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EXPLORING THE PHENOMENON OF CODE-SWITCHING IN IMMERSIVE ESL KINDERGARTEN IN THE UAE

Abeer Nabeel Albayari

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**EXPLORING THE PHENOMENON OF CODE-SWITCHING
IN IMMERSIVE ESL KINDERGARTEN IN THE UAE**

Abeer Nabeel Albayari



May 2024

United Arab Emirates University

College of Education

Department of Curriculum and Methods of Instruction

EXPLORING THE PHENOMENON OF CODE-SWITCHING IN
IMMERSIVE ESL KINDERGARTEN IN THE UAE

Abeer Nabeel Albayari

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Education (Curriculum and Instruction)

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Cover: Code-switching among kindergarten students
(Photo: By Abeer Nabeel Albayari)

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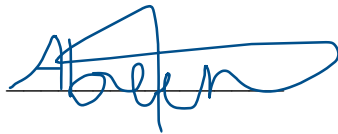
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Declaration of Original Work

I, Abeer Nabeel Albayari, the undersigned, a graduate student at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) and the author of this thesis entitled “*Exploring the Phenomenon of Code-Switching in Immersive ESL Kindergarten in the UAE*”, hereby, solemnly declare that this is original research work done by me under the supervision of Dr. Mona Aljanahi, in the College of Education at UAEU. This work has not previously formed the basis for the award of any academic degree, diploma, or a similar title at this or any other university. Any materials borrowed from different sources (whether published or unpublished) and relied upon or included in my thesis have been properly cited and acknowledged by appropriate academic conventions. I further declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, data collection, authorship, presentation and/or publication of this thesis.

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Date: 29/05/2024

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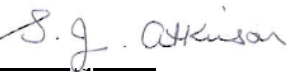
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Abstract

This thesis explores the phenomenon of code-switching among those learning English as second language in an immersive kindergarten setting in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). There is a lack of research on code-switching practices, specifically among kindergarten students in immersive language programs in the UAE. They argue that this gap in research is particularly concerning, given the growing number of young learners who are enrolled in such programs in the UAE.

The main objective of this study is to identify when kindergarten students switch from English to Arabic their L1 during their immersive English language classes, intending to understand the purposes and motivations behind this linguistic behavior, and analyze how teachers react to these instances of code-switching with an explicit rule in the research site that prohibits the use of L1 in L2 classes.

In addition, the study investigates how students employ code-switching as a tool for communication, social interaction, and identity expression. It also seeks to reflect on policies pertinent to immersive English school settings in the UAE.

A qualitative phenomenological case study research method was implemented in this study. An observation checklist was developed to collect data using field notes and videos. The checklist was designed to systematically capture code-switching instances while categorizing the purposes behind and the teachers' reactions to each instance. The checklist discusses the three purposes of the following: communication, social interaction, and identity.

This study showed that code-switching occurs in many instances during several activities, such as classroom discussions, group work, peer work, role play, reading activities, writing activities, and classroom center activities. It often happened during interactive activities that required communication and interaction between students, such as group work and playtime.

Furthermore, the results showed that teachers mainly corrected students' code-switched language instead of ignoring it, as observed 22 times, while they ignored code-switching only five times.

Keywords: Code-switching, early childhood education, phenomenology, multilingualism, immersive English settings, English language learning policies.

Title and Abstract (in Arabic)

استكشاف ظاهرة التناوب/ التبديل اللغوي لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في فصول رياض الأطفال في إحدى المدارس الخاصة التي تعتمد الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية غامرة في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة

المخلص

تركز هذه الرسالة على استكشاف ظاهرة التبديل بين اللغات، بين متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية في رياض الأطفال التي تستخدم الإنجليزية كلغة غامرة في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة. للبحث أهمية كبيرة على سياسات وممارسات التعليم اللغوي في البيئات متعددة اللغات. توجد حاجة لمزيد من البحث حول التعدد اللغوي وتأثيراته في برامج التعليم الابتدائي في دولة الإمارات وبيئات مماثلة أخرى، حيث يتم تسجيل العديد من الأطفال الصغار في مثل هذه البرامج.

الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة هو التعرف على أوقات تبديل طلاب الروضة بين لغتهم الأولى، العربية، خلال حصص اللغة الإنجليزية الغامرة، بهدف فهم الأغراض والدوافع وراء هذا السلوك اللغوي وتحليل كيفية تفاعل المعلمين مع هذه الحالات من التبديل بين اللغات عندما يكون هناك قاعدة صريحة تحظر استخدام اللغة الأم في حصص تستخدم اللغة الثانية، في الموقع الذي يتم فيه البحث.

بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تبحث الدراسة في كيفية استخدام الطلاب للتبديل بين اللغات كأداة للتواصل والتفاعل الاجتماعي، وتكوين الهوية. كما تسعى الدراسة إلى النظر في سياسات المدارس التي تستخدم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة غامرة في دولة الإمارات.

تم اعتماد أسلوب البحث الظاهري النوعي في هذه الدراسة. تم إجراء قائمة راقية مرجعية لجمع البيانات باستخدام ملاحظات من الميدان ومقاطع الفيديو. تم تصميم القائمة لالتقاط تلك الحالات من التبديل بين اللغات بطريقة منهجية مع تصنيف الأغراض وراء كل حالة وتفاعل المعلمين معها. تتناول القائمة ثلاث مجالات: الاتصال، التفاعل الاجتماعي، وأغراض الهوية.

أظهرت هذه الدراسة أن التبديل بين اللغات حدث في عدة مواقف خلال أنشطة مثل المناقشات الصفية، والعمل الجماعي، والعمل مع الأقران، والتمثيل، وأنشطة القراءة والكتابة وأنشطة مركز الفصل. وغالبًا ما يحدث ذلك أثناء الأنشطة التفاعلية التي تتطلب التواصل والتفاعل بين الطلاب، مثل العمل الجماعي ووقت اللعب.

علاوة على ذلك، أظهرت النتائج أن المعلمين قاموا في الغالب بتصحيح لغة الطلاب التي تم تبديلها بدلاً من تجاهلها، لوحظ ذلك 22 مرة، بينما تم تجاهل التبديل بين اللغات خمس مرات فقط.

مفاهيم البحث الرئيسية: تبديل الرموز، الظاهرة، التعددية اللغوية، اللغة الإنجليزية لغة الغامرة، سياسات تعلم اللغة الانجليزية

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Dedication

To my beloved father and family

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List of Abbreviations

CS	Code-Switching
ESL	English as a Second Language
FCSA	Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority
L1	First language
L2	Second language

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

Research has shown that code-switching can often occur in diverse linguistic contexts in which individuals are exposed to multiple languages and cultural norms (Dewaele & Wei, 2014). Koronkiewicz (2014) suggested that code-switching is a frequently occurring phenomenon in bilingual communities, and a similar observation was made by Alsalami (2021). The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a culturally diverse country in which people from various backgrounds interact with each other on a daily basis. According to the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority (FCSA) of the UAE, as of 2021, the country is home to more than 200 different nationalities, making it one of the most diverse in terms of the spoken languages. Arabic is the official language of the UAE, as 42.0% of the population speaks Arabic, and 58% population speaks other languages; however, English is widely spoken and understood, especially in business and education (FCSA, 2021). Other commonly spoken languages in the UAE include Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Tagalog, and other languages from South Asia and the Philippines (FCSA, 2021). The diverse linguistic context of the country, with the number of nationalities to which people residing in the UAE belong and use different languages, provides a favorable environment for code-switching. Hopkyns et al. (2018) emphasized that the UAE's linguistic diversity not only fosters such practices but also functions as a significant aspect of social and communicative interactions among residents. Retnawati and Mujiyanto (2015) defined code-switching as "the alternation between two or more languages in a speaker's speech, which occurs naturally in the scheme of bilinguality" (p. 30). The researchers suggest that its reason may be the diverse linguistic context in which the children grow up as well as the influence of media and the educational system. Research on the phenomenon of code-switching among Arabs in diverse linguistic contexts highlights its role as a natural and adaptive component of multilingual communication. The study also highlighted that code-switching is not just a linguistic necessity but also a reflection of social and cultural dynamics in an English class. Drawing on insights from research on code-switching among Arabs in diverse linguistic contexts, the evident of such

practices extending naturally to younger populations, including children in the UAE, becomes clear.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

English plays a pivotal role in UAE society. Siemund et al. (2021) indicated that due to its multilingual and multinational environment, the UAE views the use of English as a foreign language, a second language, and as a lingua franca. It is not surprising to see the extent to which English has expanded its role in schools and the educational sector as a whole. In the UAE, Western pedagogies and consultants have contributed to English-medium curriculum reforms (van den Hoven & Carroll, 2021). Moore-Jones (2015) stated, “The government of the UAE mandates that all public institutions of higher learning provide its entire curriculum through the medium of the English language” (p. 64).

The policies in HE and K–12 schooling is interrelated, meaning that changes in one system can affect the other. The UAE government requires all public institutions to offer entire English curriculum (Moore-Jones, 2015), that is, English-Medium Instruction (EMI) was introduced in K–12 schooling for core subjects in government schools in Abu Dhabi in 2010. Private and international schools had already adopted EMI as the medium of instruction by then. Code-switching is widely observed in the speech of bilingual children (Paradis et al., 2011). People view code-switching in light of its pros and cons. Those who support code-switching believe that it can facilitate teaching and learning processes (Nurhamidah et al., 2018). Using L1 in the classroom provides students with a more comfortable setting in which they can speak freely without strict adherence to an English-only policy. This has led to the belief that code-switching benefits both teachers and students in the classroom (Nurhamidah et al., 2018). Although some believe that code-switching enhances language learning, opponents see it as an obstacle to acquiring the target language. Long-term language alternation also induces errors in standard forms of language without people using them realizing it. Some educators oppose code-switching in classrooms and view the use of first language (L1) as a sign of laziness or incompetence. They believe that excessive code-switching can hinder students’ ability to fully optimize their English usage, compromising the primary goal of language education (Liu, 2010). In addition, strict policies against using L1 in the English language classroom create a

conducive environment in which students are encouraged to use English as much as possible to improve their language skills (Cook, 2001). In this case, students are not allowed to use their L1 or code-switch. Many private schools in the UAE have adopted immersive language classes in their curricula.

When children are not allowed to code-switch, they may need help understanding new concepts and vocabulary, which can hinder their language development and academic success. According to García et al., (2014), when children are not allowed to use their L1 or code-switch, they may feel disengaged from the learning process, leading to frustration and a lack of interest in learning, and they may think that their linguistic and cultural identities are not valued or respected. This can affect their self-esteem and confidence in their abilities (Adams, 2020).

There is limited research specifically examining the relationship between strict policies against the use of L1 and code-switching. It is expected that policies against the use of the first language may cause anxiety and stress in students, which can negatively impact language acquisition. One study that acknowledges the lack of research in this area is by Pérez-Vidal and Roquet (2015). The authors suggest that policies discouraging or prohibiting code-switching may negatively affect students' language learning and development. In addition, Min et al. (2023) stated, "The use of L1 in EMI (English Medium Instruction) not only affects the efficiency of communicating hence teaching and learning, but also affects the feelings of students, hence changing interests and motivation, and thus affecting learning outcomes" (p. 2). However, not allowing students to use their first language may lead to students giving up and avoiding learning (Min et al., 2023). The ability of students to express themselves fully can hinder communication in the classroom. For bilingual or multilingual children, code-switching can help them learn how to use both languages effectively and distinguish between them. Therefore, not allowing children to code-switch can make them feel excluded, uncomfortable, and unwelcome (Young & Barrett, 2018). In contrast, allowing children to use their home language and code-switching can help them feel more included and valued in the classroom (Baker, 2011). Baker also noted that children who are not allowed to use their home language or code-switch may experience language delays and difficulties in communication. However, there

is a need for more research on the occurrence of code-switching between Arabic and English among children in early childhood education settings. According to Alasmari (2016), code-switching is found among people of all ages, genders, societies, and languages. “Many studies have analyzed adult-adult, child-child, and adult-child code-switching in different language pairs around the world. However, to this researcher’s knowledge, few studies have been conducted on Arabic-English bilingual children” (Alasmari, 2016, p. 1). On the other hand, the study by Al Kaddour and Kaddoura (2019) emphasized the need for further research on Arabic dialects and their usage of code-switching and code-mixing.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to explore the phenomenon of code-switching, if any, among ESL (English as a second language) learners in an immersive kindergarten setting in the UAE. ESL term according to the Cambridge Dictionary, refers to the teaching of English to speakers of other languages who live in a country where English is an official or important language. The study also aims to identify and analyze instances of code-switching in the immersive English classes of kindergarten students, intending to understand the purposes and motifs behind this linguistic behavior and analyze how teachers react to these instances of code-switching. Moghadam et al. (2012) stated that code-switching is “motivated by situational and stylistic factors, and the purpose behind the switch between two languages is important. In addition, it investigates how students employ code-switching as a tool for communication, social interaction, and identity formation.

1.4 Significance

This research provides insights into language education and policy by challenging the perception of code-switching as a language error or deficiency. The findings contribute to reshaping language education policies, emphasizing the importance of accommodating students from diverse backgrounds. They also highlight the need for research on early childhood education and its impact on social integration.

The study of code-switching has been an area of interest for linguists and educators for decades. The phenomenon of code-switching, or switching between different

languages or dialects, has been widely studied in various settings. However, its occurrence and effects in early childhood education, particularly in kindergarten, have yet to be extensively researched. The findings of this research could have important implications for language education policies and practices in the UAE and other similar English classes settings. While there is some research on code-switching practices in bilingual education contexts, there is a lack of research on code-switching practices, specifically among kindergarten students in immersive language programs in the UAE. Immersive language programs refer to programs or educational environments in which all (or at least most) verbal transactions occur in the target (second language) (Schwartz, 2022). One unique aspect of code-switching research is the immersive situation that it presents. Unlike traditional language learning contexts, in which learners may be exposed to a single language, code-switching allows learners to experience the richness and complexity of multiple languages and language varieties in a natural and authentic way. Researchers can better understand how language is used and learned by understanding the significance of code-switching in immersive contexts. On the other hand, by exploring the factors behind code-switching among young language learners, the study could provide insights into how to effectively support second language acquisition and improve language education programs in the country—focusing specifically on the context of the UAE, which may have unique cultural, linguistic, and educational factors that affect code-switching in ESL (English as a second language) kindergarten students. This can be seen in the study by Shinga and Pillay (2021), which suggested that the study explores how alternating between English and the learners' native language can help improve second language acquisition. It investigates the reasons behind code-switching and its outcomes. This suggests that by understanding the reasons for code-switching, educators, and curriculum designers can provide better support to young language learners in their learning environments. A study by Cenoz (2003) found that the use of L1 can be beneficial for understanding and producing target language vocabulary. Furthermore, code-switching is especially important in early education, as young children are still developing their language and communication skills. Exposure to different languages and dialects can help children develop their language skills (Cenoz, 2003).

1.5 Research Questions

These are the research questions that drive this study:

1. In which instances do kindergarten students code-switch in their immersive English classes?
2. Which purposes do these instances of code-switching serve?
3. How, if any, do classroom teachers react to these instances of code-switching when they occur?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Code-switching is a phenomenon that occurs in bilingual communities in which people switch between multiple languages during communication (Palmer, 2009). Code-switching is commonly used in global communication. According to a study conducted by Moghadam et al. (2012), code-switching is a normal practice that is usually performed by speakers subconsciously.

In the context of education, the phenomenon of code-switching has been observed in classrooms, especially in ESL classes (Argellan et al., 2019). The study of code-switching has been of great research interest because it provides insights into how languages and cultures intersect and interact in multilingual communities (Davies, 1996).

This literature review aims to explore the phenomenon of code-switching in ESL kindergarten in a private school in the UAE. In addition to theories that influenced code-switching, the review will examine the literature on the history of research on code-switching—its reasons, factors affecting it, its effects on language learning and teaching, and its implications in classrooms, including its advantages and disadvantages. Code-switching has been observed in ELT classrooms of students belonging to different ages and levels. Some of the studies were conducted in elementary schools (Anselmo & Williams, 2012), while others were conducted in, HE institutions (Bista, 2010). This study will focus on code-switching in ESL kindergarten in an immersive classroom.

2.1 Definition and History

Some researchers, such as Haugen (1950), Gumperz (1982), Poplack (1980) and Vogt (1954) have defined code-switching. The term “code-switching” appeared first in *Language Contacts* a book by Vogt (1954), not as a linguistic phenomenon but rather a psychological one, and its causes are obviously extra-linguistic (Hanini & Bouhania, 2016, p. 17).

Poplack (1980) defined it as “the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence, or constituent” (p. 583). According to Davies, (1996), Code-switching is the term used to identify alternations of linguistic varieties within the same conversation.

An influential early definition of code-switching was provided by Poplack (1993), who defined it as “the juxtaposition of multi-word sequences, each consistent with the grammatical patterns of its respective language” (p. 225). According to Benson (2001), the term “code-switching” was first used by Vogt in 1954 in his review of the language of content. The first scholar to define “code-switching” as a linguistic phenomenon was the sociolinguist Einar Haugen. In his 1953 article, “The Norwegian Language in America,” Haugen used the term “code-switching” to describe the practice of alternating between two languages or dialects. However, he lacked the requisite theoretical and empirical resources to adequately define the concept (Heller, 2006).

Researchers have suggested various definitions of code-switching that has been studied from a variety of perspectives. For instance, scholars such as Gumperz (1982) explored the concept of code-switching, paying special attention to how social factors play out in bilingual communities. he was intrigued by how people interact linguistically within these communities and the role that social dynamics play in shaping their language use.

From a purely linguistic or grammatical point of view, linguists such as Poplack (1980) has researched the linguistic nature of switches themselves. They tried to account for grammatical versus ungrammatical switches.

Code-switching refers to the juxtaposition of sentences that are part of a system of grammatical structures different from one another. According to Davies, (1996), it is the use of two languages in the same sentence. Code-switching and code-mixing are often used in different studies. One of the main differences between these terms is how they are used. For instance, Muysken (2000) provided a detailed understanding of code-switching as the phenomenon of bilingual individuals alternating between two languages while maintaining the distinct grammatical and lexical features of each language. For instance, a speaker may switch from English to Spanish in a conversation, based on the topic or the audience, without blending the structures of the two languages. This practice highlights the speaker’s ability to navigate two linguistic systems independently. For example, an English-speaking parent may switch to Spanish while discussing cultural traditions, ensuring that the monolingual integrity of each language is maintained.

