Original Research

Impact of Teacher-Initiated Code-Switching on Iranian 7th Grade EFL Students' Spoken Accuracy and Fluency

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Abstract

Globalization and the increasing linguistic diversity of classrooms have challenged traditional monolingual approaches to language teaching. In EFL contexts such as Iran—where exposure to English is largely restricted to the classroom—teachers often seek innovative strategies to enhance comprehension and communication. One such approach is code-switching. This study investigated the impact of teacher-initiated code-switching on the spoken grammatical accuracy and fluency of Iranian seventh-grade EFL learners. Employing an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, the present study consisted of a quantitative quasi-experimental phase (twelve-week intervention) followed by qualitative interviews. For the quantitative phase, the researchers selected 24 students and divided them into two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group received instruction in which the teacher purposefully switched to Persian for explanations to scaffold comprehension and reduce anxiety, whereas the control group was taught exclusively in English. Quantitative data were collected from pre- and post-tests using adapted IELTS Speaking Band Descriptors. Content validity was assessed through expert review, and inter-rater reliability was confirmed by two independent raters with adjudication of discrepancies. The results revealed that students exposed to strategic code-switching significantly outperformed their peers in both fluency and accuracy. The qualitative interviews confirmed that both students and the teacher viewed code-switching as an effective means to bridge linguistic gaps and enhance classroom communication. These findings support balanced bilingual pedagogies that strategically integrate the L1 for comprehension without diminishing L2 immersion. They offer practical implications for classroom instruction and curriculum design in EFL settings.

Keywords: Accuracy, Code-Switching, EFL Learners, Fluency, Iranian Classrooms

1. Introduction

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Globalization and the increasing linguistic diversity of classrooms have challenged traditional monolingual approaches to language teaching (Heidari Tabrizi & Chalak, 2024, 2025a, 2025b; Heidari Tabrizi & Mair, 2025). In EFL contexts such as Iran—where exposure to English is largely restricted to the classroom—teachers often seek innovative strategies to enhance comprehension and communication. One such approach is code-switching, defined as the purposeful alternation between two or more languages within a single discourse event (Poplack, 1980). Although historically regarded as a natural phenomenon among bilingual speakers, more recent studies highlight its pedagogical potential. Research has shown that strategic teacher code-switching can scaffold learning, clarify complex concepts, and reduce classroom anxiety (Ghaderi et al., 2024; Yao, 2020).

In Iranian middle schools, teacher-initiated code-switching can serve as a cognitive and affective scaffold, particularly among seventh graders with limited English exposure outside school. Teachers can selectively use Persian to explain complex vocabulary, abstract grammar, and culturally loaded expressions, thereby reducing cognitive load and supporting learners' comprehension (Bonyadi et al., 2021; Elias et al., 2022). This practice aligns with Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978), in which learners achieve higher levels of understanding through guided support. However, not all scholars agree on the benefits of code-switching. While some view it as an effective tool for promoting participation and clarity, others warn that overuse of the L1 may hinder L2 immersion and lead to fossilization of errors (Yang et al., 2023; Chitiga, 2021).

2. Literature Review

This section reviews existing research on code-switching, providing the conceptual framework and identifies gaps in the literature that justify the present study.

2.1. Theoretical Perspectives on Code-Switching

Code-switching, broadly defined as the alternation between two or more languages within a conversation or discourse, has long been studied in bilingualism research (Poplack, 1980; Wei & Liu, 2020). Early typologies distinguished between inter-sentential and intra-sentential switching, while more recent frameworks view code-switching as a communicative and pedagogical resource rather than a deficiency (García & Wei, 2014).

According to the Matrix Language Frame Model (Wei & Liu, 2020), one language serves as the grammatical frame while the embedded language contributes lexical or pragmatic elements. Translanguaging theory (García & Wei, 2014) further expands this concept, suggesting that bilingual speakers draw from an integrated linguistic repertoire to make meaning. Such perspectives challenge monolingual ideologies and position bilingualism as an educational asset. These theoretical insights form the foundation for exploring how teacher-initiated code-switching may facilitate learning in EFL classrooms, especially for beginner and intermediate learners.

