1-2)

Items	Session 1		Session 2	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Section A: Teacher's Code-Switching Practices				
Teacher switches to L1 to explain new vocabulary	✓		✓	
Teacher switches to L1 to translate vocabulary items		✓	✓	
Teacher uses L1 to give instructions		✓		✓
Teacher switches to L1 to check understanding	✓			✓
Teacher switches back in English after explanation	✓		✓	
Teacher limits L1 use to short explanations	✓		✓	
Section B: Vocabulary Teaching Strategies				
New vocabulary is presented with pictures or objects		✓	✓	
Vocabulary is repeated in English after L1 explanation	✓		✓	
Teacher asks students to repeat new words	✓		✓	
Teacher provides examples using new vocabulary	✓		✓	
Section C: Students' Vocabulary Response				
Students show understanding after L1 explanation	✓		✓	
Students correctly use new vocabulary orally	✓		✓	
Students participate more often after code-switching	✓		✓	
Students ask questions about vocabulary		✓	✓	

Students recall previously taught vocabulary without prompts	✓			✓		
Section D: Overall Classroom Interaction						
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
Students' engagement during vocabulary lesson			✓			✓
Students' confidence in using new words			✓			✓

Table 02: Observation Checklist Results for the Experimental Group (Sessions 3-4)

Being an observer of these classes, it was noticed that the teacher consistently switched to L1 to explain new vocabulary across all four sessions, indicating a stable use of the first language during vocabulary presentation throughout the treatment period. The teacher also used L1 to translate vocabulary items in three sessions, whereas in one session translation was not provided and instruction was delivered entirely in English. In addition, L1 was used to give instructions in two sessions, while in the remaining sessions it was not employed for this purpose. The results further show that the teacher used L1 to check students' understanding in only one session. Moreover, it was observed that the teacher consistently reverted to English after providing explanations in all four sessions, limiting the use of L1 to brief and targeted clarification. Regarding instructional aids, new vocabulary was presented with pictures and objects in two sessions, while no visual aids were used in the other sessions. The findings also indicate that vocabulary items were systematically repeated in English after L1 explanation in all four sessions. Similarly, in all sessions, the teacher asked students to repeat new words and provided relevant examples to reinforce vocabulary learning.

Furthermore, students demonstrated understanding after L1 explanations in all four sessions. They were also able to correctly use the new vocabulary orally, producing sentences such as “The ship is big” and “I like hiking in the mountains.” The results reveal increased student participation following code-switching in all sessions. Students asked questions about vocabulary in two out of four sessions, while no such behavior was observed in the remaining sessions. In addition, the

observation shows that students were able to recall previously taught vocabulary without prompts in three sessions, with only one session showing limited recall. Students' engagement during vocabulary lessons was generally high in three sessions and moderate in one session. Finally, students' confidence in using new vocabulary was mostly high across the sessions, except for one session where it remained at a medium level. The following tables present the results of the classroom observation conducted with the control group.

4.1.2.2. Classroom Observation of the Control Group

Items	Session 1		Session 2	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Section A: Teacher's Code-Switching Practices				
Teacher switches to L1 to explain new vocabulary		✓		✓
Teacher switches to L1 to translate vocabulary items		✓		✓
Teacher uses L1 to give instructions		✓		✓
Teacher switches to L1 to check understanding		✓		✓
Teacher switches back in English after explanation		✓		✓
Teacher limits L1 use to short explanations		✓		✓
Section B: Vocabulary Teaching Strategies				
New vocabulary is presented with pictures or objects	✓			✓
Vocabulary is repeated in English after L1 explanation		✓		✓
Teacher asks students to repeat new words	✓		✓	
Teacher provides examples using new vocabulary	✓		✓	
Section C: Students' Vocabulary Response				
Students show understanding after L1 explanation		✓		✓
Students correctly use new vocabulary orally	✓			✓

Students participate more often after code-switching						✓
Students ask questions about vocabulary		✓				✓
Students recall previously taught vocabulary without prompts						✓
Section D: Overall Classroom Interaction						
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
Students' engagement during vocabulary lesson		✓		✓		
Students' confidence in using new words	✓			✓		

