

Original Paper

Teachers' Code-Switching in Primary EFL Classroom: Is It Good or Bad?

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Fund Project

This study was supported by the Teaching quality and teaching reform project of Bozhou University (2023XJXM039).

Received: October 29, 2024 Accepted: December 07, 2024 Online Published: December 17, 2024

doi:10.22158/wjer.v11n6p106

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/wjer.v11n6p106>

Abstract

This study investigates the characteristics of code-switching (CS) in a Chinese primary EFL classroom, focusing on frequency and types of teachers' CS, as well as teachers' and students' attitudes toward it. Data on CS characteristics were gathered from three English classes using recording pens. Attitudinal data were obtained from separate questionnaires for teachers and students. Qualitative data (which include characteristics) were analyzed using thematic coding, while quantitative data (which include attitudes) were processed using SPSS 27.0. Results indicate that Year 4 teachers engaged in CS more frequently. Three CS types were identified, with inter-sentential switching being the most frequent in classes, followed by tag switching and intra-sentential switching. Both teachers and students shared a positive attitude towards CS used by teachers in class management, subject access, and relation building. In EFL classrooms, CS, particularly inter-sentential switching, should be used to support teachers in these aspects.

Keywords

code-switching, primary EFL classroom, foreign language teaching, teachers' attitude, students' attitude

1. Introduction

In the 1980s, code-switching (CS) was not a major topic of scientific study. However, it has attracted much attention as a specific strategy among foreign language teachers. In recent decades, it has become an interesting phenomenon amid the rise of communication among bilinguals and multilinguals (Garrett, 2010; Le, 2022). In some countries where a foreign language or a second language (L2) is taught, CS has been inevitably and widely used in language learning classrooms (Temesgen & Hailu, 2022).

At present, a discussion has emerged regarding the benefits of switching between the target language and the first language (L1) in language learning settings (Kumar et al., 2021). Opponents of using of CS, such as Yao (2011), argued that CS is widely used in EFL classrooms in many aspects, including requesting students to be quiet and praising them. Similarly, Dendup (2020) believed that CS affects the learning and mastery of the target language; hence, a single foreign language environment should be created.

Meanwhile, many researchers support the use of CS in English learning classes. For example, Pharamita et al. (2021), Riadil and Dilts (2022), and Indrahayu et al. (2022) stated that CS can be used as an effective tool to assist English language teaching and learning processes. Contrary to Dendup (2020), Le (2022) believed that CS is an efficient strategy for teaching instead of having a negative effect on foreign language teaching. He asserted that the first language can be used to promote learning the target language in foreign language classrooms. Moreover, CS is considered a natural response in a bilingual setting, and the language choice is not always negative. It is a necessary activity and has pedagogical meaning for language teachers (Zainil & Arsyad, 2021).

Based on the above conflicting opinions, the present study investigates teachers' and students' attitudes toward teachers' CS in primary school and gives empirical evidence regarding the influence of teachers' CS in EFL classrooms.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of CS

Several studies have provided different definitions of CS. Le (2022) described CS as a phenomenon of switching between at least two languages. A more specific definition is that CS can function as an alternative use of two or more languages in the same conversation or within a single discourse, sentence, or constituent (Levine, 2011; Azam & Navehebraim, 2013; Afriani, 2020). Moreover, Hamers and Blanc (2000) referred to CS as changes between two or more languages of speakers in a single utterance but at an inter-sentential or intra-sentential level. Intra-sentential level occurs "within the clause boundary," while inter-sentential level involves CS "at the sentence boundary" (Qian et al., 2009, p. 723). A similar definition by Ariffin and Husin (2011) pointed out that "the switching of languages can occur either at inter-sentential level (code-switching), or intra-sentential level (code-mixing)" (p. 224). Furthermore, among many current studies on CS, Azuma (2001) stated that CS is a behavior that

has a definite pattern instead of a random choice of two languages. The study also concluded that closed-class items, including determiners, propositions, and possessives, do not switch; moreover, code-switched elements are often open-class items (not closed items). To summarize, CS is a systematic and patterned alternation of two or more languages instead of random shifting from one language to the other in a single utterance for communicative purposes. In the EFL classroom, CS entails the shift from the first language (Chinese) to the target language (English) or vice versa, which can be a communicative way of teaching the target language as the need arises.

2.2 Types of CS

Many researchers have attempted to divide CS into categories. Poplack's (1980) division of CS is widely accepted by many researchers. He identified three types of CS, namely, tag switching, intra-sentential switching, and inter-sentential switching.

Tag switching, also known as emblematic switching or extrasentential switching, involves an interjection or a linguistic tag in other languages (Holmes, 2013). In line with Holmes, Riadil and Dilts (2022) explained tag switching as a tag phrase or a word from one language to an utterance entirely in the other language. Intra-sentential switching involves a switch of words or phrases within a clause or a sentence. This switch is considered the greatest syntactic risk and complex form, and it seems to occur in conversations most frequently (Jingxia, 2010). According to Adder and Bagui (2020), this switch seems to be used more by educated people who are fluent in both languages than the tag sentential one. Inter-sentential switching refers to switching at a clause or sentence boundary in which each clause or sentence is expressed in one language and another one in another language by the same speaker (Pharamita et al., 2021; Riadil & Dilts, 2022).