2.2. Sociolinguistic and Cognitive Foundations

Sociolinguistic research has shown that code-switching serves not only communicative but also social and identity-related purposes. It allows speakers to signal group membership, negotiate cultural meanings, and maintain inclusivity in multilingual settings (Chalak, 2021; Chalak & Derakhshani, 2021; Gumperz, 1982; Bonyadi et al., 2021; Mizbani & Chalak, 2017a, 2017b). In EFL classrooms, teachers' use of the L1 can validate learners' identities, reduce power distance, and create a psychologically safe environment. From a cognitive perspective, language switching engages executive control processes that strengthen attention and metalinguistic awareness (Elias et al., 2022). Studies indicate that bilinguals who frequently code-switch demonstrate enhanced task-switching abilities and working memory performance (Yang et al., 2023). Thus, code-switching may contribute not only to linguistic understanding but also to cognitive development.

2.3. Empirical Evidence from EFL Classrooms

Empirical studies across diverse contexts (Turkey, Saudi Arabia, China, and Iran) have generally reported positive learner attitudes toward moderate, purposeful code-switching (Ahmad & Jusoff, 2009; Cheng, 2013; Bonyadi et al., 2021). Students often find it helpful when teachers switch to the L1 to explain complex grammar or vocabulary. Quantitative research confirms that beginner-level learners benefit most from code-switching, as it provides the necessary scaffolding for comprehension. However, concerns remain about overreliance on L1, which may reduce exposure to authentic L2 input or lead to syntactic interference (Yang et al., 2023). Therefore, the present study explored how to balance L1

support with sufficient L2 immersion to avoid fossilization while maximizing comprehension.

2.4. Pedagogical Models and Instructional Implications

Several instructional frameworks incorporate code-switching systematically. First, Translanguaging encourages learners to use their full linguistic repertoire for meaning-making. (García & Wei, 2014). Moreover, as explained by Bonyadi et al. (2021), Dual-Focused Instruction promotes parallel development of L1 and L2 by explicitly contrasting language structures. Finally, Yao (2020) proposes that Scaffolded Instruction uses L1 explanations for challenging concepts, gradually reducing support as L2 proficiency increases. These approaches are grounded in Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), emphasizing that strategic L1 support accelerates learners' movement from assisted to independent L2 performance. Effective integration of code-switching requires teacher training and reflective practice. Recent studies highlight that awareness of when and how to code-switch is crucial to prevent overuse and maintain instructional balance (Elias et al., 2022).

2.5. Challenges, Counterarguments, and Future Directions

Despite increasing recognition of its pedagogical value, code-switching remains controversial. Critics argue that reliance on the L1 may reduce L2 input, slow acquisition, and perpetuate dependency (Chitiga, 2021; Yang et al., 2023). Additionally, inconsistencies in teachers' use of code-switching can confuse learners. Future research should employ longitudinal designs and cross-cultural comparisons to identify the optimal degree and context of L1 integration in EFL settings. Given the limited exposure to English outside school in Iran, this study sought to contribute to the literature by empirically testing whether teacher-initiated code-switching enhances both accuracy and fluency without compromising immersion.

To address the ongoing debate, the present study investigated whether controlled, teacher-initiated code-switching enhances spoken English fluency and grammatical accuracy among Iranian seventh-grade students. Accordingly, this study was guided by three research questions:

1. Does teacher-initiated code-switching improve spoken English fluency among Iranian seventh graders?

2. Does it enhance grammatical accuracy in their spoken English?

3. How do teachers and students perceive the use of code-switching in the EFL classroom?

By addressing these questions, this study aimed to provide empirical evidence to inform bilingual pedagogical practices and contribute to ongoing discussions on the role of the L1 in EFL instruction.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods (MMR) design, consisting of two distinct phases: (a) a quantitative quasi-experimental phase, and (b) a qualitative follow-up phase designed to contextualize and interpret quantitative findings. This design was chosen because it allows for a comprehensive exploration of both measurable language outcomes and participants' perceptions (Bahmani et al., 2021; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The research was conducted in a public middle school in Iran over 12 weeks.