Table 03: Observation Checklist Results for the Control Group (Sessions 1-2)

Items	Session 1		Session 2	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Section A: Teacher's Code-Switching Practices				
Teacher switches to L1 to explain new vocabulary		✓		✓
Teacher switches to L1 to translate vocabulary items		✓		✓
Teacher uses L1 to give instructions		✓		✓
Teacher switches to L1 to check understanding		✓		✓
Teacher switches back in English after explanation		✓		✓
Teacher limits L1 use to short explanations		✓		✓
Section B: Vocabulary Teaching Strategies				
New vocabulary is presented with pictures or objects	✓			✓

Vocabulary is repeated in English after L1 explanation		✓		✓		
Teacher asks students to repeat new words	✓			✓		
Teacher provides examples using new vocabulary	✓			✓		
Section C: Students' Vocabulary Response						
Students show understanding after L1 explanation		✓				✓
Students correctly use new vocabulary orally	✓					✓
Students participate more often after code-switching		✓				
Students ask questions about vocabulary	✓					✓
Students recall previously taught vocabulary without prompts	✓			✓		
Section D: Overall Classroom Interaction						
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
Students' engagement during vocabulary lesson			✓		✓	
Students' confidence in using new words		✓			✓	

Table 04: Observation Checklist Results for the Control Group (Sessions 3-4)

In the control group, it was observed that the teacher did not resort to L1 to explain new vocabulary across all four sessions, relying exclusively on English as the medium of instruction. Similarly, the teacher did not use L1 for translating vocabulary items, giving instructions, or checking students' understanding in any of the observed sessions. Overall, English-only instruction was consistently maintained throughout the four sessions. In addition, the results show that in two out of four sessions, new vocabulary was presented with the support of pictures or objects, whereas in the remaining sessions vocabulary was introduced without the use of visual aids. It was also observed that vocabulary items were consistently repeated in English in all

sessions, and the teacher regularly asked students to repeat new words. Furthermore, the teacher provided examples using the newly taught vocabulary in all four sessions, which helped contextualize meaning despite the absence of L1 support.

Regarding students' performance, it was noticed that learners were able to correctly use new vocabulary orally in two sessions, and they asked questions about vocabulary in only one session. In addition, students were able to recall previously taught vocabulary without prompts in two sessions, while no such recall was observed in the remaining sessions. Furthermore, students' engagement during vocabulary lessons varied across sessions, ranging from low in one session, to medium in two sessions, and high in one session. Similarly, students' confidence in using new vocabulary was generally limited, being low in two sessions and medium in the remaining sessions.

To complement the qualitative findings obtained from classroom observation, the following section provides a detailed analysis of the pre-test and post-test results.

4.1.3. Analysis of Pre- Test and Post- Test

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	Experimental group	34	12.35	4.06	0.69
	Control group	34	12.69	4.51	0.77

Table 05: Descriptive Statistics of the Experimental and Control Groups in the Pre-Test

From the table above, it can be observed that the mean score of the experimental group in the pre-test reached 12.35 with a standard deviation of 4.06, while the control group obtained a mean score of 12.69 with a standard deviation of 4.51. These results indicate that both groups demonstrated very similar levels of vocabulary knowledge prior to the implementation of the treatment, suggesting an initial equivalence between the experimental and control groups.

To further highlight the initial equivalence between both groups, the following table presents the differences in their pre-test results.

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Pre-test	Equal variances assumed	0.24	0.63	-0.33	66	0.75
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.33	65.30	0.75

Table 06: Differences between the results of the experimental and control groups in the pre-test

As shown in the table above, the Fisher significance value between the experimental and control groups in the pre-test of vocabulary is 0.63, which is higher than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the results of both groups are homogeneous prior to the treatment. It can also be observed that the t-test significance value between the experimental and control groups in the pre-test is 0.75, which is also greater than 0.05. This confirms that there are no statistically significant differences between the two groups at the pre-test stage, further supporting their initial equivalence before the implementation of the treatment. To examine the impact of the treatment on the experimental group, the following table presents the descriptive statistics of the pre-test and post-test results.

