

Teachers' In-Class Code-Switching __ A Case Study of Six English-major Classes

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Abstract

This study focused on a case study of 6 English-major teachers at Sichuan University, China and their code-switching (CS hereafter) between the first language (L1) and the target language (TL) over the course of Extensive Reading, where English was the TL and Chinese was the L1 of both learners and teachers. By means of on-the-spot recording, questionnaires, and interviews, the study aimed to acknowledge the amount, functions, and influencing factors of CS use in classes of English-majored college students. And students' perceptions of teachers' in-class CS were examined. The results revealed that the proportionality of teachers' in-class CS varied from 10% to 70% and the L1 was preferred when it came to translation and emotional reactions. Most students agreed with the positive impacts of CS on understanding teaching materials and classroom interaction while there were some students who were uncertain about CS' impact on social distance.

Key words: code-switching, college English-major classes, functions, students' perceptions

1. Introduction

Code-switching (CS hereafter) refers to the alternating of two or more languages or dialects in one conversational episode. In the field of second language learning and teaching, the exclusive use of the target language (TL hereafter) has been the bone of contention. On the one hand, many scholars believe that class should guarantee the maximum input of the TL, for the learners need to encounter the language as much as possible. For them, switching to the first language (L1) undermines the learning process (Chambers, 1991; Macdonald, 1993). Duff & Polio (1990) made investigations on foreign language classroom activities in America and concluded that native language should not be used because its use deprived students of opportunities for learning and practicing the language. Dulay (1982) claimed that using the TL in class might better allow learners to face unpredictable situations in real life. In addition, Macaro (1997) thought that exclusive use of the TL in classroom activities could enhance the learners' instrumental motivation. On the other hand, supporters of in-class CS suggest that CS helps improve communication efficiency, promote the learning process, and benefit the process of concept development (Adendorff, 1993; Cook, 2001; Skinner, 1985). Gass (1988) put quality before quantity and argued that high-quality language input was essential. Teachers' use of L1 in class helped the learners understand the difficult points in the TL and better convert input into output. I would like to have a more detailed review of the researches of CS involved in language teaching and learning as follows.

Many studies have been conducted into the cognitive, social, and emotional functions of CS in the ESL/EFL classroom. In the research by Antón & DiCamilla (1999), for example, Spanish learners of English had undergone close observations. The researchers argued that the L1 "acts as a critical psychological tool that enables learners to construct effective collaborative dialogue in the completion of meaning-based language tasks by performing three important functions: construction of scaffolded help, establishment of intersubjectivity, and use of private speech" (p. 245). DiCamilla & Antón (2012) studied the role of Spanish learners at different language proficiency levels in classroom interactions and clarified the psychological function of L1 use in teaching. Researchers also have examined the effects of L1 use in class on language learning from the perspective of language acquisition. For example, Levine (2003) surveyed 600 foreign language learners and 163 foreign language teachers based on an online anonymous questionnaire and analyzed the relationship between the amount of TL use and the degree of anxiety generated by using TL. The results supported the hypothesis that the amounts of TL use varied in accordance with the communicative contexts. However, the assumption on the positive correlation between TL use and students' anxiety about it was not supported. After studying the role of L1 in task-based classroom activities by interviewing teachers and educators, Carless (2008) called for a balanced and flexible view of mother tongue use.

Tian & Macaro (2012) examined the impact of CS use on the part of teachers on vocabulary comprehension and obtained preliminary evidence indicating that the use of CS was more beneficial for language learning than the sole use

of TL. In the research by Lee & Macaro (2013), both college students and students from primary and middle schools were recruited as the subjects. They examined the influence of L1 (Korean) and TL (English) uses by the teachers on the students' vocabulary acquisition. They achieved results which suggested that both age groups benefited from the use of L1 and that the younger students gained more benefits than the older ones.

In recent years, the research focus has also shifted from the personal discourse to interaction behaviors between teachers and students as well as between different students. For example, Duff & Polio (1990) surveyed the use of L1 in foreign language classes in American universities by means of questionnaires, teacher interviews and other instruments. The results showed that the L1 use varied from 10% to 100%, with an average of 23.1%. In the research by De la Campa & Nassaji (2009), the observation of a 12-week course of Spoken German for second-year students showed that the two German teachers used L1 for 9.3% and 13.2% of the classroom time.

China has become the second-largest economy entity and plays an essential role in world economy development. As a result, there is a fast growing number of trade contacts, cultural communications, and non-governmental exchanges between China and other countries. Undoubtedly, the practices of CS are unavoidable in international language contacts. Research in classroom CS started rather late in China, but this field of study has already attracted many Chinese scholars' attention (such as Cheng, 2015; Li et al., 2008). For example, to investigate the frequency of and the reasons for CS use on the part of teachers in EFL, Chen (2004) implemented interviews with 32 teachers and conducted a questionnaire on undergraduates and received valid responses from 425 respondents. Xie (2011) interviewed three teachers of the first-year English intensive reading course for English-majored students at a university in Shanghai and discussed the amount of L1 use and the function of L1 in English classroom teaching.

