

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LEARNER AND TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARDS CODESWITCHING: INSIGHTS FROM GHANA AND TURKEY

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The present study sought to investigate students' and teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards codeswitching (CS) in foreign language classrooms. The study was conducted in tertiary education contexts in Ghana and Turkey that differed in a variety of aspects including the target language and number of languages spoken by participants. A survey was administered to 189 learners and six teachers of Spanish as a foreign language from a Ghanaian public university, and to 101 learners and eight teachers of English from a Turkish public university. The data were analysed quantitatively using SPSS. To compare the contexts, chi square and Mann-Whitney U Test were employed according to the question types used in the survey. The findings showed that although learners from both the Ghanaian and Turkish contexts generally had positive attitudes towards the moderate use of CS in the foreign language classroom, students from Ghana appeared to have slightly more favourable attitudes towards it. In the case of the teachers, although participants from both countries generally supported the moderate use of CS, teachers from Turkey had more positive attitudes towards its usage than those from the Ghanaian context. Learners from both contexts believed CS was necessary for explaining difficult concepts or ideas, for teaching grammar and vocabulary and for metalinguistic purposes. In general, the study showed that a dominant use of the own language was not supported in either context neither by the teachers nor by the learners. Rather, its judicious use was advocated for.

Keywords: Foreign language teaching and learning, Codeswitching, Ghana, Turkey, Tertiary education

1. Introduction

Code-switching (CS) is a widespread phenomenon that has attracted the attention of several researchers in sociolinguistics. In the past, CS, the act of alternating between two languages, was frequently regarded as a negative phenomenon. Dewaele & Wei (2014) report that 'verbal salad' (in Nigeria), 'still colonized' (Morocco) and 'very irritating' (Hong Kong) are some of

the extensive pejorative terms that have been coined to reflect this disapproval (pp. 236-237). Martin-Jones & Romaine (1986) also use the term ‘semilingualism’. An increasing interest in multilingualism and multiculturalism, along with an awareness of the consequences of linguistic imperialism and its resultant devaluation of minority languages have occasioned a change in the way CS is perceived (Hall & Cook, 2012). As Simon (2001) explains, the appreciation of the value of CS as a communicative resource in multilingual communities has led to a “shift in social opinion moving away from monolingual language ... to the progressive tolerance, if not acceptance, of the use of more than one code, including code-switching phenomena, the latter contributing to the enhancement of a speakers’ communicative competence” (p. 312). More recently, CS has been appreciated and reconceptualised from a translanguaging perspective that recognizes speakers’ diverse linguacultural backgrounds as an array of linguistic means unified in a crosslingual system to enhance communication (Canagarajah, 2018; Garcia, 2009; Shin et al, 2019).

Indeed, the use of CS or translingual practice is not peculiar to social interaction alone as it is a frequently observed phenomenon in the language classroom. Several scholars in foreign or second language (L2) teaching now advocate for the judicious use of the learner’s own language (L1) in the foreign language (FL) classroom (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Kerr, 2015; Littlewood & Yu, 2011). Nonetheless, research shows that some language teachers still perceive CS negatively, and questions still arise as to its acceptability in the FL classroom (Martínez, Hikida & Durán, 2015; Wang, 2019). As Levine (2014) notes, the debate on the earlier “rigid dogmas” and the place of the L1 “in language pedagogy and classroom interaction is far from settled” (p. 332).

Undeniably, studies on CS in foreign language teaching and learning contexts are essential given that they provide deeper insights on CS beyond its usage for regular social interaction. Consequently, scholars have shown an increasing interest in research on the dual presence of the L2 and the L1 in the language classroom. Given the tenacious nature of the debates on code alternation in the FL classroom as well as its potential benefits for target language learning (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Greggio & Gil, 2007; Levine, 2013), the examination of CS from a pedagogical perspective remains crucial. Notwithstanding the growing research interest in the area, there is a lack of comparative studies which examine translingual practices and perceptions from different contexts (Vold & Brkan, 2020). The current paper seeks to address

this lacuna by comparatively examining learner and teacher attitudes and perceptions towards CS in Ghana and Turkey. Through the identification of the similarities and differences found between the two contexts; it highlights strategies for the maximal use of CS without detriment to the foreign language learning process. It also aims at providing deeper insights into the effects of language attitudes and perceptions on language practices.