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-test	12,35	34	4,06	0,70
	Post-test	16,44	34	3,54	0,61

Table 07: Descriptive Statistics of the Experimental Group in the Pre-Test and Post-Test

As indicated in the table above, the mean score of the experimental group in the pre-test was 12.35 with a standard deviation of 4.06, whereas in the post-test it increased to 16.44 with a standard deviation of 3.54. This improvement suggests a noticeable enhancement in students' vocabulary retention following the treatment. To further examine the effect of the treatment on the

experimental group, the following table illustrates the differences between the pre-test and post-test results.

		Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pre-test - post-test	-4,09	1,02	0,1747	-4,44	- 3,7328 5	- 23,40	33	0,000

Table 08: Differences between Pre-Test and Post-Test Results in the Experimental Group

As shown in the table, the t-test significance value between the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental group is 0.000, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the two tests in favor of the post-test, as the mean score (16.44) is higher than that of the pre-test (12.35). Accordingly, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. These results suggest that teachers’ code-switching has had a significant positive effect on students’ vocabulary retention within the experimental group. To examine the performance of the control group, the following table illustrates the descriptive statistics of the pre-test and post-test results.

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pre-test	12.69	34	4.51	0.77
	post-test	14.44	34	4.15	0.71

Table 09: Descriptive Statistics of the Control Group in the Pre-Test and Post-Test

From the table above, it can be observed that the mean score of the control group in the pre-test was 12.69 with a standard deviation of 4.51, whereas in the post-test it increased to 14.44 with a standard deviation of 4.15. In order to identify any variation in the control group’s performance over time, the following table presents the differences between the pre-test and post-test results.

		Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pre-test - post-test	-1.75	1.09	0.19	-2.13	-1.37	-9.37	33	0.000

Table 10: Differences between Pre-Test and Post-Test Results in the Control Group

From the table above, it can be observed that the t-test significance value between the pre-test and post-test results of the control group is 0.000, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the two tests in favor of the post-test, as the mean score (14.44) is higher than that of the pre-test (12.69). These results suggest a positive improvement in the control group's performance from pre-test to post-test. To compare the performance of both groups after the treatment, the following table illustrates the descriptive statistics of the experimental and control groups in the post-test.

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-test	Experimental group	34	16.44	3.54	0.61
	Control group	34	14.44	4.15	0.71

Table 11: Descriptive Statistics of the Experimental and Control Groups in the Post-Test

The table above shows that the mean score of the experimental group in the post-test was 16.44 with a standard deviation of 3.54, whereas the control group obtained a mean score of 14.44 with a standard deviation of 4.15. This reveals a noticeable difference between the two groups after the treatment, with the experimental group outperforming the control group in vocabulary retention. This improvement in the experimental group may be attributed to the use of teachers'

code-switching, which appears to have positively supported learners' ability to retain and recall vocabulary items. In contrast, the control group, which was taught using English only, showed a comparatively lower level of performance. In order to highlight the extent of variation between the two groups after the treatment, the following table presents the differences between the experimental and control groups in the post-test results.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Post-test	Equal variances assumed	0.79	0.38	2.14	66	0.04
	Equal variances not assumed			2.14	64.42	0.04

Table 12: Differences between the Results of the Experimental and Control Groups in the Post-Test

As indicated in the table above, the Fisher significance value between the experimental and control groups in the post-test of vocabulary is 0.38, which is higher than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the results of both groups are equivalent prior to comparing their post-test performance.

It can also be observed that the t-test significance value for the post-test is 0.04, which is lower than 0.05. This reveals that there are statistically significant differences between the two groups in the post-test in favor of the experimental group, as its mean score (16.44) is higher than that of the control group (14.44). Accordingly, the results lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, suggesting a significant difference in vocabulary retention between students taught through teachers' code-switching and those taught through English-only instruction.