Given that CS often happens in English learning classes, a full understanding of the types of CS and their frequency can help teachers use different types of CS properly to improve their teaching efficiency. However, few studies have focused on the types of CS and their frequency in EFL classrooms. Although some researchers, such as Pharamita et al. (2021) and Riadil and Dilts (2022), have investigated the types of teachers' CS, the participants in their research were from high school or university instead of primary school. Therefore, an investigation of the types and frequency of teachers' CS in primary EFL classrooms is of great significance.

2.3 Attitudes toward CS

Scholars have different attitudes toward CS. For instance, many studies have revealed negative attitudes toward CS. Dewaele and Wei (2014) concluded that CS in language teaching is an indication of low proficiency in the target language and poor control of the appropriate choice of language. Shin (2005) also put forward that bilinguals consider CS as a careless language habit. Therefore, many educators believe that CS has a negative impact on the learning process (Jingxia, 2010). Moreover, Macaro (2005) suggested that the unpopular language teaching method, grammar translation method, can be avoided if CS is not used in classrooms because the method can cause L2 teaching to be irrelevant to the real world.

On the other side of the issue, recent studies in bilingual and multilingual education identify the importance of CS, that is, it can be used as an effective teaching and learning method (Canagarajah, 2011) and is regarded as an indication of linguistic creativity (Wei, 2011). Garrett (2010) also argued that the phenomenon involves speakers making full use of a bilingual situation. Moreover, Arthur and Martin's (2006) research on interactional patterns in content language integrated learning in Brunei concluded that CS is used to explain and clarify some difficult concepts, instruct students, and develop relationships between the teachers and students (Adder & Bagui, 2020).

Referring to attitudes toward CS, some researchers, including Liu and Wei (2022), Adder and Bagui (2020), Dendup (2020), and Zainil and Arsyad (2021), discussed students' and teachers' attitudes toward teachers' CS. However, these studies have been conducted in universities or secondary schools. Additionally, other researchers, such as Denup (2020), Pharamita et al. (2021), and Kumar et al. (2021), only covered the perception of teachers toward using CS. Moreover, their questionnaires for investigating teachers' attitudes toward CS only covered some attitudinal questions without categorization, which may not be comprehensive and clear. Given that teachers' attitudes toward CS have not been fully investigated, the present study aims to investigate teachers' and students' attitudes using questionnaires.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Questions

- 1) What are the characteristics of teachers' CS in primary EFL classrooms?
- 2) What attitudes do teachers and students have toward teachers' CS in English class?

3.2 Participants

All participants were recruited through convenience sampling in a primary school in China. The participants consisted of 10 teachers and 60 students from Year 3 to Year 5. A total of 10 teachers came from different classes: three from Year 3, four from Year 4, and three from Year 5. All teacher participants held a bachelor's degree in English literature and had teaching experience. Therefore, they were considered to have high proficiency in English, and they understood how to teach primary school students English effectively. This profile ruled out the probability that teachers would shift their language because of their low proficiency in English. A similar number of teachers selected from three year levels could make the result of the questionnaire more reliable when comparing the three year levels. Moreover, 20 students from each year level were randomly selected in these teachers' classes. They also needed to complete the questionnaire about their attitudes toward teachers' CS. Similarly, the same number of students selected from each year level could also make the quantitative data collection more reliable when comparing the three year levels.

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Audio Record and Transcription

A recording pen was used in this study to investigate the frequency and type of CS. Three classes of

three teachers in Years 3, 4, and 5 were selected from the 10 teachers. The pen was used to record three 30-minute English classes of three teachers, and the audio recording was transcribed. Only the teachers' discourse was transcribed to measure their CS (excluding students' questions and answers). Specifically, at the beginning of the session, the instructor addressed the entire class. This point was counted as 0:00. The teacher participants were not told about the aims of the research, which was important for ensuring the credibility of the research process. Otherwise, they might not be able to conduct their classes in a natural way and might use more English during the classes. Moreover, the recording pen was in a good quality and put in a suitable position where the sessions could be recorded clearly.

3.3.2 Questionnaire

Information concerning people's knowledge, attitudes, and behavior can be collected objectively using questionnaires (Holm et al., 2023). Furthermore, questionnaires have been conducted by many researchers to investigate people's attitudes toward CS (Jingxia, 2010; Yao, 2011; Dewaele & Wei, 2014). Their studies indicate that questionnaires are suitable for quantitative data collection. Specifically, two questionnaires adapted from Yao (2011) and Jingxia (2010) were used to explore teachers' and students' attitudes toward teachers' CS. These questionnaires consisted of 20 items (teachers' questionnaire) and 22 items (students' questionnaire) respectively. All relevant questions were put in the front, and the background information question was arranged at the end. The teachers' questionnaire was divided into five aspects, namely, classroom management (statements 1 to 4), subject access (statements 5 to 8), relation building (statements 9 to 12), the impact of CS (statements 13 to 16), and teachers' persona (statements 17 to 20). The students' questionnaire was almost the same as the teachers' one but has two more questions that were related to the students' personal opinions. All statement items were answered using a Likert-type scale, and the choices were given scores ranging from 5 to 1: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = not sure, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree. Teachers or students were asked to tick one of the five boxes for each statement. One to two questions referred to teachers' and students' background, such as teachers' education level and years of teaching or students' year level. Moreover, the teachers' questionnaire was written in English with Chinese translation, which could effectively avoid the effect of misunderstanding. The students' questionnaire was in Chinese because of the low English proficiency of the primary students. To ensure the validity and reliability of both the questionnaires, first, the items of questionnaires had been proofread by a native speaker specializing in the research field. Then, two teachers and two students from Year 3 and Year 4 were invited to complete the two questionnaires respectively. None of the participants indicated any problems in understanding each item and gave further suggestions. Thus, the pilot dataset was used in the final experiment.

