

**The Effects of Code-Switching on Students' Grammar Understanding in Kazakh  
Secondary English as a Foreign Language Classroom**

Ingkar Moldagaliyeva

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Thesis Advisor:

PhD, Aidos Myrzabek

SDU University

Faculty of Education and Humanities  
Department of Language Teacher Education

This is to certify that the Master's Thesis of

Ingkar Moldagaliyeva

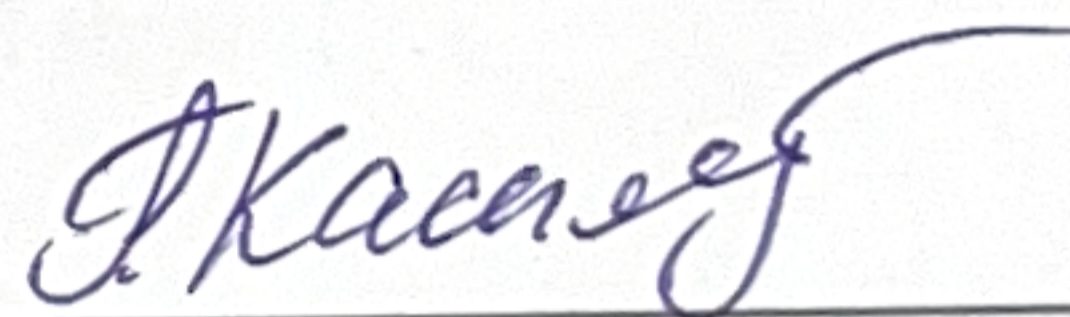
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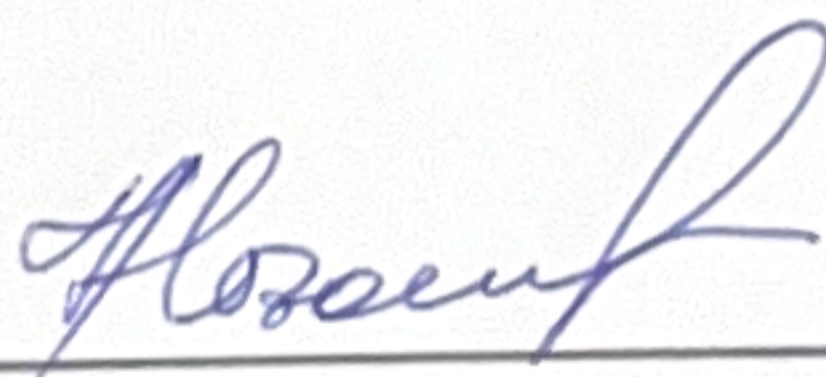
Approved by:



PhD, Aidos MYRZABEK  
Professor, Thesis supervisor



PhD., Doctor  
Gulzhaina KASSYMOVA  
Committee Chair



PhD., assistant professor  
Akmarzhan NOGAIBAYEVA  
Department Chair



PhD., associate professor Zhainagul DUISEBEKOVA  
Dean, Faculty of Education and Humanities



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## **The Effects of Code-Switching on Students' Grammar Understanding in Kazakh**

### **Secondary English as a Foreign Language Classroom**

#### **Abstract**

This study explores the effects of teacher-led code-switching on students' grammar comprehension in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Kazakhstan. A mixed-method approach was employed, combining a teacher questionnaire (N = 107) and a quasi-experiment with tenth-grade students (N = 22). Drawing on Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model, the research investigated whether incorporating students' first language (Kazakh) supports grammar learning. The experimental results showed that both groups improved, but the code-switching group demonstrated slightly greater gains and reduced score variability. Survey findings revealed that most teachers consciously or habitually use code-switching and consider it effective, particularly for complex grammar topics. The study concludes that code-switching can serve as a valuable pedagogical tool, especially for learners with limited English proficiency, and recommends its strategic use in grammar instruction.

*Keywords:* code-switching, grammar comprehension, EFL classroom, Kazakhstani education, first language use, bilingual instruction, teacher strategies

## **Код ауыстырудың қазақ орта мектебіндегі ағылшын тілі пәніндегі грамматикалық түсінікке әсері**

### **Аңдатпа**

Бұл зерттеу Қазақстандағы ағылшын тілін шет тілі ретінде оқыту (EFL) сабақтарында мұғалімнің код-свичинг қолдануы оқушылардың грамматиканы түсінуіне қалай әсер ететінін зерттейді. Зерттеу барысында аралас әдіс қолданылды: мұғалімдерге арналған сауалнама (N = 107) және 10-сынып оқушыларына арналған квази-эксперимент (N = 22). Выготскийдің әлеуметтік-мәдени теориясы мен Майерс-Скоттонның белгілік моделі негізінде оқушылардың ана тілін (қазақ тілі) грамматиканы үйретуде қолдану тиімділігі қарастырылды. Нәтижелерге сүйенсек, екі топ та алға жылжығанымен, код-свичинг қолданылған топтағы оқушылардың нәтижелері сәл жоғары болды және нәтиже айырмашылығы азайды. Сауалнама қорытындысы бойынша мұғалімдердің көпшілігі код-свичингті саналы түрде немесе дағды ретінде қолданатынын және оны әсіресе күрделі грамматикалық тақырыптарды түсіндіруде тиімді деп санайтынын көрсетті. Зерттеу код-свичингті шектеулі ағылшын тілдік деңгейі бар оқушылар үшін пайдалы құрал ретінде қарастырады және оны грамматика оқытуда мақсатты түрде пайдалануды ұсынады.

*Кілт сөздер:* код ауыстыру, грамматиканы оқыту, ағылшын тілі сыныптары,

Қазақстан

## **Влияние переключения кода на понимание грамматики у студентов в казахстанских школьных классах английского языка как иностранного**

### **Аннотация**

Данное исследование посвящено изучению влияния использования код-свитчинга преподавателем на понимание грамматики учащимися в классах английского языка как иностранного (EFL) в Казахстане. Был применен смешанный метод: опрос среди учителей (N = 107) и квази-эксперимент с учениками 10 класса (N = 22). Основываясь на Социокультурной теории Выготского и Модели маркированности Майерс-Скоттон, исследование рассматривало, способствует ли использование родного языка (казахского) усвоению грамматики. Результаты эксперимента показали, что обе группы продвинулись, однако группа с код-свитчингом продемонстрировала немного лучшие результаты и более однородные баллы. Опрос показал, что большинство учителей осознанно или автоматически применяют код-свитчинг и считают его эффективным, особенно при объяснении сложных грамматических тем. В заключение подчеркивается, что код-свитчинг может быть полезным педагогическим инструментом, особенно для учащихся с низким уровнем английского, и рекомендуется его стратегическое использование при обучении грамматике.

*Ключевые слова:* код-переключение, обучение грамматике, классы английского, Казахстан

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

The role of English is recognizable in communities, workplaces, and institutions worldwide. However, the perceptions of apparently similar roles of English are not necessarily the same everywhere. In multilingual Kazakhstan, English has officially become a third language alongside the state language of Kazakh and the official language of Russian. In Kazakhstan, English is taught and learned in educational institutions from primary school through to university, moreover in some international schools and universities English is recognized as a medium instruction, that means English is used to teach other academic subjects (besides English itself) in areas where residents' mother tongue is not English (Macaro, 2018).

Using students' first language (L1) in a second or foreign language classroom has been an ongoing discussion topic among linguists and researchers. This dispute revolves around two controversial views, while one camp of researchers advocates for the exclusion of L1 in the classroom, another group of researchers considers L1 as a supportive tool to learn foreign languages (Jingxia, 2010).

Krashen (1985) was among the proponents of exclusive target language exposure in L2 learning, positing that minimizing the use of the L1 maximizes L2 immersion and learning. Conversely, there are applied linguists who advocate for integrating the L1 into L2 teaching (Jingxia, 2010). Researchers like Yao (2011) emphasize the efficacy of teachers' code-switching, stating that it can efficiently aid in teaching and explaining grammar and vocabulary.

Utilizing the L1 in L2 classrooms appears to facilitate comparison and contrast between languages, enabling learners to relate new knowledge to familiar concepts (Brooks-Lewis, 2009).

However, the extent of L1 usage can yield both positive and negative outcomes. While L1 incorporation aids in understanding grammar and complex concepts (Akulova, 2019), excessive reliance on the L1 may limit exposure to the L2 (Fang and Liu 2020; Resmini, 2019; Zhou and Mann 2021).

From a pedagogical perspective, code-switching to the L1 can facilitate discussions about cultural and grammatical disparities between languages, fostering heightened language awareness among learners, and it is viewed as a motivational tool while acknowledging the importance of the L2.