2. Previous studies on language choice in the FL classroom

Previous studies on CS in the foreign language classroom have centred on two fundamental areas: language choice and attitudes towards CS.

2.1 Language choice in the FL classroom

As mentioned earlier, the question of if, and to what extent the L1 should be accepted in foreign and second language teaching has been the object of a long-lasting debate (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; G. Cook, 2010; Shin et al., 2020). As a reaction to the usage of the L1 in the Grammar Translation method of language teaching with its perceived inadequacy to develop the learners' ability of using the target language for communicative purposes, the L1 has been claimed to be detrimental for FL learning (G. Cook, 2010). With a few exceptions, language teaching methods with a focus on communication often refute the possible benefits of the L1 and rather postulate its exclusion (Littlewood & Yu, 2011).

However, monolingual approaches in FL teaching and learning have been criticised for lacking a theoretical basis (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; G. Cook, 2010; Cook, 2001; Kerr, 2015). In particular, the arguments that L1 and FL learning share the same characteristics and that they should be separated have been questioned (V. Cook, 2010; see also Amuzu, 2012). Indeed, the L1 has been described as “an indispensable Language Acquisition Support System” (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009, p. 66) that allows learners to benefit from existing competencies and skills and to anchor the target language into their existing linguistic system (Brooks-Lewis, 2009; Bruen & Kelly, 2017). The L1 serves as a tool that helps learners regulate their learning by negotiating meaning in interaction with others and expressing their affective needs (DiCamilla & Anton, 2012). The validity of these arguments has been confirmed by the observation of translingual practices of bilingual or multilingual speakers in and outside school contexts who make use of at least two different languages to enhance communicative effectiveness (Garcia, 2009; Hornberger & Link, 2012). Accordingly, the second/foreign language classroom has been re-conceptualised as a bilingual space in which learners are

appreciated as developing bilinguals who develop their crosslingual system (Meier, 2017; Turnbull, 2016) and make use of different resources available for them to facilitate language learning (Cenoz, 2017; Wei, 2018).

2.2 Attitudes towards CS

Studies conducted with learners at different age levels have shown that learners hold positive attitudes towards CS as it is a tool that enhances learning opportunities (e.g., Carson & Kashihara, 2012; Hidayati, 2012). It is perceived as an available linguistic resource that enables learners to understand structures and tasks more fully. It helps them organize their learning in a safe environment as they can incorporate the target language into their existing L1 (Brooks-Lewis, 2009). The use of the L1 has been shown to promote autonomous and discovery learning because learners can raise awareness of differences and similarities between languages. Additionally, CS serves purposes of communicative language learning because learners' L1 use prevents possible breakdowns due to barriers set by restricted proficiency (Bozorgian et al, 2021; Bruen & Kelly, 2017; Yuzlu & Diklitaş, 2021). However, the potential advantages of the L1 may conflict with the perceived need to be exposed to the FL as much as possible (Aberdeen, 2018; Nazary, 2008). Language policies and uncontested assumptions about the role of the L1 in FL teaching (Levine, 2013; Daniel & Pacheco, 2016) may lead to a perceived “discomfort with translanguaging as a form of pedagogy while praising it for its beneficial effect on their language learning” (Kwihangana, 2021, p. 94). Indicative of this discomfort is the observed mismatch between assumptions reported by teachers and their actual CS practices that aim, for instance, to clarify linguistic aspects, manage classrooms or respond to time pressure (Aberdeen, 2018; Kkese, 2020; Lomotey, 2020a, Parker & Karaağaç, 2015).