3.3.3 Procedure

The study comprises two sources of data, including the data collected from two questionnaires and data from recorded English classes. Firstly, with the help of another researcher, three lessons of three teachers from year three to year five were recorded respectively (all 30 minutes each) by using a small

but highly sensitive recording pen. All the lesson recordings then were transcribed in Chinese or English according to what the teachers used, but the English translation followed all the Chinese utterances. Before these classes, the teachers were not informed the aim of the research in detail; they therefore can have classes in a natural way. Two questionnaires were emailed to another researcher and then were distributed to 10 teachers and 60 students. Before the questionnaire, teachers and students were informed that there was no right or wrong answer in order to acquire more accurate results. Teachers or students then were asked to tick one of the five boxes by each statement.

3.3.4 Data Analysis

For the first research question, three teachers' classes were recorded and transcribed. Each teacher's class (qualitative data) was analyzed by thematic coding. Thematic analysis can capture some important concepts with the data set by segmenting, categorizing, and summarizing the qualitative data (Given, 2008). Furthermore, this analysis is a notably valuable analytical approach to analyze qualitative data (Lester & Lochmiller, 2020). This study only transcribed mixed units in the three lessons and recorded the time and then labeled each type of CS in the text. All types of CS were coded as follows: [TS] stood for tag switching, [INTRAS] stood for intra-sentential switching, and [INTERS] stood for inter-sentential switching. Afterward, the duration of using the target language and the first language was recorded, respectively. Then, the differences in the three teachers' use of CS were compared.

For the second research question, 60 students and 10 teachers from Year 3 to Year 5 were asked to complete a questionnaire. SPSS 27.0 was used to analyze the data. Specifically, the coded survey data were tabulated in Excel and then imported into SPSS. The descriptive statistics, such as frequency, were first produced.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1 Frequency of teachers' CS

The recording pens captured the three lessons. Then, all the teachers' words were transcribed. Each CS was labeled and counted. Moreover, the length of time using English and Chinese was identified. According to the transcription, the frequency of CS used by teachers in Year 3, Year 4, and Year 5 was 60, 88, and 86 times, respectively (Table 1). These values indicated that teachers used CS more frequently in Year 4 than Year 5 and Year 3.

Table 1. Frequency of CS in one Lesson among Three Grades

	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Frequency of CS (times)	60	88	86

The data shown in Table 2 explain the reason why teachers used CS in Year 3 the least times and in Year 4 the most. Specifically, the total recording time of one lesson was 1800 seconds (30 minutes), including the time the teachers used English, Chinese, and others (students' interactive time and activity time). The teacher in Year 3 used much more Chinese in her class than the teachers in Year 4 and Year 5. Chinese was the main language in her English class, and only the target learning unit in the class and some greeting words or phrases were expressed in English. Therefore, the teacher switched less frequently. From the table, the teacher in Year 5 mainly used English in her class, that is, more than double of the amount of Chinese was used. Some explanations for complex words or grammar were expressed in Chinese. However, compared with that of the other two teachers, the time spent by the Year 4 teacher speaking in English was closer to the time the teacher spoke in Chinese during the lesson. This observation indicated that the Year 4 teacher used CS more frequently.

Overall, the teacher in Year 4 used CS more frequently in her lessons than the other two teachers mainly because they spent similar time on Chinese and English. By contrast, the teachers in Year 5 and Year 3, especially Year 3, spent much time on one language when teaching. Therefore, the frequency of CS in the two years was not higher than that in Year 4.

Table 2. Time using English, Chinese, and others in one Lesson among three Year Levels

Year	Time total (seconds)	Time using English	Time using Chinese	Others
3	1800 (30m')	258	1186	356
4	1800 (30m')	534	790	476
5	1800 (30m')	986	479	335

4.2 Types of CS

Table 3 demonstrates that three types of CS were found in the pedagogical practice, including inter-sentential switching, intra-sentential switching, and tag switching. By labeling [TG], [INTRAS], and [INTER] in the text and counting the percentage of each type of switching in each lesson, we found that the CS distribution of the three teachers in Year 3 and Year 4 was similar. However, the CS in Year 3 was a little different. In Year 3, as mentioned before, the teacher mainly used Chinese, and more shifts occurred within clauses and sentences. Therefore, intra-sentential switching was used more frequently. In Year 4 and Year 5, the teachers used more inter-sentential switching in their lessons (54%, 52%) than intra-sentential switching (32%, 43%) and tag switching (14%, 5%).