In the quantitative phase, two intact classes were selected and randomly assigned as the experimental (n = 12) and control (n = 12) groups. Both groups followed the same syllabus and textbook, differing only in the teacher's use of code-switching. In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of students and the teacher from the experimental group. Teacher-initiated code-switching in the experimental group was strategically used to explain complex points and reduce anxiety, with a gradual decrease as students' proficiency improved. The control group received English-only instruction throughout.

3.2. Participants

The total population of interest consisted of seventh-grade students enrolled in public middle schools in the city. From this population, 24 students (aged 12–13) were selected using convenience sampling due to accessibility and availability. The participants' English proficiency level was at the elementary (A2) level, based on a placement test administered before the study. The final sample included 12 students in each group, balanced for gender

and academic performance. Although the sample size was small, it was deemed acceptable for a quasi-experimental classroom-based study (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Therefore, caution is advised when generalizing the findings beyond similar EFL contexts. Ethical considerations were observed: informed consent was obtained from participants and their guardians, and anonymity was ensured.

3.3. Instructional Materials

Prospect 1, the locally produced English textbook published and prescribed by the Ministry of Education, currently in use in Iranian seventh-grade junior high schools, was taught to both groups. The series is developed based on CLT tenets. *Prospect 1* includes a student workbook, student book, audio CD, and teacher's guide. These components are defined as follows: The student book includes seven lessons, three review units, activities for pair and group work, and a photo dictionary at the end of the book. Student Audio CD contains tracks for all conversation parts and listening exercises. The workbook contains seven lessons corresponding to the student book parts. In this respect, it involved exercises for word reading and writing. There is also a CD which containing audio files from the student book. It covers all the recorded materials for in-class use. The supplementary teacher-developed materials were used to prompt oral discussions during tests and interviews.

3.4. Instruments

3.4.1. Speaking Pre-Test and Post-Test

To measure students' development in spoken English fluency and grammatical accuracy, two equivalent versions of the same speaking test were constructed and administered as the pre-test and post-test, each designed to be parallel in structure, difficulty level, and linguistic demands. Both tests included two short tasks: (a) Personal Questions (1–2 minutes), where learners responded to simple familiar-topic prompts to elicit spontaneous speech (e.g., pre-test: "What do you usually do after school?"; post-test: "What did you do last weekend?"), and (b) Picture-Based Description (1–2 minutes), requiring students to describe a visual scene and explain what is happening (e.g., pre-test: a classroom group-work scene; post-test: a family at a park). These tasks targeted fluency and grammatical accuracy, and each test lasted approximately 3–4 minutes. All performances were audio-

recorded and scored analytically using a 0–9 scale adapted from the IELTS Speaking Band Descriptors, focusing on the fluency and coherence (smoothness, speed, continuity) and the grammatical range and accuracy (appropriate use of basic structures and verb forms). Both the final versions of the pre-test and post-test were comparable, reliable, and developmentally suitable for A2-level Iranian EFL learners. Two trained raters independently evaluated all recordings following a calibration session, scoring blindly, and achieving strong inter-rater agreement; disagreements greater than one band were resolved through discussion.

3.4.2. Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews vary in type from structured, organized in advance by the interviewer, to unstructured, in which the respondents discuss freely without much interruption from the interviewer. In this study, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 12 participants in the experimental group who were randomly selected, and their views toward using Persian and code-switching strategy in the EFL context were investigated. Semi-structured interviews in this study included five predetermined questions (see the Appendix), and other questions that were not preplanned and based on interviewees' ideas were asked. The questions were designed to elicit participants' perceptions regarding the use of Persian during English lessons, the interview questions focused on clarity, comfort, and engagement.