Although there seems to be an increasing number of researches on CS use in EFL classroom activities, there are still problems that need to be answered. Firstly, most studies appear to focus on the English teaching for teenager students and for non-English-majored college students. However, much less attention has been paid to that for English-majored college students, who are special in being likely to be deeply involved in learning to use the TL. Secondly, the individual differences among the respondents may cause a significant diversity between the questionnaire results and what is supposed to measure. There is a demand for on-the-spot recordings that can help reveal the real situation. However, there is a serious lack of this kind of research in China. Thirdly, some studies haven't taken students' perception into consideration and are likely to ignore students' attitudes to CS use. The final point is that most researches focus on the frequency and functions of classroom CS, but pay less attention to the interaction between teachers and students. There is a lack of investigations into the impact of CS use on social distance between teachers and students. Recognizing these research gaps, this study propose the following research questions:

1. Do Chinese teachers in English-major classes switch code between Chinese and English?
 - a) If yes, what are the percentages?
 - b) If no, what are the reasons?
2. What are the functions of in-class CS?
3. What are the teachers' motivations of in-class CS?
4. What are the students' perceptions of teachers' in-class CS?

2. Method

2.1 Subjects

The researcher chose 6 classes at Sichuan University for in-class observation and implemented a series of on-the-spot audio recording of class activities. All the classes shared the following characteristics. 1) They were all for the intensive reading course for English-majored students. The teachers were required to teach all the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Thus, the class showed a more comprehensive situation of English-majored students. 2) All the teachers were Chinese native speakers, which means they were non-native speakers of the TL (English). However, all the teachers had received high-quality education and had a high level of language proficiency both in Chinese and English. There were 2 classes for freshmen, 2 for sophomores, and 2 for seniors. The classes were chosen based on the teachers' willingness and time requirements.

In order to better understand what was happening in English-major classes, 6 teachers and 134 students filled out questionnaires.

The teachers, who taught the 6 observed classes, were represented with T1, T2...T6. See Table 2.1 for details of the teachers' background information. The 134 students were the members of the above-mentioned six intensive reading classes.

Table 2.1 Teachers' Information

Teacher	Sex	Teaching years	Degree	Overseas study experience	Title
T1	Female	33	Doctor	1-2 years	Professor
T2	Male	4	Doctor	/	Associate professor
T3	Female	19	Master	>2 years	Lecturer
T4	Female	8	Doctor	>2 years	Lecturer
T5	Female	13	Doctor	/	Lecturer
T6	Female	20	Doctor	>2 years	Lecturer

2.2 Procedures and Data Collection

The study adopted three methods of data collection, including on-the-spot in-class recording, questionnaires, and interviews.

2.2.1 On-the-spot in-class Recording

Through audio-recording, we can repeatedly review the on-the-spot situation of CS in the classrooms, and analyze the functions and motivations of CS use on the part of teachers. For the sake of convenience and recording quality, the author required the monitor to do the recordings for his or her class with the recorder set on one of the front row desks. Two periods for one classroom were recorded, and each period lasted 45 minutes. In total, the study collected 540-minute recordings. The recordings were then supposed to be transcribed so as to examine the class discourse in detail. Nevertheless, only the first session of the 6 classes were actually transcribed for the following two reasons: 1) The time for listening to and transcribing the recordings was limited. 2) The second sessions were occupied by students' presentations, which were distracted from the research purpose.

2.2.2 Questionnaires and Interviews

The purpose of questionnaires was to examine the teachers' motivations and attitudes to CS as well as the students' perception and expectations of in-class CS uses. Two versions of the questionnaires were designed. One was for the teachers, and the other one was for the students. The questionnaires were in Chinese, so that the respondents could well understand the content and quickly make their responses. Besides, in order to protect private information, all the questionnaires were anonymous.

The questionnaire for teachers was composed of 5 parts including 25 items. After a brief introduction of CS and the investigation purpose, the teachers were required to fill out personal information such as sex, age, personality, and overseas study experience. The third part was related to the current situation of in-class CS and its functions. Example items in this part are as follows: How often do you use the L1 (Chinese) in class? Will you switch English to Chinese when assigning tasks? The fourth part aimed to figure out the motivations (e.g., the adaptation to linguistic reality and the adaptation to psychological motivations) of the teachers when they used CS in class. The last part was expected to reveal the teachers' attitudes to CS. For instance, an item in this part is as follows: Do you agree with using L1 in classroom activities for English-major students? The questionnaires were printed and delivered to the nine teachers, and all of the feedback answers were valid.

The 134 students filled out the questionnaire and 129 of them provided valid responses. The questionnaire for students was made up of five parts with 33 items. The questionnaire for the students covered similar themes to those for the teachers. In addition, the purpose of the 8 more items than those for the questionnaire for the teachers was to reveal the students' perceptions. For example, "when would you expect teachers to use L1 in class?" was included in the questionnaire for the students.

Apart from the questionnaires, the author also interviewed the nine teachers. Owing to the Covid-19 outbreaks, some of the interviews were conducted on line. The interviews centered on the factors influencing CS use on the part of teachers and their attitudes to the use of CS.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Frequency of Teachers' In-class CS uses

All the data were analyzed with SPSS 23. Table 3.1 illustrates the frequency and percentage of the teachers' in-class CS uses. The researcher calculated the numbers of English words and Chinese words in each 45-minute on-the-spot recoding. T1 and T2 were for freshmen, T3 and T4 were for sophomores, and T5 and T6 were for senior students. It is clear that all the teachers used L1 in class. The amount of the TL uses in the FL classes had a wide range: from 90.14%, in the highest case, to 28.85%, in the lowest case. By and large, the teachers for the two freshmen classes (48.71% and 71.15%) used a larger amount Chinese words than those for other four classes. The smallest amount L1 uses were observed in the classes of T3 (21.22%) and T4 (9.86%). Unexpectedly, however, the percentages of L1 uses by T5 and T6 were 43.56% and 40.79%, respectively. That is, the teachers for the senior students were more likely to use L1 than those for the sophomores. After interviewing with T5 and T6, the researcher recognizes that the course contents for senior students were heavily involved in literature, philosophy, and history. Thus, they had to switch to L1 at many times in order to provide clear explanations for particular content points in classroom teaching activities.