Code-switching has been defined in several ways by different researchers over time, depending on the point of view of their study. Sometimes the terminology overlaps, and sometimes the terminology is used differently by different researchers (Milroy & Myusken, 1995).

In the realm of code-switching research, there have been varied interpretations of the term. Gumperz (1982) defined it as "the mixing of passages from two distinct grammatical systems or subsystems within the same conversation." Cook (2016) conceptualized code-switching as the "transitioning between languages during a conversation when both speakers' own knowledge in those languages". In essence, code-switching involves altering from one language to a second, even a third, within dialogue or a statement. In educational settings for foreign languages, it specifically designates the shifting usage of both native and target language, often applied by language teachers as a communication strategy when necessary.

## 1.1 Problem Statement

The Altynsarin National Academy of Education (2022) proposed methodological guidelines for organizing the foreign language learning process in Kazakhstani schools. These guidelines include a table (Table 1) outlining both the coursebook content level and the expected proficiency levels in foreign languages by grades. However, a diagnostic proficiency test conducted by the researcher revealed that many students did not meet the expected curriculum standards for their level. This challenge in teaching English may lead to frequent use of classroom code-switching, mostly by teachers. To verify the aforementioned problem statement regarding the mismatch between students' actual and expected English proficiency levels outlined in the methodological guidelines in the context of the current research, a diagnostic English proficiency test was administered to 10th-grade students at the school. The total number of test takers was 87, from four classes. The test was sourced from liteka.ru, a website offering CEFR-aligned assessments.

The results shared a mismatch in the school where the study was conducted: A2 level - 40% (n=35); B1 level holders made 54% (n=47), and there were 5 students with B2 level, 6%. As data showed, the majority of students performed at the B1 level or below.

### Table 1.

*Language proficiency levels according to the model curriculum for the "Foreign Language" subject*

Grade	Proficiency level
English	
2	A1 low
3	A1 mid

---

4	A1 high
5	Low-mid A2
6	Mid-high A2
7	Low B1
8	Mid B1
9	High B1
10	B2 low-mid
11	B2

---

Code-switching in foreign language classrooms has been widely researched from multiple perspectives and in diverse educational contexts, including Kazakhstan. Notable studies have explored students' attitudes toward Kazakh-English code-switching (Akynova et al., 2014; Seidin et al., 2021), along with linguistic and sociological investigations into socio-psychological dimensions of this phenomenon.

Even though a huge number of studies have been conducted on code-switching, the author believes that the pedagogical usage of code-switching to enhance grammar comprehension in English as an EFL classroom, especially in the Kazakhstani context of secondary schools, remains underexplored. This study aims to fill the gap by investigating the potential impacts of code-switching on learners' understanding of English grammar.

### **1.1 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is twofold:

1. To identify the functions of code-switching in the secondary school EFL classroom in Kazakhstan.

2. To investigate the effects of teacher-led code-switching on students' grammar comprehension in EFL classrooms where students share the same mother tongue (Kazakh).

By examining whether the strategic use of students' first language (L1) improves or hinders grammar acquisition, the study aims to provide insights into the role of code-switching as a teaching strategy.

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

1. To review and synthesize the existing literature related to code-switching, its types and functions, as well as impacts on language proficiency, with a specific emphasis on grammar.
2. To collect and analyze questionnaire data about code-switching from the teachers' perspective
3. To identify and evaluate the effects of teacher-led code-switching on students' grammar acquisition through an experimental design, comparing results from pre-tests and post-tests.

## **1.3 Hypotheses:**

Upon reviewing previous studies, the study is guided by these two hypotheses:

H0: EFL students understand English grammar better when the teacher switches codes to students' L1 during the explanation.

H1: EFL students understand grammar topics better when the teacher explains grammar only in the target language (English).

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

To address the hypothesis, this study explores the following research questions:

1. What are the reasons for which English language teachers code-switch in the EFL classroom?
2. How does the practice of code-switching influence the grammar understanding of students in Kazakh secondary school language classrooms?

#### **1.5 Limitations of the study**

This study acknowledges two main limitations. First, the findings cannot be generalized due to the small sample size. Only 22 students from a single school participated in the experimental part of the study. Although 107 EFL teachers from various regions of Kazakhstan responded to the questionnaire, bringing diverse teaching experiences, the sample remains insufficient for drawing nationwide conclusions.

Second, there may be confusion regarding terminology. In recent literature, terms such as translanguaging are often used to describe the use of L1 in foreign language classrooms. However, this study deliberately uses the term code-switching to define this process.

## CHAPTER 2

### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a thorough overview of previous literature by scholars from different contexts, which sheds light solely on the phenomenon of code-switching in EFL classroom, its dynamics in the regards of other related terms; as well as its functions in English as Foreign Language classroom (EFL), moreover the influence of using code-switching on teaching English grammar to non-native students was analyzed. The state of teaching English as a foreign language and legislation on the English language in the Kazakh education system have been reviewed to set the background.

#### 2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is theoretically grounded in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1985) and the Markedness Model by Myers-Scotton (1993). These theories provide a solid base for understanding how code-switching can facilitate grammar learning in EFL classrooms.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978) underscores the social nature of learning, positing that cognitive development is shaped by social interactions. A central concept in this theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which defines the difference between what a learner can do without external assistance and what they can achieve with the help of a more knowledgeable person (Zamarripa, 2006). Scaffolding, a fundamental term within Vygotsky's framework, refers to the provision of temporary help that is reduced gradually as learners achieve autonomy (Wood et al., 1976). These scaffolding techniques align well with code-switching, where teachers or more competent peers support, hence facilitating learning in a foreign language classroom. On top of that, ZPD emphasizes the necessity for learners to engage

with language in a social and interactive environment (Vygotsky, 1978). Code-switching facilitates a deeper understanding and meaning-making in language activities by enabling learners to connect their first language with the foreign language (Swain, 2000). Vygotsky's theory (1978) posits that learners can progressively acquire the linguistic tools essential for academic success through these social interactions.

Alongside Vygotsky's work, Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model (1993, 2002) offers a framework for understanding rational choices regarding code-switching. This model suggests that speakers navigate between marked and unmarked codes in their linguistic repertoire.

Unmarked code refers to those codes that are viewed as neutral or socially accepted in a given context, whereas marked codes deviate from the norm and serve specific communicative functions (Myers-Scotton, 1993). The Markedness Model is based on Rational Choice Theory, which suggests that individuals choose. Within the Markedness Model, code-switching is seen as a deliberate choice that learners make to meet their immediate communicative needs. In EFL classrooms, code-switching can occur when the Matrix language (target language) becomes too difficult and confusing to understand. Switching to their L1 allows learners can achieve better understanding and conceptual clarity, hence promoting language acquisition (Myers-Scotton, 1998).

The combination of code-switching with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model highlights how code-switching can be employed as an effective tool in the EFL classroom. Strategic use of code-switching acts as a mediating tool, offering learners essential support to navigate cognitive and linguistic challenges in learning foreign languages. This study integrates Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory with Myers-Scotton's

Markedness Model to illustrate how code-switching serves as a mechanism for enhancing language development through social and cognitive support.

### **2.3 The State of the English Language in Kazakhstan**

Due to globalization, English has become the world's dominant language; interest in and demand for this lingua franca have been expanding across various sectors worldwide, and Kazakhstan is no exception. The promotion of English in education, business, science, technology, and international collaborations has been actively supported by policies at the state level. In 2007, the former President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev introduced the trilingualism policy in his address to the nation, this policy was directed to promote the use of three languages: Kazakh as the state language, Russian as the language of international communication and documentation (as is common in post-Soviet countries), and English is considered a tool that encourages a successful integration into the global economy (Karabassova, 2020; Küçükler, 2020; Terlikbayeva & Menlibekova, 2021).

The cultural project of «Trinity of Languages» aligns with the state's aim of joining the list of «World's 50 most developed countries», underscoring the country's commitment to multilingualism and global competitiveness.

Kazakhstani students learn English as a core subject in mainstream schools from second grade to eleventh grade. By the end of the school, students are required to get the CEFR B2 level. Moreover, specialized schools such as NIS, BIL were pioneers in multilingual education in Kazakhstan (Irsaliyev et al., 2017). Pilot programs of teaching subjects in English were conducted. Including BIL, 33 specialized 'Daryn' schools for gifted children were designated to implement trilingual education and start teaching several subjects in English beginning in the 2007–2008 academic year. Nowadays, the mentioned schools, alongside other private

international schools adopted English not only as a subject but the language to teach STEM subjects, providing Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL).