3. Purpose Statement

Given the prevalence of CS in FL teaching and learning, and its increasing appreciation in the scholarly literature, there is a need to examine learners' and teachers' attitudes to CS from different contexts in order to identify differences or similarities and to account for potential differences. Such contextual differences may be, for example, different departure and target languages, learners' and teachers' monolingual or multilingual environments in which the target language is learned or modes of delivery—an aspect that has gained significance due to the need to conduct lessons online during the COVID-19 pandemic (Moorehouse & Kohnke,

2021). Examining a Ghanaian and a Turkish tertiary FL learning context, this paper sought to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are the current perceptions and attitudes of students and teachers towards CS in Ghana and Turkey?
- 2) Do the perceptions and attitudes of the learners and teachers in the two contexts differ?
- 3) How do these perceptions and attitudes impact their learning of the foreign languages through CS?

4. Method

The background of the research contexts and participants as well as the data collection procedures and analysis methods are described below.

4.1. Research setting and participants

The following sections provide information about the linguacultural situation in Ghana and Turkey. Additionally, each subsection also deals with the research context and sampling strategies.

4.1.1. Ghana

Ghana is a West African country. Ghanaians have indigenous languages as their L1, but the linguistic situation is quite complex. According to Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig (2022) there are a total of 83 living languages in Ghana. Of these, 73 are autochthonous and 10 are non-indigenous. Since the native language of the parents of an individual are often different, a person could have two languages as his/her L1. Additionally, English is the official language of the country due to British colonization. Thus, most Ghanaians are multilingual. The languages spoken by the research participants of the current study were thus mainly Ghanaian languages, English, and Spanish and/or French for those learning these foreign languages.

Due to the complex linguistic setting of the Ghanaian context, the authors use the term “own language” introduced by Cook (2010) to denote the languages already spoken in the Ghanaian context (i.e., English and the indigenous languages). Cook (2010) defines own language as “the language which the students already know and through which (if allowed), they can approach the new language” (p. xxii). By new language, Cook (2010) refers to “the language

being learned” (xxi-xxii). English is therefore the own language of the Ghanaian participants whereas the new language is Spanish.

The study was conducted in a national university. Students at the university choose a programme/language they want to study when applying for admission to the university. They do a four-year programme (sometimes five if they do a year abroad) or less if they drop the course in order to do other subjects of their preference before completing the university programme. All the research participants of the present study were students of the Modern Languages Department (in addition to belonging to other departments due to the combination of courses). Since some of them combined French and Spanish, they were also students of the French Department. At the end of the 4/5-year programme, many of them attain the level of B1 (threshold or intermediate) or B2 (upper intermediate). A few of the students who do the year abroad programme attain the level of C1 (advanced level). The foreign language classes are held about 4-8 hours per week excluding tutorials over a thirteen-week semester. The programme had a focus on orals, grammar, translation, literature, and civilization.

Table 1 displays information on the participants from the Ghanaian context. The research settings were selected based on the consideration that they would be information-rich cases as they had FL learners with diverse linguacultural backgrounds (Patton, 2015). Put differently, the familiarity of both researchers with their research contexts led them to the conclusion that these research settings would provide rich insights on FL learner attitudes towards classroom CS. The snowball sampling technique was employed for the selection of the research participants.

Table 1: Demographic information on Ghanaian lecturer and student participants

LECTURER PARTICIPANTS			
Question	Response	Freq	%
Age	41-50	3	50
	51-60	1	16.7
	61+	2	33.3
Gender	Female	3	50

	Male	3	50
Nationality	Ghanaian	4	66.7
	Spanish	2	33.3
How long have you been teaching Spanish as a foreign language?	6 - 10 years	1	16.7
	11- 15 years	2	33.3
	21 - 25 years	1	16.7
	26 years plus	2	33.3
STUDENT PARTICIPANTS			
Age	15-20	94	49.7
	21-25	91	48.1
	26-30	4	2.1
Gender	Female	166	87.8
	Male	21	11.1
	Prefer not to say	2	1.1
Nationality	Ghanaian	181	95.8
	Other	8	4.2
Level*	200	88	46.6
	300	52	27.5
	400	49	25.9
How long have you been studying Spanish as a foreign language?	1 year	53	28
	3 years	46	24.3
	4 years	41	21.7
	2 years	40	21.2
	More than 4 years	9	4.8
Did you choose this subject when applying for admission to the University?	Yes	157	83.1
	No	32	16.9
How would you describe your level of proficiency in Spanish?	Beginner	34	18
	Elementary	64	33.9
	Pre-Intermediate	40	21.2