To sum up, it was hypothesized that (a) CS would be a common phenomenon in the classroom activities, (b) the amounts of L1 use would vary, and (c) the amount of L1 use overall would correlate negatively with the grade. The findings support the first two hypotheses, but failed to support the third one.

Table 3.1 Distribution of Teachers' in-class L1/TL Discourse

	English		Chinese		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
T1	3125	51.29%	2968	48.71%	6093	100
T2	1856	28.85%	4577	71.15%	6433	100
T3	3701	78.78%	997	21.22%	4698	100
T4	3729	90.14%	408	9.86%	4137	100
T5	3890	56.44%	3002	43.56%	6892	100
T6	3918	59.21%	2699	40.79%	6617	100

3.2 Functions of Teachers' In-class CS

3.2.1 Offering translations.

Translating the unknown TL words is one of the most common functions of CS use. This was observable in all the classes. Whenever there were new TL word occurrences, the teachers tended to switch the code from English to Chinese. When asked the reasons of the frequent appearances of CS for translation, T1 said, "Sometimes, it is necessary to offer Chinese translations since all of us are foreign language learners. And I do have the feeling that using L1 can also improve the efficiency of communication between me and my students." It seemed that most CS cases occurred at a language boundary, and typical examples from classroom recordings are listed as follows ("T" is short for "teacher", and "S" is short for Student. Chinese characters are the corresponding translation to the previous English words or sentences).

1. T: *Last class I used several times self-realization. Right, self-realization 自我实现的。*
2. T: *So they actually go to, for example, tribal community and spend like 3 or 5 years just living among tribal people and observe their behaviors. This is called participatory observation, 就是你在你那你观察但不干涉他们的行为. So that's what they do. Observation, field trip and observation.*
3. T: *My parents' home is always as around 29 to 30 °C in winter because their home is very close to heat plant, 那个叫供暖厂, heat plant.*
4. T: *They are exorbitant. 就是过度的昂贵的东西。*
5. T: *That actually is quite adventurous. 非常具有冒险精神。*

All these examples show that the teachers used CS to translate unfamiliar TL words and make those words or phrases clearly.

3.2.2 Retelling and explaining the previous sentences

Most teachers retell the previous sentences in the L1 in order to provide clearer explanations. For one thing, the teachers repeated the TL sentence in Chinese because it was really difficult to understand those sentences (see 6). Though the teacher firstly paraphrased it in English, he explained it in Chinese later. For another thing, the teachers turned to L1 because they were not sure whether their students truly got the point (see 7) and, 8)). There are also some other purposes of retelling. For instance, in 9), the students and teachers were talking about the living expenses per month, and the teacher repeated the example in Chinese to call students' attention. In 10), the students were talking about Mill's elitism, and they were confirmed that he was an elitist. When the teacher responded to her students, she repeated the previous sentence in Chinese to show that she absolutely agreed with the students. (The Chinese sentence is the corresponding translation to the previous English sentences. T: "*The desire to be oneself doesn't mean the desire to fundamentally different from everyone else, but rather to situate individual differences within communal allegiance*", 好,这句话非常有哲理,是什么意思?你想成为自己,并不代表着你要完全和别人不同,你就是把你这种个体的差异性放在这种群体的共同性之中,我们每个人都是这样。

6. T: *I have some colleagues who are natives of this city, so they always insist that no one should be putting on warm under-wears.* 那个长的秋衣秋裤,而且是加绒的那种。
7. T: *And for an individual, you can be an idealist. Have you got the point? For an individual, you can be an idealist, you can be an elitist. But if many other people have always told you that if many others, many other people's interests are vested upon you, then you cannot be an idealist anymore. Understand?* 就是对于思想讨论来说,这个是没有问题的,对于个人来说这个是没有问题的,你愿意追求你自己的什么。但是如果比如 A
她如果成为了一个 *politician*, 许多人的现实的利益集中在她的肩上, 那她就不能像这样说去做, 但作为一个个体, 我的生活, 我的人生我负责。
- 8: *Last semester a student from the automation major told me that for each and every month he spent 6000 yuan.* 上学期有一个自动化专业的同学告诉我, 一个月他花 6000 块钱。
8. T: *Good, your discussion revealed the elitist nature of Mill ideas. Right?* 他绝对是精英主义者, 不用、不用否认。

3.2.3 Shortening the distance between students and teachers

The third function of CS is related to social distance. Sometimes, teachers use CS to relieve students' anxiety, to build solidarity, to show empathy, or to comfort the students. Under this circumstance, students and teachers are more likely to be friends in the discussion of specific topics. In 11) for example, when the teacher asked the students to paraphrase a sentence and there was no response. The teacher used Chinese to encourage the students to be confident, remarking that the standard answers presented might be wrong or inaccurate. As for 12) and 13), the students were really stressed under some kind of social pressure. They were expected to be middle school teachers or clerks. The teacher shared her own opinions in the L1 to ease the students' anxiety and showed empathy since the students were anxious about future choices. These examples of teachers' in-class CS uses indicate a closer and more personal relationship between teachers and students as well as a more relaxed and casual way of conversation (Liu, 2001, p. 141). (Translations are found in the brackets following L1 segments.)