The impact of these specialized schools has been significant, with many students demonstrating improved English proficiency and academic performance in subjects taught in English. However, the scalability of these programs to the broader education system remains an ongoing challenge. The shift towards EMI in mainstream schools faced obstacles, such as insufficient teacher proficiency in English, lack of appropriate training, and concerns about the readiness of students to cope with the complexities of learning through a foreign language. As a result, the government decided to postpone the full implementation of EMI in secondary education until these challenges are addressed (Kaiypova & Kim, 2024).

Notwithstanding the failure of implementation of EMI in secondary education in state schools, the Ministry of Education and Sciences initiated an intense application of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in the higher education system to fulfill the requirements of the Bologna declaration (Gaipov et.al, 2024). EMI refers to teaching academic disciplines in English within university settings where English is L2 or L3, and the surrounding sociolinguistic environment is multilingual (Curle et al., 2020a; Dafouz & Smit, 2020; Macaro et al., 2018; Goodman et.al, 2024). While some universities have fully embraced EMI from the outset, others have adopted a gradual approach, and core subjects are taught beginning from the second or third year of study.

The status of English in Kazakhstan educational system is further evidenced by its inclusion as one of three required sections in the postgraduate program (Master's, PhD) entry tests, and admission tests to higher education (UNT) can be taken in English (Kaiypova & Kim, 2024). In addition, the Unified National Test (UNT), an exam for admission to higher education

organizations in Kazakhstan, started being offered in English. Only Kazakh and Russian were available before, but because of the increase in the number of trilingual schools, students were now able to take the test in a more comfortable language for them. In 2021, the number of test-takers in English reached a total of 350 students (Prime Minister's Office 2021).

## **2.4 Code-switching vs Translanguaging**

Several overlapping terms are often used to describe language alternation alongside code-switching. One that has gained increasing attention in recent years is translanguaging. Although these concepts are closely related and have mutual characteristics (García, 2009; Goodman & Tastanbek, 2021; Lewis & Baker, 2012), they differ in their theoretical view, purpose, and characteristics of classroom activities. In this study, I chose code-switching as the main central issue of the research. At first sight, they seem as the same term that can be applied interchangeably, even some researchers claim that code-switching is a part of translanguaging alongside translation (Yakshi, 2022), but it is not. Translanguaging, as introduced by a Welsh teacher, Williams, in 1994, is a broader pedagogical aspect that encourages fluid language use, allowing learners to draw on their entire linguistic repertoire to input and output knowledge in different languages (Garcia, 2009). For instance, students read in English (input) and write in Welsh (output) or vice versa (Baker, 2011 as cited in García & Wei, 2014). Unlike code-switching, which involves switching between discrete languages, translanguaging is viewed as the integration of languages in a holistic manner, often going beyond single words or phrases (García & Wei, 2015). In the CS practices, languages are seen as separate systems, used alternately to support comprehension or communication. In contrast, translanguaging sees all languages a speaker knows as part of a unified repertoire.

Code-switching is applied in the classroom to clarify complex grammar or vocabulary by switching to L1; to manage classroom behavior, and fill the gaps in understanding, while translanguaging aims to encourage students using all linguistic resources (L1, L2, gestures, visuals) to aid comprehension, subsequently lowers anxiety, for example, by allowing L1 use in brainstorming or drafting ideas in their L1. Moreover, code-switching mostly happens spontaneously and functionally, while translanguaging is always planned, intentional, and strategic. They should not be considered as synonymous, as they lead to distinct types of classroom activities.

CS activities focus on structured language switching for comprehension and communication, such as:

#### A. Clarification Requests

When introducing a new word (e.g., appreciate), the teacher asks

*«Appreciate сөзінің мағынасын білеміз бе, балалар?» (Do you know the meaning of the word «appreciate»?)*

Students respond «бағалау» (value)

#### B. Grammar Comparison

When the teacher explains negative forms of the past tense, the teacher writes:

*«Nobody came to her birthday party, and she was deeply disappointed (English)».*

*(Оның туған күніне ешкім келмеді, және оның қатты көңілі қалды. (Kazakh)).*

Students and teacher discuss how in English, negative pronouns like nobody or nothing are not used with negative verb forms, unlike in Kazakh.

### C. Role-Play with code-switching

Scenario: A customer (student) at a «restaurant» struggles to order in English:

*«I want to order ...um... креветки қалай болады, teacher?»*

Waiter (peer student)/Teacher: Shrimps! I'd like shrimps, please.

This spontaneous switch helps fill lexical gaps and maintain communication.

Translanguaging activities focus on fluid language use to deepen understanding and creativity.

### A. Bilingual Brainstorming

Before writing an essay\making a project on pollution, students:

- Discuss causes/solutions in Kazakh/Russian in groups.
- Compile key terms in English (such as «trash», «recycling»)
- Write the essay\start the project in English using their notes

### B. Translanguaging Storytelling

Students create a story where:

- Dialogue is in English (Hello! How are you?)

- Narration uses L1 (“*Содан кейін батыр қатты қорқып кетті.*” «*And then the hero was very scared*»).
- Later they translate the full story into English. This activity uses translanguaging validates L1 as a scaffold for L2 output.

While translanguaging has been recognized as beneficial in bilingual or multilingual educational settings, its application is often suited to contexts where learners are proficient in multiple languages (Baker, 2011). EFL classrooms, particularly those involving learners with limited proficiency in the target language, may not be ideal for the full integration of translanguaging (Liu, 2023). Code-switching, on the other hand, can be more easily adapted to EFL contexts, and more appropriate (Gabryś-Barker, 2020).

## **2.5 The Concept of Code - Switching**

The phenomenon of code-switching has long been a subject of academic interest across various disciplines, including sociology, politics, multilingual education, and language teaching. In this literature review, I primarily focus on code-switching from the TEFL perspective.

The term «code-switching» is derived from two elements: code, which means language (Johanet, 2017), and switch, which can be synonymous with alter or change. Gumperz (1982) defined code-switching as “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems”.

Grosjean pioneered (1982, as cited in Nurhamidah et al. 2018) in referring term of «code-switching» to language alternation who used code-switching referring to language alternation, however, code-switching was first coined by American linguist Haugen in 1956 to describe person’s capacity to alter languages and dialects. He also mentioned that bilingual

speakers add utterances from a language they have not fully assimilated to his speech while speaking (Abdulla & Abbas, 2024).

More recent definitions emphasize its occurrence in multilingual settings. Rahayu and Margana (2018), Cook (2016) define it as the simultaneous use of two or more languages within a single conversation or monologue where both speaker and listener share the same languages. Lin (2013) specifically refers to code-switching in the foreign language classroom as the alternation between a learner's native language and the target language. Similarly, Richards and Schmidt (2002) describe it as a linguistic behavior where a speaker starts in one language and shifts to another mid-conversation. Bullock and Toribio (2009) further highlight that this phenomenon occurs primarily among bilinguals, as they can switch codes without any effort. It is common in multilingual societies or countries, such as Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Tanzania, where attempts to switch to EMI (English as a medium of instruction) at different levels of education are recognized.

In the context of foreign language teaching, studies suggest that teachers often use students' L1 due to limited proficiency in the target language and based on students' other needs, and it is found as a means of communication in the EFL classroom.

**2.5.1 Types of code-switching.** Poplack (2000) proposed the classification of code-switching: inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag-switching.

Inter-sentential code-switching occurs when a speaker completes a full sentence or clause in one language before switching to another. This results in two or more separate sentences in different languages (Pharamita et al, 2021; Shalihah & Rosa, 2021; Sudarmawan, 2022; Ali et al, 2023). This type of switching demands an upper level of multilingual proficiency, since it necessitates the production of complete grammatical structures in both languages (Ali et al,

2023; Jingxia, 2010). Yletyinen (2004) observed that this form of CS is commonly prevalent in secondary and high school settings, particularly when teachers deliver the content in the target language (L2) and later on clarify or summarize it in the students' native language (Sudarmawan, 2022). This approach in the classroom is expected to facilitate barrier-free comprehension, and also can encourage students' responses and participation (Markhamah & Kardena, 2023; Nashruddin et., 2024).

An example extracted from Myrzabek et.al (2024):

*Маған Қазақстан ұнамайды. Жоқ, жоқ, **I'm a huge fan of my country. No.***

*(I don't like Qazaqstan. No, no, **I'm a huge fan of my country. No.**)*

The speaker first expresses a full sentence in Kazakh, then switches to English while negating the initial statement. This transition between sentences clearly exemplifies inter-sentential switching.