Table 3. Types and Percentage of CS in the Teachers' Discourse

Types/Frequency (%)	Tag switching	Intrasentential switching	Intersentential switching
Year 3	13	47	40
Year 4	14	32	54
Year 5	5	43	52

NOTE: Bold indicates use of Chinese

Example 1 (Year 4)

T: 比如说, I want to ask whose English book this is.

(TRANSLATION: **for example**, I want to...)

Example 2 (Year 3)

T: 桌子, is it right?

(TRANSLATION: **desk**, is it right?)

Example 3 (Year 3)

T: 如果有人问你, 你喜欢...? 如果你喜欢, 你应该这样回答, yes, I do. (TRANSLATION: if someone asks you whether you like... If you like, you should answer, yes, I do.)

Example 4 (Year 5)

T: I need you to read after me, keep, 保持, can you identify left, 左 and right, 右? (TRANSLATION: I need you to read after me, keep, **keep**. Can you identify left, **left** and right, **right**?)

Example 5 (Year 4)

T: 昨天我们学了一个单词, 短裙, what is 短裙?

(TRANSLATION: **Yesterday, we learned a word, skirt**, what is a **skirt**?)

Example 6 (Year 4)

T: A 部分学过一个单词 yours, what is the meaning of yours?

(TRANSLATION: **This word**, "yours" **was learned in part A**, what is the meaning of yours?)

Tag switching refers to the insertion of a tag. As in example 1, the teacher used “比如说” to give an example of the grammar point “whose.” In the class, an English animation was broadcast. In this animation, the sentence “whose dress is this” was said. Then, the teacher taught the usage of “whose.” The teacher believed that this word was important and hoped that the students master this word. Hence, she used the Chinese phrase to remind students. Moreover, as shown in example 2, teacher used “is it right?” to ask whether the students understood the meaning of “desk.” The teachers who used the switch tended to interact with their students in class. This type of switching occurred when teachers intended to remind students and understand their linguistic input.

Intra-sentential switching involves switches within the clause or sentence. In examples 3 and 4, the teacher inserted English words or sentences in her expression, which was dominantly in Chinese. These

words or sentences were generally expressed in the target language. This type of CS might occur because of the teachers' consideration of the low English proficiency of primary school students. Meanwhile, in example 5, the teacher who used "what is" in her demonstration might have had many aims. The teacher wanted to emphasize the word that students were ready to learn. Another reason associated with the insertion might be the teacher's language habits. Another example (example 6) from the teacher in Year 4 was the use of "yours," which was part of the lesson.

Example 7 (Year 4)

T: 刚刚我把里面的一个句子挑了出来. First listening, whose dress is this, it's Jenny's dress.

(TRANSLATION: **just now, I picked up one sentence from the video for you.** First listening, whose...)

Example 8 (Year 4)

T: 这是一个连衣裙, 那这是谁的连衣裙呢? Whose dress is this?

(TRANSLATION: **This is a dress, but whose dress is this?** Whose dress...)

Inter-sentential switching involves CS at the clause or sentence boundary. In example 7, the teacher shifted from Chinese to English to put forward the core lesson of this class. At the beginning of the class, the animation was played. Then, the teacher picked a sentence from the video. The teacher first used Chinese to attract the students' attention and then extracted the target language to be learned. As shown in example 8, the teacher shifted the grammar from Chinese to English. She repeated the target language and strengthened the students' learning of the target language.

In Table 3, although the teacher in Year 3 used more intra-sentential switching than the other two types of switching in her lessons, primary school teachers used inter-sentential switching the most in their lessons. Therefore, inter-sentential switching was the predominant type of switching in the primary EFL classrooms observed in this study.

4.3 Teachers' Attitudes Toward CS

By analyzing the 10 teachers' questionnaire, we identified that all teachers obtained a bachelor's degree in English and had at least two years of teaching experience. Hence, they were highly likely to have high proficiency in English. Hence, they would use CS for reasons other than their low English proficiency.

4.3.1 Attitudes toward CS Associated with Classroom Management

As shown in Table 4, all the teachers either strongly agreed or agreed that the switch from English to Chinese helped them to instruct students more clearly and attract the students' attention better. More than 60% of the teachers had a positive attitude toward CS in helping them give a clearer explanation or clarification and maintaining classroom discipline. However, no teacher had a negative attitude (strongly disagree or disagree) toward these statements.

The above results demonstrate that almost all the teachers thought that using CS in classroom management was useful.

Table 4. Teachers' Attitudes toward CS Associated with Classroom Management

Statement	Response frequency (%)				
	SA	A	NS	D	SD
1	40%	40%	20%	0%	0%
2	30%	70%	0%	0%	0%
3	30%	30%	40%	0%	0%
4	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

4.3.2 Attitudes toward CS Associated with Subject Access

This section comprises four statements related to subject access. These statements were about the teachers' attitudes toward CS in relation to asking questions (S5), explaining lexical items and grammatical points in the text (S6), explaining the cultural topics (S7), and making the course topics easier to understand (S8). The first statement of this section explained that when teachers told a story in class, they often used Chinese to ask the students about the following events in this story. As shown in Table 5, 80% of the teachers either strongly agreed or agreed with the opinion on this statement. Similar to S5, the other three items in this part also showed a high percentage (above or equal to 80%) of teachers' positive attitude. Therefore, a high percentage of teachers had a positive attitude toward CS in relation to subject access.