9. T: "*Individual differences within communal allegiance*" *Ok any volunteer? Have a try. Any volunteers?*
SSS: (No response)
T: 我告诉过大家, 这些答案是那些学生写的, 不是很好, 希望大家有更好的。包括我发给大家的 reference
都会很多错误, 绝对会有, 所以你发现的话请你自己更正, 所以你的水平恐怕比他们高一些。[I have told you that these answers were given by students and were not accurate enough. I hope that you have better versions. The references might also have some mistakes. If you find them, please revise the mistakes. I mean you guys might have a higher level of English language proficiency than those people giving answers.]
T: *That's why your parents, would like you to be middle school teachers. This is the prevalent idea, prevalent opinions.*

就如果读了前面的部分，他一直强调的是主流的意见，主流的情感，当时社会流行的。咱们社会流行的东西就是，就是因为大家太焦虑了，然后稳定了这样子。[He always emphasizes the prevalent opinions in the previous part. We are too stressed and anxious and just follow others' ideas. And those ideas gradually become prevalent and dominating ideas in the society.]

10. T: *Only when everyone gives his own peculiarity into full play could the society be full of vitality.* 就社会的活力在这里，它的活力不是大家每个人都去做中学老师。那就是死气沉沉，是吧？每个人按照他的本性去做，他自己最适合做的。你们是我教的第*届*班的。是的，第*届，前面*届我都有这样的感觉，就看着他们每个人最后不能说每个人，因为有些人可能是选了一些并不是他们自己本心想做的，就大多数的人，追随他自己的本心，做他自己觉得最符合他个性，而且我告诉他们是不可替代的。[If everyone becomes a middle school teacher, the society will lose its vitality. Everyone should make choices based on their own peculiarity and do what they want or they are adept at. Most of those graduated students from the Innovation Experiment Class followed their hearts. I believe you would also make the choices that are best for you. I always tell students that everyone is unique.]

3.2.4 Creating Humors

The L1 can also be used when teachers play a trick or tell funny stories, in order to create humor and enliven the atmosphere of the classroom. Compared to the TL, students get the punchlines easily in Chinese. In 14), for example, when the students discussed rational consumptions, the teacher quoted her friend's story to make students relaxed. She said that one of her friends always ran out of money in the beginning of the month and scrounged free meals off her for the rest time during college time. Similarly, in 15), the teacher played a joke in Chinese. (Translations are found in the brackets following L1 segments.)

: 就是我大学时候有一个好朋友，一个男生，他就每个月前 10 天就把一个月的钱花完了，然后剩下 20 天非常饿，然后到去找蹭饭？很可怜。对，但是因为前 10 天他超级大方，所以大家还是会给他蹭。[One of my best college friend run out of his money in the first ten days of the month and asked meals for free in the remaining twenty days. We always helped him because he was generous in the beginning of the month.]

SSS: (Laugh)

11. S: *And the rest to person needs for transportation fee 2% is with transportation.*

T: *To choose a restaurant?*

S: *Nono, to Wangjiang campus*

T: 我以为是 98% 是花在吃饭上，还有 2% 的钱是花在去吃饭的路上 [I thought 98 percent of your money has been spent on eating, and the remaining 2 percent was spent on transportation to and from the restaurant.]

SSS: (Laugh)

3.2.5 Attracting students' attention

If teachers ask questions which meet with no response, they will always use CS. Owing to the silence, for example, the teacher repeated the question in Chinese in order to attract students' attention (see 16) and 17)). Similarly, in 18), after sharing her own experiences about the prices for one dish in college canteens, the teacher switched to Chinese to make sure whether it was right or wrong.

12. *What research methodology would you actually adopt? All right, on covering new ideas. That's the whole purpose of research. Uncovering new ideas. But if you were in anthropologist* 人类学家会怎么样做调查？人类学家？[How do anthropologists make an investigation?] *They actually just do what they call a field visits.*

13. *What's the difference between individualism and what we talk about in Chinese? Good. Now* 哪位来说一下 [Who would like to speak?] *quickly now if you have some idea, you got the essence.*

14. I guess the price for the dish is not increasing much over the years because i've divided in 2004. The dish with meat is five yuan. 现在也是如此吧？[Is it true now?]

3.2.6 Imposing disciplines

Teachers play different roles in the classroom, like planners, informers as well as monitors, and importantly, they are managers, who “organize the learning space, make sure everything in the classroom is running smoothly and sets up rules and routines for behaviors” (Spratt, Pulverness, & Williams, 2007, p. 145). In 19), the students’ dictations had been poorly done. The teacher switched to Chinese to emphasize the importance of dictation in the final exam. In 20), the teacher required the students to utilize the database instead of baidu.com search engine in academic research, for the information on baidu.com was likely to be unprofessional and unauthoritative.

15. 顺带说到这儿，首先这个听写太糟糕了，我再说一遍，你只要是*spelling*

和*meaning*都写了，哪怕你错一个都会给你两分。但是我发现班上很多同学钻空子，钻到什么程度呢？只写*spelling*，还有一些可以钻空子转到只写中文解释，那也不可能给你分数，我再说一遍。期末考试，听力会占很重要的部分，听写会占很重要的部分，而且到时候你会看到听写折算的成绩，到时候会给你一个一个给你算出来，所以你自己会非常清楚，这些是有数据来说话的部分，是不可能改变的，唯有你努力了你才会提高，所以还有几次机会请大家做好准备。[By the way, your dictation is terrible. Let me repeat that: as long as you spell the target word and write its meaning, you will get two points even if you make a mistake. But some students took advantage of loopholes and only spelled the word or only wrote its Chinese meaning. Again, dictation will account for a significant portion of the final grade. The converted scores of dictation will be published and cannot change. Only if you work hard will you improve. You are supposed to be well-prepared for the future quizzes.]