Another type of code-switching is intra-sentential which refers to occurrence of language alternation within a single sentence or clause. It often requires speakers to shift between grammatical systems without pause, often mid-thought. This type of switching demands the highest level of fluency, as it involves navigating the syntax of both languages simultaneously (Zirker, 2007; Suhardianto & Afriana, 2022; Aliaskar, 2024). According to Yletyinen (2004), this types of frequently occurs during grammar lessons. For example, teachers might explain concepts in Finnish but provide examples in English. it is common during exercises or grammar instruction, where teachers must be proficient in both languages (Poplack, 1980). Intra- sentential switching also helps learners understand challenging vocabulary or abstract concepts (Markhamah & Kardena, 2023).

An example:

Ну ладно, менің есімде то что мында вот студенческий sports facilities

маған қымбатырақ көрінді.

(Okay, I remember *that here sports facilities for students seemed to be more expensive for me*) (Myrzabek et al, 2024).

This utterance shifts between Russian, Kazakh, and English within one sentence, illustrating intra-sentential switching at multiple points.

The last, tag switching involves inserting a single word or short phrase (tag) from another language into a sentence. Tags are typically interjections, fillers or idiomatic expressions (e.g. «you know», «I mean») (Wei, 2000; Yletyinen, 2004; Novianti & Said, 2021). Since tags are syntactically independent, they can be placed freely in a sentence without affecting its structure (Jingxia, 2010, Mabule, 2015). Teachers often use tag-switching to emphasize a point, clarify a statement, or guide student attention (Novianti & Said, 2021; Suhardianto & Afriana, 2022).

An example extracted from Myrzabek et al. (2024):

*Ah. By the way*, қашан келеді?

The speaker begins with English interjections and then switches to Kazakh and then switches to Kazakh to ask a question, showing how tag-switching functions in natural discourse.

**2.5.2. The functions of code-switching in an EFL classroom.** Code-switching has been widely studied in the context of bilingual and multilingual education, as well as in foreign language teaching, especially English as an ESL and EFL classroom. In EFL classrooms, it serves multiple pedagogical and communicative functions, facilitating both language learning and classroom interaction. Numerous scholars have debated its role, with some viewing it as a barrier to language immersion, and hinders the process of learning (Zhu, 2008, Jingxia, 2010), whereas others argue that it can be seen as an effective language teaching tool when used

purposefully and in a balanced way to avoid excessive reliance on L1 (Alrabah et al., 2015; Hazaymeh, 2022; Alnefaie & Gupta, 2024).

Several researchers have categorized the usage of code-switching differently. As an illustration for this, Üstünel (2016) revised the previous authors' works and summarized that CS can be applied (a) to act as a "we-code" for solidarity, (b) to clarify or check for understanding, (c) to contrast variable meanings in L1 and L2 and to anticipate likely sources of confusion for learners; to annotate, explain and exemplify (L2) terms and academic content; students can switch to L1 to ask for help from teacher or peers and respond to teacher questions (Guthrie, 1984; Ndayipfukamiye, 2001; Cameron, 2001; as cited in Üstünel, 2016). Later on in the book she examines the first-hand data in the context of Turkish students categorizing the functions of code-switching into three main areas, code-switching for curriculum access, classroom management, and interpersonal relations. CS facilitates curriculum access by helping students understand the subject matter, scaffolding knowledge, encouraging participation, clarifying meaning through translation, and checking comprehension. In terms of classroom management, it plays a pivotal role in signaling topic or task shifts, and getting students' attention. In addition, CS serves interpersonal functions by building group solidarity and rapport.

Similarly, Geregiher and Amaha (2024) aligned with Üstünel's (2016) categorization, emphasizing the university first, second, and third-year-students use their mother tongue (Amharic) primarily for interpersonal relations, classroom management, and curriculum access. Notably, they highlight curriculum access as the most dominant function, a perspective that closely aligns with Blackman (2014), who also identified curriculum access as the primary role of code-switching in educational settings.

Yletyinen (2004) examined the use of CS in EFL classrooms in Finland and listed fifteen functions, six of which were solely initiated by teachers; and other two shared by both teachers and students. These included explanation, requesting help, transition between activities, and clearing misunderstandings. Additionally, teachers used CS to check students' understanding and facilitate grammar translations and explanations. By reviewing prior research by Canagarajah (1995) and Merritt et al. (1992), Yletyinen pinpointed that the role of CS in EFL classrooms may vary from its functions in ESL settings.

Likewise, Nurhamidah et al. (2018) explored CS in Indonesian EFL classrooms by analyzing literature and interviewing teachers. Their findings indicated that CS served multiple utilizations, such as providing translation when students struggled to express ideas in the target language (English), checking comprehension, giving directions, and managing the classroom. Teachers also use CS to provide feedback, explain differences between L1 and L2, and discuss assignments. An important discovery was that teachers may switch languages when content delivery is prioritized over the development of language-applying skills. Their literature analysis and findings were consistent, reinforcing the practical role of CS, and supporting its usage in EFL teaching,

Switching to L1 can be beneficial for students when communicating with both teachers and peers, to clarify what is being talked about to avoid possible miscommunication and confusion; especially if the topic is difficult to comprehend (Moore, 2002). Moreover, it was found students' mother tongue is more likely to assist them when a group task is assigned, as discussing in L1 is easier for them and less time-consuming. Prior linguistic knowledge in the mother tongue may serve as a scaffolding tool in the foreign language learning process. (Nurhamidah et al., 2018).

Novianti & Said (2021) conducted research in two schools in Indonesian schools and listed several functions of code-switching in the classroom interaction between teacher and pupils observing the classrooms, they are: a) Reiteration b) Message Qualification c) Personalization d) Referential e) Expressive f) Poetic Based. The most frequently occurring function was message qualification (50%), where teachers switched codes to clarify lesson content. Reiteration (20%) was the second most common, as teachers repeated or translated information to enhance comprehension. Personalization, referential, and poetic functions occurred less frequently, each accounting for approximately 10% of instances. The results of aforementioned study are on the same page with Nur ' Ain (2018) and Mujiono's (2013) conclusions. Specifically, expressive, poetic and referential functions were discovered in this study, which align with Nur ' Ain's classification. Additionally, study findings corroborate Mujino's (2013) claim that teachers employ code-switching for a number of reasons, including clarification, humor, and emphasis through repetition, all of which were observed in this study..

## **2.6. The Impact of Code-Switching on Target Language Learning in EFL**

**Classroom.** The pedagogical role of code-switching, especially in EFL classrooms remains a subject of ongoing scholarly debate. A dichotomy between scholars who argue that code-switching hinders second language acquisition by reducing exposure to the target language (Chaudron, 1988; Halliwell & Jones, 1991), and proponents who advocate its strategic value as a scaffolding tool, in particular in multilingual settings (Cook, 2000; Stern, 1992). This chapter is aiming to analyze empirical research on the effects of CS on language learning and competence, with specific attention to its influence on grammar competence.

**2.6.1 Positive Effects of Code-Switching on Language Learning.** One of the most widely documented benefits of code-switching is its ability to enhance comprehension and classroom engagement. Younas et. al (2020), Mushtaq and Rabbani (2020) pinpointed that code-switching creates a welcoming and conducive environment to active learning, also fosters student participation and easing communication barriers, especially in multicultural contexts. Further evidence by Du (2009) referencing Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) highlights that language anxiety can significantly hinder second language acquisition. Allowing L1 in the EFL classroom can thus serve as a mechanism to boost students' willingness to communicate (Sato, 2023). Moreover, Olivera (2020) found that in Filipino-English bilingual classrooms, students reported feeling more confident and less anxious when teachers alternated between languages, as it allowed them to express ideas in their first language (L1) before transitioning to English.

Beyond emotional aspects, it was observed that code-switching was crucial in multilingual settings where teachers and students came from different linguistic backgrounds (Markhamah & Kardena, 2023). Idana (2021), in her study during the COVID-19 pandemic, concluded that code-switching helped students to understand in online EFL classes.

Islam (2014) also supported the view that code-switching acts as a cognitive bridge between L1 and L2, facilitating the processing of complex information. This argument is strengthened by Stern (1992) and Cook (2000), who advocated that strategic L1 use in teaching can clarify difficult concepts that might remain opaque if explained solely in the L2. Ahmad and Jusoff (2009) observed that 71.6% of Malaysian EFL learners demonstrated improved understanding of complex concepts when instructors used code-switching to clarify instructions.