4.2. Discussion of the Findings

This study aimed to investigate the effect of code-switching on students' vocabulary retention among first-year middle school EFL learners. To address the research questions, a quasi-experimental design was implemented using pre-test and post-test measures, in addition to classroom observation and teacher interviews. The findings show that there are statistically significant differences between students' pre-test and post-test results in vocabulary retention, with higher scores in the post-test. Accordingly, the first alternative hypothesis is accepted, while the corresponding null hypothesis is rejected. These results indicate that teachers' code-switching contributes positively to improving students' vocabulary retention. Furthermore, the comparative analysis of the post-test results between the experimental and control groups confirmed the second alternative hypothesis, which stated that there is a significant difference in vocabulary retention between students taught through code-switching and those taught through English-only instruction. The results revealed statistically significant differences in favor of the experimental group, which achieved higher mean scores than the control group. Thus, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, suggesting that code-switching is more effective than English-only instruction in enhancing vocabulary retention.

This improvement can be explained by the fact that code-switching facilitates learners' comprehension of new vocabulary items. By linking new words to their first language, students are able to construct clearer meanings, which makes learning more meaningful and accessible. As a result, they are more likely to retain and recall vocabulary effectively. In addition, the higher level of vocabulary retention observed in the experimental group may also be attributed to increased student participation during lessons. When learners clearly understand vocabulary meaning, they tend to become more confident and more willing to interact and use new words without hesitation. This interpretation is supported by the classroom observation findings, which revealed that students in the experimental group were generally more engaged and active than those in the control group. They participated more frequently and demonstrated better recall of previously taught vocabulary across most sessions. In contrast, students in the control group showed relatively lower levels of participation and confidence, which may explain their weaker performance.

Moreover, the results from the teachers' interviews provide further support for these findings. Teachers reported that they use code-switching mainly to explain difficult vocabulary, save time, and ensure student comprehension. They also emphasized that the use of the first language helps

reduce learners' anxiety and increases their confidence, which in turn facilitates vocabulary learning and retention. These findings are consistent with previous research in the field. For instance, Ong and Zhang (2018) found that code-switched reading tasks enhance EFL learners' vocabulary recall, retention, and retrieval compared to English-only instruction. Similarly, El Aeraaj and Kesbi (2025) reported that teachers' code-switching significantly improves vocabulary acquisition and supports long-term retention among EFL learners. Overall, previous studies suggest that code-switching is an effective pedagogical strategy for improving vocabulary learning outcomes. It supports learners' understanding and facilitates meaningful connections between the first and target languages. However, its effectiveness may vary depending on factors such as learners' proficiency level and the way it is implemented in the classroom.

Furthermore, the findings of this study have important pedagogical implications for EFL teachers. They suggest that code-switching, when used strategically and in a controlled manner, can serve as an effective scaffolding tool in vocabulary instruction. Teachers are therefore encouraged to integrate L1 selectively to support comprehension, especially when introducing new or abstract lexical items. However, this support should be balanced with sufficient exposure to English to ensure that learners continue to develop independent language processing skills. In this sense, code-switching should not replace English input, but rather complement it in a way that facilitates understanding and encourages active vocabulary use.

Despite these findings, this study is not without limitations. The research was conducted within a single middle school with a relatively small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the results. In addition, the duration of the experimental phase was limited, which may not fully capture long-term vocabulary retention effects. Therefore, future research is recommended to include larger and more diverse samples, as well as longitudinal designs that examine the sustained impact of code-switching over time. Further studies could also explore learners' perspectives in more depth to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how code-switching influences vocabulary learning processes.

In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that code-switching is an effective instructional strategy for enhancing vocabulary retention among first-year middle school learners. It improves comprehension, increases student participation, and supports more effective vocabulary recall.