16. *Really high quality research make us think about things. So that's it.* 其实读科研的东西就是这样的，然后以后你们也有任何东西，你了解那就不要百度了，然后就直接去数据库去查那些科研论文。因为那些才是有质量的分析，你百度出来的都是就是说随便的这种。[When you conduct research, you should use database to find the scientific research papers and do not use the Baidu.com search engine anymore. Those published papers might provide you with high-quality analysis and reliable results.]

3.3 Factors Influencing Teachers' CS

CS is a process of language choices conducive to the communicative goal. According to Verschueren (1999), the reason why language users make language choices is attributable to intrinsic language features: variability, negotiability, and adaptability. Yu (2004) developed the Adaptation Theory. To be specific, language users switch code to adapt to linguistic reality, social conventions, and psychological motivations.

3.3.1 Adaptation to linguistic reality

Linguistic reality means the real nature and existence of a language, which refers to “the features and properties of those linguistic elements and linguistic structures of that language in its own right and/or compared with other natural languages” (as cited in Jingxia, 2009). In other words, every language possesses some specific linguistic properties that other languages do not share. A lexical gap between Chinese and English is one of the linguistic reasons for teacher's in-class CS. Several examples from the on-the-spot recordings are listed below. (Translations are found in the brackets following L1 segments.)

17. *Gary for example, 肥肠[pig's large intestines] speech on something that will be played scary and especially for 肥肠. [pig's large intestines]*

18. *Talk about 吃货 [foodie] in the young people? Is it a of the negative conversation? NO? 货 [Huo] ¹is not a objectifying keep means? 但是货不是不太好的词吗？比如蠢货 [Is it a relatively negative expression, like idiot?]*

¹货[Huo] in Chinese has different meanings. On the one hand, it can refer to the goods. On the other hand, it can refer to people who are stupid.

19. 她本来是喜欢的是翻译口译，但是她在这里学了就很多的文学类的课程，等到他出去之后，她会发现她 *this is her identity. Yeah, this is her identity.* [She originally preferred to study translation and interpretation, but she took plenty of literature class at college. And she found that studying literature consists of her identity.]

In 21), “肥肠” is a special dish of Chinese food that few foreigners are familiar with. The English translation is “pig’s large intestines”, which may be weird and confusing for Chinese students. Consequently, the teacher switched to Chinese to describe typical Chinese food more clearly and accurately, and the students could also understand her question quickly. In 23), the Chinese character “货” mean “goods” or “cargo” in English translations, but it referred to “people” in the context. Although it was used as a commonly used fixed expression in Chinese, it was hard to find a corresponding word in English to express the same meaning as in Chinese. Thus, the teacher switched to Chinese.

3.3.2 Adaptation to psychological motivations

There are always some psychological factors influencing the speakers’ language choices. According to Yu (2001), the two adaptations to linguistic reality and social conventions are passive adaptations while the adaptation to psychological motivations is an active one. Using CS as a communicative strategy is used spontaneously by the users to achieve specific communicative purposes such as shortening the psychological distances, creating humor, and manifesting one’s identity etc.

20. *But now I can still do something. I can still choose to be a middle school teacher or... the emphasis is not what I wanted, but I not what I want right now. I emphasize right now at this moment.*

就不是你过去想过的那件事情，就现在你做什么事来得及的，但是现在依然是有选择在选做这个东西，有一些是更符合有一些是不可能的。[What you should think of is not the past ideas. Instead, you need to think what I can do now. You still have choices. Some of the choices are suitable for you and some are not.]

21. *So they insisted that no one should be wearing those kind of disgusting cloths because they look so unattractive, but I think keeping warm is more important. So because you don't want to catch a cold.*

而且我发现四川人很抗冻，就是我们的床上会有一层一层的褥子，软软的。就是光有那个床垫还不够，要有很厚的褥子，然后再就是上床前要加一个hot bottle进去。[I found that Sichuanese seemed ignorant of the cold. In northern China, there are layers of quilts on the bed. And we would use hot bottles before going to bed.]

In 24), the students worried that they had missed many opportunities when they were young or lost at the starting points. The teacher switched the code from English to Chinese to build solidarity and develop empathy. Chinese here was more impressive and was helpful in reducing anxiety for the students. The findings also support the study of Redlinger, which argued that the native language was preferred with regard to emotional speech interactions, such as scolding and consoling (as cited in Liu, 2001, p143).

In 25), the teacher talked about people’s different living habits in winter. Chinese AABB reduplicated words represent the beauty of the languages in rhythm, image and expression, and the ABAB word-structure in Chinese possesses a very strong sense of pictures. The teachers switched the code to Chinese to show the living habits in Northern China vividly, which was also helpful to create an active classroom atmosphere.

3.4 Students’ Attitudes towards Teachers’ CS

3.4.1 Students’ attitudes to using CS

Figure 3.1 shows the students’ attitudes towards the teachers’ in-class CS (N=129). 58.14% of the freshmen agreed with the teachers’ using CS while a strong majority of sophomores (88.37%) and seniors (79.07%) agreed with teachers’ in-class CS. Note that a sizable minority of freshmen strongly agreed with in-class CS uses, taking up 37.21%, whereas only 4.65% of sophomores choose this option.