	Intermediate	46	24.3
	Upper-intermediate	5	2.6

‘Level’ refers to students’ year of study (e.g., Level 200 = second year student; Level 300 = third year student etc.)

4.1.2. Turkey

Turkey is a transcontinental country located between South-eastern Europe and Western Asia. Even though the official language in Turkey is Turkish, minority languages (numbers differing from 15 to 41) are spoken by bilingual speakers who, however, have diverse attitudes towards their own languages and often display a preference towards Turkish as it has by far the greatest prestige as the dominant language in the public (Çetintaş Yıldırım, 2020). The study was conducted at a state university among students in an English preparatory programme leading learners from A2 to B2 according to the Common European Framework of Languages (Council of Europe, 2001). The learners were students in the English Language Teaching programme, and the preparatory programme was compulsory for those who did not pass the proficiency exam at the beginning of an academic year. Students who complete the preparatory programme successfully would start their major in the upcoming academic year. While the school delivering the preparatory programmes granted certificates to successful students, it had not received accreditation by third party accreditation bodies at the time of data collection. The sizes of the four classes examined in the study (proficiency level A2 according to the school syllabus) were between 20 and 25, and classes were held 26 hours per week and taught by four teachers. Teacher A taught 12 hours, teacher B taught 10 hours in a main course based on a general English coursebook, while teacher C and D delivered skills lessons (speaking and writing). In the study, two participants of each teacher (A, B, C and D) responded to the data collection tools.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, classes were delivered online over the videoconferencing tool Zoom at the time of data collection. Detailed demographic information on the participating teachers and learners in the Turkish context are given below. As seen in Table 2, only five out of the 101 participating learners were bilingual in terms of L1. It should also be noted that the indicated levels of proficiency in English were self-reports. Given that the students were still enrolled in the programme at the time the questionnaire was administered, the rather high number of learners claiming to be at upper-intermediate level may not be accurate.

The sampling strategy employed was the same as for the selection of the participants in the Ghanaian context (see Section 4.2.). The participants were believed to provide valuable data to engage in an examination of the focus of inquiry (Patton, 2015).

Table 2: Demographic information on Turkish teacher and student participants

TEACHER PARTICIPANTS			
Question	Response	Freq	%
Age	31-40	5	62.5
	41-50	2	25
	51-60	1	12.5
Gender	Female	4	50
	Male	4	50
Nationality	Turkish	8	100
How long have you been teaching English as a foreign language?	6 - 10 years	2	25
	11- 15 years	2	25
	16-20 years	1	12.5
	21 - 25 years	1	12.5
	26 years plus	2	25
STUDENT PARTICIPANTS			
Age	15-20	73	72.3
	21-25	25	24.8
	26-30	2	2
	31+	1	1
Gender	Female	73	72.3
	Male	28	27.7
Nationality	Turkish	101	100
What is/are your native language(s)?	Turkish	97	96
	Turkish, Kurdish	3	3
	Turkish, Arabic	2	1

How long have you been studying English as a foreign language?	4 years	57	56.4
	1 years	17	16.8
	2 years	15	14.9
	3 years	12	11.9
How would you describe your level of proficiency in English?	Beginner	1	1
	Elementary	5	5
	Pre-Intermediate	31	30.7
	Intermediate	14	13.9
	Upper-Intermediate	50	49.5