Code-mixing, as explained by Ayeomoni (2006), involves blending elements from two different languages within a single sentence or discourse, resulting in the convergence of linguistic features. For instance, bilingual speakers may use English syntax along with Spanish nouns and adjectives, as in the sentence, “I went to the mercado yesterday to buy some frescas frutas.” This example demonstrates how English and Spanish can be integrated to create sentences that incorporate elements from both languages.

According to Davies (1996) code-switching is often observed in conversations in which both parties share the same linguistic background and use words from a common language. This is often seen in professional settings in which two bilingual colleagues may switch to a specialized jargon or a third language that is not the primary means of communication within that context but is shared between them for specific terms or concepts.

In contrast, code-mixing, according to Ayeomoni (2006), occurs more fluidly in interactions in which speakers weave together different linguistic elements to communicate effectively. This is common in multicultural and multilingual communities in which the blending of languages forms a part of the social fabric, enabling individuals to express ideas and cultural nuances that might not be directly translatable or as impactful in a single language.

Given that this study explores code-switching, it becomes important to also mention translanguaging, a term that is often inaccurately used interchangeably with code-switching (Solorza, 2019). Translanguaging has gained a lot of attention in the field of language education and research in recent years (Tian & Rafi, 2023). Canagarajah (2011) has defined translanguaging as the “the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system” (p. 401). The relationship between translanguaging and code-switching is a subject of debate. The relationship between code-switching and translanguaging might be conceptualized as follows: code-switching is one kind of language practice, while translanguaging is an umbrella term (Henderson, 2022).

2.2 Reasons for Code-switching

Recent research suggests that code-switching can serve several functions in communication, identity, and socialization. For instance, code-switching can help individuals negotiate social identities by allowing them to express different aspects of the latter, depending on the social context (Wei, 2018). For example, as indicated by Wei (2018), a bilingual speaker speaking both English and Spanish fluently falls under this category. When this speaker is at home with their family, they may primarily use Spanish to communicate, as it is the language with which their family members are most comfortable. However, when this speaker goes to school or work, they may primarily use English, as it is the language of instruction or the one spoken by their colleagues. In this way, the bilingual speaker can switch between languages depending on the social context, allowing them to express and negotiate various aspects of their social identities. By using Spanish at home and English at school or at work, the speaker can signal their membership in both Spanish-speaking and English-speaking communities and express their sense of belonging to both groups. This ability to code-switch allows the speaker to navigate different social situations and contexts more effectively and express different aspects of his or her identity as needed. In addition, code-switching can be used to express solidarity or affiliation with a particular group or community, indicating one's linguistic competence and sociocultural affiliations (Backus, 2000). For instance, a bilingual speaker who is fluent in Spanish and English may switch to Spanish when communicating with members of his or her family or Spanish-speaking community. This code-switching behavior can be seen as a way of displaying their linguistic competence and sociocultural affiliations with the Spanish-speaking community. As Blommaert and Backus (2013) pointed out, code-switching can also be used to align oneself with a particular group or identity, making it an effective means of expressing solidarity with one's social group or community. Moreover, code-switching can be used to signal expertise or authority in a particular domain, demonstrating one's knowledge and competence in that field (Milroy & Muysken, 1995). For example, a bilingual teacher may use code-switching as a pedagogical tool in the classroom to facilitate comprehension and connect with students from different linguistic backgrounds. The teacher may switch between English and the student's native language to explain complex concepts or make cultural references that are relevant to the

students' backgrounds. By doing so, the teacher can demonstrate his or her linguistic and pedagogical competence and create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment for all students. Finally, code-switching can be used to fill communicative gaps and facilitate communication between speakers of different languages or dialects, allowing for the achievement of communicative goals (Gardner-Chloros, 2009).

After exploring the varied reasons and motivations behind code-switching in various contexts, considering how this phenomenon may manifest remains crucial. In particular, let us examine its implications in the context of an ESL kindergarten in a private school in the UAE. Code-switching can serve several purposes for students in this context, including expressing social identity, demonstrating linguistic competence, considering social context and pragmatic considerations, and emphasizing or clarifying a point (Appel & Muysken, 2005). The motivations for code-switching are diverse and can be influenced by a variety of individual and social factors. Code-switching may serve several purposes in the context of ESL kindergarten in an immersive school in the UAE. Social factors can motivate code-switching (Alasmari, 2016), as students may use language to express their cultural background or signal their membership in a particular group. Linguistic competence can also be a factor, as students may feel more comfortable expressing a particular concept or idea in one language over another (Young & Barrett, 2018). Social context and pragmatic considerations may also play a role in code-switching, depending on the setting and communicative needs of the students. Finally, code-switching can be a way to emphasize or clarify a point that may be particularly important in the context of ESL education in which students' language skills are still developing. Understanding the reasons and motivations for code-switching in ESL kindergartens in the UAE can help teachers and researchers better support the language development of young learners.

2.3 Disadvantages and Advantages

Code-switching is a complex and dynamic phenomenon that occurs when individuals use two or more languages or language varieties in a single conversation or interaction. Although code-switching can offer various benefits, such as aiding communication and fostering social connections, it can have disadvantages depending on the context in which it occurs. According to (MacSwan, 2017), code-switching can provide

valuable opportunities for language learners to practice their second language skills in a supportive environment. However, excessive use of code-switching may hinder language development and perpetuate linguistic disparities. Therefore, understanding the factors that influence code-switching and its functions in different contexts is crucial for developing effective language policies and pedagogical practices.

2.3.1 Disadvantages

Code-switching can have several disadvantages. In some contexts, code-switching can lead to negative attitudes and stereotypes toward speakers who code-switch (Gafaranga, 2007). Code-switching can disrupt conversation flow and lead to misunderstandings, particularly if the interlocutors are unfamiliar with the languages in use. Furthermore, it can induce language anxiety and feelings of insecurity, especially if speakers perceive judgments regarding their language usage.

Furthermore, Canagarajah (2011) highlighted that code-switching can create confusion or misunderstandings among interlocutors. For instance, if two speakers are conversing in multiple languages, a monolingual individual who is unfamiliar with all the languages being used may have difficulty following the conversation.

2.3.2 Advantages

While there are potential drawbacks to code-switching, it is important to recognize that it also has numerous advantages that can help mitigate these issues or disadvantages. For example, it can help speakers express themselves more effectively, maintain a cultural identity, and develop greater linguistic flexibility. In addition, code-switching has been shown to have cognitive benefits, such as improving executive function and memory. By understanding the benefits of code-switching, speakers can develop strategies to use multiple languages effectively and appropriately in a variety of contexts while also minimizing potential drawbacks. Overall, code-switching can be a powerful tool for effective communication and cultural expression if used appropriately and with consideration for the needs and perspectives of all interlocutors involved.

Code-switching proves advantageous across diverse contexts. For instance, it can help people from diverse backgrounds communicate easily in multilingual communities. In schools, it can provide students with a bridge between their home language and the curriculum and can help them better understand new concepts (García et al., 2014). Code-switching can also be used to express one's identity and establish solidarity. Furthermore, it can enhance bilingual proficiency and bolster executive function and attention (Kroll & Bialystok, 2013). In addition, according to García et al. (2014), code-switching can facilitate communication and understanding in multilingual contexts. For example, in a multilingual classroom in which students speak different languages, a teacher may use code-switching to clarify instructions or provide explanations in different languages, thus promoting better understanding among students (García et al., 2014). Li (2018) suggested that code-switching can also express identity and cultural belonging. For instance, a bilingual individual may use code-switching to express his or her identity and cultural heritage by switching to his or her native language when speaking to family members or friends from the same linguistic and cultural background (Li, 2018). The study also noted that code-switching can enhance cognitive development. He investigated the relationship between code-switching and cognitive development in bilingual children, suggesting potential cognitive benefits associated with the practice.

2.4 Theoretical Approaches of Code-switching

Building on the previous discussion, considering theoretical perspectives that can shed light on the phenomenon of code-switching is important. Code-switching is a complex linguistic phenomenon that has been studied from different theoretical perspectives (Kabuto, 2010). While some researchers focus on the grammatical aspects of code-switching, others emphasize the social and pragmatic factors that influence code-switching behavior. Numerous theoretical approaches have been proposed to explain why and how code-switching occurs. These theories vary in their focus, assumptions, and methodologies, and they offer different perspectives on the nature and functions of code-switching. Some theories emphasize its linguistic aspects, such as the grammatical and lexical constraints that govern code-switching patterns (Muysken, 2000). Other theories highlight the social and cultural factors, such as identity, that influence code-switching.

Some other theories adopt an interdisciplinary approach that integrates linguistic, psychological, and sociological perspectives to explain code-switching (Wei & Milroy, 1995).

The discussion of theoretical frameworks in the previous section provides a useful foundation for the present study, which seeks to explore code-switching in the context of an ESL kindergarten in a private school in the UAE. Various theoretical frameworks have been proposed to explain the phenomenon of code-switching, with some emphasizing linguistic aspects and others focusing on social and cultural factors. In the context of exploring code-switching in an ESL kindergarten in a private school in the UAE, several theoretical perspectives may be relevant. These include the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT). This theory provides a framework that explains how people adapt their language to their interlocutors' communication styles, suggesting that language users can facilitate social interactions by adopting accommodation behaviors. Code-switching is a phenomenon that language learners can use to accommodate their teachers' and peers' communication styles. CAT was first introduced by Howard Giles, a professor of communication at the University of California, Santa Barbara, in the 1970s. Giles and Byrne (1982) developed CAT as a way to explain how people adjust their communication styles to adapt to the linguistic and social norms of their interlocutors in various situations. Giles drew on social identity theory and intergroup relations to argue that communication is not only a tool for conveying information but also a means of expressing social identity, defining intergroup boundaries, and establishing interpersonal relationships (Giles & Johnson, 1987). He proposed that people use various accommodation strategies, such as convergence, divergence, and maintenance, to adapt to the communicative needs and expectations of their interlocutors (Giles & Coupland, 1991). Convergence is the process of adapting one's communication style or behavior to match that of another person or group. In contrast, divergence involves intentionally emphasizing differences in communication style or behavior to establish a distinct identity or maintain social distance. Maintenance refers to preserving one's own communication style or behavior without changing it to match others (Giles et al., 1991).

The goal of CAT is to explore the communicative and social functions of language use in an ESL kindergarten setting. One study by Giles et al., (1991) used CAT to explore how speakers accommodate their language use in intergroup communication. They found that speakers adjusted their language in a variety of ways, including through code-switching, to either converge or diverge from their interlocutors' language use, depending on the social context. This study suggested that speakers are motivated by the desire to establish and maintain social relationships with their interlocutors. Language accommodation, including code-switching, is a tool for achieving this goal. In the context of an ESL kindergarten in the UAE, CAT may be used to accommodate the language needs of the students and facilitate communication, which can potentially strengthen the student's relationships and enhance the student's language learning experiences. For example, the students code-switch between Arabic and English to facilitate communication and clarify concepts for the students. The students may use Arabic to introduce the lesson and provide examples that the other students may be more familiar with, and then switch to English to introduce the English terms for the shapes. This code-switching may help the students better understand the lesson and build their vocabulary in both languages. This can be seen in the following conversation:

Teacher: "Today, we are going to learn about different shapes. Can you show me a circle? Hmm... I do not see anyone raising their hand.

Student: "da'ira." I see "da'ira".

The CAT model can be utilized to explore how educators and teachers can use code-switching or language learning. For instance, it can be used to provide scaffolding for students, clarify meanings, or facilitate understanding (Li, 2016). Through the study of the many ways in which code-switching is used in ESL kindergarten classrooms, educators and researchers can gain a better understanding of how language use in multilingual settings works.

In the context of communication, there is also a situational code-switching theory that suggests that code-switching occurs to accommodate communication needs in specific social situations. As proposed by Gumperz (1982), this theory suggests that speakers

switch between languages to accommodate the communication needs of a particular social situation. In the context of an ESL kindergarten, code-switching may occur when teachers and students need to switch languages to ensure effective communication (Li, 2016). CAT examines how individuals modify their communication to align themselves with or distance from their conversational partners by exploring the reasons for and outcomes of linguistic adjustments.

Another theory relevant to code-switching in the context of an ESL kindergarten is the identity theory that proposes that the use of language is shaped by individuals' social identities and their desire to express and maintain these identities (Giles & Johnson, 1987). This theory explains how individuals develop and maintain their sense of self about others and society and the role of language in shaping identity. Identity theory was first proposed by social psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s to explain how individuals derive their sense of self from their social group memberships. This theory can help to explore how code-switching relates to the identity development of ESL kindergarten students and how it reflects their social and cultural backgrounds. It highlights social and cultural factors that influence code-switching; in the context of this research, it can explore how the students' identities as ESL learners and their cultural backgrounds may influence their code-switching patterns.

Identity theory proposes that individuals derive their sense of self from their social group memberships, and that language use is an important aspect of expressing and maintaining one's identity. In the context of bilingualism and multilingualism, code-switching can reflect an individual's efforts to negotiate linguistic and cultural identities in different social contexts. For example, a bilingual individual may switch between their first language and a second language, depending on the social group they are interacting with. This can reflect their desire to assert their linguistic and cultural heritage with one group while also fitting in with another group by using the dominant language. In this way, code-switching can be seen as a strategy for expressing and maintaining multiple identities and negotiating one's position in different linguistic and cultural communities. Here is an example of an explanation:

Ahmed: “I don’t like it when we have to speak English in class. I want to speak Arabic like I do at home.”

Fatima: “But we have to learn English so we can talk to other people. It’s good to know more than one language.”

Ahmed: “But I don’t want to forget my own language. Arabic is a part of who I am.”

Two bilingual students, Ahmed, and his fellow pupil, Fatima, are trying to negotiate their cultural and linguistic identities. On one hand, Ahmed, who is from a prominent Arabic-speaking family, desires to learn Arabic in class. On the other hand, Fatima values the importance of maintaining one’s native language and is open to learning English as a way of interacting with others.

The discussion explores the concept of identity theory that states that a person’s sense of self is maintained and developed according to his or her social group background. The identity theory of code-switching proposes that language use is an important aspect of expressing and maintaining one’s identity, particularly in different social and linguistic contexts (Noels, 2009). This theory is highly relevant to this study because it can provide insights into how young ESL learners navigate their linguistic and cultural identities in English classrooms. In this context, code-switching may reflect students’ desire to assert their linguistic and cultural heritage with one group while also fitting in with another group by using the dominant language. Furthermore, identity theory can shed light on how code-switching in the classroom can impact students’ sense of self and their socialization into the larger society. By examining the ways in which code-switching is used in ESL kindergarten classrooms in the UAE, researchers, and educators can gain a deeper understanding of how students develop and maintain their identities in multilingual contexts (Noels, 2009).

Through code-switching in ESL kindergarten classes, educators, and researchers can better understand how language use and identity are interconnected in multilingual environments. The socialization theory highlights how the process of learning and using language is shaped by the process of socialization, which will help to investigate how students’ socialization in the classroom may influence their code-switching patterns. The

socialization code-switching theory proposes that code-switching is a socialization process learned through interactions with others in each social context. This theory suggests that code-switching reflects a speaker's desire to communicate effectively and appropriately in different linguistic and cultural contexts. It is a natural part of language acquisition and socialization (Gumperz, 1982). According to this theory, individuals learn to code-switch through exposure to different language communities and social contexts and through modeling and reinforcement by others (Auer, 2013). Sociolinguist John J. Gumperz first proposed the socialization code-switching theory in the 1980s. Gumperz observed that language use is deeply intertwined with socialization, and that code-switching serves as a means of adapting to different social and linguistic contexts. Gumperz (1982) argued that code-switching reflects a speaker's desire to communicate effectively with others and negotiate social relationships in different settings.

The socialization theory of code-switching sheds light on the intricate interplay between language practices and social dynamics among children. It explains how code-switching is used as a tool for socialization, aiding in the formation of groups, negotiation of power, and maintenance of hierarchy. This theory emphasizes the role of code-switching in reinforcing social identities and boundaries, allowing children to navigate and negotiate their social worlds effectively. Through code-switching, children learn to adapt their language use to their social environment, thereby developing social competence and an understanding of group dynamics. Wang (2019) highlighted that code-switching is significant in children's socialization as it enables them to fit into different social groups. When children play together, they may switch between languages to include or exclude others. This can influence how groups are formed and who belongs to them. When children switch languages to include those who share the same language background, they reinforce a sense of belonging. On the other hand, they may use language to exclude those who do not speak the same language, thereby creating boundaries within the group (Auer, 2013).

Furthermore, code-switching is a phenomenon that allows us to gain insights into how children navigate power and social status within hierarchical structures. By selecting a language or dialect that is associated with higher social prestige or authority, children can assert their dominance or challenge existing power hierarchies among their peers.

Holmes (2013) delved into how people strategically utilize language choices to shape power relations. She explored how code-switching can be used as a tool to maintain or subvert power dynamics.

The socialization theory of code-switching sheds light on how language plays a role in the formation and maintenance of social groups among children. Children use code-switching to signal their alignment with specific cultural or linguistic communities that negotiate their social identities. This is particularly significant in multicultural settings in which language choices help navigate the complexities of cultural hybridity. García (2011) provided a comprehensive overview of how bilingual individuals use code-switching to navigate and construct their social identities in diverse linguistic landscapes.

2.5 Code-switching Models

To better understand the phenomenon of code-switching, researchers have proposed various models to explain the diverse ways in which bilingual speakers switch between languages, each offering different insights into the nature and functions of this linguistic phenomenon. This section will examine several prominent models of code-switching, including the matrix language model, Language and Identity Negotiation Theory (LINT), and interactional sociolinguistics. These models are pertinent to communication, identity, and socialization theories and are summarized in the Table 1.