4.3. Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings of the present study, several directions for future research can be proposed to further deepen understanding in this area. First, future studies are encouraged to replicate this research with larger and more diverse samples of EFL learners. Expanding the sample size and including participants from different schools, regions, and educational levels would enhance the external validity of the findings and allow for more generalizable conclusions regarding the effect of teachers' code-switching on vocabulary retention. Moreover, it would be valuable for future research to examine this phenomenon in different instructional contexts in order to compare how code-switching functions across varying classroom environments. Such comparative studies could provide deeper insights into whether its impact remains consistent or varies depending on educational settings and learner characteristics. In addition, while the present study focused on vocabulary retention, future research could extend the scope of investigation to other language skills, such as reading comprehension, speaking fluency, and writing development. This would help provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of code-switching in EFL learning.

4.4. Ethical Considerations

- **Informed Consent:** Before data collection, the school administration granted permission for the study. All participants were informed of the purpose of the research and the procedures involved. They were also assured of their right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.
- **Confidentiality and Anonymity:** Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly ensured throughout the study. Participants' identities were protected through the use of codes instead of real names, and all data were carefully stored under secure conditions, with access restricted solely to the researcher.
- **Transparency in Reporting:** The findings of the study were reported accurately and honestly. All results, including unexpected or non-significant outcomes, were presented without alteration or selective reporting, ensuring the integrity of the research.
- **Ethical Use of Data and Tools:** The data collected through pre-tests, post-tests, classroom observation, and interviews were used exclusively for academic purposes related to this study. Ethical guidelines were carefully followed in the use of all research instruments to ensure validity and integrity in both data collection and analysis.

- **Researcher Bias and Objectivity:** Measures were taken to minimize potential bias throughout the research process. The researcher acted solely as an observer during data collection, maintaining neutrality and objectivity to avoid influencing participants' behavior or the interpretation of the results.

4.5. Limitations of the Study

The present study is subject to number of limitations that should be considered. First, as the research was carried out with only 68 learners in a single middle school, its findings may not be fully applicable to other educational contexts and population. Moreover, participants were not randomly assigned, as they were grouped according to existing classroom organization, which reduces control over individual differences between groups. The study was also carried out over a limited instructional period, which may not capture the long-term effects of teachers' code-switching on vocabulary retention. Furthermore, during the teacher interview, some questions were left unanswered, which may have limited the depth of qualitative data collected. Finally, although multiple instruments were used (pre-tests, post-tests, classroom observation, and interviews), the findings remain context-specific and their application to other settings should be approached with caution.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the fieldwork of the present research study, which aimed to investigate the effect of teachers' code-switching on first-year middle school pupils' vocabulary retention. It provided a detailed account of the procedures followed during data collection and the methods used to examine the research problem in a systematic and structured way. To achieve the objectives of the study, a carefully selected quasi-experimental design was adopted. This design involved the use of pre-test and post-test measures, in addition to classroom observation and semi-structured interviews with teachers. The combination of these instruments allowed the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. On the one hand, the pre-test and post-test provided measurable evidence of students' vocabulary development over time. On the other hand, classroom observation and interviews offered valuable insights into classroom practices, teacher behavior, and learners' responses during instruction. Furthermore, the use of triangulation strengthened the reliability and validity of the findings, as it enabled the researcher to cross-check and compare data obtained from different sources. The experimental design, involving both an experimental group

and a control group, made it possible to clearly examine the effect of code-switching by comparing learners exposed to different instructional approaches under similar conditions.

Additionally, the analysis of the collected data highlighted important patterns related to students' vocabulary retention, classroom interaction, and teachers' perceptions of code-switching as a pedagogical strategy. The results indicated that the treatment was effective, particularly in the experimental group, where code-switching was systematically used during vocabulary instruction. Students in this group demonstrated greater improvement in vocabulary retention compared to those in the control group, who were taught using an English-only approach.

Overall, the findings revealed that teachers' code-switching had a positive impact on students' vocabulary learning. It facilitated comprehension, supported memory retention, and encouraged greater classroom participation. Consequently, this chapter provides strong empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of code-switching as a useful instructional strategy in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among first-year middle school learners.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Vocabulary retention is a fundamental aspect of language learning, as it enables learners to understand, recall, and use newly acquired words effectively in communication. In EFL classrooms, teachers often rely on code-switching as a pedagogical strategy to facilitate vocabulary instruction and bridge comprehension gaps. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate the effect of teachers' code-switching on students' vocabulary retention among first-year middle school learners. It also sought to compare vocabulary retention between learners taught through code-switching and those taught through English-only instruction, as well as to identify teachers' perceptions and the main reasons behind the use of code-switching during vocabulary lessons.