These findings are reinforced by Hazaymeh's (2022) survey, in which a majority of teachers agreed that code-switching not only promoted bilingualism (69.57%) but also helped

dispel ambiguities in lesson content (75.22%). Alzahrani (2023), in addition to these discoveries, emphasized that CS practices are able to enhance student comprehension and engagement by helping to translate idioms, explaining grammatical structures and creating a more inclusive atmosphere.

CS has been viewed to facilitate vocabulary acquisition coupled with aiding comprehension. It was demonstrated in Tian and Macaro's (2012) and Lee and Macaro's (2013) works, that Chinese and Korean EFL learners performed markedly better in lexical retention tests when teachers used CS to present unknown concepts and terms. These results were supported by research Namaziandost et.al (2019) conducted, where Iranian students scored higher in post-test when code-switching was used to translate difficult vocabulary.

CS also plays a crucial role in lowering speaking anxiety besides cognitive advantages, especially among low-proficiency learners who relied on their L1. Maleki and Varzandeh (2016) further noted that code-switching increased fluency by alleviating communication apprehension, allowing students to participate more actively in class discussions. Han and Filippi (2022) found that bilinguals who code-switched on regular basis exhibited better cognitive control, mostly if the tasks require attention-switching and inhibition of irrelevant information. This reveal is evidence that code-switching has also been associated with improved mental flexibility.

Cummins (2007) and Levine (2003, 2011) similarly posited that judicious use of L1 can scaffold higher levels of cognitive and linguistic development in L2 learning context.

Regarding communicative strategy, Sato (2023) shared that when learners were allowed to use their L1 for clarification or cultural expression, their willingness to communicate in English boosted.

Altogether aforementioned studies came to the conclusion that CS can be a strategic

tool, not merely for cognitive development but also for facilitating meaningful communication in target language.

**2.6.2. The Impact of Code-Switching on Grammar Learning.** Usage of L1 assists in grasping structural differences between students' native and target languages more efficiently than relying merely on L2 explanation, (Cole, 1998). One of the pioneer methods of language teaching, such as the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) is deeply rooted in the practice of code-switching. Gao and Hoa (2004), Stern (1991) described these methods as utilizing L1 to clarify L2 grammatical structures and to emphasize linguistic contrasts, respectively. The practical value of code-switching has been seen in concrete classroom examples, for instance explaining the English copula «am» or adjective-noun order differences between Arabic and English. These teaching strategies are further supported by empirical research: Chang (2011) observed that college students' grammar retention improved when L1 explanations were integrated, in contrast to the Communicative Approach, which emphasizes solely L2 use. Accordingly, Hidayati (2012) found that code-switching enhanced student engagement and grammatical understanding, especially when teachers used to clarify complex rules. More recently, Kani (2024) explored that teaching past tense through inter-sentential code-switching between phrases in L1 and L2 was more successful than intra-sentential switching because it created a more pronounced contrast between two languages. This viewpoint was reinforced by Ahmad and Jusoff (2009), who pointed out that students frequently preferred using L1 to explain intricate grammar rules, which improved their understanding and engagement.

**2.6.3. Negative or Mixed Opinion on the Effects of Code-Switching.** Notwithstanding its benefits, code-switching is still subject to criticism. A recurring concern is that over-reliance on L1 may result in L2 practice, as noted by Sakaria and Priyana (2018), who discovered that

certain students become dependent on code-switching instead of interacting with the target language. Furthermore, institutional policies often label code-switching as a «taboo» practice (Mushtaq & Rabbani, 2016), creating tension between its pedagogical value and perceived validity. The advantages of code-switching seem to differ among language skills: although it significantly enhances vocabulary and reading comprehension, its impact on listening and writing is less evident (Alzahrani, 2023).

On the other hand, some studies question the efficacy of CS in grammar instruction. Alseweed (2012) and Almansour (2016) observed no significant improvement in the grammar scores of Saudi university students when instructors utilized CS, suggesting that excessive reliance on L1 may hinder internationalization of the second language. Viakinnou-Brinson et al. (2012) contend that target language only instruction resulted in better long-term grammar retention among French learners, though they recognized that code-switching could reduce immediate anxiety. These contrasting viewpoints and findings indicate that the effectiveness of CS in grammar instruction is likely to be contingent upon contextual variables, including learners' proficiency levels and the complexity of the grammatical structures being taught.

## CHAPTER 3

### Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

To have a detailed reflection of the effects of teachers' code-switching on students' English grammar comprehension, quantitative research design was employed. Quantitative approach allowed to obtain more insights on this research scope through quasi-experiment and broad perspectives through the survey (Oranga & Matere, 2023).

#### 3.2 Participants

The participants of the study were divided into two groups:

1. EFL teachers - 107 English teachers from different regions of Kazakhstan, with varying teaching experience, participated in the online questionnaire. They were selected randomly, with the only criteria being that they teach at secondary school and work with Kazakh students.
2. School Students - A total of 22 tenth-grade students from two classes (10A,10 V) at a boarding school in Almaty engaged in the quasi-experiment. They were selected through convenience sampling, which aligns with the principles of quasi-experimental sampling method (Creswell, 2009). Students had similar language proficiency levels with minimal variation.

#### 3.3 Data Collection Tools & Analysis Procedure

The data was collected via two key components:

1. Questionnaire for EFL teachers that consisted of 15 diverse questions: multiple-choice, open-ended, Likert scale questions, along with two questions about teaching background. It was designed to explore teachers' views and experiences with code-switching. The survey was held online via Google forms due to its simplicity and accessibility for participants (Prabawati et al, 2021). The questionnaire data was analyzed mostly manually with the assistance of Excel and ChapGPT.

2. Quasi-experiment was conducted with two 10h-grade classes, pre-test administered to both groups to assess initial grammar knowledge on topics such as relative clauses; determiners - pronouns - quantifiers; wishes; pre-determiners; determiners/quantifiers. To save time, the pre-test included questions on all five topics at the outset rather than before each grammar lesson. The control group received instruction incorporating code- switching (which was an ordinary teaching approach for them), while the treatment group received English-only instruction. The post-tests including grammar understanding questions on each topic separately were administered in the end (Use of English) to measure changes in grammar comprehension. The test questions are available in the Appendix. The pre- and post-test results were analyzed to determine the effectiveness of code-switching using t-test. The course lasted for 8 weeks, with a total of 8 academic hours of instruction.

### **3.4 Ethical Considerations**

This study followed the ethical guidelines as outlined by the Research Ethics Committee of SDU University. Data collection began right after official approval was obtained. All participants were provided with information including the purpose of the study, procedures, and their rights, including the right to refuse participation at any time with no penalties and negative consequences. Students received information in person, while parental consent was collected electronically via Google Forms, as students study at boarding school and their parents live in different cities. The consent form template was provided by SDU University and later it was translated into Kazakh and modified by the author. By signing the form, participants and their caretakers agree that their rights will be upheld throughout the research process. The form includes components such as the identification of the researcher and institution, sample selection criteria, purpose of the study, acknowledge of potential benefits and risks to participants, assurance of participant confidentiality, and contact information (Creswell, 2009). Parents have got acquainted with the terms of participation and confirmed consent

by clicking the "I have read the terms and agree" button. Data confidentiality was ensured - no personal identifiers (names, emails) were collected, and test results were securely stored and accessible only to the researcher and research advisor. Upon research completion, raw data will be deleted following ethical guidelines.

### **3.5 Validity and Reliability**

In this research, a grammar test was used as both pre-test and post-test to measure students' grammar comprehension before and after implementation of code-switching. The test was piloted with a small group of students (not part of the main study sample) to check clarity, timing and consistency of item responses. Based on the pilot results, minor results were made to improve the test's reliability (Cohen et al, 2007).

Content validity was ensured by designing the test based on the grammar topics taught in the curriculum, aligned with the learning objectives for the students' level. Having teachers or subject matter experts review the test and determine if it is a sufficient sample of the content and objectives to be tested is fundamental method for content validity assessment (Ary et al., 2009). Therefore, the test items were also reviewed by two experienced EFL teachers to confirm that they appropriately covered key grammar areas.

Construct validity was considered by ensuring that the test truly measured grammar understanding, rather than vocabulary knowledge or reading comprehension. Instructions and test format were kept simple to avoid confusion and focus on grammar structures.

## CHAPTER 4

### Results

This section presents the quantitative findings related to the professional background of participants, their practices regarding code-switching, and their perceptions of using the native language (Kazakh/Russian) in English language instruction. The data were collected from a sample of 107 English teachers through a combination of closed-ended and open-ended survey items and the quasi-experimental study conducted with two tenth-grade groups (Class 10A and 10V) at a boarding school in Almaty. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, are used to summarize the closed-ended responses, while thematic analysis is applied to data to identify recurring patterns and viewpoints.