Table 1: Code-switching Theories and Models

Theory	Model	Brief Description
The Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT)	Matrix Language Frame Model	CAT theory proposes that bilingual speakers have two separate language systems, and that they use one language as the matrix language and the other as the embedded language. The MLF model is related to CAT theory, as it suggests that speakers switch languages based on the grammatical and lexical features of each language.
The Identity Theory	Language and Identity Negotiation Theory (LINT)	LINT proposes that code-switching is a strategic tool used by bilingual speakers to negotiate their social identities in different communicative contexts. The theory suggests that speakers switch languages to express their affiliations, negotiate their status, and construct their identities about others. LINT emphasizes the role of social norms and cultural values in shaping code-switching behavior and highlights the importance of power dynamics in language use.
The Socialization Theory	The Sociocultural Theory (SCT)	Socialization theory posits that individuals learn to code-switch through socialization and interaction with other bilingual speakers. Interactional sociolinguistics is related to socialization theory, as it explores the social contexts and norms that influence code-switching behavior.

2.6 Code-switching in UAE

The previous section discussed the theoretical frameworks relevant to the study of code-switching. The following section will examine the literature on code-switching in early childhood education.

After examining the various theoretical models and frameworks that have been presented to explain the phenomenon of code-switching, it is important to consider the existing research on this topic. This section aims to review previous studies on the topic of code-switching in early childhood education and the UAE context, with a focus on the

factors that influence code-switching patterns, the functions of code-switching, and the potential benefits and challenges of code-switching in educational settings.

Code-switching has been studied in bilingual education, and it has been shown to have varying negative and positive effects on a student's academic performance and language development. It can help them access and negotiate various cultural and linguistic contexts (García et al., 2014). However, excessive code-switching can result in language confusion and hinder the development of a language.

A study by Al Kaddour and Kaddoura (2019) on code-switching in the UAE context look at the use of, and varieties of usage that include code-switching and code-mixing by Arabic speakers of the Emirati dialect, with special reference to the age and gender variables. The results obtained have shown that code-switching and code-mixing between Arabic and Emirati dialects in the speech of Arabic speakers occur very often, and the frequency of both phenomena takes into conditioning the social variable of age and gender.

Mugaddam & Abdelmagid (2013) elaborated upon code-switching among the students' L1 (first language), Arabic, in the ESL classroom and how it affects the pattern of interaction. Undertaking the integration of audio-taped data within the classroom, questionnaires, and interviews from different educational levels in Sudan and Saudi Arabia, this research presented a detailed analysis of the prevalence and purposes of code-switching. Therefore, it provided much support to the strategic use of L1 despite its criticism in the literature, hence proving that it can be unavoidable and even beneficial in ESL learning environments. Here, teachers use L1 in explanation, guide interpretation, illustration of grammatical rules, and organizational procedures in the classroom to enhance effective understanding and student participation. Thus, the present study may agree that the judicious use of code-switching in ESL teaching methodologies may provide a more interactive and effective platform for learning.

Although research on the use of code-switching in ESL kindergartens in the UAE is limited, broader studies have shown that bilingual students often use code-switching to communicate more effectively with teachers and peers. Scholars argue that code-switching serves multiple functions in the classroom, such as enhancing comprehension, smoothing

the flow of instruction, and addressing key issues, thereby creating an equitable and enriched learning environment. Using both the students' first language and target language in classrooms bridges communication gaps and helps build positive interpersonal relationships between students and teachers. Therefore, embracing code-switching in pedagogical practices can lead to increased student participation, inclusion, and comprehension, supporting the acquisition of language skills in bilingual educational settings (He et al., 2020).

Although the amount of research on code-switching is increasing in the Arab world, pointing to communication as a critical component, a significant lack of studies that are explicitly designed for specific educational settings, including ESL kindergartens in private schools in the UAE, remains. Critical insights into the complex reasons for code-switching in EFL classrooms were provided by Alptekin and Tatar (2011), who highlighted the practice's benefits for improving comprehension, bolstering linguistic identity, and encouraging learner socialization. This seminal work implied that code-switching embodies a complex interaction of cognitive and sociocultural factors that go beyond simple language necessity. Nevertheless, a lack of applicability of these insights to the unique setting of ESL kindergartens in the UAE in the literature are noticeable. A focus such as this is essential because it may reveal distinct patterns of using and acquiring language in early learners, guiding the development of pedagogical practices and language policies that are sensitive to the linguistic and cultural context of the UAE. Hence, an unquestionable need exists for immediate empirical research that explores the ways in which communication, identity, and socialization factors specifically impact code-switching behaviors among ESL learners in this context. Such research can provide a model for improving bilingual education practices in similar contexts globally (Alptekin & Tatar, 2011).

Therefore, code-switching in EFL classrooms is a complex phenomenon influenced by linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural factors. Research underscores its role in facilitating linguistic comprehension, reinforcing bilingual identities, and promoting effective socialization. However, an urgent need exists for targeted research that can inform pedagogical strategies and language policies tailored to the linguistic and cultural

milieus of unique educational contexts. Future research can offer insights that to enhance teaching practices and support bilingualism and multilingualism in ESL classrooms worldwide.

In addition, this study aims to investigate the various functions and effects of code-switching in the context of ESL kindergarten, including its social implications for young learners. By addressing these gaps in the literature, this study can provide a more comprehensive understanding of code-switching in the Arab world and inform teaching practices and language policies that promote bilingualism and multilingualism in the ESL classroom.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Data Analysis

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides explanations regarding the research methodology used in this study to investigate and explore the phenomenon of code-switching among second-language learners of English in an immersive kindergarten setting within the UAE. It also provides detailed descriptions of the research design, participant selection, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures.

The objectives of this study are rooted in a broader framework of linguistic and educational theories that aligns with the current research questions. The first research question, examining instances of code-switching in immersive English classes, draws inspiration from sociolinguistic theories, such as interactional sociolinguistics by Gumperz (1982), as discussed by Rampton (2016). Gumperz emphasized the social context of language usage, asserting that language serves as a tool for communication and social interaction. By exploring when and how kindergarten students engage in code-switching within the realms of communication, social interaction, and identity, this study seeks to contribute to the understanding of the social dimensions of second language learning in early education.

The second research question, which focuses on the purposes served by code-switching instances, aligns with the work of Davies (1996) and her matrix language frame model (Zahra et al., 2021). This model posits that code-switching serves communicative and expressive functions, indicating a speaker's communicative intent or emphasizing certain elements in a discourse. Examining the purposes behind code-switching in an immersive ESL kindergarten setting will shed light on the communicative strategies employed by young language learners, linking them to broader theories of language acquisition and communicative competence (Christoffersen, 2015).

The third research question, exploring teachers' reactions to instances of code-switching, is grounded in educational theories focusing on teacher–student interactions and language pedagogy. The study of Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the role of social

interactions, including teacher–student interactions, in the process of learning (Allahyar & Nazari, 2012). Investigating how teachers respond to code-switching instances will contribute to our understanding of the pedagogical implications of this phenomenon, potentially informing language teaching strategies and classroom management practices.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Qualitative Research

This study utilized qualitative research designs that are investigative approaches emphasizing the exploration and interpretation of social phenomena. These approaches aim to understand the complexities of human behavior, experiences, and perspectives within their natural context (Mohajan, 2018). It seeks to uncover the depth and richness of qualitative data, often employing methods such as interviews, observations, focus groups, and content analysis (Owen-Smith & Coast, 2017). Qualitative research emphasizes textual analysis as a core method of understanding complex phenomena. Kara (2023) highlighted that textual analysis methods, such as content analysis, thematic analysis, and discourse analysis, are valuable approaches in qualitative data analysis for understanding complex phenomena. Unlike quantitative research, which seeks to test hypotheses through numerical data, qualitative research is exploratory and inductive. Researchers immerse themselves in the data, allowing themes and patterns to emerge organically, thus gaining a deeper understanding of the context and subjective experiences of participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This method is effective in capturing the nuances of human behavior and social interactions that numerical data may overlook.

3.2.2 The Rationale for Selecting the Qualitative Approach

The degree of complexity of examining the language behaviors, social interactions, and lived experiences of young language learners lends itself well to qualitative inquiry. By selecting the qualitative research approach, the research looks forward to capturing the depth of code-switching phenomena in the natural context of the kindergarten setting. Such an initiative is aligned with the exploratory and context-dependent nature of the research, permitting an understanding of the phenomenon and what leads to code-switching, why students code-switch, and how teachers react.

3.2.3 Qualitative Phenomenological Case Study

3.2.3.1 Definition of Phenomenology

As described by Creswell, & Poth (2016) phenomenology is a qualitative research approach centered on delving into and comprehending the lived experiences of individuals. This methodology is particularly adept at capturing the essence of human experiences by focusing on individuals' perceptions and interpretations (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In the context of this research, phenomenology aims to illuminate the core nature of code-switching experiences among kindergarten students. By closely examining the personal meanings and interpretations that these students associate with their language choices, this study seeks to uncover the underlying essence of their linguistic experiences and behaviors.

3.2.3.2 Definition of Case Study

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), a case study is a research design that involves an in-depth understanding of an individual case set within its real-life context. In this research, the case under examination is an immersive ESL kindergarten. This approach facilitates a comprehensive exploration of code-switching behaviors, offering insights into the natural environment and interactions of young language learners (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

According to Duff (2014), case study research and methodology play a crucial role in studying applied linguistics and phenomena, such as code-switching (Jones, 2023). This is because case study research helps to thoroughly document and explore all aspects of the phenomenon under investigation within the context of the case and against existing theory and research. Duff (2014) highlighted the significance of examining the interplay of the linguistic, social, cultural, political, and affective dimensions of experience and performance (Jones, 2023).

3.2.3.3 Merging Phenomenology and Case Study

The aim behind merging both qualitative approaches, phenomenology, and case study, is to have a comprehensive exploration of code-switching. This combination allowed the study to explore the lived experiences of individuals (phenomenology) within

the specific context of a particular case (case study). Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of a phenomenological case study is important for several reasons. First, code-switching, the practice of alternating languages or language varieties, is a complex and context-dependent phenomenon. Immersive kindergarten settings provide a unique environment in which young children are exposed to multiple languages and cultures. It is essential to understand how and why code-switching occurs in this specific context.

The selected research methodology offers a contextual backdrop, enabling a richer understanding of how and why code-switching occurs within an immersive ESL kindergarten setting.

3.2.4 Data Collection: Observation Checklist and Video Recordings

Observations, facilitated by video recordings and an observation checklist, are instrumental in capturing the dynamic nature of code-switching instances (Jones, 2023). The observation checklist provided with a structured guide for collecting data systematically. This study used classroom observations to collect the data for a month and two weeks; 18 observations of a total of 9 hours were conducted in an American curriculum private kindergarten adopting an immersive learning program as the medium of instruction for the subjects taught in English. Three immersive KG classes were visited each week, where English applies to this setting as a second language for various subjects within an environment. In addition, field notes, checklists, and artifacts (videos) were used to collect data on the phenomenon of code-switching among ESL kindergarten students in a private school in the UAE.

3.2.4.1 Observations

An observation is defined as “the act of watching social phenomena in the real world and recording events as they happen” (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 255). According to Kalekin-Fishman (2001), gaining access to the social practices of teachers and students in the ESL classroom is the primary goal of classroom observations. Marshal and Rossman (1989) defined observation as “the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study” (p. 79). Researchers use observations to create a written photograph of the situation being studied using the five senses (Erlandson

et al., 1993). The observation method is essential because it enables researchers to look for nonverbal emotional expression, identify social relationships, understand how participants engage with each other, and measure the amount of time spent on various activities (Schmuck, 1997). Participant observation is a valuable method for researchers to develop a comprehensive and objective understanding of the phenomena under study. This method can improve the validity of a study by providing researchers with clearer knowledge of the situation and phenomenon being investigated. In this study, observations played a pivotal role in facilitating a deeper understanding of participants' experiences. By observing classroom dynamics and the use of language during code-switching, the study was hoped to generate rich and descriptive data essential for phenomenological research. This approach aligns with the fundamental principles of phenomenology, which seeks to uncover the essence of a phenomenon through firsthand observations. These data enhance the depth of the study and contribute to the development of a comprehensive understanding of how code-switching is experienced and enacted within this context (Moustakas, 1994).

3.2.4.2 Observation Checklist

The observation checklist employed in this study was designed in alignment with extant theories underpinning code-switching. One such theory is the communication accommodation theory, introduced by Howard Giles in 1970. CAT posits that individuals adapt their communication behaviors, including language use, to converge or diverge from the speech patterns of their interlocutors based on various social and psychological factors. In the context of code-switching, CAT provides a theoretical framework to explore how individuals, particularly young learners in an immersive ESL kindergarten, may adapt their language use to accommodate their peers or teachers. Another relevant theory underpinning the checklist is the identity theory developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s. Identity theory focuses on the role of social identity in shaping individuals' behaviors and interactions. In the context of code-switching, this theory offers insights into how students' social identities, such as their linguistic affiliations and self-concepts as ESL learners, may influence their language choices and code-switching patterns within the classroom. The socialization code-switching theory, first proposed by sociolinguist Gumperz (1982), is another essential theoretical perspective for understanding code-

switching in educational settings. For instance, a young Emirati child, fluent in Arabic, starts attending a school where both Arabic and English are used. The child picks up from the daily interactions around, whereby he or she sees teachers and other children switching languages since they apply English in the instructions of science and math and give instructions in Arabic during social studies and religious education. Then, in the playground, English is the language of communication to peers, irrelevant to whether English is their native language. Still, in the case of sharing cultural stories—like folklore, for example—Arabic is used. In these kinds of experiences, the child learns not only when and for what to change the language but also how he or she starts finding the role of the language in bridging gaps across cultures and in creation. Such socialization in a multilingual environment ensures that the child has successfully negotiated the different linguistic and cultural environments.

This theory emphasizes how individuals acquire the norms and rules of code-switching through socialization processes, such as interactions with peers and teachers. In the context of an immersive ESL kindergarten, Gumperz's theory aids in exploring how young learners acquire and deploy code-switching as a communicative tool within their social environment. For instance, children may use their native language when talking to peers who also speak that language but switch to English when speaking to their teacher or participating in class activities. This shows that children have an innate understanding of the social and linguistic norms that govern their environments.

By integrating these theories into the construction of the observation checklist and conducting observations in the natural setting of the ESL immersive kindergarten, this phenomenological case study gained a strong theoretical foundation and methodological rigor, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of code-switching as experienced by the participants. See Appendix B for a sample of the checklist template.

3.2.4.3 Field Notes

In the world of qualitative research, field notes serve as a crucial tool for documenting and organizing observations during the data collection process (Taylor, 1975). Field notes are another important instrument used in this study to investigate code-

switching, following the guidance provided by Taylor (1975). Field notes allowed capturing the details of classroom interactions, the unexpected instances of code-switching, and the context in which they occurred. They served as a rich source of raw data that can be analyzed and coded during the later stages of my research. Taylor's insights provided valuable strategies for efficiently recording field notes, ensuring the maintenance of integrity in observations. Documentation was carefully done and recommendations were adhered to for systematic and organized field notetaking, which included details on coding and managing these notes effectively. Field notes are not just records of what we see but also an essential tool for understanding and reflecting on our own understanding of the observed behavior.

3.2.4.4 Artifacts

In line with best practices in qualitative research, this study used video recordings as an essential tool in the data collection process to support the observation and make observing all the students' utterances easy. It highlighted the importance of recording observation sessions and emphasized the limitations of relying solely on written notes. It also suggests that recording observations can offer a richer, more detailed account, particularly useful in qualitative research in which understanding complex human behaviors and contexts is essential. Recorded data captures verbal interactions and critical aspects, such as context, nonverbal cues, and emotional subtleties. This multidimensional data is particularly relevant to this research. Following the insights of Matheson (2007), video recordings served as a valuable backup to ensure that the participants' voices and intentions were accurately preserved throughout the transcription process. However, Al-Yateem (2012) cautioned that recording equipment can sometimes influence participants' behavior. Having their teacher present and I, the researcher, being an insider to the KG lessons, the inhibition children might feel toward the recordings would be lessened. In addition, to address this concern, building trust and rapport with kindergarten students was a priority during the data collection process, following the recommendations of Al-Yateem (2012).

3.3 The Validity of the Instrument

Instrument validation for this study followed a systematic process, considering the theories that guided this research: CAT, identity theory, and socialization code-switching theory. This theoretical foundation ensured that the checklist captured relevant aspects of code-switching in an ESL immersive kindergarten context. To ensure the checklist's reliability and relevance, input was sought from four early education and language experts at UAE University, College of Education. Their expertise helped assess how clear, relevant, and important each item on the checklist was, ensuring it aligned with the study's goals. Upon receiving the experts' comments, some changes were made according to the expert's recommendations. Since understanding identity-driven code-switching might be tricky and require extra clarity, the checklist items related to identity purposes in code-switching were revised. Examples and prompts were included to make observation and interpretation easier for identity-related code-switching during data collection. In response to the second comment from the expert, which raised questions about the relevance of including "Teacher reaction to code-switching" in the checklist, this aspect was refined for better precision. This checklist item was clarified by specifying its purpose, which was to gain insights into how students' code-switching impacted the comprehension and interactional responses of their interlocutors. Particular emphasis was given to the fact that the interlocutors could encompass both teachers and peers. This adjustment was instrumental in making the checklist's objectives more explicit and ensuring that the data collected would be closely aligned with the research goals. Furthermore, an additional note was incorporated to suggest that observations can extend to encompass the reactions of other children when they serve as interlocutors. This addition acknowledged the broader context of code-switching interactions within the classroom, encompassing interactions among the students themselves. To further refine the instrument, a pilot test was conducted by observing a classroom with another teacher from the school. This practical step helped assess how well the checklist worked in a real classroom setting. The feedback from the teacher was crucial in improving the instrument's usability and its ability to capture code-switching nuances within the ESL immersive kindergarten environment. The purpose of this was also to see that the observation of the code-switching instances was similar to

what had personally been observed. This validation process helped ensure that the instrument was reliable and valid for the current research.

3.4 Reliability

According to Figure 1, the results of the two checklists used by me and the observing teacher were identical, and the other observer, Ms. E, observed and marked “Yes” for both identified code-switching instances in the categories of “Requesting to Clarify the Meaning” and “Explaining Things” during the classroom observation. We also observed the same frequency, which happened four times for communication purposes. This indicated that the agreement between the two observers in recognizing code-switching for these specific purposes in the observed interactions.