Table 5. Teachers' Attitudes toward Teachers' CS Associated with Subject Access

Statement	Response frequency (%)				
	SA	A	NS	D	SD
5	30%	50%	20%	0%	0%
6	60%	30%	10%	0%	0%
7	10%	80%	10%	0%	0%
8	20%	60%	20%	0%	0%

4.3.3 Attitudes toward CS Associated with Relation Building

CS also functioned as a builder of interpersonal relationships (Table 6), including attitudes toward CS in relation to encouraging and praising students (S9), reducing distance (S10), arousing the enthusiasm of students to study (S11), and providing better feedback on students' responses in class (S12). For S9, 80% of the teachers either strongly agreed or agreed with the opinion. However, about 10% of teachers disagreed with it. Teachers might have thought that simple English expressions, such as "have a try" and "that's great," could function well without the necessity of shifting to Chinese. For S10 and S11, teachers held the same attitudes toward these two statements: 70% either strongly agreed or agreed, while 30% remained neutral. Moreover, 90% of teachers agreed with S12. The results indicated that

most teachers believed that CS could help build interpersonal relations.

Table. 6 Teachers' attitudes toward CS associated with relation building

Statement	Response frequency (%)				
	SA	A	NS	D	SD
9	30%	50%	10%	10%	0%
10	30%	40%	30%	0%	0%
11	30%	40%	30%	0%	0%
12	0%	90%	10%	0%	0%

4.3.4 Attitudes toward CS Associated with the Impact of CS

S13 to S16 demonstrated the teachers' attitudes toward their own CS in relation to the impact of CS (Table 7), including attitudes toward CS in relation to increasing the opportunity for students to pass exams in English (S13), weakening students' English skills (S14), strengthening students' English skills (S15), and affecting the use of students' native language in communication in the future (S16). Responses to S13 indicated that more than half of the teachers either strongly agreed or agreed that CS could help increase the passing rate of exams. However, 30% of the teachers disagreed with this impact of CS. The result showed that many teachers might consider the passing rate of exams related to English input. CS reduced the maximum input of target language (English) and might negatively affect the passing rate of exams. Moreover, 20% more teachers either strongly agreed or agreed that CS could negatively affect the students' English skills, as seen from the responses to S14, than those who strongly agreed that CS could improve students' English skills, as seen from the responses to S15. Similarly, 70% of the teachers agreed that CS could affect the use of Chinese in future English communication. Therefore, most teachers held a negative attitude toward the impact of CS.

Table 7. Teachers' Attitudes toward Teachers' CS Associated with the Impact of CS

Statement	Response frequency (%)				
	SA	A	NS	D	SD
13	20%	40%	10%	30%	0%
14	40%	40%	10%	10%	0%
15	0%	60%	30%	10%	0%
16	0%	70%	20%	0%	10%

4.3.5 Attitudes toward CS associated with teachers' persona

S17 to S20 elicited teachers' attitudes to their CS in relation to teachers' persona (Table 8), including attitudes toward CS in relation to making students confused (S17), explaining themselves more

sometimes clearly in both languages (S18), indicating low proficiency in English (S19), and indicating high proficiency in English (S20). Responses to S17 indicated that over 50% of the teachers either strongly agreed or agreed with it. Moreover, in response to S18, almost all the teachers agreed that CS between English and Chinese allowed them to explain themselves in two languages more clearly. For S19 and 20, over half of the teachers thought that the shift from English to Chinese was because of their high English proficiency. The results above showed that teachers believed that CS not only allowed them to explain the knowledge more clearly but also showed their high proficiency in English. However, most of the teachers also admitted that their CS sometimes led to students' misunderstanding.

Table 8. Teachers' Attitudes toward Teachers' CS Associated with Teachers' Persona

Statement	Response frequency (%)				
	SA	A	NS	D	SD
17	50%	10%	40%	0%	0%
18	20%	70%	10%	0%	0%
19	10%	30%	30%	30%	0%
20	0%	70%	20%	10%	0%

4.4 Students' attitudes toward CS

Students had extra two statements in their questionnaire: S21 and S22 (Table 9). For S21 and S22, almost half of the students (48.3%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed that teachers only used Chinese in class, and only 40% of the students either strongly agreed or agreed with it. However, almost 90% of the students believed that English and Chinese should be used in class. Therefore, many students hoped that teachers use their first language and target language during the class.

Table 9. Students' Attitude toward the Use of First Language and Target Language

Statement	Response frequency (%)				
	SA	A	NS	D	SD
21	10%	30%	11.7%	28.3%	20%
22	56.7%	31.6%	10%	1.7%	0%

4.4.1 Attitudes toward CS Associated with Classroom Management

As shown in Table 10, in response to S1 and S2, around 90% of the students either strongly agreed or agreed with the two, and only less than 2% of the students disagreed with them. The result of S3 indicated that although about 70% of the students agreed that teachers' CS could help maintain the class discipline, 15% of the students thought it did not work. In class, some students witnessed the failure of teachers to manage the class using CS. Responses to S4 showed that almost half of the

students remained neutral on whether the teachers' CS could attract their attention. Meanwhile, 41.7% of the students either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. Therefore, most students believed that CS could help in managing the classroom.