4.2. Data collection

An adapted version of Tang's (2002) questionnaire (Appendices A and B) was used to conduct this study. The questionnaire was developed to elicit learner and teacher attitudes towards CS in the foreign language classroom. Both questionnaire versions (for learners and teachers) were parallel as the same aspects were examined in the same order and with question formulations that took the respondents' perspectives into account (e.g., "Do you like your teacher to code-switch in the classroom?" in the learner version and "Do you think your students like you to code-switch in the classroom?" in the teacher version). The questionnaire asked about general views on CS (questions 1 and 2), functions of CS (question 3), reasons for CS (question 4), its potential significance for the learning of a foreign language (question 5) and preferred and actual frequencies (questions 6, 7 and 8). Participants were also allowed to add purposes and reasons not provided in the given options, and to add other comments. For the teacher survey, questions were added inviting the participants to explicate their general views on CS.

Questions eliciting demographic information preceded the questionnaire items on CS. In the Ghanaian context, the questionnaires were administered in English. Only the target language named in the original survey ('Chinese') was replaced with 'Spanish.' Accordingly, the target language name was changed in the questionnaire used in Turkey to 'English.' Additionally, a Turkish translation of the learner survey was administered for the Turkish participants. The translation was available as it had been done by the second author (for his Master's thesis). The translation procedures included back translation, independent check by two English language

teachers (L1 Turkish) and modification by a Turkish language linguist as well as piloting with students enrolled in the same programme to examine the comprehensibility of the questionnaire to ensure its validity.

In the Ghanaian context, the questionnaires were administered to level 200 and 300 students during lecture hours in the first semester of the 2020/2021 academic year. However, in the case of the level 400 students, the survey was administered electronically via Google forms due to the Covid-19 pandemic. At the time of the survey, they (final year students) were not available on campus as the university was running the modular system to ensure social distancing. Level 100 students were excluded from the study because lessons for first year students were conducted mainly in English. Lessons for the other Levels (200-400) were however ‘expected’ to be conducted in the target language only (see Lomotey, 2020b).

In the Turkish context, the questionnaires were administered online using Google Forms. This procedure was necessary due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which did not allow a face-to-face administration.

4.3. Data analysis

The analysis of the quantitative data was conducted descriptively by calculating percentages displaying the learners’ and teachers’ views and preferences concerning the CS aspects asked in the questionnaire. For practical reasons, each participant was given a study-intern ID. In order to compare the results gained in the two contexts, two different statistical tests were employed. A two-way group independence chi-square was performed for questions 1, 3 and 4, in which the participants were asked to select categorical variables denoting preferences, purposes and reasons related to CS. Concerning the analysis of the responses to the other questions, Mann-Whitney U Test (which is identical with Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test) was considered the appropriate statistical test to identify potential differences between the two contexts as the items consisted of categorical variables and the number of participants differed in both groups (Larson-Hall, 2010, p. 377).

Since only six teachers in the Ghanaian context and eight teachers in the Turkish context participated in the survey, it was not possible to compare questions 1, 3 and 4 with a two-way group-independence chi-square because for all questions 50% or more of the cells had expected counts less than 5. Direct quotations from the responses to the open-ended questions coming

from the Turkish participants shown in the Result Section were translated from Turkish into English. A colleague (L1: Turkish) of the second researcher was consulted to check the accuracy of the translations.

5. Results

The results of the study are presented in the following sections. The learner views on CS are reported first in three subsections. These sections document 1) the learners' general views of CS, 2) the perceived benefits of CS for FL learning and 3) the results concerning the preferable and reported frequency of CS in the classroom. The same structure is followed to report the teacher survey results. Student and teacher comments from the open-ended questions in the questionnaires were incorporated into the report to support the quantitative findings and to document participant voices that accentuate specific aspects not inferable from the statistical results. Readers are directed to the appendices for references made to the survey questions in the following sections.

5. 1 Data from learners

4. 1.1. Learners' perceptions and attitudes towards CS

To evaluate the learners' general views on CS, the survey asked the students to indicate if the use of CS in the foreign language classroom was generally appropriate. For the analysis, a two-way group-independence chi-square was performed to assess the relationship between location and general view of CS. This aspect was examined through the first survey question. Figure 1 shows the results.