3.4.3. Classroom Observation Checklist

A researcher-made classroom observation checklist was designed and prepared for the purposes of the present study. The validity and reliability were established through expert judgment, literature review, piloting, and inter-rater reliability. The classroom observation checklist included ten items to record the frequency, context, and pedagogical purposes of code-switching events during classroom sessions. Initial items were adapted from prior observation tools used in studies on translanguaging and teacher talk, and then refined to match the specific context of Iranian EFL classrooms. The checklist underwent expert validation by three university specialists in applied linguistics, who reviewed it for relevance, clarity, and content coverage (CVI = 0.89). A pilot observation was also conducted in one 7th-grade classroom (not included in the final sample) to check item

clarity and observer usability; minor wording revisions were made accordingly. Due to the nature of the construct in question and to meet the context-specificity (Iranian context where Persian is the L1), the content of the "Observation Criteria" column was customized for this particular investigation. Moreover, the items on the checklist were directly aligned with the study's "tailored criteria"; that is to say, the specific research objectives and questions. They were designed so that they could capture not just the occurrence of code-switching, but its perceived pedagogical purpose and its immediate impact on students. Table 1 shows the final version of the checklist used to document teacher-initiated code-switching instances and their impact on student engagement.

Table 1

Classroom Observation Checklist

Item	Observation Criteria	Yes/No	Notes
1	Teacher switches to Persian to explain difficult vocabulary or grammar		
2	Teacher uses Persian for classroom management (instructions, discipline, clarifications)		
3	Code-switching helps students complete a task more successfully		
4	Students show increased participation after code-switching		
5	Students appear more confident when responding after code-switching		
6	Excessive Persian use reduces students' English production		
7	Teacher strategically reduces Persian use as the lesson progresses		
8	Instances of student-initiated code-switching are observed		
9	Code-switching supports comprehension of lesson objectives		
10	Teacher uses Persian to check understanding (e.g., comprehension checks)		

3.5. Data Collection Procedure

3.5.1. Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

To ensure the accuracy, reliability, and appropriateness of the research instruments employed in this study, a multi-stage validation process was conducted. This process included expert review, pilot testing, and the establishment of inter-rater reliability. Each step is described in detail below.

The construct validity of the speaking pre and posttests of fluency and accuracy in spoken English was established by aligning the test items with the study's operational

definitions of *accuracy* and *fluency*. To ensure validity, the tasks and rubric underwent expert review by three TEFL specialists, producing a high Content Validity Index (CVI = 0.89), and a pilot test with 10 comparable students confirmed clarity, age appropriateness, and timing, leading to minor adjustments in picture prompts and instructions. This index value exceeds the commonly accepted threshold of 0.79, demonstrating strong content validity. The reliability of the instrument was assessed through pilot testing with a separate group (n=10), yielding Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.86 for fluency and 0.89 for accuracy. The inter-rater reliability was confirmed with a Pearson correlation of r=0.92 between the two raters' scores.

The content validity of interview questions was ensured through expert review by three TEFL specialists. Three specialists in TEFL and English language education—namely, a university TEFL professor, a Ministry-certified English teacher, and a TEFL doctoral candidate—participated as expert reviewers. All three had previous experience with the *Prospect* series and were familiar with the communicative objectives of the Iranian Ministry of Education's seventh-grade curriculum. The experts were provided with the five interview prompts. They were asked to rate the relevance of each item using a four-point scale (1 = Not relevant, 2 = Somewhat relevant, 3 = Relevant, 4 = Highly relevant). Item-Level Content Validity Index (I-CVI) values were calculated by dividing the number of experts who scored each item as "3" or "4" by the total number of experts. Four of the five prompts received an I-CVI of 1.00, and one item received an I-CVI of 0.67.