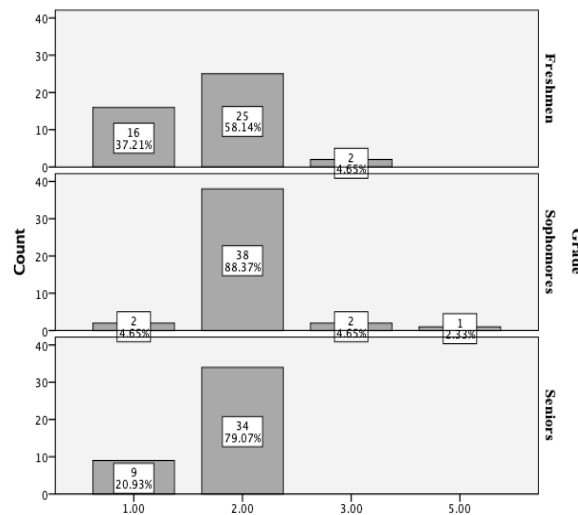


Figure 3.1 Students' Attitudes toward Teachers' in-class CS

(1=Strongly agree; 2=Agree; 3=Not sure; 5=Strongly disagree)

According to Figure 3.2, the most striking difference was that 62.79% of sophomores thought that the teachers should use 5%-20% L1 in class, while only 32.56% of freshmen chose that option. Surprisingly, compared to the sophomores, fewer senior students (48.84%) suggested that the teachers switch to Chinese 5%-20% of the total amount. The proportionality of the third option (20%-40%) in the group of freshmen was the highest, at 39.53%, compared to 20.93% in the group of sophomores and 27.91% in the group of seniors. The percentage of the fourth option (40%-60%) in the freshman group was around 2.5 times the score in the sophomore group (18.6% versus 6.98%).

Based on Figures 3.1 and 3.2, it can be concluded that almost all the students in this investigation agreed with the teachers' in-class CS and wanted the teachers to use the L1 in specific situations. Compared with the sophomores, the freshmen looked forward to a higher proportion of L1 uses since they entered into English department for a shorter period and needed more L1 use to advance language learning. For the senior students, it can be inferred that the language proficiency of those students differed from each other after two-year training. Some students who found it difficult to adapt to academic and professional classes preferred a larger amount of L1 uses.

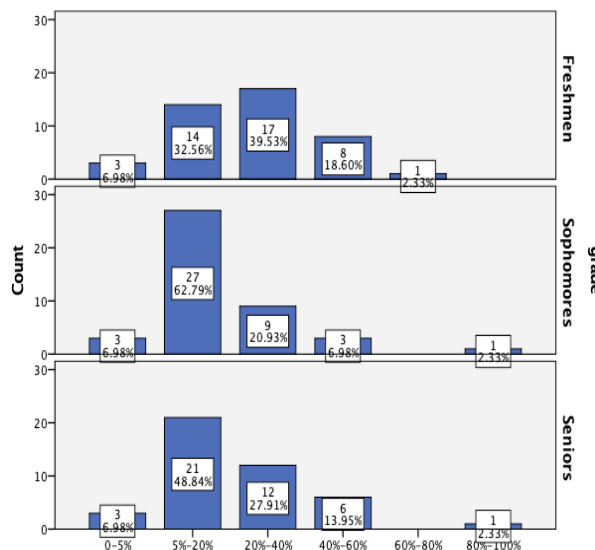


Figure 3.2 Students' Expectant Amount of L1 in Class

3.4.2 Students' expectant function of CS.

Table 3.2 presents the students' expectant amounts of CS use. 97.7% of all the students wanted their teachers to use CS. For other options, there were still some differences. For the freshmen, grammar and vocabulary explanation took up 72.10%, and the percentage of the second function (informing the class activities) was 53.50%.

The lowest proportion, 11.6%, belongs to the last two functions (class management and response to students' questions and performance). Unlike the group of freshmen, using CS to inform the class activities and explain grammar were expected by a minority of sophomores (38.60%). Of all the seniors, 44.2% chose the third function (explain grammar and vocabulary). This score was higher than the one for the second group but still lower than that for freshmen group.

These results indicate that most students had difficulties in understanding terminologies in TL, although sometimes teachers used easy words to explain or paraphrase the sentences. There were always new terminologies in different academic classes. Consequently, there was no significant difference concerning students' expectations on the first function. Freshmen students had a comparatively lower level of language proficiency and tended to lack grammatical and lexical knowledge. Therefore, they expected the teachers to use L1 when learning grammar. From class observation, the researcher found that there were various class activities such as group discussion and presentation or even role play in English-major classes. In order to understand the requirement accurately, many students suggested that teachers switch to Chinese to inform the class activities

Table 3.2 Students' Expectant Functions of CS

		Grade		
		Freshmen	Sophomores	Seniors
	Explain terminology	97.70%	97.70%	97.70%
	Inform the class activities	53.50%	38.60%	46.50%
Functions of CS	Explain grammar and vocabulary	72.10%	38.60%	44.20%
	Class management	11.60%	13.60%	11.60%
	Response to students' questions and performance	11.60%	13.60%	14.00%

3.4.3 Impacts of CS

Figure 3.3 and Table 3.3 draw a general picture of the students' perceptions of the impacts of using CS in six aspects. As can be seen from Figure 3.3, a strong majority of subjects were positive about the code-switching's impacts on understanding teaching materials and responding to students, which can also be revealed in Table 3.3. The mean scores of the two options were lower than those of other options. As for the other options, a number of students were uncertain about code-switching's impact, which might have been resulted from the lack of recognition and consciousness of the teachers' in-class CS. Figures 3.4-3.9 present the students' agreement patterns with specific statement in three groups.