Observer A			Observer B		
Date:	Code-switching utterance	Frequency	Class level:	Code-switching utterance	Frequency
A- Communication purpose (Negotiating meaning)			Date: 20/10/2023		Subject: Math
Requesting to clarify the meaning: (Students code-switch to seek clarification on the meaning of the English word).	✓ Yes	1	A- Communication purpose (Negotiating meaning)		
Explaining things: A student wants to explain how to play a game to their peers. They code-switch between Arabic and English to ensure everyone understands the rules (كرة - the ball to me).	✓ yes	2	Requesting to clarify the meaning: (Students code-switch to seek clarification on the meaning of the English word).	✓	1
Requesting assistance: student's code-switch to ask for help. (tell me what is this ما فهمت) (Seek for help to understand something or to do a certain task)	yes	1	Explaining things: A student wants to explain how to play a game to their peers. They code-switch between Arabic and English to ensure everyone understands the rules (كرة - the ball to me).	/	2
Facilitating Communication:			Requesting assistance: student's code-switch to ask for help. (tell me what is this ما فهمت) (Seek for help to understand something or to do a certain task)	✓	1
			Facilitating Communication:		

Figure 1: Reliability Check

3.5 Procedures

Before starting with the methodology, mentioning ethical approval from the UAEU to conduct the study is important. This approval ensures that the research followed established ethical guidelines and protected the rights and well-being of all participants

involved in the study. Next, the parents of the students who participated in this study received consent letters requesting permission. Before gathering data, full adherence to ethical standards was observed. Particularly throughout the entire study, the confidentiality of the participants' and the data's confidentiality was maintained. Participants, through their parents, were informed that their answers would be kept private and anonymous. The code-switching theoretical framework was then used as inspiration for a checklist of criteria. Prior to selecting the checklist, an evaluation was done to ensure that it met the majority of the criteria needed to document the occurrences of code-switching among kindergarten students in their immersive English classes in three areas: communication, social interaction, and identity. This checklist's goal was to ensure that it is an appropriate choice for use in the classroom. During the field notes taken during this study, the guidelines provided by Taylor (1975) and a reliable checklist were used as a guide for constructing field notes. Notebooks, pens, phone video cameras, and audio recorders were used—all ready to capture every moment in the kindergarten classroom, particularly when students switched languages. The checklist ensured note taking. It prompted the recording of dates, times, and locations. In addition, ongoing events were described, speakers were identified, and their actions were outlined. Codes were employed, such as CS for code-switching and SI' for social interaction, allowing for organizing observations systematically. In addition to written notes, video and audio recordings were used to capture words and the entire classroom's ambiance.

The research adopted a systematic approach to ensure the accuracy and richness of field notes. This involved using a notebook to record detailed observations during classroom observations, including the time and location of each observation. The field notes aimed to capture as much detail as possible, including any language switches or patterns of language use. Field notes were also supplemented by video to capture additional context and subtleties of communication. After each observation session, the notes were reviewed to ensure they were clear and accurate. Observations were also reflected upon to gain further insight into the phenomenon of code-switching. These strategies are based on Creswell & Poth (2016).

The total of 18 observations spanned 9 hours, as conducted over the span of a month and 2 weeks, visiting three different classes each week. Both KG1 and KG2 were observed at different times of the day. Table 2 shows detailed information about the observations.

Table 2: Total Number of Observations

Observation	Date	Class Observed	Time of Observation	Number Of Students
1	Oct. 23, 2023	KG2-B	8:00–8:30 AM	24
2	Oct. 24, 2023	KG1-B	10:10–10:40 AM	19
3	Oct. 25, 2023	KG2-C	8:45–9:15 AM	23
4	Oct. 30, 2023	KG2-B	10:10–10:40 AM	25
5	Oct. 31, 2023	KG1-B	8:00–8:30 AM	18
6	Nov. 1, 2023	KG2-C	8:45–9:15 AM	22
7	Nov. 6, 2023	KG2-B	8:45–9:15 AM	25
8	Nov. 7, 2023	KG1-B	10:10–10:40 AM	20
9	Nov. 8, 2023	KG2-C	8:00–8:30 AM	23
10	Nov. 1, 2023	KG2-B	8:00–8:30 AM	24
11	Nov.14, 2023	KG1-B	8:45–9:15 AM	19
12	Nov.15, 2023	KG2-C	10:10–10:40 AM	22
13	Nov.20, 2023	KG1-B	10:10–10:40 AM	25
14	Nov.21, 2023	KG2-B	8:45–9:15 AM	21
15	Nov.22, 2023	KG2-C	8:00–8:30 AM	23
16	Nov. 27, 2023	KG2-B	8:45–9:15 AM	21
17	Nov. 28, 2023	KG2-B	8:00–8:30 AM	24
18	Nov. 29, 2023	KG1-B	10:10–10:40 AM	20

3.5.1 Selection of Classroom Activities

In my study on code-switching among ESL kindergarten students, the selection of classroom activities for observation was both deliberate and targeted. The activities included group discussions, class discussions, and pair conferencing, which were chosen specifically for their richness in natural code-switching instances. This selection aimed to capture authentic student interactions in settings where code-switching was most likely to occur.

Video recordings were employed as the primary tool for documenting these interactions. Unlike audio recordings, video captures not only verbal exchanges but also nonverbal cues and classroom dynamics, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the context in which code-switching happens. This method aligns with McKay (2000), who emphasizes the importance of accurately documenting natural classroom interactions to enhance the validity and credibility of research findings.

The typical lesson structure in the English classroom further facilitated the observation of code-switching. From teacher-led discussions to student-centered activities, each part of the lesson offered unique opportunities for students to engage in code-switching. The teacher's role as a facilitator in these activities encouraged spontaneous student interactions, which were crucial for observing authentic code-switching behavior. Furthermore, the research aimed to investigate students' code-switching instances and purposes; therefore, student-oriented activities were preferred. The choice of these specific activities, combined with the use of video recordings, observation checklists, and field notes, was strategically aligned to understand the natural occurrence and motivations behind code-switching in a classroom setting.

3.5.2 Research Site

The study took place in one of the kindergartens of Al Ain's international private schools. This city is in the UAE. According to a report by the Abu Dhabi Statistics Centre the estimated population of Al Ain is around 766,689, making it the second largest city in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi after the capital city. The school follows immersive English language settings. Eight kindergarten teachers are working as classroom teachers, and they teach the main subjects (English, Math, Science) with the English language as the medium of instruction. All teachers are nonnative speakers of English, and they come from different nationalities: Syrian, Tunisian, and Egyptian.

As for the students, there are 163 students from different nationalities and diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. 67 students from 3 classes participated in the study. The observations took place in KG1-B, KG2-B and KG2-C. The participant's parents or caregivers had varying levels of education, with the majority having completed high

school or college, with some working in different jobs, such as education, healthcare, and finance. In contrast, others were self-employed, such as those in construction and transportation. The participants' families lived in a range of housing types, including apartments and villas, and some families shared accommodations with other families. The private school the participants in this study attend has a fee structure that includes kindergarten fees of 12,000–13,000 AED per year, which costs 3,267.80–3,540 USD, and covers the cost of tuition and classroom resources. In addition, the school charges an additional fee of 3,000≈ 816.95AED/USD for students who ride the school bus for transportation to and from the school. Furthermore, there is a separate fee of 1,000≈272.32 AED/USD for books and materials needed for the academic year. Finally, the school requires students to wear a uniform, which costs approximately 600≈ 163.39 AED/USD per set. In addition, the parents pay for other expenses related to their child's education, such as extracurricular activities and trips around 100 ≈ 27.23 AED/USD. So, the total spending on one child per year is around 17,700≈4820 AED/USD.

The population of kindergarten students in this school is 175 ESL kindergarten students in KG1 and KG2 from a private school in Al Ain, UAE. The participants were female and male, with ages ranging from four to six years old. All the participants were English language learners who came from diverse language backgrounds, such as Philippine, English, and the majority were Arabic.

3.5.3 Study Population and Sample

This study included 67 students selected from three kindergarten classes in a school. The reason for selecting this population was to have a diverse yet representative sample of linguistic practices among young learners in an immersive English language educational setting. Each class was observed to ensure a varied mix of student interactions and behaviors representative of the school's broader kindergarten population. The classes were selected based on accessibility and the willingness of the school administration to participate in the study.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were followed in this research, ensuring the rights, well-being, and confidentiality of participants. Informed consent was obtained, clearly outlining the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks. Participants, particularly young learners through their parents, can withdraw at any stage without consequence. Anonymity was maintained in reporting the findings, and pseudonyms were used to protect identities. Privacy during observations and video recording was safeguarded, and all data were securely stored (Khan, 2014). Ethical approval was obtained through the UAEU's Ethical Approval systems for Research in Social Sciences.

3.7 Data Analysis

The focus of this study is to explore code-switching in ESL kindergarten classrooms in the UAE. The discourse analysis approach was utilized to analyze the collected data, including observation checklists, field notes, and video recordings. This approach was thought to be helpful in answering the “what” and “how” questions related to the data. “Discourse analysis is the study of language-in-use. Better put, it is the study of language at use in the world, not just to say things but to do things.” (Gee, 2014). According to Gee (2014), it goes beyond just talking or writing; it is about using language to do things in the world, such as interacting and communicating with others, cooperating, and creating social structures. According to Gumperz (2015), Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS) is a method of discourse analysis that aims to establish qualitative analysis techniques that can explain our ability to interpret what people intend to communicate in their everyday conversations. By closely examining verbal and nonverbal communication, discourse analysis will reveal patterns, meanings, and social functions embedded in code-switching instances. This method aligns with the study's qualitative nature, ensuring a thorough exploration of language dynamics within an immersive ESL kindergarten (Arslan, 2023). In the context of this research, this definition was used to understand how students use language in the classroom, focusing on children's code-switching from English to Arabic.

According to Domalewska (2017), discourse analysis “allows in-depth analysis of patterns of code-switching as well as links discourse with the broader social context in which it is used” (p. 39). Gee (2014) explained that in discourse analysis, researchers often work with communication data that has already occurred, and the task the researcher has to complete is to reconstruct the context of the conversation as much as possible. Gee (2014) also pointed out that analyzing dialogs from familiar cultures can be challenging because individuals tend to fill in the gaps with their assumptions. Therefore, it is beneficial to look at things from a fresh perspective and sometimes even work with someone from outside the culture or context to get a more balanced view. To address this issue, pilot observations were conducted with another teacher in the hope of eliminating any possible biases or assumptions regarding gaps in the dialog or communication. Data analysis was conducted by observing students for one month and two weeks. During this time, students were observed in various activities, such as classroom discussions, group work, peer work, play time, writing activities, and classroom center activities. Three observations were made each week to collect data on code-switching instances, their frequency, the purpose for which they occurred, the teacher’s reaction, and the tasks that students were doing when these instances occurred. According to Gee’s guidelines in this study, classroom conversations were transcribed, and special attention was paid to instances of code-switching in which students switch from English to Arabic. The use of code-switching in an educational setting by identifying the patterns and reasons behind code-switching instances was tried to be understood.

All data were transcribed based on participant discourse. Video recordings were used and field notes were taken to get most words down from them, and then corrections were made where necessary. Furthermore, annotations were made, followed by more annotations for larger themes/topics as highlighted the instances in which code-switching happened, and the purposes of the instances were analyzed and notes were made that aligned to building tasks by Gee (2014), which then supported the subsequent line-by-line critical discourse analysis.

The findings of the data were recorded. A visual of the steps is included in Figure 2. These steps were inspired by the data collection process done by Ramdeo, (2023) in her research about “A critical discourse analysis of black women teacher experience.”

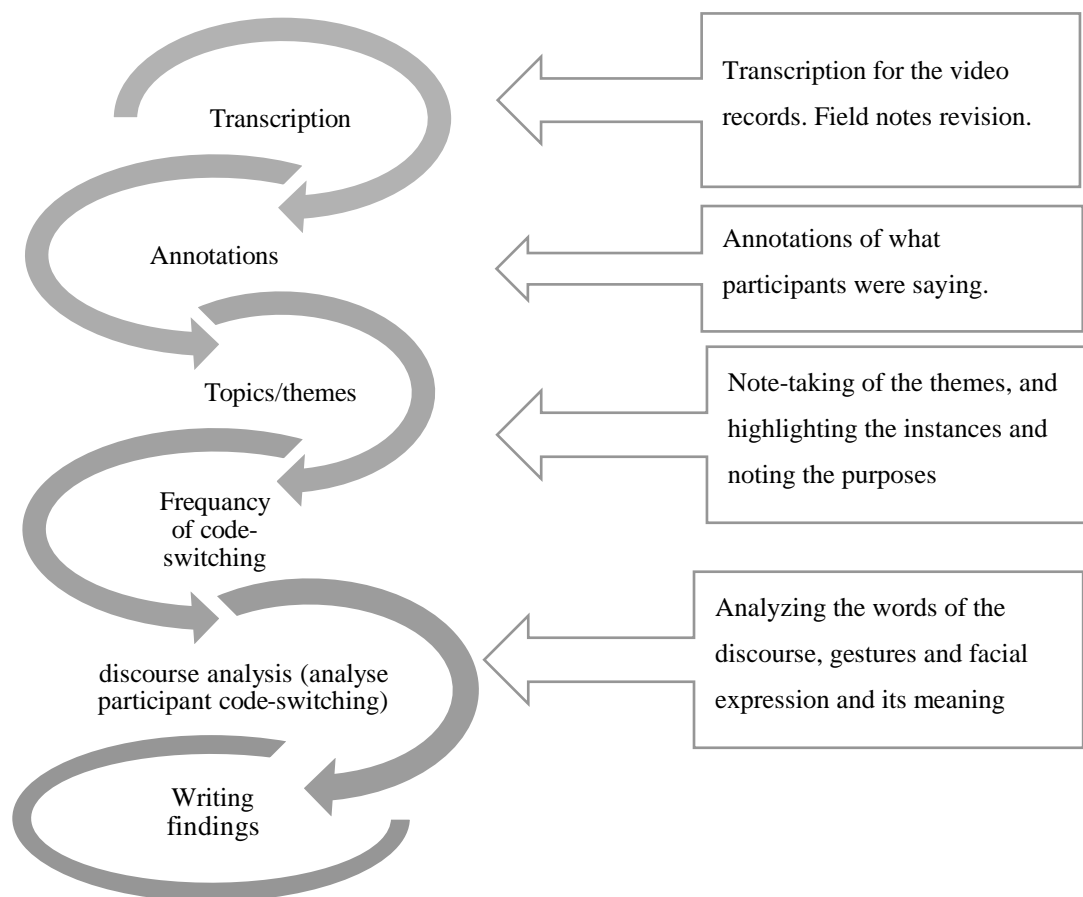


Figure 2 : Steps of Data Analysis

The dark gray arrows between each step represent the sequence of steps and the analysis completed. Based on the figure above, the following are the data analysis steps outlined for the study:

1. Transcription of Classroom Conversations: The initial step involves transcribing classroom conversations and videos to focus on instances in which students switch from English to Arabic. This transcription focuses on the moments and instances in

which students switch languages during their immersive English language classes. The aim is to document the language switch in detail to facilitate further analysis.

2. Annotation of Transcripts: After the transcripts are prepared, the data undergo a detailed annotation process. Conversations are annotated to highlight instances of code-switching. Further annotations identify larger themes or purposes behind these instances.
 - Identification of Patterns: Through detailed annotation and theoretical framework analysis, patterns in code-switching related to specific classroom activities, social interactions, and communicative needs are identified. This includes recognizing whether certain such activities prompt more code-switching and the typical functions they serve in different contexts.
 - Insights into pedagogical implications: The analysis yields insights into the implications of code-switching for teaching practices. It examines how teachers can leverage code-switching as a pedagogical tool to support bilingual learners' language development and classroom participation.
 - Contribution to education research: The extended analysis contributes to bilingual education by providing empirical evidence on the roles and functions of code-switching in immersive language learning environments. It highlights the complexity of bilingual learners' linguistic strategies and underscores the need for educational policies and practices that affirm and utilize students' linguistic repertoires.
3. Analysis Aligned with Theoretical Frameworks: The annotated transcripts are then analyzed in line with specific theoretical frameworks. The document mentions building tasks by Gee (2014) as a reference for analysis. This involves a line-by-line critical discourse analysis in which each instance of code-switching is examined to understand its purposes and implications. This analytical approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of how code-switching serves various functions in the classroom setting, such as facilitating communication, expressing cultural identity, or clarifying concepts that are difficult to explain in one language alone.

4. **Synthesis of Findings:** The last step involves synthesizing the findings from the critical discourse analysis. This includes summarizing the patterns, reasons, and implications of code-switching identified during the analysis. This synthesis aims to provide a coherent understanding of the role and significance of code-switching in the educational setting studied. The findings are compiled in such a way that they can inform educational policies, classroom practices, and further research on multilingualism and language learning.
5. **Visual Representation of Analysis Steps:** The document also mentions that a visual representation of these steps is provided (referred to as Figure 2), which serves as a supplementary tool for understanding the analysis process in a more structured and accessible manner.

When analyzing code-switching in an educational context among young multilingual learners, a comprehensive approach combining transcription, annotation, theoretical analysis, and synthesis is necessary to uncover the multifaceted roles of language switching.

Chapter 4: Results and Findings

This section of the study provides a comprehensive analysis of the data. This study explored the phenomenon of code-switching in ESL kindergarten classrooms in an immersive private school in the UAE. It aimed to understand the instances of code-switching, patterns, purposes, and teacher responses to code-switching. To achieve this goal, the study used a qualitative phenomenological case study. This chapter reports the findings from the qualitative data collection instruments, including observation checklists, field notes, and video recordings. The aim is to present a comprehensive analysis of the data and answer the following research questions:

- In which instances do kindergarten students code-switch in their immersive English classes?
- Which purposes do these instances of code-switching serve?
- How, if any, do classroom teachers react to these instances of code-switching when they occur?

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Results of Question 1 (The Instances of Code-switching)

In what instances do kindergarten students code-switch in their immersive English classes?

To answer the first question, data analysis was conducted by observing students in three classes in various activities, such as classroom discussions, group work, peer work, role play, reading activities, writing activities, and classroom center activities. Code-switching to Arabic occurred often during interactive activities, such as group discussions and playtime. Differences were found in the number of instances between the classes. Based on observations conducted in the three classes of KG1 and KG2, the instances of code-switching occurred more frequently among KG1 students than among KG2 students each week. For instance, in KG1 B, 21 instances were observed, while KG2 B and KG2 C had 19 instances. Table 3 summarizes the data I collected during this time.