Before formal data collection, a pilot test was administered to six seventh-grade students from a school not involved in the main study. The purpose of this pilot test was to evaluate the clarity, age appropriateness, and procedural feasibility of the interview-based fluency and accuracy test. Students were individually interviewed using the full set of test prompts. Interviews lasted approximately 6–8 minutes, confirming that the timing was appropriate for the age group. After the interviews, students were asked to comment on the comprehensibility of the questions, the difficulty level, and the overall experience. All participants reported that the prompts were understandable and relevant, and none required rewording or simplification. The pilot test therefore, confirmed that the instrument was suitable for seventh-grade learners, procedurally feasible, and free of linguistic or structural ambiguity. No modifications to the test items were necessary.

To assure the quality of the classroom observation checklist, the validity was established through expert judgment, literature review, and piloting to ensure content and face validity. The items substantially showed good construct validity by linking directly to the study's theoretical framework; that is, the impact of code-switching. The inter-rater reliability was established through systematic rater training and statistical calculation (Cohen's Kappa) to ensure that the observations are consistent and not subjective interpretations.

3.5.2. Instrumentations of the Study

The data collection followed four stages. First, the pre-test was administered before the intervention to establish baseline fluency and accuracy. Next, the experimental group received a 12-week instruction program with controlled code-switching, while the control group received the same period of English-only instruction. After the treatment was completed, a post-test was administered at the end of the intervention to measure changes. Finally, an observation and an interview were conducted after the post-test to provide qualitative insights. All sessions were video-recorded and transcribed for analysis. The participant feedback was confirmed through member checking to ensure credibility. To control for extraneous variables, both groups were taught by the same instructor using the same lesson plans and teaching schedule.

3.6. Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 27). Descriptive statistics (mean, SD) and inferential tests (paired-sample and independent-sample t-tests) were conducted. Effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's d. Qualitative data from interviews and observations were analyzed thematically following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework. Quantitative and qualitative results were integrated through triangulation to provide a holistic understanding of how code-switching influenced both performance and perception.

4. Results

This chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative results of the study. The analyses were conducted in alignment with the research questions and organized into two main sections: accuracy and fluency.

4.1. Quantitative Results

Table 2 presents the descriptive of the language proficiency tests administered before and after the intervention.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Accuracy and Fluency Scores

Group	Test	Mean (M)	SD	Range
Experimental	Pre-test	5.2	0.7	4.5 - 6.3
Experimental	Post-test	6.5	0.6	5.7 - 7.4
Control	Pre-test	5.3	0.8	4.6 - 6.4
Control	Post-test	5.6	0.9	4.8 - 6.6

Table 3 presents the inferential statistics of the language proficiency tests administered before and after the intervention.

Table 3

T-Test Results for Accuracy and Fluency

Comparison	t-value	p-value	Effect Size (Cohen's d)
Experimental (Pre vs. Post)	-4.62	< 0.01	0.85
Control (Pre vs. Post)	-1.74	> 0.05	0.32
Experimental vs. Control (Post)	3.89	< 0.01	0.88

These results indicate a significant improvement in fluency and accuracy for the experimental group, while the control group showed minor gains.

4.1.1. Grammatical Accuracy

To answer the first research question—whether teacher-initiated code-switching improves students' grammatical accuracy—independent-samples *t*-tests were performed to compare post-test means between the experimental and control groups. Table 4 presents the

inferential statistics for the results of the pre- and post-tests administered before and after the intervention.

Table 4

Results of t-Test for the Pre- and Post-Tests

Group	N	Mean	SD	$t(22)$	p	Cohen's d
Experimental	12	4.17	0.89	-5.75	< .001	2.34
Control	12	2.23	0.76			

As shown in Table 3, students in the experimental group outperformed those in the control group in grammatical accuracy, $t(22) = -5.75$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.34$, indicating a very large effect size. Further analysis of within-group progress (pre-test vs. post-test) revealed that the experimental group improved significantly, $t(11) = -8.12$, $p < .001$, while the control group showed no statistically significant change. Thus, teacher-initiated code-switching had a substantial positive effect on grammatical accuracy.