Table 10. Students' Attitudes toward Teachers' CS Associated with Classroom Management

Statement	Response frequency (%)				
	SA	A	NS	D	SD
1	40%	46.7%	11.7%	1.7%	0%
2	40%	45%	13.3%	1.7%	0%
3	28.3%	43.3%	13.3%	10%	5%
4	20%	21.7%	45%	11.7%	1.7%

4.4.2 Attitudes toward CS Associated with Subject Access

As shown in Table 11, the result of S5 showed that 73.3% of the students either strongly agreed or agreed with the function of CS in asking questions. However, 15% of the students either strongly disagreed or disagreed. The negative result indicated that students might think teachers could use some brief and simple English words to ask questions without shifting to Chinese. In response to S6, S7, and S8, about 70% of the students either strongly agreed or agreed that teachers' CS could help explain the vocabulary, grammar points, and cultural context of the target language better and make the course content easy to understand. The results above demonstrate that most students had similar positive attitudes toward CS associated with subject access.

Table 11. Students' Attitudes toward Teachers' CS Associated with Subject Access

Statement	Response frequency (%)				
	SA	A	NS	D	SD
5	33.3%	40%	11.7%	11.7%	3.3%
6	36.7%	40%	16.7%	5%	1.7%
7	21.7%	45%	26.7%	3.3%	3.3%
8	40%	30%	26.7%	3.3%	0%

4.4.3 Attitudes toward CS Associated with Relation Building

The results of S9 to S12 (Table 12) indicated that over 50% of the students either strongly agreed or agreed that teachers could increase the encouragement they provide to students, reduce distance, inspire students' enthusiasm, and enhance feedback on students' responses in class. Meanwhile, 20% to 30% of the students were uncertain. Moreover, the responses to S10, S11, and S12 showed that compared with S10, a higher percentage of students showed either strong disagreement or disagreement on the

function of inspiration for students' enthusiasm and enhanced feedback on students' response in class.

Table 12. Students' Attitudes toward Teachers' CS Associated with Relation Building

Statement	Response frequency (%)				
	SA	A	NS	D	SD
9	16.7%	40%	36.7%	5%	1.7%
10	20%	38.3%	31.7%	10%	0%
11	21.7%	31.7%	26.7%	15%	5%
12	21.7%	35%	23.3%	15%	5%

4.4.4 Attitudes toward CS Associated with the Impact of CS

Table 13 presents that 70% of the students believed that teachers' CS could help increase the passing rate of exams. However, about 17% of the students either strongly disagreed or disagreed with it. The results of S14 and S15 indicated that a higher percentage of students showed their agreement on the influence of CS on strengthening students' English. Responses to S16 showed that over 40% of the students were uncertain about CS having a negative influence on their use of Chinese in future communication. Therefore, the students' overall attitudes toward CS related to the impact of CS were not negative.

Table 13. Students' Attitudes toward Teachers' CS Associated with the Impact of CS

Statement	Response frequency (%)				
	SA	A	NS	D	SD
13	25%	45%	13.3%	13.3%	3.3%
14	11.7%	21.7%	28.3%	23.3%	15%
15	20%	28.3%	45%	6.7%	0%
16	15%	21.7%	41.7%	16.7%	5%

4.4.5 Attitudes toward CS Associated with Teachers' Persona

As shown in Table 14, responses to S17 indicated that around half of the students either strongly agreed or agreed that teachers' CS could sometimes cause students to misunderstand the lesson. However, over 60% of the students also showed either strong agreement or agreement on the function of teachers' CS on explaining themselves more clearly according to the result of S18. As shown in Table 14 of the result of S19 and S20, more students strongly agreed with S20 than S19, which shows that more students agreed that the use of CS embodied teachers' high proficiency of English.

Table 14. Students' Attitudes toward Teachers' CS Associated with Teachers' Persona

Statement	Response frequency (%)				
	SA	A	NS	D	SD
17	11.7%	43.3%	28.3%	15%	1.7%
18	36.7%	28.3%	30%	3.3%	1.7%
19	8.3%	15%	43.3%	21.7%	11.7%
20	11.7%	20%	38.3%	16.7%	13.3%