Table 3: Instances of Code-switching

Activity type	Instances
1. Classroom discussion	7
2. Group work activity	12
3. Peer work activity	6
4. Writing Activity	3
5. Play time	10
6. Center activity	2

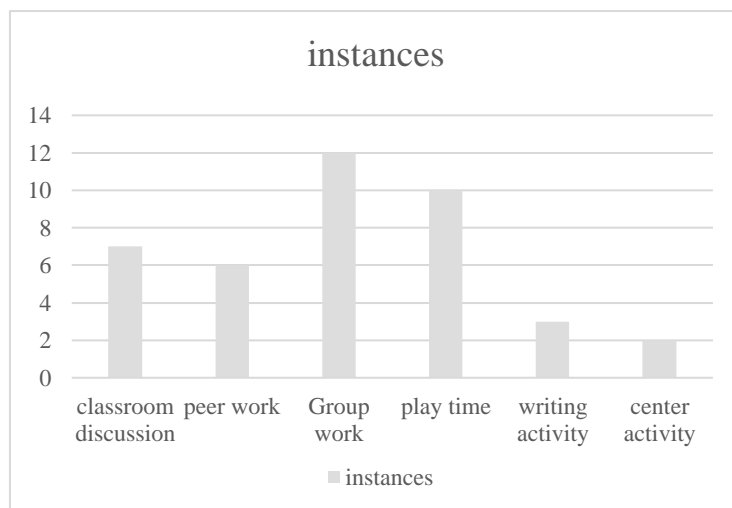


Figure 3: Instances of Code-switching

To answer the first question, this section discusses various instances in which kindergarten students engage in code-switching during their immersive English classes. In this research on code-switching among kindergarten students, “instances” referred to specific examples of code-switching that were observed during particular activities. Based on the data collected, this bar graph illustrates how frequently code-switching occurred during classroom activities, such as storytelling, group discussions, playtime, and others. Following is an analysis based on the graph in Figure 3.

4.1.1.1 Group Work

This study found that group work activities tended to have the highest number of code-switching instances, that is, 12. This can be attributed to these activities' collaborative nature of these activities in which students may use all their language resources to communicate with their peers effectively. In addition, this may be due to the interactive nature of group work. For example, during an English lesson in an immersive class, a group of KG1 students sat at a table of six members while doing the activity, and they were engaged in an activity in which they needed to find pictures that started with the letter "D."

Excerpt 1

Male Student A: "هاي؟ هاي بال D" (Meaning, is this D?)

[Student picked up the flashcard and asked his friend if the picture started with the letter D].

Male Student B: "Yes." [He responded affirmatively to his colleague].

Male student C: "Donuts" [pointing to the flashcard that has a picture of donuts]

Male student D: "Dinosaur ب بيداً D" (Meaning, Dinosaur begins with D). [Student picked up a flashcard of the dinosaur picture and informed his colleague that the word Dinosaur begins with D.]

The type of code-switching in this excerpt had to do with questioning (Is this letter D?) Student A needed clarification from peers that the flashcard containing the picture of Donut is a word that starts with, indicating that the student was not entirely certain of the word. As for student D, he, in turn, confirmed his knowledge of the word dinosaur by pointing to the flashcard containing its picture and confidently stating that this is the word dinosaur, which starts with the letter D.

Following is another example of code-switching during a group work activity. In this example, the students gathered around the table for their group activity; they were focused on the worksheet in front of them, filled with various images and a blank where they had to find the beginning sound and write it in the blank.

Excerpt 2

Female Student A: “What is this?” [The student asked one of her classmates about a picture on the worksheet.]

Male Student B: “هذي Van” (Meaning, this is a Van) [he pointed to the picture and answered her].

Female Student A: “وهذي شو؟” (And, what is this?) [Pointing at another picture on the worksheet and asking again.]

Male Student B: “This is a cup.” [The student pointed to the picture on Student A’s worksheet and answered her question.]

In this example, the type of code-switching serves two primary functions: clarification and confirmation. Student A asked her classmate about the picture on the worksheet to seek clarification and demonstrated her need to understand and correctly identify the objects for the task at hand. By using English to ask, “What is this?” Student A opened the door for interaction, addressing her peers in the language of instruction and reflecting on a shared educational context.

Student B responded to the queries by alternating between Arabic and English. His first response, “هذي Van” (Meaning, this is a Van) provides the needed clarification in Arabic, suggesting that the switch to Arabic may facilitate a more straightforward or confident answer. This indicates his comfort in using his native language to ensure the accuracy of the information shared. When female Student A continues with another question, “وهذي شو؟” (And, what is this?), she switches to Arabic, influenced by the

precedent set by Student B's initial response, signaling an adaptive linguistic strategy to maintain effective communication. Male Student B's subsequent reply, "This is a cup," in English not only confirms the identity of the second object but also mirrors the bilingual dynamic of their interaction, displaying a fluidity in language use that caters to the task's requirements.

4.1.1.2 Playtime

The second-highest number of instances (10) was observed during playtime, indicating that the informal and playful context allows students to switch between languages freely. This may be because they used language in a more spontaneous and less structured way, and because they were not surveyed by teachers as intently as when working on other forms of classroom activities.

During free play time in KG1, all students gathered on the carpet and engaged in playful classroom toys. Among them, a small group of female students played with a set of cooking-related toys on the side of the carpet.

Excerpt 3

Student A [holding a basket filled with kitchen toy items, looks at her classmates to play with her.]

Student B: "I want this egg." [She said to her friend as she reached for a plastic egg in the basket].

Student A: "Do you want this? خديها" (Meaning, take it) [She asked, holding up a basket filled with plastic toys, then added in Arabic, "خديها" (Take it.)

Student C: "بعدولي ما في مكان اعطوني صحن" give me" (Meaning, move over, there is no space, give me a plate, and then add in English, "give me.") [Trying to find a space for herself in the crowded area called out to her friends].

A type of code-switching in the fifth line is a combination of a question and a command within the interaction. The type of code-switching of Student C is order. This instance displays how bilingual speakers can fluidly navigate between languages to suit the communicative needs of the moment, effectively employing code-switching to enhance the clarity and impact of their message.

Student A's use of both English and Arabic to offer a toy to her peer is a prime example of this phenomenon. By framing her offer as a question in English ("Do you want this?") and then immediately reinforcing it with a command in Arabic ("خديها," meaning "Take it"), she adeptly uses code-switching to ensure her intention is clear and to encourage a positive response. This combination of question and command reflects a strategic use of language to emphasize the offer's sincerity and urgency, making it easier for her peer to accept the toy without hesitation.

Student C's behavior, marked as an order, demonstrates how code-switching can be used in group dynamics. By requesting an object in a mix of Arabic and English ("بعدولي ما في مكان اعطوني صحن, give me"), Student C not only communicated her physical need but also asserted her place within the social interaction. The use of Arabic at the beginning of the request conveys a personal appeal to her peers, leveraging a shared linguistic and cultural background to foster a sense of camaraderie and mutual understanding. The switch to English for the final part of the request ("give me") then serves to reinforce the immediacy of the need in a straightforward manner, ensuring that the request is accessible to all participants regardless of their primary language.

4.1.1.3 Classroom Discussion

This activity involves a moderate number of instances of code-switching (6). Students may need to switch between languages or dialects during classroom discussions to effectively clarify meaning to teachers. In addition, the moderate number of instances could also be attributed to the fact that this section of the classroom is teacher-controlled. Teachers directed the discussion in a way that would allow for minimal code-switching to take place.

For example, during a classroom discussion in the introduction of the English lesson, where students were sitting on the classroom carpet, the teacher displayed many words on the slideshow and directed the students' attention to a word on the board as they sat in a semicircle.

Excerpt 4

The classroom teacher: "Who knows what this word is?" [Teacher pointing to the pronoun 'I' displayed on the smart board]

Female Student A: "انا اعرف, I know this word."
(Meaning: Me, I know, I know this word) [Keen to answer, she raised her hand and answered].

In this example, the student tried to show her readiness and confidence that she knew the answer. In this example, the student initially used Arabic to express her eagerness and confidence, possibly because Arabic is her first language, making it a more instinctive choice for conveying strong emotions or assertiveness. By starting in Arabic and then switching to English, she not only affirmed her understanding of the question but also ensured her readiness was clear to both the teacher and her classmates. This response might have been a way to make sure her eagerness to participate was understood by everyone, bridging the gap between her comfort language and the classroom's language of instruction.

4.1.1.4 Peer Work

Compared to group work or playtime, peer work involves fewer instances (6) of code-switching. However, it is still evident that the students also tended to switch to Arabic during this activity. This suggests that, although the number of participants is lower, students still resort to code-switching less frequently than in group settings.

For example, during the English class activity time, the teacher gave two male students a laminated sheet with a passage to work together as peers to find the letter D in the passage.

Excerpt 5

Male Student A: “I found it, حصلتھا” [smiled] (Meaning, I found it. I found it) [Students were sitting together on a table, holding markers, and looking for the letter D in the passage on a laminated sheet was given to them].

Male Student B: “كفو عليك” (Meaning, “Well done”) is an Emirati Arabic expression used to commend someone for a job well done or to express admiration for someone’s achievement.

There are two types of code-switching here. The first is observed in the first line, where the student expresses his happiness upon finding the letter D. It is an expression of success. However, the fifth line involves an affirmative response by the other student, who offers praise to reinforce and commend Student A positively for his actions.

4.1.1.5 Writing Activity

There are limited instances (only 3) of code-switching during writing activities. This is because writing is usually an individual task that demands the consistent use of language to complete the task according to the given instructions. This can explain why there is less switching to Arabic during these activities.

For example, in KG1, during the writing activity, the students sat with the teacher at the table to do one. The teacher guided the students to write a sentence on their writing sheets. She started to call the words one by one, “I see a cat,” and then she wrote them on her board to show the students how to put the words to write a sentence. Two students in the group sat next to each other and started the conversation between them.

Excerpt 6

Student A: [“He took the eraser to erase the word that he had written incorrectly on the sheet.”]

Student B: “Give me المساحة” (Meaning, give me the eraser.) [He asked his friend and took the eraser to erase, as well].

Student A: “اشوف ‘see’!” (Meaning, let me see the word “see”). (Looked at his friend’s paper to see the word.)

In Excerpt 6, the type of code-switching observed can be characterized as situational code-switching for clarification, assistance, and directing attention, which occurs when the switch in language use is prompted by the specific situation in which the speakers find themselves. This type of code-switching is often driven by the need to achieve a particular communicative goal depending on the immediate social or linguistic context. Student B’s request, “Give me المساحة” (the eraser), is an example of code-switching where the speaker starts in English and switches to Arabic for the key object of the request. The switch to Arabic might indicate a more comfortable or precise expression in the speaker’s first language, especially for familiar objects, suggesting that the use of Arabic ensures the request is clearly understood. When Student A said, “اشوف ‘see’!” (Meaning, “Let me see ‘see’!”), there is a blending of Arabic and English to direct attention to a specific word (“see”) that is the focus of their activity. This instance shows how speakers can fluidly combine languages to navigate their learning environment, using code-switching to focus attention and clarify their intentions.

4.1.1.6 Center Activity

Center activities with the lowest count (1) may offer the least opportunity or need for code-switching. This could be due to their structured or individualistic nature or their focus on specific tasks that do not encourage language switching.

For example, in the reading center, in KG2, during the English lesson, two female students were pretending to be a teacher and a student role. The students were given laminated words with pictures:

Excerpt 7

Student A: “شو هذي ‘ف.ج’؟” (Meaning, “What is this? ‘F.J’”). [Student A pretended that she was the teacher. She was holding the card. Then she pointed to the picture on the card and asked her friend, calling her name “What is this ‘F’” to identify the picture.]

Student B: “Jet.” [Answered the question].

[The type of code-switching here is questioning in a role-play game]

What is interesting in this excerpt is that the student pretending to be a teacher used Arabic rather than English, despite the latter being the language used by teachers in English classes.

According to the previous examples, this study provides insights into the language use patterns of kindergarten students in different educational settings. This suggests that the structure of a task and whether it is done individually or collaboratively significantly influence the frequency of code-switching. The presence of teachers and the extent of their facilitation of tasks and interactions also affect code-switching. It was seen in the excerpts above that ‘freer’ activities, such as play, had more opportunities for code-switching than teacher-led activities or individualistic activities.

4.1.2 Results of Question 2 (Purposes These Instances of Code-switching Serve)

This section delves into the observed purposes of code-switching that took place, juxtaposed against predetermined categories, including communication purposes, social interaction purposes, and identity purposes. Table 4 summarizes the number of purposes and frequency of every purpose.

Table 4: Purposes of Code-switching

Purpose Category	Specific Purpose	Frequency
Communication Purposes	Clarification and correction	6
	Reiterating messages	3
	Filling a gap in communication	5
	Facilitating communication	6
	Instructional support	5
Social Interaction	Show membership and belonging	2
	Setting group rules	3
	Power and solidarity	4
	Being friendly and part of the group	3
Identity Purposes	Cultural background and personal preferences	3

4.1.2.1 Communication

Code-switching is a purposeful activity with functions and intentions assigned to this behavior. This suggests that people code-switch between languages for many reasons. In line with this, this study provides examples demonstrating how code-switching serves the different communication purposes observed during data collection. These purposes varied between asking for help, bridging the English gap, overcoming English proficiency limitations, and facilitating communication. This can be seen in the following examples.

4.1.2.1.1 Communication (Clarification and Correction)

During the English lesson, two male students in KG2 played a game of Simon Says with the teacher while sitting on the carpet facing each other for peer discussion in the starter part of the lesson.

Excerpt 8

Teacher: “Touch your partner’s shoulder” [The teacher asked her students to do the action].

Male Student A: [Student A touches their partner’s head instead of the shoulder.]

Male Student B: [smiling] “My shoulder, مب راسي” [Meaning, my shoulder, not my head).

In this classroom excerpt, Student B's use of code-switching serves multiple communicative purposes within a discourse during a peer interaction while playing a game. To correct Student A's action, Student B responded with "My shoulder, مب راسي," which means "My shoulder, not my head." The use of the Arabic word "مب راسي" in the phrase directly addressed the mistake and provided a clear correction. This indicates that code-switching here ensures understanding and correct actions within the context of the game's instructions. The use of Arabic emphasized correction. By code-switching, Student B used their shared linguistic background to emphasize the point more effectively than in English alone to ensure that the peer understood the instruction the second time, as he did not do, as the teacher said when she used English.

Another example of code communication for clarification and correction can be seen in the following example:

During a science class in KG2-C, the teacher was reading about farm animals' stories, holding a big book in her hands; she pointed to the picture of a hen shelter "coop" and introduced the term "coop" while describing where chickens live.

Excerpt 9

Teacher: "The chickens live in a coop. Can you say 'coop'?"

Student A: "قفص?" (Meaning, cage?)

Student B: "No, not قفص. Coop بيت الدجاج, where chickens sleep."

In this example, Student B helps clarify the term "coop" for Student A, who mistakenly thinks it means "cage." By using both the incorrect Arabic term "قفص" and the correct term "بيت الدجاج" (chicken house), Student B effectively helps his peers understand that a "coop" is specifically a chicken house, not just any cage. Student A, who is not familiar with the English word "coop," attempted to find a corresponding term in Arabic and suggested "قفص" (meaning "cage"). However, "قفص" is a general term for any small

animal enclosure that is not specific to chickens. Student B responded to Student A's answer by code-switching between Arabic and English. By saying "No, not قفص. Coop بيت الدجاج," Student B clarified the meaning of "coop" by providing the accurate word, "بيت الدجاج" (chicken house), which specifies the kind of shelter meant specifically for chickens. The switch between languages (Arabic and English) allowed Student B to address the confusion directly and effectively. Student B used English to reaffirm the term being discussed ("coop") and Arabic to correct the misunderstanding, making the explanation accessible and clear to Student A.

Here is another example of code-switching for clarification: During a math lesson in KG2 about 3D shapes, while the students were sitting on their chairs, the teacher held up a sphere showing the shape to the students and asked the children to name the shape.

Excerpt 10

Teacher: "What shape is this?"

Student A: [Looks unsure] "دائرة؟", meaning circle?"

Student B: "No, مب دائرة, it's a sphere like a ball, not flat.

The teacher introduces a 3D shape and a sphere and asks the students to identify them. Student A mistakenly refers to it as a "دائرة" (circle in Arabic), which is incorrect, as "circle" represents a 2D shape, not a 3D. The confusion likely arises from the visual similarity between a circle and the visible outline of a sphere. Student B code-switched between both Arabic and English. By saying, "No, مب دائرة, it's a sphere like a ball, not flat," Student B uses Arabic to directly address and negate the mistaken term ("مب دائرة" meaning "not a circle") and then switches back to English to provide the correct term and describe it ("it's a sphere like a ball, not flat"). This not only corrects the misunderstanding but also helps visually and conceptually differentiate between a flat circle and a volumetric sphere. One more example of code-switching of communication for clarification is as follows.

4.1.2.1.2 Reiterating Messages

Code-switching is also used to reiterate messages, which is the act of repeating what has been said earlier in another language with the intention of making the message clearer and better understood.

These instances were examples that took place during the activity time when students were directed to sit as a group, and the group leader was asked to name a word from the words such as can, see, am, I, look, like) placed on their table for his colleagues in the group, and they had to find the word.

Excerpt 11

Group leader [male]: “Find the word ‘can’” [He asked his colleagues to find the word “Can”].

Student A [male]: “This is ‘can,’ give me” [he was looking at his friend (Student B) and waiting for him to pass the word)

[Student B is sitting in the same group.]

Student B [male]: [He did not respond]

Student A: [repeated many times], “Give me.... give me ‘can’ .” عطني اياها” (Meaning give me Give me ‘can,’ give it to me.) [He asked his friend to pass the word ‘can’ and repeated many times give me]

In this example, speakers may adjust their speech to communicate effectively with others. The example shows that code-switching bridges language gaps between speakers in a common language. Code-switching was, thus, seen as a device to ensure understanding where the student asked his friend many times as he repeated the word “give me” “give me” (showing empathy as the student was not angry or in a hurry he patiently repeated the phrase many times), but when he did not find a response, he switched to Arabic to make sure that they understood him. Student: (quietly) “Give me.... give me ‘can’ .” عطني اياها” (Meaning give me Give me ‘can,’ give it to me.)