4.1.2. Fluency

To address the second research question—whether code-switching improves students' spoken fluency—independent-samples *t*-tests were conducted using the same procedure. Table 5 depicts the related results.

Table 5

Results of Independent-Samples t-Tests

Group	N	Mean	SD	t(22)	p	Cohen's d
Experimental	12	4.00	0.93	-6.72	< .001	2.74
Control	12	1.88	0.58			

The results indicated that the experimental group achieved significantly higher fluency scores than the control group, $t(22) = -6.72$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.74$, which also represents a very large effect size. Within-group comparison confirmed significant improvement only for the experimental group ($t(11) = -7.89$, $p < .001$). These findings

suggest that teacher-initiated code-switching effectively enhanced both accuracy and fluency, confirming its dual cognitive and affective benefits.

4.2. Qualitative Findings

The qualitative data, derived from semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, provided deeper insight into participants' experiences. Thematic analysis yielded three key themes. The first dominant theme was that of "Facilitated Comprehension." The students reported that limited Persian use helped them grasp difficult grammatical structures. Another prevalent theme was "Reduced Anxiety." Code-switching was perceived as reducing pressure to respond only in English. Finally, "Enhanced Participation" was found to be a key theme. The students stated they were more willing to engage in oral tasks when teachers occasionally used L1 support.

Representative excerpts from interview transcripts illustrated that students felt code-switching made lessons "clearer," "less stressful," and "more enjoyable." The teacher also expressed that it allowed more efficient management of class time and encouraged students' participation.

4.3. Summary of the Findings

The quantitative and qualitative data jointly confirmed that teacher-initiated code-switching substantially improved both grammatical accuracy and spoken fluency. Effect sizes (Cohen's $d = 2.34$ for accuracy and 2.74 for fluency) indicated strong practical significance. The qualitative phase supported these statistical findings, demonstrating that both the teacher and students viewed code-switching as a valuable scaffolding strategy rather than a hindrance to English learning.

5. Discussion

The results demonstrated that teacher-initiated code-switching significantly improved both the grammatical accuracy and fluency of Iranian seventh-grade EFL learners. Quantitative results showed substantial effect sizes for both variables, and qualitative findings revealed positive perceptions toward moderate L1 use in English classrooms. These outcomes validate the use of controlled code-switching as an effective pedagogical strategy when applied purposefully and judiciously.

Improved grammatical accuracy in the experimental group can be attributed to the cognitive scaffolding provided by selective L1 explanations. According to Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory, learning occurs within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where guided assistance enables learners to perform beyond their current level. When teachers switch to Persian to clarify grammar rules, students can more efficiently internalize complex L2 structures. These results are consistent with those of Yao (2020) and Bonyadi et al. (2021), who reported that code-switching aids comprehension of syntactic and morphological features among low-proficiency learners. In contrast, studies that discourage L1 use (e.g., Yang et al., 2023) often focus on advanced learners or immersion settings where exposure to English is abundant—conditions that differ from those in Iranian EFL classrooms. Therefore, the findings support the notion that limited, intentional L1 use enhances grammatical learning without compromising English acquisition.

Fluency gains observed in the experimental group align with theories of affective filter reduction (Krashen, 1982). By reducing anxiety through occasional Persian use, students were more confident and willing to speak, which increased the quantity and quality of L2 production. The teacher's strategic L1 interventions also reduced cognitive overload, allowing students to focus on message formulation rather than linguistic form. This finding corresponds with prior research (Ahmad & Jusoff, 2009; Elias et al., 2022) suggesting that L1 use can improve classroom interaction, especially when it encourages more spontaneous communication. In contrast, the control group's lack of improvement may reflect the limitations of strict English-only policies in low-exposure environments. Hence, teacher-initiated code-switching can act as a bridge between form and meaning, supporting fluency through confidence and comprehension.