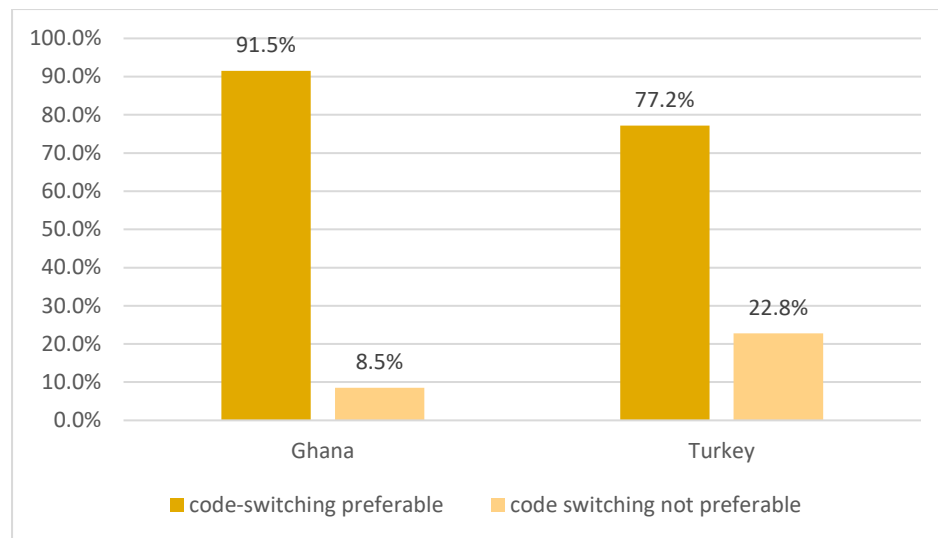


Figure 1. Learners' perceptions on whether CS should be used in class

While it was apparent that CS was preferred by the majority of learners in both contexts, there was a statistically significant difference between the groups ($\chi^2 = 11,6$, $df = 1$, $p = .001$). CS appeared to be more preferred in the Ghanaian context.

When asked if they liked it when their teachers engaged in CS, the answers were varied. However, the learners generally indicated quite positive attitudes to the use of CS by their teachers. Figure 2 shows a comparison of the results for the participants in Ghana and in Turkey. The statistical analysis of the responses to this question suggest that the Turkish learners had more positive attitudes to the use CS in their classrooms.