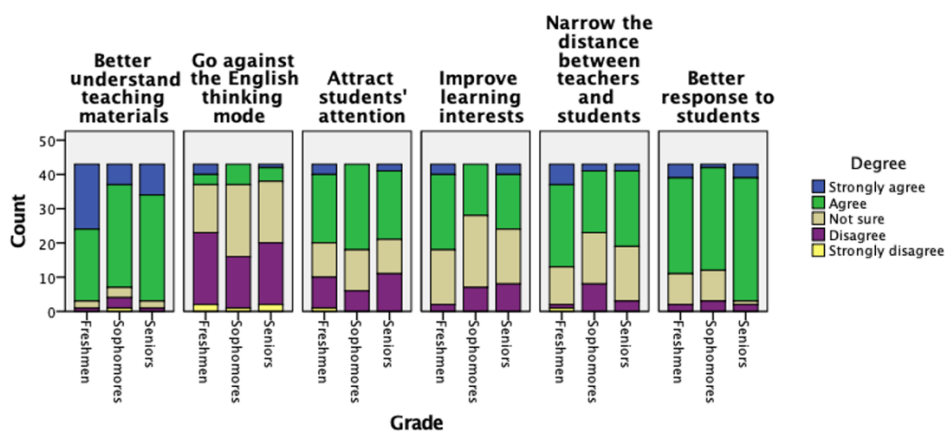


Figure 3.3 Students' Perceptions of the Impacts of CS

Table 3.3 Mean Scores of the Nominal Variables Impacts of CS

	Go against practicing in English thinking	Attract students' attentions	Better understand teaching materials	Improve interest in learning on the part of learners	Close the social distance between teachers and students	Better respond to students' questions and performance
Mean	3.3411	2.4419	1.8682	2.6279	2.4574	2.186
N	129	129	129	129	129	129
SD	0.83382	0.77969	0.67754	0.77126	0.80047	0.63452

Note: 1=strongly agree; 2=agree; 3=not sure; 4=disagree; 5=strongly disagree

As can be seen from Figure 3.4, a substantial majority of respondents agreed that switching to L1 helped them better understand the teaching materials (90.69% on average). But the results indicated that the level of agreement was different. While nearly half of the freshmen believed that the positive impacts on learning teaching materials were extremely significant, 13.95% sophomores and 20.93% seniors strongly agreed with CS use in English-major class.

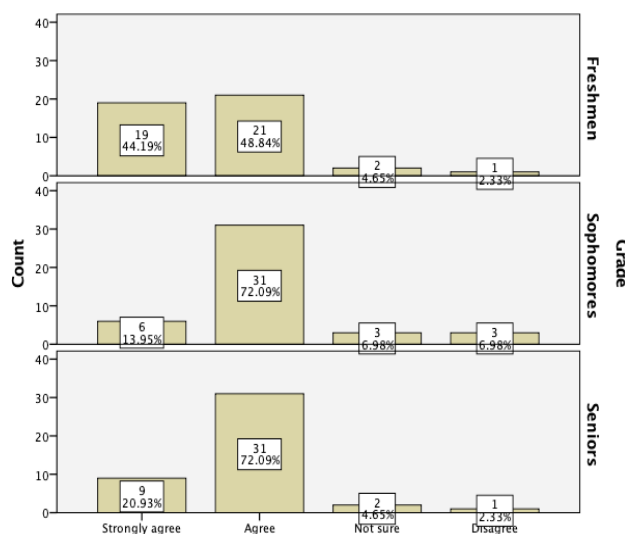


Figure 3.4 Student Agreement with Statement about the Impact of CS on Better Understanding Teacher Materials

Figure 3.5 concerns CS’ impact on the thinking habit. Language may influence learners’ thinking mode, and learners are encouraged to develop the habit of thinking in English to get rid of Chinglish. Thus, the questionnaire included the following question: “Will teachers switch to L1 go against developing the habit of thinking in English?” The results indicated that only a few students were positive with the effect while a sizable minority of students was not sure about its effect. One student in the interview said, “I am not sure about how much teachers’ in-class CS may affect our thinking mode, for the cultivation of thinking habit is a long-term process and I don’t know whether teachers’ language choice in class will have a significant impact on it.



Figure 3.5 Student Agreement with Statement about the Impact of CS ongoing against developing English Thinking Habit

From Figure 3.6, we can find that there was no striking difference among the three groups. More than half of the students agreed with the statement that teachers’ L1 use could attract their attention. During the interview, some students expressed that it could be effective when they were distracted or sleepy, for teachers were used to raising their voice when repeating the question or assigning tasks in Chinese.



Figure 3.6 Student Agreement with Statement about the Impact of CS on Attracting Students’ Attentions

The results of the statement about CS impact on improving interest in learning on the part of students were quite different (see Figure 3.7), as there were a large amount of students feeling uncertain about it. Whereas only 2.94% of freshmen disagreed with the statement, there was 21.21% of senior students expressed considerable disagreement. The findings suggested that the impact of CS on improving interest in learning on the part of students needs more exploration and discussion.

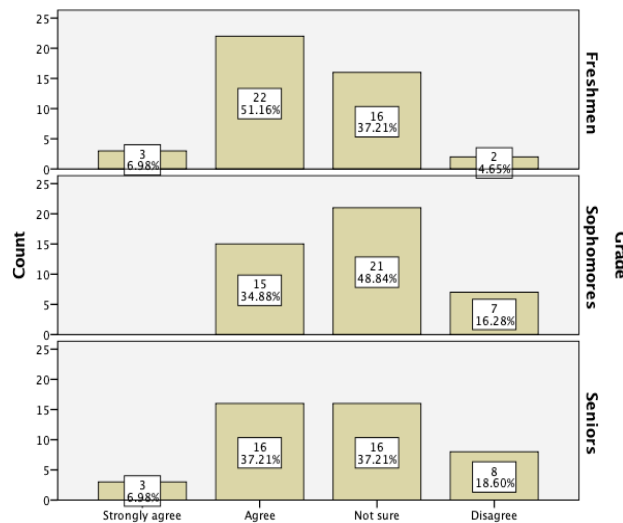


Figure 3.7 Student Agreement with Statement about the Impact of CS on Improving Interest in Learning on the Part of Students

As can be seen from Figure 3.8, except for the group of sophomores, the students in the other two groups showed positive attitudes towards CS impact on shortening the social distance between teachers and students. 69.76% of the freshmen students agreed or strongly agreed with this idea. One student in the interview stated that they felt comforted and warm when teachers switched to Chinese to reduce their anxiety and share his or her own experiences, and the Chinese expression was more inspiring and motivating.