To achieve these objectives, the researchers opted for a quasi-experimental design within a mixed-methods approach, as this design is suitable for examining the relationship between instructional practices and learning outcomes in a natural educational setting. The study was conducted at Djouhri Ali Elkhouni and His Brothers Middle School and involved 68 first-year middle school learners and four English teachers. Convenience sampling was used to ensure accessibility to the participants. To collect comprehensive and reliable data, several research instruments were employed, namely pre-test and post-test measures, classroom observation, and semi-structured teacher interviews.

The research was structured into two main chapters. The first chapter focused on the literature review, which presented the theoretical background of code-switching and vocabulary retention from different linguistic and pedagogical perspectives. The second chapter focused on the fieldwork and empirical investigation, where the research design, participants, data collection tools, procedures, and analysis of findings were presented in detail.

After the analysis and interpretation of the collected data, the findings revealed that the experimental group, which received vocabulary instruction through code-switching, significantly outperformed the control group taught through English-only instruction. The pre-test results showed that both groups started from relatively similar levels of vocabulary knowledge, while the post-test results confirmed a clear improvement in favor of the experimental group. Accordingly, the research hypotheses were accepted, and the null hypotheses were rejected, indicating that code-switching has a positive effect on students' vocabulary retention. Furthermore, the qualitative findings provided strong support for these results. Classroom observations revealed that learners in the experimental group were more engaged, active, and confident during vocabulary lessons,

and they demonstrated better recall of previously learned words. In contrast, learners in the control group showed lower levels of participation and confidence. In addition, teacher interviews indicated that code-switching is mainly used to clarify meaning, save time, facilitate comprehension, and reduce learners' anxiety, which ultimately contributes to better engagement and retention. Teachers also emphasized that students are able to recall vocabulary more accurately when Arabic is used strategically, although they stressed the importance of balancing its use to avoid overdependence on the first language.

Moreover, these findings suggest that code-switching plays an important scaffolding role in vocabulary learning by helping learners connect new English words to their existing linguistic knowledge. This connection enhances comprehension, reduces cognitive load, and allows learners to store vocabulary more effectively in long-term memory. As a result, learners become more confident in using new lexical items and more willing to participate in classroom activities.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that teachers' code-switching contributes significantly to improving vocabulary retention among first-year middle school learners when used in a strategic and purposeful manner. It enhances comprehension, increases classroom interaction, and strengthens vocabulary recall, while still requiring careful and limited use to maintain sufficient exposure to the target language.

Finally, the study highlights the importance of adopting flexible and context-sensitive teaching strategies in EFL classrooms. It suggests that rather than completely avoiding the use of the mother tongue, teachers should integrate it judiciously as a supportive tool that facilitates learning. Further research is recommended to replicate this study with larger and more diverse samples, and to explore the effect of code-switching on other language skills such as speaking, writing, and reading comprehension, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of its pedagogical role in EFL contexts.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Teachers' Interview Questions

Dear teachers,

This interview is part of our research work for my Master's degree. Your participation will be a great help in completing this study. The main purpose of this interview is to explore the effect of teachers' code-switching on first-year middle school students' vocabulary retention. We would be very grateful if you could answer the following questions to support our research.

Section A: Background Information

1. Can you briefly describe your teaching experience, including how long you have taught and the levels you have taught?

Section B: Frequency and Purpose of Code-Switching

2. How often do you use Arabic (L1) when teaching new English vocabulary to first-year middle school students?
3. What are your main reasons for using code-switching during vocabulary instruction?