4.1.2.2 Communication

This involves filling a gap in communication in situations where students have limited vocabulary in English. During the discussion time in the introduction of the reading class in the KG-1 class, where all students were seated at their desks, the teacher displayed a slide show of different sight words in front of the students and asked the students questions:

Excerpt 10

Teacher: “Which one is the word ‘I’?” [Using her stick, she pointed to the word with the yellow background on the board.]

Female student: “I found it, emm الأصفر”
(Meaning, I found it, emmm, and the yellow one).
[Student was trying to retrieve the word yellow.]

Teacher: “Good job, the yellow one is the word ‘I.’
[The teacher smiled.]

The data illustrate evidence that the child faced difficulties finding the right word, did not remember the word, or simply did not know the color’s name in English. The filler ‘em’ (line 4) shows that she was looking for the word yellow; this shows that when bilingual or multilingual speakers encounter a vocabulary gap, they use a common linguistic strategy of recalling or searching for the word in English, as seen in the example with the word “‘yellow’.” Therefore, the girl switched to Arabic to complete the sentence for the previous reasons.

In the following example, two male students talked to each other during center time during an English lesson, which was about nouns. While they had a task of writing words, they chose from the words placed in the writing center on the writing board.

4.1.2.3 Communication to Facilitate Communication and Instructional Support

Expert 11

Student A: [He picked up the marker and started to think of a word.]

Student B: [He was waiting for him to write the word, then he said]: “Write, *يلا*” (Meaning, go ahead, and write).

[Student A wrote the word “dog”] then Student B asked: “Write.....mmm” [he was thinking of a word] then Student A interrupted him saying: “*بالعربي*” (meaning say it in Arabic)

Student B: “*اكتب* book.”

Student A: [He wrote the word “book” and asked]: What else?

Student B: “Duck” [He asked his partner to write “duck”]

Student A: [He drew a duck on the board].

Student B: “*اكتب... اكتب لا ترسم*” (meaning, write, write, do not draw)

In the discourse between Student A and Student B, the code-switching observed in the provided example served following communication purposes:

- Facilitates communication: During their conversations, the students use different languages to ensure that their message is clearly understood. If students struggle to find a specific English word or want to expedite communication, they switch to Arabic. Whenever a student urges his or her peer to write by saying “*يلا*” (which means “go ahead and write”) or “*بالعربي*” (which means “say it in Arabic”), it is a way to move ahead with the task efficiently. This indicates that they comprehend each other better in their native language, which can be particularly helpful for clarifying instructions or concepts.
- Instruction support and correction: The students used code-switching to negotiate meaning and ensure precise communication of ideas. For instance, when a student is uncertain about how to proceed or wishes to clarify what the other should do

(“اكتب لا ترسم”“), switching to Arabic helps in making the instructions clear and unambiguous.

4.1.2.4 Social Interaction

Within the setting studied in this work, the observations showed that code-switching served as a nuanced tool for social interactions among participants in the immersive setting, once again, especially during the informal, playful context and in the absence of the teacher’s presence, where students code-switch freely. This may be due to the less structured use of language. Here are some examples that illustrate the code-switching purposes that serve social interaction.

Show membership and demonstrate belonging to a group of people: Speakers code-switch when they desire to build a connection with each other. The following excerpt shows the students’ efforts to enact a relationship with others through code-switching.

During playtime, a group of 3 female students were playing in the classroom, and in front of them, there was a basket full of colored play dough and toys. The students sat at the desk, and they had a conversation.

Expert 12

Student A: “Let’s pretend we’re cooking in a restaurant.”[She informed her colleagues to play with her, and then she picked up the Barbie and Batman toys and pointed to her friends, saying]: “I am the mom, and you take this. You are the dad.” [She gave her friend the Batman toy and asked her to pretend to be the dad].

Student B: Okay, I am the dad, “تعالوا نلعب.” (Meaning okay, I am the dad, let us play. [She took the Batman toy, picked up the restaurant plastic toys, and placed them on the table].

Student C: [“She walked closer to the two girls and joined them.”

Student B: “No, انت ما تلعبيش معنا” (Meaning, no, do not play with us) [She stared at student C intently and refused to let her join them].

[Student C gazed at Student A with a sad expression on her face.]

Student A: “OK, take this” [She gave her another toy to join them].

Student B: “يا, what do you want to eat?” [She pretended to work at a restaurant and play with her classmates, then she looked at the toy in front of her and her as she pretended that the toy was the customer in the restaurant.

Student A: “Give her the eggs.”

Student B: “خديها” (Meaning, take it) [She picked up the egg and motioned for her to take it].

Student C: “شكرا”

As can be seen clearly from the expert 12 using code-switching as a tool for social interaction among students within the context of pretend play. This example serves many social interaction purposes:

Being friendly and part of the group: When one student switches to Arabic to say “تعالوا نلعب” “let us play,” it is like saying, “come on, let’s all play together!” This makes other students who speak Arabic feel included and part of the fun.

Setting group rules and power and solidarity: When another student uses Arabic to say “انت ما تلعبيش معنا” (Meaning do not play with us) It is like setting a rule or giving orders for who can join in, making it clear they have their own circle they want to keep exclusive. Switching languages in this way acts as a form of exclusion, showing who is allowed in and who is not, based on whether they understand the language. This creates a clear line between members of the group and those left out, using language to control who gets to be part of their activities. It is a way of showing power and keeping the group’s identity strong by deciding who belongs and who does not.

Thanking and being polite: When a student says “thank you” in Arabic after being allowed to play, it is a way of saying that she is grateful and happy to be part of the group. Using Arabic in this way shows the others that she too is part of the group; shows solidarity and shows that she could speak Arabic, as did the other two students.

Overall, the code-switching observed in the transcript is used to show that the students belong to or are excluded from society. It creates a language environment where individuals can establish group boundaries and promote a sense of exclusivity, inclusivity, and solidarity among peers with similar linguistic backgrounds.

During the free zone time, students can choose between 8 classes. Each class has a different activity, such as the bakery zone and the Lego zone. During this period, students have the freedom to choose their classroom and the activity they want to do. During this time, a group of 3 male students were walking in the hall together, choosing the class and the activity they wanted, and they started the conversation as follows:

Expert 13

Student A: “See this one” [He pointed to the class logo to attract their friend’s attention to the zone area].

Student B: “شوفو, شوفو painting.” [He pointed to the painting zone, suggesting going there as they can paint].

Student A: “No... No” احسن, Play dough نلعب, تعالوا بنروح نلعب” (meaning, No. No, Play Dough is better. Common, let us go to play).

Student C: “تعالوا, يلا” (meaning, Common).

In this example, students use code-switch to suggest and negotiate different activities they can engage in during free zone time. Student “A” initiates the interaction by pointing out the class logo and then switches to Arabic to suggest playing with Playdough. Student B suggested going to the painting zone in Arabic. This is an example of how code-switching is a way to negotiate decisions with groupmates.

In a KG1 classroom setting, a teacher introduces a new activity involving blocks to build simple structures. In one of the groups, 8 students, as the children begin the activity, one student, takes the lead in organizing the group.

Excerpt 14

Student A: [Takes a handful of blocks] “Let us make the big tower! You put this here, and I will put it on top.”

Student B: “كيف؟” (Meaning, “How?”)

Student A: “تنشي، شوف” (Meaning, “Like this, look”);
“put this on the top, see, like this!”

Student C: “I want to try?”

Student A: “ايلا تعال سوي معنا” (Meaning, “Come, make it with us!”)

Student A utilized code-switching effectively to demonstrate both power and solidarity. Student A initially took charge of the group by instructing others on how to place the blocks. By switching languages seamlessly, Student A not only communicates instructions more effectively but also asserts a leadership role among peers. Recognizing that Student B might not fully understand instructions in English, Student A switches to Arabic, Student B’s native language. This act of switching languages demonstrates empathy and solidarity, making Student B feel included and supported in the activity. By concluding with an invitation in Arabic to build together, Student A reinforced a sense of teamwork.

In the KG1 classroom, a group of students set up a playtime activity on the carpet. At this time, the students interacted freely. The activity involves setting up a small market stall using toys and pretend money.

Excerpt 15

- Student A: [Setting up a fruit stand with toy fruits] “Let’s make a market! Do you want to sell these apples with me?”
- Student B: “ايوا, أريد أبيع التفاح معك.” (Meaning, “Yes, I want to sell the apples with you.”)
- Student C: “I’ll buy! What do you have?”
- Student A: [Responds to student C in English and then turns to Student B in Arabic] “في تفاح وموز، تعالوا” (Meaning, “We have apples and bananas, come on!”)
- Student D: [Interested in joining, speaks Arabic] “عادي؟” (Meaning, “Can I play?”)
- Student A: “Of course, we need a cashier. !تعال وساعدنا” (Meaning, “Come and help us!”)

This excerpt demonstrates several social interaction purposes facilitated through code-switching: Student A initiates the activity by inviting Student B, in a mixed language interaction, to join in selling apples. This inclusive approach helps bridge linguistic barriers and makes the invitation more personal and engaging. As the leader of the activity, Student A used both English and Arabic to communicate effectively with all participants, ensuring that everyone felt included. This creates a community-like environment in which children are encouraged to collaborate despite language differences. Student A not only invites participation but also assigns roles, such as the cashier role, to student D. This assignment, done partially in Arabic, not only clarifies the structure of the play but also validates the linguistic identity of the participants, fostering a sense of belonging and teamwork.

4.1.2.5 Identity

The data also revealed that code-switching was used for various purposes, including the expression of identity. One key function of code-switching is for children to express facets of their identities, their culture, and heritage.

For example, during the English class, while the students were doing a writing activity, they sat on the table drawing and coloring and then wrote a sentence to describe the picture they drew on the paper.

Excerpt 16

Student A (female):” I don’t like to draw, أحب اكتب “(meaning I like to write) [she looked not interested, then asked her friend: “show me, what did you draw?) [looked at her friend’s work to see her drawing].

Student B: “Oh, do you like to write ما احب اكتب احب ارسم” [smiled] (Oh, do you like to write? I do not like to write; I like to draw.

In this discourse, code-switching was observed as a tool for the expression of identity and personal preferences among the students. When Student A switched to Arabic to exhibit her personal preferences for writing over drawing, Student B also mimicked her in turn by displaying her preference for drawing over writing.

During the English lesson in the KG1 class, the teacher was tutoring the kids about some words beginning with “I,” and she mentioned the word igloo and displayed the picture of the igloo on the smart board. The teacher explained how they make igloo using the snow and the ice, then the students started a discussion about the ice and the snow after they saw the picture of the igloo. One male student raised his hand and interrupted the teacher, saying:

Student: “snow” أنا بحب ال (Meaning, I love the snow) I went to الاردن and I see snow.

In this case, the student’s comment about snow can provide information about his cultural and geographical identity. The student’s comment about snow offers glimpses into his cultural background, personal experiences, and linguistic identity. The student’s mention of his visit to Jordan suggests that he has a cultural connection or background in the region. In addition, by sharing his love for snow and recalling his experience of seeing

snow in Jordan, the student revealed a part of his personal identity and life experiences. The student also sets himself apart from most other students who live in the UAE, where there is no snow, and most of the students could not have had the same experience as his.

4.1.3 Results of Question 3 (Teacher’s Reactions to Code-switching)

How, if any, do classroom teachers react to these instances of code-switching when they occur?

The third question in this study was: How, if any, do classroom teachers react to these instances of code-switching when they occur? One of the objectives of this study was to observe and investigate the teachers’ reactions to code-switching among young learners when there was a specific policy that discouraged the use of Arabic in the classroom. Three primary reactions were identified: recasting, ignoring, and requiring students to answer in the target language. The data collected over multiple observations also revealed that the predominant strategy employed by teachers in response to code-switching instances was recasting. Moreover, there was a difference between the teacher reactions to code-switching in the 3 classes. For example, one of the teachers in KG2 B from the 3 classes used only recasting, while the other teachers in KG1 B and KG2 C asked students to use the target language only; sometimes, they ignored the code-switching, and a few times, they recast. One of the two teachers in KG2 C asked students to use the target language only more than the other teachers in KG1 A and KG2 B.

Figure 4 shows how teachers react to code-switching in immersive learning settings, categorizing responses as recast, ignore, or other, with data represented by frequency.

Table 5: Teacher’s Reactions

Recasting	Ignore	Direct instruction to use L2
22	5	9

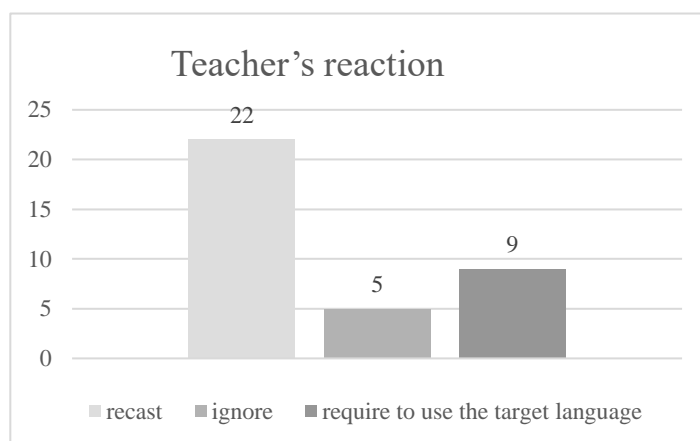


Figure 4: Teacher's Reactions

Based on Figure 4, the analysis is as follows: The bar graph presents data on teachers' reactions when encountering code-switching in the classroom. It is evident from the graph that "ignore" is the least frequent reaction, with only five instances recorded. This suggests that while some teachers ignore code-switching, it is not the predominant strategy when compared to "recast," which has a significantly higher count of 22 instances. Recast is the most common reaction, indicating that teachers often prefer to reformulate the students' incorrect language usage into the correct form. Here, teachers treat code-switching as a language error. The relatively small number of instances in which teachers ignore code-switching may imply a recognition of the importance of addressing language use in the classroom, whether through correction, instruction, or other methods. However, the existence of 'ignore' as a response also acknowledges that some educators could believe in the benefits of allowing the use of the first language in the classroom.

4.1.3.1 Recasting

Recast is a commonly used strategy by teachers for corrective feedback (Fathimah, 2020). Corrective feedback refers to the process teachers use to help learners fix language forms or meaning errors. Corrective feedback can be defined as any reaction of the teacher which clearly transforms, disapprovingly refers to, or demands improvement of the learner utterance. In the context of this research, recasting refers to a situation in which the teacher responds to a student's code-switched utterance by repeating or rephrasing the statement

in the target language. This approach is used to provide a correct model and reinforce the target language in the classroom.

Throughout the observed sessions, during observations of the activities across the three classes, recasting was recorded as the primary method teachers used to address code-switching. It occurred 22 times.

During classroom activities, teachers consistently indirectly rephrased code-switched utterances in the target language. This recasting strategy was observed during structured lessons and informal interactions among students. It is important to note that the instances of recasting were not isolated; instead, they were integrated into the flow of the classroom environment, demonstrating their natural incorporation into the teaching approach. The teachers in the ESL kindergarten classes observed seem to prioritize giving students accurate language models and abiding by the immersive language learning environment policy present at the school. Although young learners frequently code-switched to Arabic, the teachers were committed to steering them back to use the target language.

Excerpt 14

Example 1: Students learned about letter D during the English lesson. The teacher introduced words that begin with “D” to students by using a real-life object, a dice that starts with the letter “D.”

Teacher: What is this?

Student A: “A dice” *بنلعب فيها* (Meaning, “we play with it”)

Teacher: “Excellent! It is some dice; yes, we play with it.”

Example 2: The teacher was reading CVC words with her students. She placed a laminated card of the word ‘jet’ with the picture of a jet, and she asked her student:

Teacher: What is this? Let us sound it out first.

Teacher & student: /j/ /e/ /t/ 'jet'

Teacher: Do you know what a jet is? What does this mean?

Student: “بتطير؟” (Meaning, it flies).

Teacher: Yes, it can fly. Good job!

In both excerpts above, the teacher recasted the students' Arabic utterances back in English.

4.1.3.2 Ignoring Code-switching

Based on the graph, “ignore” is the least common reaction, with only five recorded occurrences. This implies that while some teachers may choose to ignore code-switching, it is not the most used strategy when compared to “recast,” which has a significantly higher count of 22 instances. In some cases, teachers chose to ignore code-switching during classroom activities. This reaction occurred in many instances for several reasons. It was common when the code-switching did not disrupt the overall flow of the lesson or was seen as a natural part of a student's language development. By ignoring code-switching, teachers could create a positive classroom atmosphere and avoid interrupting the students' engagement in the task.

They may find that by choosing not to interrupt or correct code-switching, they were able to create a supportive and inclusive classroom environment. Moreover, it allowed students to express themselves more freely and confidently. By ignoring code-switching, educators might see it as a normal part of learning a new language, during language learning and it is not erroneous.

For example, during the starter activity in the English lesson, the teacher called one group of her class who are the developing group in the class to gather around her; she was holding signs for the classroom centers and each sign has a picture for the specific center such as writing center, reading center and math center. Then she informed them that they would choose the center they wanted to go to and do certain activities. Two of these centers

were the ICT center and the reading center. Here is the transcript of the example that happened during the observation.

Excerpt 15

The classroom teacher: “Choose your activity, please.
Who wants to read?”

Male Student A: “Ms. E. أنا أأبى reading” (Meaning, I
want reading). [He pointed to the reading center].

The classroom teacher: “Ok, go there” [She gave him
the center sign on a stick and asked him to go to the
center].

In this case, the teacher chose not to comment on a student’s use of an Arabic utterance. This strategic decision can be deemed a nuanced and purposeful approach aimed at creating a supportive learning environment. The priority was to encourage communication and build confidence, rather than always enforcing strict adherence to language boundaries. The teacher’s reaction was supportive, and the student felt safe expressing himself.