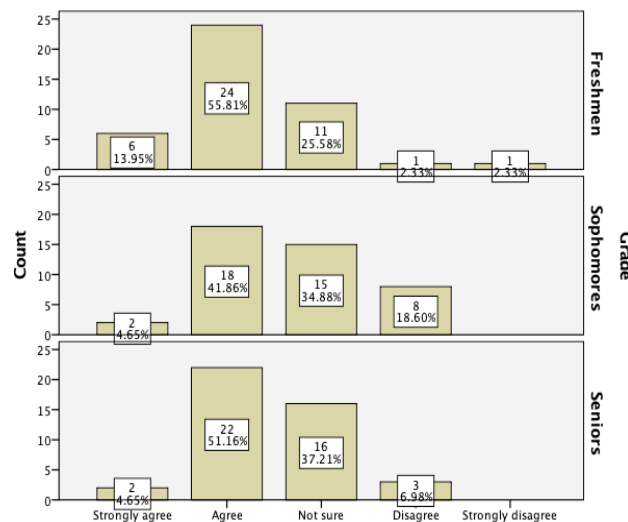


Figure 3.8 Student Agreement with Statement about the Impact of CS on Closing the Social Distance

Figure 3.9 illustrates students’ attitudes to the impact of CS on better responses to their questions and performance. 83.72% of the seniors agreed with this statement, which was the highest number among the three groups. A majority of freshmen and sophomores also believed that using CS was effective when responding to students. One student said, “In the classroom, we tend to use L1 to clarify our questions, and we hope to receive feedback in L1 either.” The class observation showed that the students’ language choices may influence teachers’ language choice in order to better interact with others.

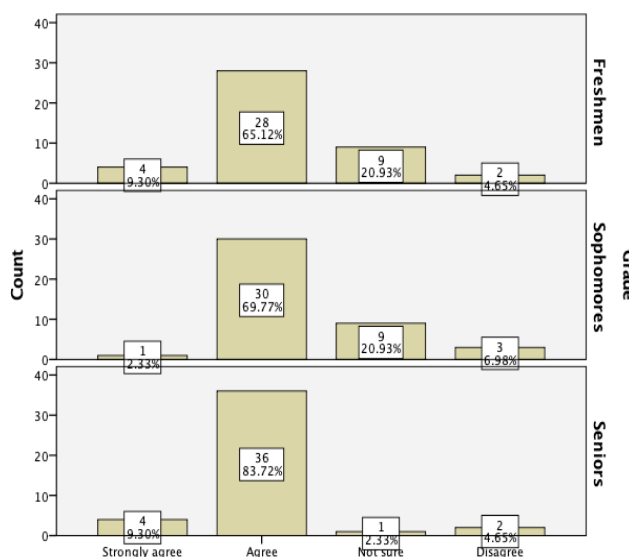


Figure 3.9 Student Agreement with Statement about the Impact of CS on Better Respond to Students' Questions and Performance

4. Conclusion

In spite of the prevailing of “monolingual principle”, the use of L1 frequently occurred in all the observed classes. In light of our findings, the researcher found that the teachers actually used a larger amount of L1 than previously thought. In terms of the students' attitudes to teachers' in-class CS, almost all the participants agreed with CS use in class. Besides, the findings suggested that CS served important functions in classrooms. Translation and explanation were the most frequently used functions. It was more efficient and accurate to understand the tests in L1 than in the TL. The L1 was also preferred when it came to emotional interactions or when class environment needed some excitation. Through building solidarity or showing empathy, the distance between students and teachers could also be shortened. Just as teachers being friends to comfort learners, teachers were also managers and coordinators in the classroom. In order to promote the class smoothly and set up rules, the teachers would use L1 to impose discipline and manage the class.

The last function of CS was to attract students' attention, especially when there was no response to questions or students appeared to be worn out or distracted. Moreover, students' perceptions of teachers' in-class CS could be different. While a strong majority of participants were positive about the CS' impacts on understanding teaching materials, a number of students were still uncertain about the impacts of CS. This study provides a relative wholesale view of CS in Chinese college English-major students and reveals students' attitudes to CS between Chinese and English as well as their perceptions of the impacts of CS.

Several limitations of the study should be mentioned. The first concern that may limit the findings relates to the representatives of the sample. On the one hand, all the procedures and data collection were conducted at Sichuan University, China, which might not fully represent the situations in other colleges. On the other hand, the number of observed classes and participants was limited. Though the researcher tried to transcribe recordings, the total periods were not long enough. The second limitation is that there might have been some unmeasured variables. For instance, the students from the same class might be different from each in their language proficiency. All of these factors might have affected the results. Further research needs to examine a larger sample of students and teachers. Future students as subjects are supposed to be divided into different groups according to language proficiency test instead of grade. Thus, the correlation between language proficiency and learners' attitudes towards the amount of CS can be calculated. Furthermore, students' CS behaviors should be paid more attention in class observation, so that the research could figure out how students' language choices influence on teachers' choices.

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