The interview data revealed that both learners and the teacher viewed code-switching positively, describing it as "helpful," "motivating," and "necessary for understanding." This reflects the affective and social dimensions of classroom communication discussed in sociocultural approaches (Gumperz, 1982). Learners' favorable attitudes suggest that code-switching enhances not only linguistic comprehension but also emotional engagement. These results parallel findings by Cheng (2013) and Yao (2020), who emphasized that teacher code-switching can humanize the classroom, strengthen rapport, and sustain attention—key factors for successful communicative teaching.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data in this mixed-methods design reinforces the robustness of the findings. The numerical improvements in fluency and accuracy were directly supported by participants' positive perceptions. Such convergence strengthens the argument that pedagogically controlled L1 use contributes to both linguistic and affective outcomes. This synergy highlights the value of mixed-methods research in applied linguistics, allowing richer interpretation than purely quantitative designs. The findings suggest several pedagogical implications. The first implication concerns strategic L1 use; teachers should employ code-switching to clarify grammar, explain difficult concepts, and manage affective factors—but avoid excessive translation. Secondly, in EFL teacher training, professional development programs should include modules on effective bilingual classroom communication. Another implication is for the curriculum designers; EFL curricula should acknowledge the supportive role of L1 in the early stages while maintaining long-term goals of L2 fluency.

By adopting a balanced bilingual approach, educators can maximize comprehension without reducing students' exposure to English. Although the present study yielded strong results, its small sample size limits generalizability. Future research should replicate this design with larger and more diverse populations. Longitudinal studies could examine the sustainability of the observed gains over time. Furthermore, comparative studies across proficiency levels could clarify when and how code-switching is most effective.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated the impact of teacher-initiated code-switching on the spoken grammatical accuracy and fluency of Iranian seventh-grade EFL learners, using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. The quantitative results revealed that learners in the experimental group, who received instruction supported by selective Persian use, significantly outperformed their peers in both grammatical accuracy and fluency. Effect sizes were large ($d = 2.34$ for accuracy and $d = 2.74$ for fluency), demonstrating strong practical significance.

The qualitative data corroborated these results, indicating that students perceived code-switching as a helpful and motivating instructional strategy that reduced anxiety and increased classroom engagement. These findings confirm that code-switching, when used strategically and purposefully, functions as a pedagogical scaffold that facilitates

comprehension, supports affective factors, and promotes spoken performance. The outcomes align with socio-cultural and translanguaging theories, reinforcing the view that learners' first language is a legitimate instructional resource rather than an obstacle to second-language acquisition. The study contributes to the growing body of research advocating for balanced bilingual approaches in EFL education, particularly in contexts where exposure to English outside the classroom is limited .It highlights the importance of teacher training programs that prepare instructors to use L1 judiciously and reflectively, avoiding both overreliance and strict exclusion.

In conclusion, teacher-initiated code-switching can be viewed as a bridge between linguistic accuracy and communicative fluency. When implemented thoughtfully, it enhances learning efficiency, reduces affective barriers, and creates a more inclusive and cognitively supportive classroom environment.

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Appendix

Interview Protocol

This appendix provides the list of questions used in the semi-structured interviews conducted with students and the teacher.

Student Interview Questions

1. How did you perceive the use of Persian (L1) during your English lessons?
2. In what ways did the teacher's explanations in Persian help (or hinder) your understanding of English?
3. Do you think code-switching made learning English easier? Why or why not?
4. Did using Persian in class make you feel more comfortable speaking English?
5. What differences do you notice in your ability to speak English before and after this course?
6. Would you prefer your English classes to be entirely in English, or do you think some Persian should be used? Why?

Teacher Interview Questions

1. What motivated your decision to use code-switching in the classroom?
2. What benefits do you think it provided for students' fluency and accuracy?
3. Did you notice any drawbacks or negative effects from using code-switching?
4. How did student participation change throughout the study?
5. Do you think code-switching should be a recommended teaching strategy in EFL classrooms? Why or why not?