4.5 Comparison between Teachers' and Students' Attitudes toward Teachers' CS

Teachers and students were two irrelevant samples, and their data were normally distributed by SPSS analysis. Therefore, independent samples t-test was used to identify whether their attitudes toward CS differed. All teachers' and students' data were analyzed using SPSS 27.0. Levene's test was used to analyze whether the data met the assumption of homogeneity of variance. If the significance value is less than the alpha value (0.05), then the data do not meet the assumption of homogeneity of variance. Moreover, the t-test also showed whether the difference in variances of two samples in each question was statistically significant.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare teachers' and students' attitudes toward teachers' CS conditions. No statistical significance was observed in the teachers' and students' attitudes toward 17 CS conditions (S1, S2, S3, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11, S13, S15, S16, S17, S18, S19, and S20). These results suggested that teachers and students had the same attitude toward the 17 statements. Meanwhile, a significant difference was observed in three CS conditions (S4, S12, and S14), including the teachers' attitudes ($M = 4.5$, $SD = 0.527$) and students' attitudes ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 0.999$) toward CS in relation to catching the students' attention better (S4, $t = 4.90$, $p = 0.000$), teachers' attitudes ($M = 3.9$, $SD = 0.316$) and students' attitudes ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.142$) toward CS in relation to providing better feedback on the students' responses in the class (S12, $t = 2.058$, $p = 0.045$), and teachers' attitudes ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.994$) and students' attitudes ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.239$) toward CS in relation to weakening students' English (S14, $t = 3.354$, $p = 0.005$). These results suggested that teachers and students had different attitudes toward CS in relation to its ability to attract the students' attention, provide better feedback on students' responses in class, and weaken students' English. In S4, as shown in Tables 3 and 9, 100% of the teachers either strongly agreed or agreed that teachers' CS could better attract students' attention, while only 41.7% of students showed either strong agreement or agreement on it. Therefore, teachers and students had different attitudes toward teachers' CS in relation to attracting students' attention better. The result of S12 shown in Tables 5 and 11 indicated that 90% of the teachers either strongly agreed or agreed with teachers' CS in relation to providing better feedback on the students' responses. Meanwhile, only 56.7% of the students showed either strong agreement or agreement on it. Furthermore, 20% of the students either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the

statement. However, no teacher showed strong disagreement and disagreement. Similarly, teachers and students had different attitudes toward teachers' CS in relation to providing better feedback on students' responses in the classes. In Tables 6 and 12, responses to S14 indicated that 80% of the teachers either strongly agreed or agreed that teachers' CS weakens students' English compared with 10% who disagreed. Simultaneously, only 33.4% of the students either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement on S14, and around 38% of students showed either strong disagreement or disagreement. Based on the above analysis, the results indicated that almost all the teachers and students held the same attitude toward CS.

5. Discussion

The above analysis shows that one language (Chinese or English) used by teachers in Year 3 and Year 5 dominated the class. In turn, the teachers might shift from one language to the other less frequently. Therefore, teachers might use less CS in teaching students with low or high proficiency in English. However, the research results of Jingxia (2010) and Qian et al. (2009) revealed that teachers used more CS to teach low-proficiency students, followed by a gradual decrease in the following years. The difference may lie in the participants' background. Jingxia (2010) conducted the study in a university where teachers and students were more proficient in English than primary counterparts; therefore, in his study, Chinese was not the main language in the class, and teachers shifted more from the target language to the first language for low-proficiency learners. Similarly, teacher and student participants in Qian et al.'s (2009) study were from Beijing, the capital of China, where teachers have prestige and students have high educational levels. Meanwhile, the participants in the current study were from a primary school in a medium-sized city in China. Therefore, the teachers and students were less proficient in English than teachers in Beijing or university counterparts. Chinese in Year 3 dominated the class. As the year level increased, teachers used more English and shifted more frequently.

Meanwhile, three types of CS were found in the primary school teachers' speech: tag, intra-sentential and inter-sentential switching. The results in Table 3 show that the primary school teachers used much more inter-sentential switching in their classes. The study correlates with the findings of Qian et al. (2009) and Pharamita et al. (2021). The study result of Qian et al. (2009) also demonstrated the three types of CS in primary EFL classroom and inter-sentential switching was used the most. The similarity of the background might lead to similar findings between their study and the present study. Furthermore, compared with the results of Qian et al. (2009), which indicated that teachers only used intra-sentential switching 16% of the time, this study found that teachers in every year level used intra-sentential switching more than 30% of the time. The class samples in this study were from Year 3 to Year 5, while the class samples in their research ranged from Year 1 to Year 4, which might cause the difference of results. The high school teachers in Pharamita et al.'s (2021) study also used the same types of CS but in different backgrounds. Notably, high school teachers also need to use CS to assist students in acquiring English skills and enhancing their concentration during the learning process.

Furthermore, the data from the questionnaires showed that in terms of classroom management, most teachers and students had a positive attitude toward the four items. This outcome is in line with Ahmad and Jusoff's (2009) research, where most learners with low proficiency in English acknowledged that teachers' CS can be used to manage the classroom better. By contrast, Yao (2011) revealed that a high percentage of agreement or disagreement was not gained in using CS in classroom management. The participants in Ahmad and Jusoff's (2009) research were primary school students and teachers, while the participants in Yao's (2011) study were from senior year levels in an EFL classroom. Therefore, the results of the present study are similar to that of Ahmad and Jusoff's (2009) study but different from the results of Yao's (2011) study. Notably, most learners with low proficiency in English and their teachers believe that CS can contribute to class management.

With regard to subject access, the majority of teachers and students held a positive attitude toward all items. Similarly, many studies also gained the same results as that of the present study. For example, Nurhamidah et al. (2018) found that CS is used to check the students' comprehension of the study materials. Moreover, students expected teachers to deliver materials in L1. As Yao (2011) concluded that most teachers and students held a positive attitude toward CS in relation to subject access. Students and teachers believed that students did not understand some English words and grammar regardless of their English proficiency. Hence, they might agree with the teachers' CS to help enhance subject access.