#### *Survey results*

The following tables provide detailed insights into the participants' academic qualifications, teaching experience, language use in the classroom, awareness of code-switching practices, perceived effectiveness of L1 use in grammar instruction, and their perspectives on students' dependency on their native language when learning English. A separate thematic analysis of open-ended responses further enriches the interpretation of the survey results.

The participants' academic qualifications showed that the majority (66.4%) held a Bachelor's degree in English, followed by 19.6% with a Master's degree in Education. A small proportion held degrees in unrelated fields (2.8% Master's and 9.3% Bachelor's) or had completed a pedagogical retraining program (1.9%). Participants had an average of 6.67 years of teaching experience ( $SD = 5.95$ ). Regarding professional categories, most respondents were regular teachers (49.5%), while others were teacher-moderators (29.9%), teacher-experts (13.1%), teacher-interns (3.7%), teacher-researchers (2.8%), or master teachers (0.9%).

**Table 2***Professional Background of the Sample*

Sample characteristics	n	%	M	SD
<b>Academic Degree</b>				
Master in Education	21	19.6		
Bachelor in English	71	66.4		
Master (but not in Education)	3	2.8		
Bachelor (but not in Education)	10	9.3		
Pedagogical Retraining Program	2	1.9		
Teaching experience in years			6.67	5.95
<b>Teaching category</b>				
teacher-intern	4	3.7		
teacher	53	49.5		
teacher-moderator	32	29.9		
teacher-researcher	3	2.8		
teacher-expert	14	13.1		
master teacher	1	0.9		

*Note.* N=107

Findings showed that most participants used Kazakh or Russian either "sometimes" (42%) or "always" (28%) during English instruction. A smaller percentage reported using L1 "occasionally" (22.5%), while very few used it "very rarely" (7.5%). Notably, no participants indicated that they never used L1 in class.

**Table 3***Frequency of Kazakh/Russian Language Use in English Classes*

<b>Frequency of Use</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Always	30	28
Sometimes	45	42
Occasionally	24	22.5
Very rarely	8	7.5
Never	0	0

*Note.* N=107

When asked about their awareness of code-switching, responses were nearly evenly split: 46.7% consciously switched to Kazakh or Russian during lessons, whereas 53.3% reported doing so automatically out of habit. Regarding the effectiveness of switching to L1 for explaining grammar, 72% believed it was effective, while 28% did not find it beneficial.

**Table 4**

*Participants' Awareness of Code-Switching and Its Perceived Effectiveness*

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Are you conscious when you switch to Kazakh/Russian in the EFL class?	<u>Yes, I do consciously</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>46.7</u>
	I do it automatically as code-switching is habitual	57	53.3
Do you think it is effective to switch to L1 while explaining a grammar topic?	<u>Yes</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>72.0</u>
	No	30	28.0

*Note.* N = 107.

Thematic analysis revealed clear divisions between groups. Among those opposing L1 use, major themes included promoting English-only instruction for immersion and habit development (37.5%), the need to consider students' language proficiency (16.1%), and a belief

that grammar should primarily be taught in English (17.9%). Among those supporting L1 use, common themes were enhanced student comprehension (18.6%), the importance of comparing English with the mother tongue (18.7%), perceived overall effectiveness (18.7%), and easier explanation of difficult grammar concepts.

**Table 5**

*Thematic Analysis of Open-Ended Responses about the Use of L1 in Grammar Explanation*

<b>Group</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Example Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
No group	Comfortable teaching in English only	It is comfortable for me to conduct the lessons only in English	3	5.4
	English-only instruction to support immersion	The more students hear English, the more familiar it becomes Student needs to be familiar with the context Students should think in English Students should adapt to English	21	37.5
	Examples are enough to explain grammar	Grammar needs to be explained through examples	5	8.9
	Huge gap between Kazakh and English grammar	Kazakh and English have different constructions	4	7.1
	Level of student must be considered	It depends on students' level of proficiency	9	16.1
	English-only policy	Grammar should be taught in English only	10	17.9
	Lacks efficacy	Explaining everything by translating is not the best way	4	7.1
	Yes group	Better comprehension	Students understand better	11
Importance of comparison with mother tongue		It is important to explain through comparison with the mother tongue I use students' L1 when I compare English grammar with native language grammar	11	18.7
Effective strategy		It is an effective way	11	18.7

	Students understand quickly in native language		
Easier to explain	Easier to explain	6	10.2
Use of native language to scaffold initial comprehension	The child must first understand the rules in his own language, and then in target language	3	5.1
Grammar is similar between English and Kazakh	The pronunciation of some letters and some grammatical topics and words are similar	4	6.8
Difficulty of grammar topic	Some grammar can be difficult	5	8.5
L1 support for low-level students	The students' level is not high enough to understand me in English	8	13.6

Almost half (45.8%) of the teachers believed that code-switching improved students' understanding of grammar. Meanwhile, 46.7% thought it helped only sometimes, and a small proportion (4.7%) perceived no impact. A few respondents (2.8%) reported uncertainty.

**Table 6**

*Perceptions of Code-Switching's Role in Grammar Comprehension*

<b>Response Option</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes, it enhances understanding	49	45.8%
No, it has no effect	5	4.7%
Sometimes it helps, but not always	50	46.7%
I'm not sure	3	2.8%

*Note.*  $N = 107$ .

Regarding the contextual application of grammar after code-switching, 41.1% of participants observed that students applied grammar rules more effectively. However, 13.1% believed that code-switching mainly benefited lower-level students, and another 13.1% felt it was more effective only for higher-level students. A minority (12.1%) still reported frequent mistakes despite code-switching.

**Table 7***Teachers' Perceptions of Code-Switching and Students' Ability to Use Grammar in Context*

<b>Response Option</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes, they use the rules more effectively	44	41.1%
No, they still make mistakes with those rules	13	12.1%
Only helpful for lower-level students; less effective for stronger students	14	13.1%
Only effective for higher-level students; beginners tend to rely too much on L1	14	13.1%
Not sure	14	13.1%

*Note.* N = 107.

When asked about students' reliance on L1, 29.9% of teachers agreed that students often relied unnecessarily on Kazakh/Russian, while 29.0% believed that students actively tried to use English. Others noted reliance on L1 only for complex grammatical topics (20.6%) or when students lacked confidence or had low proficiency (15.9%). Only 4.7% of participants indicated they were uncertain.

**Table 8***Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Overdependence on Kazakh/Russian When Learning English**Grammar*

<b>Response Option</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes, they often rely on Kazakh/Russian even when not necessary	32	29.9%
No, they try to use English as much as possible	31	29.0%
They only rely on L1 for complex grammar concepts	22	20.6%
When their level of English is low or they lack confidence	17	15.9%
Not sure	5	4.7%

*Note.* N = 107.

### *Quasi-experiment results*

The purpose was to investigate the effect of teachers' code-switching on students' grammar comprehension in EFL classrooms. Class 10A received instruction that included code-switching between English and Kazakh, while Class 10V was taught using English only. Both groups completed the same pre-test before the intervention and post-tests after each grammar lesson. Total score for the test was 35.

The descriptive statistics show improvements in both groups after the intervention. The code-switching group (10A) had a mean pre-test score of 23.9 with a standard deviation (SD) of 8.44, which increased to a mean post-test score of 30.5 (SD = 4.90). In comparison, the English-only group (10V) started with a higher pre-test mean of 26.58 (SD = 4.68), and improved to 31.42 (SD = 2.97) in the post-test (Table 9).

**Table 9**

*Descriptive Statistics of Pre- and Post-Test Scores*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Tests</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Control Group: 10A (Code-switching)	Pre-test	23.9	8.44
	Post-test	30.5	4.9
Treatment Group: 10V (English-only)	Pre-test	26.58	4.68
	Post-test	31.42	2.97

The standard deviation in both groups decreased from pre- to post-test, particularly in the code-switching group, indicating more consistent performance after the intervention. This suggests that the use of code-switching may not only enhance grammar comprehension but also reduce performance variability within the group.

To determine whether the improvement in grammar scores was statistically significant, a paired samples t-test was conducted for each group. In the code-switching group, the difference between pre-test and post-test scores was statistically significant ( $t(9) = 2.68, p = 0.025$ ). Similarly, in the English-only group, a significant difference was also observed ( $t(11) = 2.87, p = 0.015$ ). These findings indicate that both teaching approaches led to improved grammar understanding.