4.1.3.3 Require Students to Use the Target Language

The gray part in the bar graph represents the number of teachers who require their students to use the target language, which accounts for nine occurrences. This approach reflects the enforcement of language-use policies within the classroom. Teachers may adopt the approach of increasing students’ exposure to and usage of the target language for various educational purposes. This approach can help students acquire language skills. However, it is important to consider the context in which this approach is implemented, as strict enforcement of the target language might discourage less confident students from participating. Such strictness might limit the participation of students who are not as fluent and create a participation gap in the classroom. This could lead to feelings of frustration and exclusion among learners who may already be struggling with language acquisition. On the other hand, some students may be hesitant to participate in discussions or ask

questions due to the fear of making mistakes, which can hinder their learning process and reduce classroom interaction. For example, during math activity in the KG2 class, students sat in their chairs at their desks to complete their math activity about addition. The teacher passed by the tables to check the students' work. In one of the classroom groups, two female students talked to each other.

Expert 16

[Student A solved a subtraction sentence and solved it incorrectly. She drew and counted the circles to solve the sentence instead of crossing out the circles].

Student B: “مب تشي, cross out the circles.” (Meaning, not like this, cross out the circles) [Student B looked at her friend's work and told her that her answer was wrong, and she had to cross out the circle instead of adding them together.

The classroom teacher: “‘F.J.’ Speak in English, please.” [She firmly commented on Student B's words calling her name].

In the given transcript, the teacher strictly enforces the classroom's English-only policy by instructing Student B to use English. The teacher addresses the student personally as “F.J.” and firmly tells her to “Speak in English, please.” This reinforces the rule with a clear emphasis on language immersion, highlighting adherence to the school's policy with regard to speaking Arabic in English class.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Introduction

In some educational settings, particularly in the immersive ESL educational setting in the UAE, where English is granted a pivotal role, strict policies are enforced in the classroom that prohibit the use of the first language even though students naturally mix their first language, which is Arabic, with English. Despite the strict policy to only speak

English, the research found that students often switch from English to Arabic. While the intent of such policies was to help students improve their English language skills by immersing them in an English-speaking environment (Supriyono et al., 2020), these include the discouragement of code-switching and the use of students' native language, potentially hindering effective communication and the overall language learning process (Sampson, 2012). Research indicates that these restrictions may cause anxiety and stress and negatively impact language acquisition and self- and cultural identity. However, the UAE educational setting is a multicultural environment where code-switching is a common phenomenon, including early childhood education settings. The results of this study confirmed that students use it for many purposes, including communication, to facilitate communication and fill the language gap. They also used it as a tool for social interaction to show membership and demonstrate belonging with a group of people, and they used it as a key function to express their identity and who they are to talk about their preferences and their cultural background.

This chapter aims to interpret the findings within the context of existing literature, offering insights into the evolving role of code-switching in education and proposing implications for curriculum development, teacher training, and language education policymaking in ESL immersive educational settings to be more inclusive towards code-switching.

4.2.2 Summary of Findings

The research provides rich insights into the phenomenon of code-switching in ESL kindergarten classrooms within an immersive private school setting in the UAE. The findings offer a nuanced understanding of how, when, and why kindergarten students engage in code-switching and the teachers' reactions to code-switching. Here is a summary structured around the research questions.

With regards to the first research question, which ask about the instance in which kindergarten students code-switch in their immersive English classes. The results of the study found that bilingual kindergarten student is code-switched from English to Arabic in the following instances students in various activities such as classroom discussions,

group work, peer work, role play, reading activities, writing activities, and classroom center activities. Code-switching to Arabic occurred frequently during interactive activities such as group discussions and playtime.

For the second research question which investigated the purposes of code-switching, the data revealed that in accordance with the literature, students code-switched for communication, social, identity. In specificity to communication, students code-switched for Clarification and correction, to reiterate messages, filling a gap in communication in situations where students have a limited vocabulary in English. As for social purposes, the students code-switched to show membership and to demonstrate belonging with a group of people, Setting Group Rules and Power and solidarity. Finally, regarding identity, the observed instance showed that students code-switched to show her personal preferences and cultural and geographical identity. And finally, “recast” was the most common reaction, indicating that teachers often prefer to reformulate the students' incorrect language usage into the correct form. Teachers here treat code-switching as a language error. The small number of instances where teachers ignore code-switching may imply a recognition of the importance of addressing language use in the classroom, whether through correction, instruction, or other methods.

Table 6 below summarizes the key discoveries from this research, offering a concise preview of the instances, reasons, and frequency of code-switching in the ESL kindergarten classroom. It also outlines the approaches employed by teachers to handle code-switching. The table underscores the intricate nature of code-switching as a diverse conduct that fulfills multiple communicative, social, and identity purposes in the language learning setting.

Table 6: Comprehensive Summary of Research Findings on Code-Switching

Category	Details	Frequency/Instances	Observations & Purposes
Activity Type	Group Work	12	The highest occurrence is that a collaborative nature encourages code-switching.
	Playtime	10	The second-highest informal setting promotes free language use.
	Classroom Discussion	7	Structured interaction with moderate code-switching.
	Peer Activity	6	Similar to group work but with fewer participants.
	Writing Activity	3	The individual nature of the tasks leads to minimal code-switching.
	Center Activity	2	Structured or individual tasks limit opportunities for switching.
Purposes	Communication	20	Facilitates understanding, clarifies, corrects, and bridges language gaps.
	Social Interaction	20	Establish group dynamics, Setting Group Rules, power, and solidarity, and demonstrating belonging.
	Identity Expression	3	Reveals personal preferences and linguistic identity.
Teacher Responses	Recasting	22	Most commonly, teachers reformulate student's code-switched utterances in English.
	Ignoring	5	The least common is that some instances of code-switching are overlooked to maintain flow or support natural development.
	Requiring English Use	9	Teachers enforce an English-only policy to encourage immersion, potentially limiting the participation of less fluent students.

The study discovered that students frequently switch from English to Arabic in immersive environments, despite strict regulations requiring the use of only the target language. According to the results of Pollard (2002), in a bilingual classroom, it is common to observe code-switching. Students frequently switched between Spanish and English during both class and play to communicate with their teachers and peers. This highlights code-switching as an advanced strategy for navigating bilingual environments; it is not just compensation for linguistic deficiency. As highlighted in some research, code-

switching is often perceived as an unconscious behavior among bilingual speakers. However, Das (2012) argued that code-switching serves specific communicative purposes rather than being arbitrary. “Bilingual speakers claim that code-switching is an unconscious behavior, but research has shown that it is not a random phenomenon”. As attested by Ariffin and Rafik-Galea (2009, p. 1). Code-switching is seen as a purposeful activity. There are functions and intentions assigned to this behavior” (p. 1). This assertion aligns with earlier findings by scholars, such as Myers-Scotton (1983, 1989), who have also recognized the intentional and functional aspects of code-switching in bilingual communication. Such results were also in line with this study’s findings, which showed children using code-switching for communication, social, and identity purposes.

4.2.3 Research Question 1

With regard to the first research question—*In what instance do kindergarten students code-switch in their immersive English classes?*—the data gathered throughout the observations conducted in this study, many instances of code-switching have been observed across different classroom activities, and students switch from English to Arabic more often during interactive and collaborative activities like group work and playtime. This suggests that the social nature of these activities provides a comfortable environment for students to utilize their entire linguistic repertoire. This aligns with and contributes to research emphasizing the importance of using a linguistic repertoire strategically in multilingual settings. The high frequency of code-switching during group work and playtime indicates that students rely on their native language to navigate complex social interactions and tasks that require collaboration. Recent research supports the idea that the social nature of activities such as group work and playtime provide an ideal environment for the utilization of a student’s full linguistic capabilities. Similar results were also found in a study by Galali and Cinkara (2017), in which they shed light on why students use their first language (L1) in social situations, particularly while learning English as a foreign language. They suggested that students revert to their first language when they have low proficiency levels in the target language (TL) and feel more comfortable expressing themselves in their native language. Moreover, the necessity for successful communication influences students’ decisions to transition to L1, particularly during tasks

that involve considerable collaboration or when the linguistic repertoire in the TL is restricted (Hidayati, 2012). Similar results were found in this study, as shown in Table 5, where the high frequency of code-switching occurred during group work and playtime activities, which require interaction between the students.

Another explanation for why students find it easier to code-switch to their first language during activities is indicated by Swain and Lapkin (2013), who illustrate that students who work together in a multilingual environment feel more at ease using all their languages, which can enhance their problem-solving and critical thinking abilities.

4.2.4 Research Question 2

As for the second question—what purposes do these instances of code-switching serve? The observed code-switching served multiple purposes, including facilitating communication, aiding in social interactions, and expressing identity. This fits what recent research suggested: code-switching can serve several functions in communication, identity, and social interaction.

Sociolinguists who study code-switching highlight non-linguistic factors such as the topic of conversation, the setting, the relationship between participants, community norms and values, and social, political, and ideological changes that influence a speaker's choice of language during a conversation. Code-switching is a purposeful activity with assigned functions and intentions (Myers-Scotton, 1989). These principles were visible in this study, particularly in instances where students were discussing the game's instruction, and the student tried to address the mistake and provided a clear correction. The student code-switched to ensure understanding and correct actions within the context of the game's instructions. The use of Arabic emphasized the correction.

4.2.4.1 Purpose of Communication

The findings show that code-switching among students in kindergarten is more than just a linguistic deficiency (Das, 2012); rather, it is used for a variety of communication purposes. This is aligned with. Empirical research has shown that code-switching or mixing languages is common and serves important communication purposes (Myers-

Scotton, 1989). These purposes, such as code-switching for clarification and code-switching to reiterate messages, which were observed in this research were similar to the results of Backus (2000) as their data showed that speakers use code-switching to reiterate messages to make them more understandable and clearer.

Furthermore, the results of the study have shown that code-switching behavior is not random, nor is it seen as a sign of linguistic deficiency or inadequacy, but that the students code-switch for clarification, fill communication gaps, and facilitate instructional support. This illustrated the claim by Das (2012): “The excerpts shown in this article have shown that code-switching behavior is not random, and code-switching is also not always a sign of linguistic deficiency or inadequacy”. Rather, it is “a negotiation between language use and the communicative intents of the speakers”.

Furthermore, the results of my research emphasize the role of code-switching in enhancing communication between students, particularly for clarifying and bridging language gaps and highlighting its role in ensuring effective interaction and understanding among peers. For instance, when the child switched to Arab in expert 10: “I found it, emm.” الأصفر The data illustrate evidence that the child faced difficulties finding the right word, did not remember the word, or simply did not know the color’s name in English. The filler ‘em’ (line 4) shows that she was looking for the word yellow; this shows that when bilingual or multilingual speakers encounter a vocabulary gap. This perspective supports and expands the established literature on code-switching.

4.2.4.2 Purpose of Social Interaction

In social contexts, code-switching helped in negotiating social dynamics, demonstrating group membership, and establishing social norms. They stated that speakers may code-switch to express solidarity and affiliation with a particular group. According to Jan (2003), “Language switching commonly occurs when individuals, regardless of their bilingual proficiency, wish to demonstrate solidarity with a specific social group. In general, when speakers desire others’ approval, they tend to adapt, or accommodate, their speech to narrow the social distance between them” - This is evident in the findings,

whereby one student excluded another by using Arabic and, once permitted to be part of the group, the latter used Arabic to show her status and solidarity as part of the group.

When a student uses Arabic to say, “Don’t play with us,” it is like setting a rule or demonstrating power and hierarchy. The act of code-switching serves to exclude or gatekeep. This exclusion is a demonstration of power, delineating who is ‘in’ and who is ‘out’ of the social circle or activity based on language. Similarly, when the student used Arabic when she was allowed to be part of the group, she showed that she was part of the same social group and negotiated her membership and status as an insider (Jan, 2003).

4.2.4.3 Purpose of Identity

Code-switching can help individuals negotiate their identities by allowing them to express different aspects of their identities depending on the social context (Wei, 2018). This was evident in the results when the students discussed their preferences. One student code-switched to Arabic to express her preference for writing over drawing, while another student followed suit by indicating her preference for drawing over writing. This aligns with the work of García (2011), who argued that code-switching goes beyond linguistic necessity but is a powerful means of identity negotiation among bilingual speakers. Similarly, the interaction between students during a writing activity demonstrates how code-switching serves as a medium for articulating personal preferences and, by extension, individual identities. This observation resonates with the findings of Davies (1996) who argued that code-switching is often employed by speakers to convey solidarity or distinction within a given social context. The students’ decision to switch between English and Arabic while expressing their preferences implies that there is a strong connection between language use and self-expression, supporting the idea that linguistic preferences are deeply intertwined with personal and cultural identities.

In addition, the story about a student expressing his love for snow during a lesson on the letter “I” is an excellent example of code-switching as an identity marker. By switching languages to refer to his experience in Jordan, the student not only shares a personal memory but also emphasizes his cultural and geographic connections. This act of code-switching goes beyond mere communication, as it carries layers of identity based on

the student's personal history and cultural background. These instances reflect the views of Auer (1999), who argued that code-switching can provide insights into a speaker's social identity and cultural heritage.

4.2.5 Research Question 3

Finally, the part of this paper that focused on the third research question, which answered the question of How do classroom teachers react to these instances of code-switching when they occur? The findings of this study are in line with those of Al-Bataineh and Gallagher (2021), who also found that teachers hold negative perceptions toward the use of translanguaging in particular and the use of Arabic in the classroom. Also, these teachers have been trained to have such negative views toward code-switching and the use of Arabic in English classrooms because widely spread language teaching approaches are still grounded on a monolingual bias and languages are conceived as separate entities and, consequently, taught separately. Yet another explanation would be that, while these teachers might originally hold positive perceptions toward code-switching and the use of Arabic in their English classes, "For these teachers, it becomes unnatural or even inappropriate to go against the language policy established by either a country's language education vision or a school's language pedagogy beliefs" (Coelho et al., 2024).

The findings of this study showed that classroom teachers predominantly react to code-switching through recasting, aiming to correct language use, and they treat the use of the first language during the English language lesson as an error. The teacher's belief that the use of the L1 in L2 classroom is erroneous. The study by Coelho et al. (2024) indicated that some teachers have concerns that including L1 might detract from effective L2 acquisition, so they prefer to maintain an L2-exclusive environment. However, the teachers' views contrast with the literature that highlights the benefits of code-switching in bilingual learning environments. García (2011) and Creese and Blackledge (2010) argued that code-switching reflects bilingual competence, suggesting that it can support learning by making content more accessible and relatable to students' lived experiences. The monolingual bias in education and promotes practices that value students' linguistic diversity. In addition, Canagarajah (2011) viewed code-switching as a way for students to

negotiate their identities, suggesting that correcting it may hinder their ability to use their languages effectively.

The varied teacher responses, including ignoring code-switching at times, indicate a pragmatic approach to language teaching that balances adherence to an immersive English environment with the recognition of code-switching's natural occurrence in bilingual development. According to Cheng and Butler (1989), "Code-switching is a vital aspect of bilingualism and is a natural occurrence when two bilingual speakers engage in discourse".

This balance reflects an acknowledgment of the complex dynamics at play in multilingual classrooms, where language policy must be navigated with sensitivity to students' linguistic backgrounds and needs.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Implications

The findings of this study have several important implications for educational policy, classroom practice, and teacher training, particularly in multilingual settings. These implications are rooted in the observation and analysis of code-switching behaviors in immersive English language classrooms despite strict language policies.

This study's findings suggest that code-switching among kindergarten students in immersive settings is not merely a linguistic limitation but serves multiple communicative, social interaction, and identity purposes, demonstrating that the use of code-switching can be an effective communication tool that supports learning the TL and facilitates smoother communication in multilingual classrooms (Pollard, 2002). Previous studies have focused on code-switching as a strategic communication tool in bilingual settings that is useful for enhancing understanding and interaction and facilitating language learning and clarity in early childhood education, although not much has been done to emphasize its multifunctional role in kindergarten immersive settings. The results of this study will add one more advantage to ESL English as a second language policymakers in immersive settings to move away from the monolingual bias and the commonly held belief that code-switching hinders language learning and includes policies that are based on the most updated research on issues of code-switching. While numerous studies have focused on the occurrence and reasons behind code-switching in bilingual classrooms, this research offers a comprehensive examination of the code-switching phenomenon within ESL immersive kindergarten settings in the UAE. It highlights how code-switching serves not only for language development but also as a key tool for enhancing communication, fostering social interactions, and supporting identity formation among young learners. The results of this study explore different reactions of teachers to code-switching, ranging from recasting to ignoring to requiring the TL. This result may have a positive impact on the future of education by leading to professional development programs that help teachers understand the benefits of code-switching and encourage them to change their beliefs. It also emphasizes the need for training programs to teach teachers how to effectively

incorporate code-switching, or the use of the student's first language (L1), in classroom instruction and develop teachable strategies of translanguaging (Canagarajah, 2011).

The future effect of this study may lead to educational policies in school systems in immersive settings to benefit from the advantages of code-switching as a pedagogical tool that supports bilingual development, clarifies misunderstandings, fills vocabulary gaps, and facilitates smoother communication in multilingual classrooms (Sakaria & Priyana, 2018).

According to the findings of the instances of code-switching during collaborative and less structured activities such as group work, playtime, and peer interaction activities, the curriculum makers in immersive settings in the UAE should consider the practice of code-switching in designing their curriculum and should incorporate activities that not only integrate the TL but also the students' first languages. This approach can utilize the cognitive and social benefits of bilingualism and promote language acquisition more holistically and in a culturally responsive manner.

The findings support the idea that schools should encourage students to use all of their languages. The teachers adopted this approach of using the TL only to maximize students' proficiency in multiple languages. Students can learn effectively by utilizing their linguistic diversity and taking pride in it. However, the implications will be disseminated to teachers in the UAE to encourage positive attitudes toward code-switching by providing professional development sessions where teachers observe and practice how to integrate code-switching strategies into their teaching. Furthermore, hosting online courses and the widespread use of digital platforms to reach a larger audience of educators. These sessions can focus on the benefits of code-switching and provide real-time answers to teachers' questions. Moreover, the researcher will develop teaching materials with guidelines and examples of effective code-switching in classroom settings. These materials can help teachers understand how to use code-switching to enhance learning.