Section C: Effects on Students' Vocabulary Learning

4. In your experience, how does using Arabic help students understand new English vocabulary?
5. Do students use newly learned vocabulary more accurately or confidently after lessons that include Arabic?
6. Have you noticed any difference in students' vocabulary recall between lessons with Arabic and lessons conducted entirely in English?

Section D: Best Practices and Challenges

7. How can teachers use code-switching effectively to support vocabulary retention while avoiding overuse?
8. What challenges do you face when using or limiting code-switching during vocabulary lessons?

Thank you for your time and valuable contribution.

Appendix B

Classroom Observation Checklist

Topic: Effect of Teachers' Code-Switching on Vocabulary Retention

Level: First Year Middle School

Date:

Time:

Session number:

Yes: observed.

No: Not observed

Section A: Teacher's Code-Switching Practices		
Teacher switches to L1 to explain new vocabulary		
Teacher switches to L1 to translate vocabulary items		
Teacher switches to L1 to give instructions		
Teacher switches to L1 to check understanding		
Teacher switches back to English after explanation		
Teacher limits L1 use to short explanation		
Section B: Vocabulary Teaching Strategies		
New Vocabulary is presented with pictures or objects		
Vocabulary is repeated in English after L1 explanation		
Teacher asks students to repeat new words		
Teacher provides examples using new vocabulary		
Section C: Students' Vocabulary Response		
Students show understanding after L1 explanation		

Students correctly use new vocabulary orally			
Students participate more after code-switching			
Students ask questions about vocabulary			
Students recall previously taught vocabulary without prompts			
Section D: Overall Classroom Interaction			
	High	Medium	Low
Students' engagement during vocabulary lesson			
Students' confidence in using new words			

Appendix C

Pre-test

Task 1: Match each word with the correct picture.



1. Sunny



2. Ship



3. Motorcycle



4. Snowy



5. Hot air balloon

Task 2: Circle the correct answer.

1. The is very fast.
a) bicycle b) run c) motorcycle
2. I like days.
a) cat b) sunny c) eat
3. The flies in the sky.
a) hot air balloon b) plane c) sun
4. We enjoyed the sea when we traveled by last year.
a) garden b) paint c) ship
5. Children are playing in the playground.
a) ball b) snowy c) autumn

Task 3: Write the suitable word under each picture from the box below.

Sunny - motorcycle - hot air balloon - ship - snowy



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Task 4: Fill in the gaps with the correct word from the box below.

Snowy – ship – hot air balloon – sunny – motorcycle

1. I like days.
2. I see a in the sea.
3. My brother has a red
4. The mountains are today.
5. The flies in the sky.

Vocabulary pre-test – Adapted from Cambridge Assessment English – YLE Pre-A1 Starters

Post-test

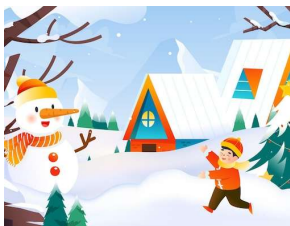
Task 1: Look at the picture and complete the sentence.



1. My brother bought a red



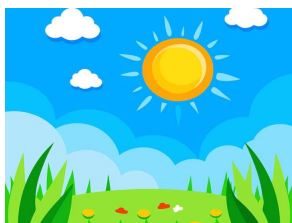
2. This is very big.



3. It is and cold.



4. The is colorful.



5. The sky looks blue and

Task 2: Fill in the gaps with the correct word from the box below.

Motorcycle - sunny - hot air balloon - snowy - ship

1. We traveled to France by last year.
2. I likedays.
3. My brother enjoys riding his red
4. Children are playing in the playground.
5. The goes high in the sky.

Task 3:

Part one: Look at the two pictures. Complete the sentences to describe what you see.



• I can see a



• The colorful

Part two: Look at the pictures and fill in the gaps with the correct words.



It is a day in the city. Ali rides his to the sea. There, he sees a big near the mountains. Above those snowy mountains, he sees a colorful flying in the sky. Ali is very happy!

Vocabulary Post-Test – Adapted from Cambridge Assessment English – YLE Pre-A1 Starters