**Table 10**

*Paired Samples T-Test Results*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>p-value</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Control Group: 10A (Code-switching)	2.68	0.025	Significant ( $p < .05$ )
Treatment Group: 10V (English-only)	2.87	0.015	Significant ( $p < .05$ )

While both groups showed statistically significant gains, the code-switching group achieved a slightly higher average gain of 6.6 points, compared to 4.84 points in the English-only group. This difference suggests that incorporating learners' native language during grammar instruction may have provided scaffolding that enhanced students' comprehension and engagement.

## CHAPTER 5

### Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the pedagogical role of teacher-led code-switching in enhancing grammar comprehension among Kazakhstani secondary school students learning English as a foreign language. Through both teacher surveys and a quasi-experimental design, the study examined the functional uses of code-switching and its measurable impact on learners' grammar acquisition. The findings confirm that code-switching can be a valuable instructional strategy when applied purposefully in EFL settings.

#### 5.1 Interpretation of Key Findings

The results of the quasi-experiment indicate that both the code-switching group (10A) and the English-only group (10V) improved their grammar scores over time. However, the code-switching group showed a slightly greater average gain (6.6 points vs. 4.84) and a noticeable decrease in standard deviation, suggesting more consistent student performance post-intervention. These results support the notion that code-switching may enhance comprehension while reducing learner disparities, particularly in classes where students share the same L1.

These findings are consistent with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which posits that learning occurs most effectively when learners are scaffolded within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In this study, code-switching provided such scaffolding by allowing students to access complex grammatical content through their more familiar native language. As students internalized these structures, they required less L1 support, as reflected by the convergence of post-test scores.

In addition, the results align with Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model, which suggests that speakers make rational language choices based on social and communicative goals. Teachers in the control group likely chose to switch codes strategically—often when students showed signs of confusion or disengagement—using the L1 to restore classroom clarity and maintain lesson flow.

The teacher survey further supports these interpretations. Over 70% of participants agreed that code-switching is effective for explaining grammar, and many reported using L1 either consciously or habitually. Teachers emphasized that L1 explanations were particularly helpful for low-proficiency students and complex grammar topics. These perspectives reinforce earlier research by Yletyinen (2004), Nurhamidah et al. (2018), and Hazaymeh (2022), who emphasized the pedagogical benefits of code-switching for curriculum access and classroom management.

## **5.2 Comparing with Prior Studies**

The findings of this study echo those of Ahmad & Jusoff (2009) and Chang (2011), who reported improved grammar retention when L1 was used for clarification. Similar to Kashi (2024), who found inter-sentential code-switching to be more effective for tense instruction, this study indicates that allowing teachers to switch into L1 at key moments can enhance rule explanation and learner comprehension.

Conversely, the study does not fully align with research by Alseweed (2012) or Viakinnou-Brinson et al. (2012), who reported no significant benefits of code-switching for grammar learning. This discrepancy may be due to contextual differences. In Kazakhstan, where

English is a third language and most students share the same mother tongue (Kazakh), the controlled and purposeful use of L1 may function more effectively than in more linguistically diverse classrooms.

### **5.3 Implications for EFL Teaching in Kazakhstan**

The findings underscore the importance of contextualizing language pedagogy. In multilingual societies like Kazakhstan, exclusive English instruction may not always be the most effective method, especially when learners lack confidence or foundational skills. Strategic use of code-switching can support comprehension without compromising target language exposure, especially during complex grammar lessons.

Furthermore, the study highlights the need for teacher training programs to include awareness of L1 integration strategies, helping educators distinguish between productive code-switching and excessive reliance on translation.

## CHAPTER 5

### Conclusion

This study investigated the use of teacher-led code-switching as a pedagogical strategy to support English grammar comprehension in Kazakhstani EFL classrooms. Drawing on data from a quasi-experiment with tenth-grade students and survey responses from over 100 English teachers, the research sought to determine whether incorporating students' first language (Kazakh or Russian) during grammar instruction enhances or hinders learning outcomes.

The quasi-experimental findings revealed that both groups—those taught through English-only instruction and those taught with code-switching—showed statistically significant improvements in grammar test performance. However, the code-switching group demonstrated slightly higher gains and a reduction in score variability, suggesting that the use of L1 helped standardize understanding across students. Survey responses further confirmed that the majority of teachers view code-switching positively, particularly for explaining difficult grammar concepts and supporting lower-level learners.

These findings support theoretical perspectives from Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model, both of which emphasize the social and cognitive benefits of strategically adjusting linguistic input to learners' needs. In the context of Kazakhstani secondary education, where students often have limited exposure to English outside the classroom, code-switching may offer an accessible scaffold for developing foundational grammar competence.

While this study does not discount the value of immersive, English-only instruction, it suggests that a flexible, context-sensitive approach—one that permits judicious use of the L1—may be more effective for achieving grammar comprehension, particularly in beginner and intermediate EFL settings.

Thus, the study concludes that while code-switching can be a valuable instructional strategy to scaffold learning, especially for beginners, its use should be strategic and adapted to students' proficiency levels. Effective English teaching in multilingual contexts like Kazakhstan requires a balanced approach that leverages the benefits of L1 while promoting gradual transition toward greater use of the target language.

### **5.1 Limitations and Further Recommendations**

The study offers valuable findings, especially in the Kazakhstani context; however, it is not without limitations. The sample consisted solely of Kazakh secondary school teachers, and results cannot be generalized to other levels of different regional contexts. In addition, data collection relied only on self-reported practices, which may not fully capture teachers' actual classroom behavior. Even though attempts to distinguish borders among terms have been made, it remains blurry.

Future studies could benefit from triangulating data through classroom observations or students' perspectives to better capture the dynamics of code-switching. Also, class observations can be done to find out the characteristics and patterns of classroom code-switching and other related terms, and defining their distinctions in the classroom practice could also deepen the subject.

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## Appendix A

### Electronic Parental Consent in Kazakh

Қайырлы күн, құрметті ата-ана!

Сіздің балаңыздан ағылшын тілі сабағында қазақ тілін қолданып оқыту оқушылардың ағылшын грамматикасын түсінуіне қалай әсер ететін зерттеуге қатысуын сұраймыз. Зерттеуге қатысу әр оқушының өз еркінде.

Зерттеудің мақсаты – мұғалім сабақта ағылшын тілін тек ағылшын немесе қазақ тілінің көмегімен оқытқанда, оқушылардың грамматиканы қаншалықты меңгеретінін немесе кедергі жасайтынын анықтау. Бұл зерттеуге 20-ға жуық оқушы қатысады. Зерттеу нәтижелері SDU University -да қорғалатын магистрлік диссертацияда қолданылады.

Балаңыздың осы зерттеуге қатысуына рұқсат берсеңіз, диагностикалық тесттер тапсырып, ағылшын тілі грамматикасын түсіну туралы сұхбат беретін болады. Балаларға психологиялық, физикалық қауіп болмайды. Зерттеу үйреншікті табиғи контекстте өтетін болады.

Сіз бұл зерттеуден тікелей пайда көре алмайсыз, дегенмен балаңыздың зерттеу қатысушысы болуы мектепте ағылшын тілін үйретудегі олқылықтарды толтыруға және оның зерттеу саласын кеңейтуге көмектеседі деп үміттенемін.

Құрметпен, Іңкәр Молдағалиева

Абай атындағы РММИ ағылшын тілі мұғалімі.

Балаңыздың аты жөні

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Таныстым және келісімді беремін

✓

## Appendix B

### Teacher's Questionnaire

(an already existing questionnaire was adopted (Jingxia, 2010). Cohen et al. (2011))

#### Description

Ағылшын тілі сабағы барысында мұғалімдер кейде бір тілден екінші тілге ауысуы мүмкін (мысалы, ағылшын тілінен қазақ тіліне). Бұл құбылыс код ауыстыру (code-switching) деп аталады, яғни бір сөйлемде немесе текстте екі немесе одан да көп тілді ауысып қолдану үрдісі.

For example:

🗨️ Мұғалім: "Okay, let's start. What is the past tense of 'go'?"

🗨️ Оқушы: "Білмеймін... Бұл irregular verb қой, иә?"

🗨️ Мұғалім: "Иә, дұрыс! 'Go' - бұл дұрыс емес етістік, сондықтан past tense – 'went'."

#### I. *Personal Background*

##### 1. Біліміңіз

- Педагогика ғылымдарының магистрі
- Педагогика ғылымдарының бакалавры
- Бакалавр (педагогика емес)
- Магистр (педагогика емес)
- Педагогикалық қайта даярлау курсының сертификаты

##### 2. Еңбек өтіліңіз неше жыл (ай)?

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##### 3. Біліктілік санатыңыз

- педагог-шебер

- педагог-зерттеуші
- педагог-сарапшы
- педагог-модератор
- педагог
- Педагог-стажер

## *II. Questions*

4. Ағылшын сабағында қазақ (орыс) тілін қаншалықты жиі қолданасыз?