5.2 Recommendations

Given the broad nature of this study, it is suggested that future studies should be conducted on the phenomenon of code-switching among kindergarten students who were part of an immersive ESL setting in the UAE might further explore the perceptions of teachers and parents themselves regarding the occurrence of code-switching in this context of an immersive educational setting. In their beliefs, attitudes, and practices, this group of teachers presents a reservoir that could help inform how they support educational practices and policies when it comes to bilingual development and seek to support their language practices (García et al., 2014). It would be made possible to realize and understand the parents' perspective in code-switching and subsequently realize how the other familial or cultural orientations toward bilingualism and mixing languages affect the language of children.

Future studies can be carried out to research the long-term effects of code-switching on bilingual proficiency, academic achievement, and social integration. For example, to track children for a long time, hence learn how early experiences with code-switching and bilingual education lead to later academic success, and social relationships of the child.

In addition, an area for further study would be to compare code-switching practices and the corresponding results between diverse cultural or language settings. These immersive ESL kindergarten settings can be interesting to compare with other regions that host either ESL kindergartens or other languages used, as they may point to how cultural and linguistic context dictates code-switching behaviors and benefits or challenges.

Furthermore, experimental research was conducted, particularly testing certain pedagogic interventions that would help students uncover the benefits of code-switching in practice. The following section of the paper will discuss different classroom code-switching strategies that have been looked at with the help of various research experiments into their effect on language learning, cognitive development, and social skills.

Finally, future research can also delve into the cognitive and psychological aspects of code-switching among young learners, examining how bilingualism and code-switching

may determine cognitive flexibility, problem-solving, and identity (Barac & Bialystok, 2012). More of such research in this field will enlighten many on the benefits and challenges of being brought up bilingual in a world that has already gone global.

5.3 Limitations

The importance of this research lies in its investigation of code-switching among children attending English immersion kindergarten in the UAE. This study provides insights into language education and policy, challenging the notion that code-switching is a linguistic language error. However, it's essential to acknowledge the limitations and boundaries associated with this study. Limitations: This research intentionally focuses on kindergarten students in an English classroom in the UAE. The sample, restricted to students from three classes in a single school, may not fully represent the broader diversity of kindergarten educational settings or the range of code-switching phenomena across the UAE or in similar bilingual environments. The aim is to explore code-switching within this educational and age-specific context. While this deliberate choice enhances our understanding within this setting, it does restrict the study's applicability to age groups or different educational environments. By establishing these boundaries, we intend to offer insights into code-switching among bilingual learners while acknowledging the constraints that shape its scope and implications.

The data for this study was collected during the first term of the academic year. Our initial plan was to conduct 20 observations, but we encountered several challenges during this term. These included the midterm break, school trips, the UAE national days, and exams, which led to students leaving early and teachers being occupied. These circumstances significantly affected the number of observations and activities that could be carried out during this term.

Also, it may only focus on second-language learners and not consider Arab speakers of the languages being studied. The study may only use specific data collection methods, such as observations, and not consider other methods, such as language assessments. In addition to the sample size, the study may be limited to a specific sample

size, such as a certain number of students or classrooms in one school, and not consider a larger sample.

5.4 Conclusion

This research explored the phenomenon of code-switching, if any, among second language learners of English in an immersive kindergarten setting in the UAE. A qualitative phenomenological case study research method was implemented in this study, and the results showed that code-switching often occurred in many instances during several activities; it happened during interactive activities that require communication and interaction between students, such as group work and playtime. The study also showed that students still use their first language, Arabic, during immersive English classes. Code-switching is common among young children who speak multiple languages. The study showed that students still use their first language, Arabic, during immersive English classes. We should encourage students to use their mother tongue language and not consider it an error. The research has important implications for language education policies and practices in multilingual settings, as there is a lack of research on code-switching practices, specifically among kindergarten students in immersive language programs in the UAE. Therefore, finding for code-switching not to be viewed as a hindrance but rather as evidence of the huge multilingual repertoire of multilingual children is important. This would mean celebrating and embracing this natural disposition of children for code-switching, and by doing this, taking one step further to appreciate and respect their linguistic backgrounds. This perspective of code-switching being a resource rather than a deficit will open doors to educational practices that are more inclusive and more culturally sensitive. This makes every language important by using them together, including the child in the telling of “I see you, and I see who you are, including your special linguistic self. This underscores the need for a redefinition of “success” within language learning to include a criterion in which students negotiated multiple languages with ease and confidence. Celebrate your students’ linguistic diversity as a gateway to learning, understanding, and global citizenship.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

- Consent to Participate in a Research Study-

**[Exploring the phenomenon of Code-Switching in Immersive ESL
Kindergarten in a Private School in the UAE.]**

Dear valued parents,

My name is Abeer Albayari. I am a Master of Education (Med) student at the College of Education in the United Arab Emirates University and a teacher at the Future International School. I am currently conducting research for my thesis, titled “Exploring the Phenomenon of Code-Switching in Immersive ESL Kindergarten in a Private School in the UAE.”

As part of this research, your child will be observed during regular classroom activities during their English classes. This research study requires observing kindergarten classrooms to identify in what instance kindergarten students code-switch from English to Arabic in their immersive English classes in three areas (communication, social interaction, and identity). This research study aims to identify and analyze instances of code-switching for different purposes, communication, Identity, and social interaction purposes, with the specific goal of understanding the factors that influence ELL kindergarten students' code-switching behavior and the purposes that code-switching serves in their language learning and social interactions. Additionally, the study examines how code-switching facilitates communication in kindergarten classrooms and whether it has any implications for language acquisition in young children.

The researcher will also record audio and video during these observations for research purposes only. It is important to note that no personal information, including your child's name and details, will be associated with the audio and video recordings. The recordings will not be shared with anyone and will be used solely for research analysis.

Please read the following points carefully before deciding to give your approval to your son's or daughter's participation in this study.

1. All information provided by your son or daughter will remain confidential. The researcher will not identify your son or daughter by name in any reports using information obtained from this observation. Your son or daughter will remain anonymous.
2. The observation will last approximately 45 minutes and will take place in your son's or daughter's classroom, during their English lessons.
3. The information collected during this research will be kept strictly confidential. Your child's identity will remain anonymous in all research materials, and the audio/video recordings will not be shared with anyone.
4. You have the right to withdraw your son or daughter from participating in this study without any repercussions.
5. There are no foreseeable risks in your son's or daughter's participation in this study.
6. There are no direct benefits from your son's or daughter's participation in this study.

Informed Consent

I have read and understood the explanation provided to me with regard to the study, and I agree to consent to my son's or daughter's voluntary participation in this study.

(Name and signature of participant)

(Date)

(Name and signature of person
taking consent)

(Date)

(Name and signature of witness (if
participant unable to read/write)

(Date)

(Name and signature of
parent/guardian/next of kin (when
participant unable to give consent due to
age or incapacity)

(Date)

استمارة موافقة ولي أمر طالب لمشاركة ابنه/ابنته في بحث علمي بعنوان:

{استكشاف ظاهرة التناوب/ التبديل اللغوي لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في فصول رياض الأطفال في إحدى
المدارس الخاصة التي تعتمد الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية غامرة في دولة الامارات العربية المتحدة}
أولياء الأمور الكرام،
تحية طيبة وبعد،

اسمي عبيد نبيل البياري، طالبة ماجستير في كلية التربية بجامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة وأعمل معلمةً
بمدرسة المستقبل. أقوم الآن بإجراء بحث لأجل رسالة الماجستير، تحت عنوان "استكشاف ظاهرة التناوب اللغوي
لمتعلمين اللغة الانجليزية في فصول رياض الاطفال في إحدى المدارس الخاصة التي تعتمد الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية
غامرة في دولة الامارات العربية المتحدة".

كجزء من هذا البحث، ستم مراقبة طفلك خلال الأنشطة الصفية العادية فيما يتعلق بمجال التعليم، وتحديدًا
في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية وتعلمها.

تتطلب هذه الدراسة البحثية مراقبة الفصول الدراسية لرياض الأطفال لتحديد الحالة التي يقوم طلاب رياض
الأطفال فيها بالتبديل بين اللغة العربية واللغة الانجليزية في ثلاثة مجالات (التواصل والتفاعل الاجتماعي والهوية).
يجوز للباحث أيضا تسجيل الصوت والصورة أثناء هذه الملاحظات لأغراض البحث فقط. من المهم ملاحظة أنه لن
يتم ربط أي معلومات شخصية، بما في ذلك اسم طفلك، بالتسجيلات الصوتية، ولن تتم مشاركة التسجيلات الصوتية
مع أي شخص وسيتم استخدامها فقط لتحليل البحث.

تهدف هذه الدراسة البحثية إلى تحديد وتحليل حالات تبديل اللغوي لأغراض مختلفة، مثل التواصل، إظهار
الهوية، وأغراض التفاعل الاجتماعي، بهدف محدد وهو فهم العوامل التي تؤثر على سلوك التبديل اللغوي لطلاب
رياض الأطفال والأغراض التي يخدمها تبديل اللغة في فهم اللغة والتفاعلات الاجتماعية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تبحث
الدراسة في كيفية تسهيل التبديل اللغوي للتواصل في فصول رياض الأطفال وما إذا كان له أي آثار على اكتساب
اللغة لدى الأطفال الصغار.

يرجى قراءة النقاط التالية بعناية قبل التوقيع بالموافقة على مشاركة ابنكم/ابنتكم في هذا البحث:

1. نود إحاطتكم بأن جميع معلومات ابنكم/ابنتكم التعريفية سوف تعامل بسرية تامة ولن تدرج في البحث.
2. سوف تستغرق عملية الملاحظة الصفية 45 دقيقة وسوف تجرى في مبنى المدرسة في الفصل الدراسي .
3. سيتم الاحتفاظ بالمعلومات التي تم جمعها خلال هذا البحث بسرية تامة. ستبقى هوية طفلك مجهولة في جميع المواد البحثية، ولن تتم مشاركة التسجيلات الصوتية مع أي شخص خارج فريق البحث.
4. يمكن لابنكم/ ابنتكم الانسحاب من المشاركة في البحث في أي وقت كان دون أي تداعيات.
5. لا تترتب على المشاركة في المقابلة أية مخاطر لابنكم/ابنتكم.
6. لا تترتب على المشاركة في المقابلة أية منافع شخصية لابنكم/ابنتكم.

الموافقة

7. قرأت جميع النقاط المبينة وعليه فإنني أسمح بمشاركة ابني/ابنتي التطوعية في هذه المقابلة.
اسم الطالب/الطالبة: _____ اسم ولي الأمر _____
توقيع ولي الأمر: _____ التاريخ _____
اسم الباحث: _____ توقيع الباحث _____
التاريخ: _____
- في حال كانت لديكم استفسارات أخرى أو في حال رغبتكم انسحاب ابنكم / ابنتكم من المشاركة في أي وقت كان يمكنكم التواصل مع الباحثة.

Appendix B

Classroom observation checklist

Class level:	Subject:		Activity:		
Date:	Code-switching utterance	Frequency	People involved	Teacher reaction to code-switching	Comment
A- Communication purpose (Negotiating meaning)					
Requesting to clarify the meaning: (Students code-switch to seek clarification on the meaning of the English word).					
Explaining things: A student wants to explain how to play a game to their peers. They code-switch between Arabic and English to ensure everyone understands the rules (مرر the ball to me).					
Requesting assistance: students code-switch to ask for help. (tell me what is this? ما فهمت) (Seek for help to understand something or to do a certain task)					
Facilitating Communication: During free playtime, children code-switch from English to Arabic to collaborate on sharing toys and role-playing, making it easier for them to					

communicate and play together.					
Date:	Code-switching utterance	Frequency	People involved	Teacher reaction to code-switching	Comment
B- Identity purpose					
Expressing Cultural Identity: During the event, they code-switch from English to Arabic to express their cultural identity. (During the cultural celebration, they say things like ‘Today I had هريس					
To show identity with the group: to show solidarity with the culture group. While talking about their culture, they switch to Arabic. (أنا لابس الزي esaba، just like my friends!)					
c- Socialization purpose					
Expressing Emotions e.g. (I am متترفز)					
Inclusion and Participation: This might involve switching to a language that all students are comfortable with to include everyone. (Orellana, 2009)					
Show Empathy and Understanding:					

Students code-switch to show empathy and understanding towards peers struggling with English language or social interactions. (Wei, 2005).					
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Appendix C

Code-Switching Observation Transcript

Observer's Name: Abeer Albayari

Date of Observation: November 1st, 2023

Time of observation: 8:45-8:30

Location: (KG2-B)

Participants: (24 students)

Languages Involved: (English and Arabic)

Medium of instruction: English

Subject/ topic: English/action verb

Type of activities: writing, peer work, and group work

Transcript Details:

Time	Activity	Transcript	Instances of code-switching	Purpose
8:45-8:52	Starter activity (work in pairs)	<p>The students actively engaged in the starter activity, with around 18 out of 21 participating. They were gathered in a circle on the classroom carpet facing the smart board, with the teacher standing in front of them next to the board. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher reminded the students of yesterday's topic, which focused on the past tense.</p> <p>Teacher: <i>Let's practice what we learned yesterday with a pair-share starter activity. First, here's an example: "It was nice when I went to Alain mall yesterday." Please turn to your partner and use this sentence to discuss the past tense.</i></p> <p>Students, while facing each other, started to create sentences. Not all students could formulate sentences, prompting the teacher to assist. She went close to one of the students to help him.</p> <p>Teacher: <i>What did you do yesterday? Did you play?</i></p> <p>Student: <i>Yes.</i></p> <p>Teacher: <i>Okay, let us say: It was nice when I... (pauses for student response, then student continues)</i></p> <p>Student: <i>When I play.</i></p> <p>Teacher: <i>OK, 'play' in the past tense is 'played.' Say: "It was nice when I played yesterday."</i></p> <p>Student: (repeats) <i>It was nice when I played yesterday.</i></p> <p>Another pair started to practice.</p>	1	Communication Fill in the gap

		<p>Male student: <i>It was nice when I went to (The student struggled to find the English word but eventually said "مكتبة" (meaning the library).</i></p> <p>The teacher continued to check on other pairs, offering praise.</p> <p>Teacher: Excellent! One of you said, "It was nice when I ate ice cream." The past tense of 'eat' is 'ate.' Great job!</p> <p>Teacher: <i>Now, let's all sit back in our usual spots and focus on the new topic: action verbs.</i></p> <p>The students sat quietly, facing the smart board, and listened attentively.</p>		
8:58-9:05	Introduction to the topic	<p>Teacher: <i>Today, we are going to learn about action verbs. Can anyone tell me what an action verb is?</i></p> <p>Student: (raises a hand and responds when called on) <i>To move.</i></p> <p>Teacher: <i>Excellent! An action verb is doing something, like moving, dancing, or writing.</i></p> <p>Teacher: <i>Now, I'd like everyone to stand up and show me an action verb!</i></p> <p>Students were then asked to do certain actions.</p> <p>Teacher: <i>Touch your partner's shoulder.</i></p> <p>One student mistakenly touched his head instead.</p> <p>Student's Friend: <i>No, your shoulder, مب راسك (meaning not your head).</i></p> <p>Teacher: <i>Yes, that's his shoulder, not his head.</i></p> <p>Later, the teacher asked the students to name different action verbs. Eager to participate, students started to raise their hands.</p> <p>Student: <i>Flying.</i></p> <p>Teacher: <i>Excellent, 'flying' is an action verb. Who said flying?</i></p> <p>Female student: <i>me انا قلت flying (meaning, me, I said flying).</i></p> <p>Then, the teacher did not correct the student's use of Arabic in the phrase. She ignored the code-switching and simply appreciated the student's contribution.</p> <p>Teacher: <i>Very good! Now, can you create a sentence using action verbs?</i></p> <p>Students eagerly started to raise their hands to answer the question.</p> <p>Male student: <i>I like to play.</i></p> <p>Then, another female student added: <i>I like to write.</i></p> <p>Teacher: <i>Awesome! Let's clap our hands for them.</i></p> <p>The other students clapped their hands.</p>	2	<p>Communication</p> <p>Correction and clarification</p> <p>Fill in the gap</p>

9:05-9:15	Activity time	<p>Teacher: Great job! Everyone, now get ready to do the activities.</p> <p>(the activities were placed on 3 tables for each different group; each group of students had different worksheets and writing books according to their level)</p> <p>(HA) The high achiever activity (8 students): the table has different cards with pictures on them and the action word written on the card. In addition to a writing journal for each student.</p> <p>(MA) The middle achiever (8 students): There are worksheets with different sentences with blanks. Each sentence has a picture next to it, and on the top of the question, there is a table with the missing action words. Students must fill in the blank with the missing action verb.</p> <p>(LA) The low achiever activity (5 students): there are whiteboards, markers, and action-verb pictures placed on the table; in front of the table, there is a board with words written on the board.</p> <p>Then, the teacher explained the activity to each group and asked them to go to their table, do it, and write nicely on the lines. And she reminded them to write their names on the top of the paper using a song.</p> <p>Teacher: <i>The first thing I do on a paper I...</i></p> <p>All students out loud: <i>I write my name.</i></p> <p>Students went to their tables quietly, picking up their pencils and looking for their erasers.</p> <p>The teacher's assistant went to the LA table while they were waiting for her. She was explaining to the students what they were going to do. Then, she revised the words, asking each student to name the action verb using the pictures placed on the table. All students on the table started to name the actions. Then, she wrote it on the board and asked students to copy the action verb.</p> <p>The teacher was sitting with the MA students, assisting them in writing.</p> <p>The HA students sat alone without the teacher or the TA's supervision. They were requested to draw a picture in the box in the writing worksheet and label their work by writing a sentence below the box after they finished the main activity in the writing journal. One of the female students sitting at the table was looking at her friend's work, who was next to her, and she was checking her work. Then she started to assist her friend and said:</p> <p>Student A (female): I don't like to draw, أحب اكتب (meaning I like to write) [she looked not interested, then asked her friend:</p>	2	Identity: personal preferences
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		<p>“Show me, what you drew?) [I looked at her friend's work to see her drawing.]</p> <p>Student B: “Oh, do you like to write ما احب اكتب احب ارسم” [smiled] (Oh, do you like to write? I do not like to write; I like to draw).</p>		
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This thesis explores code-switching among kindergarten students in immersive English programs in the UAE. It examines the reasons and contexts for switching between English and Arabic, and how teachers respond. Using qualitative research, the study reveals the role of code-switching in communication, social interaction, and identity, offering insights for language education policies in English classroom settings.

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