As for relation building, over half of the teachers and students either strongly agreed or agreed with the statements in this section, which suggested that most teachers and students held a positive attitude toward CS in helping relation building. Ye (2021) yielded a similar result that teachers and students considered CS a means to build a friendly and healthy relationship between two cohorts. This similarity in findings indicated that CS was particularly valuable in terms of relation building.

In the impact of CS, the results indicated that most of the teachers and students thought that teachers' CS could increase the passing rate of exams, although some of them did not believe that CS contributed to these rates. The findings showed that many educators and learners may believe the impact of CS on learning effectiveness, consequently influencing the overall passing rate. However, teachers expressed pessimistic views, whereas students had optimistic perspectives regarding the potential of CS to enhance students' English skills and influence the use of their native language in future communications.

In terms of teachers' persona, most of the teachers believed that their CS sometimes made students misunderstand the concepts being studied. Nevertheless, they believed that CS could still be used to explain the concepts clearly. Meanwhile, many teachers did not consider their CS an indication of less proficiency, and more student participants believed that teachers used CS because of their high proficiency in English. This view is consistent with that of Garrett (2010), who observed that speakers who are fluent in L1 and the target language can master CS. Thus, the use of CS embodies the teachers' English proficiency.

The analysis of the difference between teachers' and students' attitudes indicated that their attitudes toward CS on majority of the questions were not statistically significant. Therefore, teachers and students shared similar attitudes toward most of statements. According to the above discussion, they had the same positive attitudes toward teachers' CS in many aspects, which is in line with the findings of Jingxia (2010). Moreover, in Ariffin and Husin's study (2011) at a university in which English was the medium of teaching in all courses, less proficient students and teachers had more supportive attitudes to teachers' CS than highly proficient students. Yao (2011) also studied the university teachers' and students' attitudes toward teachers' CS and found that most of the teachers and students held a positive attitude toward teachers' CS. The previous studies demonstrated that even university teachers and students thought highly of the use of teachers' CS in class. Therefore, the positive attitude of primary school teachers and students was deemed reasonable especially given the students' low proficiency in English. However, compared with Yao (2011), who noted that teachers and students had different opinions on some functions in relation to subject matter, this study shows their various opinions on some statements associated with classroom management, relation building, and the impact of CS. The difference of results may lie in the different participants in the two studies. In Yao's (2011) study, the target audiences were university teachers with high proficiency in English. Hence, they preferred using the target language for subject access, while students expected teachers to do more CS. By contrast, in this study, classroom management and relation building were crucial for primary school teachers' teaching. Hence, teachers held a positive attitude toward the use of CS, but students did not agree with the functions.

6. Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

The current study consisted of qualitative and quantitative research. The result of the qualitative data analysis showed that the teacher in Year 4 used more CS than the other teachers in Year 3 and Year 5. Three types of CS, namely, tag switching, intra-sentential switching and inter-sentential switching, were used by primary school teachers in their class. In total, inter-sentential switching outweighed intra-sentential switching and tag switching.

Quantitative research was conducted to determine the teachers' and students' opinions on the reasons and purposes that prompt teachers to use CS in class. Almost all the results from the teachers were positive. Students' results showed that students also held a positive attitude toward teachers' CS in EFL classrooms in most of the questions. The result of the independent t-test indicated that teachers and students held the same attitudes toward most of items. Therefore, most teachers and students had the same positive attitudes toward teachers' CS in many aspects. The result is similar to the findings of Jingxia (2010), Ariffin and Susanti (2011), and Yao (2011).

Based on the findings from the present study, CS is unavoidable and should be used in EFL classes, especially for primary EFL learners. First, for primary EFL learners, CS can help them understand the learning content. Specifically, among these learners, the target language should be used more for

teaching learners with high proficiency in English. Students with medium proficiency in English should have more mixed units. Therefore, teachers should use more CS in teaching students with medium proficiency in primary EFL classrooms. Moreover, more inter-sentential switching should be applied to students in higher year levels because of their high English proficiency and their need to learn to construct complete English sentences. Second, CS is a useful and frequently applied strategy for teachers in class management (Nurhamidah et al., 2018; Afriani, 2020; Ataş & Sağın-Şimşek, 2021), subject access (Yao, 2011; Kumar et al., 2021; Ataş & Sağın-Şimşek, 2021), and relation building (Ahmad & Jusoff, 2009; Ye, 2021). In EFL countries, where English is rarely used in people's daily communication, the classroom is a special place for students' language learning. In such a setting, for low-proficiency learners, teachers need to use every means to enable students to engage in class. Therefore, CS is an available strategy to help teachers manage classes, access subjects, and build relationships because teachers and students have the same linguistic background.

Although the above findings have provided directive guidance to the teachers' CS use in in EFL classes, the study also has certain limitations. First, the teacher participants were insufficient in covering a range of primary school teachers with different education levels and years of teaching. Moreover, teachers' use of CS may be affected by their personal factors, including their language use habits or preferences. Therefore, teachers' use of Chinese or English may be affected by these factors as well. To minimize the effect of the limitation, additional teacher participants are needed to acquire accurate results. Additional recordings of teachers' lessons in each year level also should be included in further study.

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