- Өте жиі
- Анда-санда
- Сирек
- Өте сирек
- Ешқашан

5. Сабақта қазақ тіліне (орысшаға) саналы түрде біліп ауысасыз ба ?

- Иә, мен саналы түрде істеймін
- Мен үшін тіл ауыстыру әдеттегі нәрсе болғандықтан мен оны автоматты түрде жасаймын

6. Оқушыларға грамматиканы түсіндіргенде, қазақшаны қолдану грамматиканы

түсіндірудің тиімді жолы деп ойлайсыз ба?

- Иә
- Жоқ

7. Иә деп жауап берсеңіз, неге олай ойлайсыз?

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8. Жоқ деп жауап берсеңіз, неге олай ойлайсыз ?

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9. Мұғалімнің ағылшыннан қазақ (орыс) тіліне ауысуы оқу процесіне қалай әсер етеді?

- өте пайдалы
- пайдалы
- ықпалы жоқ
- зиянды

10. Сабақта мұғалімнің қазақ/орыс тіліне ауысуына қандай факторлар әсер етуі мүмкін?

(Бірнешеуін таңдай аласыз)

- студенттердің ағылшын тілін жеткіліксіз меңгеруі
- мұғалімдердің ағылшын тілін жеткіліксіз меңгеруі
- қазақ және ағылшын тілдерінің лингвистикалық жүйелері арасындағы қашықтық
- оқытылатын тақырыптың күрделілігі
- мәдени нақты ұғымдарды түсіндіру қажеттілігі
- сыныпты басқару немесе тәртіпке шақыру
- дерексіз (abstract) нәрселерді түсіндіру қажеттілігі
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Сабақта мұғалімнің қазақ/орыс тіліне ауысу қандай қызмет атқарады?

(Бірнешеуін таңдай аласыз)

- грамматиканы түсіндіру
- қарым-қатынас құру
- алаңдаушылықты (anxiety) басу
- әзілдеу
- студенттерге эмпатия көрсету

- таныс емес сөздерді аудару
- оқушыларға түсіну қиын болған кезде көмектесу
- шулы сынып болса, сыныпты басқару/тыныштандыру үшін
- түсінгендігін тексеру
- қайталау (ағылшынша нәрсені түсіндірдіңіз, кейін қазақша қайталайсыз)
- қатаң ескерту жасау
- металлингвистикалық сананы дамыту (екі тілдің құрылымындағы арасындағы ұқсастықтар мен айырмашылықтар)
- нұсқау беру (тапсырмаларды орындау жолын түсіндіру)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Қазақ (орыс) тіліне код ауыстыру оқушылардың ағылшын грамматикасы ережелерін жақсы түсінуіне көмектеседі деп ойлайсыз ба?

- Иә, бұл түсінуді арттырады
- Жоқ, әсері жоқ
- Кейде көмектеседі, бірақ әрқашан емес
- Нақты жауабым жоқ

13. Грамматика үйретуде код ауыстыруды пайдалану, грамматиканы тек ағылшын тілінде оқытқанға қарағанда оқушылар үшін қаншалықты тиімді деп ойлайсыз?

- Толықтай келісемін
- Келісемін
- Бейтарап
- Келіспеймін
- Мүлдем келіспеймін

14. Грамматиканы түсіндіру үшін қазақ (орыс) тілін пайдалансаңыз, студенттер жақсырақ түсінеді ме?

- Толықтай келісемін
- Келісемін
- Бейтарап
- Келіспеймін
- Мүлдем келіспеймін

15. Тәжірибеңіз бойынша жауап берсеңіз: code-switching қолданып үйретілген грамматикалық тақырып студенттерге ол ережелерді контекстте қатесіз қолдануға көмектеседі ме?

- Иә, олар ережелерді тиімдірек қолданады
- Жоқ, олар әлі де сол қателіктерді жасайды
- Тек төменгі деңгейдегі студенттер үшін; озық оқушылар азырақ пайда көреді.
- Тек жоғары деңгейлі студенттер үшін; Жаңадан бастаушылар ана тіліне көбірек сүйенеді
- Сенімді емеспін.

16. Оқушылар ағылшын тілі грамматикасын үйренгенде қазақ тіліне (орысшаға) қажетсіз тым көп сүйенеді ме?

- Иә, олар көбінесе ағылшын тілін қолдана алатын болса да, оған тәуелді.
- Жоқ, олар мүмкіндігінше ағылшын тілін қолдануға тырысады.
- Күрделі грамматикалық ұғымдармен бетпе-бет келгенде ғана.
- Тіл деңгейлеріне сенімсіз болғанда
- Сенімді емеспін

**Appendix C**  
**English Grammar Test for 10th Grade Unit 6 and 8**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Score** \_\_\_\_ / 40

Part 1: Relative Clauses (10 points)

**A. Fill in the blanks with an appropriate relative pronoun or adverb (who, which, where, when, whose, why). (5 points)**

1. The book, \_\_\_\_\_ was written by J.K. Rowling, became a bestseller.
2. I met a girl \_\_\_\_\_ father is a famous musician.
3. The city \_\_\_\_\_ we spent our holiday was beautiful.
4. That is the reason \_\_\_\_\_ I decided to leave early.
5. 2005 was the year \_\_\_\_\_ they won the championship.

**B. Join the sentences using relative pronouns. (5 points)**

6. She has a friend. He speaks five languages.

→ \_\_\_\_\_

7. I watched a movie last night. It was very scary.

→ \_\_\_\_\_

8. This is the museum. Van Gogh's paintings are displayed here.

→ \_\_\_\_\_

9. My teacher gave me a book. Its cover is blue.

→ \_\_\_\_\_

10. They met in 2010. That was the year they moved to London.

→ \_\_\_\_\_

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Part 2: Determiners (5 points)

**A. Circle the correct determiner and write a sentence using it. (5 points)**

16. (Whole / Every) student in the class participated in the event.
  17. (Either / Both) of my brothers play the guitar.
  18. There were (few / little) seats left in the concert hall.
  19. There was (much / many) interest in the concert.
  20. Has (anyone / no one) seen my concert ticket?
- 

Part 3: Pronouns & Quantifiers (10 points)

**A. Fill in the blanks with an appropriate pronoun or quantifier (nobody, ourselves, everyone, that, those). (5 points)**

21. We really enjoyed \_\_\_\_\_ at the concert last night!
22. \_\_\_\_\_ was interested in the boring lecture.
23. \_\_\_\_\_ who attended the concert loved the band's performance.
24. The dress \_\_\_\_\_ you bought is beautiful!
25. I prefer \_\_\_\_\_ shoes over there.

**B. Choose the correct answer. (5 points)**

26. How (many / much) songs do you know by heart?
27. There was (few / little) applause after the performance.
28. I looked (anywhere / everywhere) but couldn't find my ticket.
29. He has (anyone / no one) to go to the concert with.
30. The artist spent (much / many) years painting this masterpiece.

## Part 4: "I wish" and "If only."

A. Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the verb in brackets. (5 points)

1. I wish I \_\_\_\_\_(not/eat) so much cake. Now I feel sick!
2. If only I \_\_\_\_\_(have) more time to study for my exams.
3. I wish he \_\_\_\_\_(help) me with my homework more often.
4. If only they \_\_\_\_\_(not/move) to another city last year.
5. I wish I \_\_\_\_\_(can) speak Spanish fluently.

B. Rewrite the sentences using "I wish" or "If only." (5 points)

She didn't study hard, so she failed the test.

→ **If only she had studied hard.**

1. I don't have enough money to buy a new phone.

→ \_\_\_\_\_

2. We arrived late at the airport and missed the flight.

→ \_\_\_\_\_

3. I regret not calling my friend on her birthday.

→ \_\_\_\_\_

4. My brother doesn't help with the chores.

→ \_\_\_\_\_

5. She ate too much chocolate and now has a stomachache.

→ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D

### Ethical Approval by SDU University RE



**Research Ethics Committee**

Good day! Your research work was approved by REC. Kind regards,

Wed, Mar 26, 11:08 AM ☆



**Ingkar Moldagaliyeva** <231302011@sdu.edu.kz>

to Research ▾

Thank you so much for the great news!

Wed, Mar 26, 4:03 PM ☆ ↶ ⋮