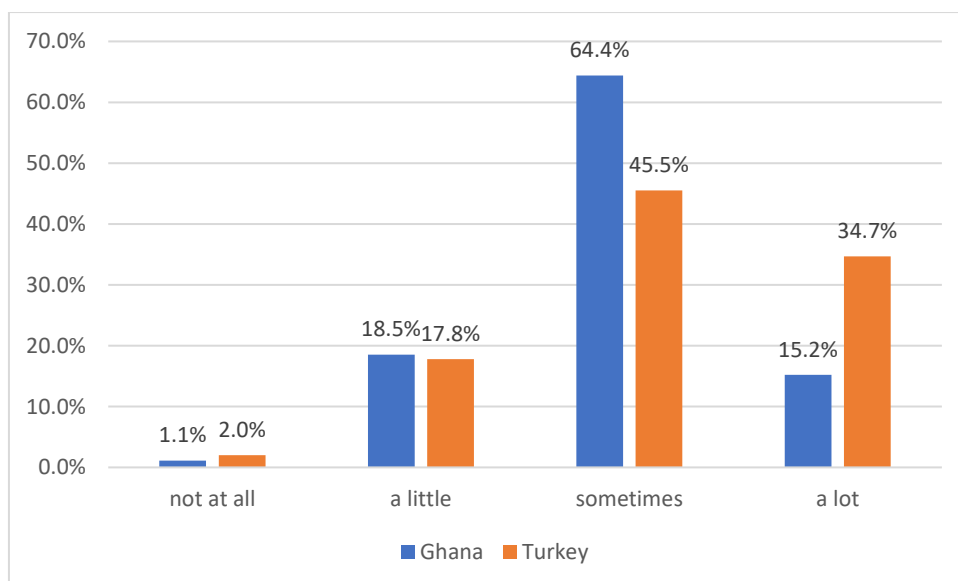


Figure 2. Ghanaian and Turkish learners' preferences regarding teacher CS

The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed statistically significant differences between the two groups, $U(N_{\text{Ghana}}=189, N_{\text{Turkey}}=101) = 8138.00, z = -2.33, p = .020$. Remarkably, a third of the Turkish learners reported liking their teachers engaging in CS, while only one sixth of the Ghanaian participants reported this.

Across local contexts, the participating learners expressed that although CS had benefits, its extensive usage had to be avoided in order to ensure sufficient learner exposure to the target language: “In some cases, it might be useful, but the teachers must be careful about it. Using the method too much may affect the classroom environment negatively. It is an extremely sensitive topic” (Turkish learner 9).

There were distinct opinions about whether teachers should be able to engage in CS from the Ghanaian context: “Foreign [language] lecturers should be able to express themselves in the official language of the student” (Ghanaian learner 115). This was elaborated upon by another student who emphasised that:

foreign lecturers should be fluent in English so that they can explain some difficult concepts to students when necessary. Also, lecturers who understand English should explain difficult concepts to students, when necessary, instead of strictly keeping to the foreign language they are teaching (Ghanaian learner 116).

5.1.2. Learner views on CS as a learning aid

Three questions in the survey (questions 3, 4 and 6) were related to the potential of CS as a learning tool. The learners’ perceptions on the extent to which CS helps with learning a foreign language is displayed in Figure 3.

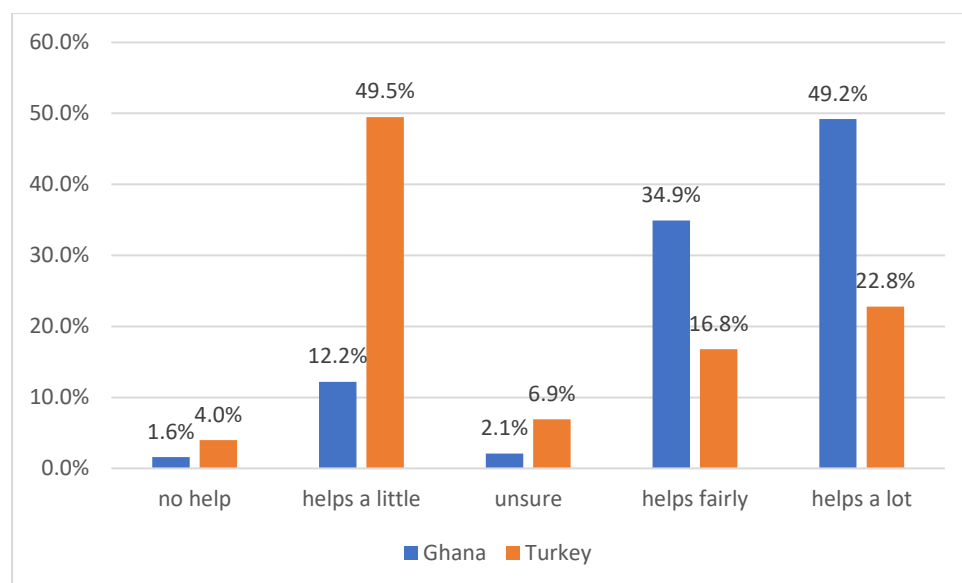


Figure 3. Learner perceptions of CS as a learning aid

Figure 3 shows that the potential of CS to contribute to language learning was more strongly appreciated by the Ghanaian learners. The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed statistically significant differences between the two groups, $U(N_{\text{Ghana}}=189, N_{\text{Turkey}}=101,) = 7697.00, z = -2.91, p = .004$. When asked about areas in which CS would be necessary, the learners in both contexts arrived at relatively similar understandings. The results are shown in Figure 4.

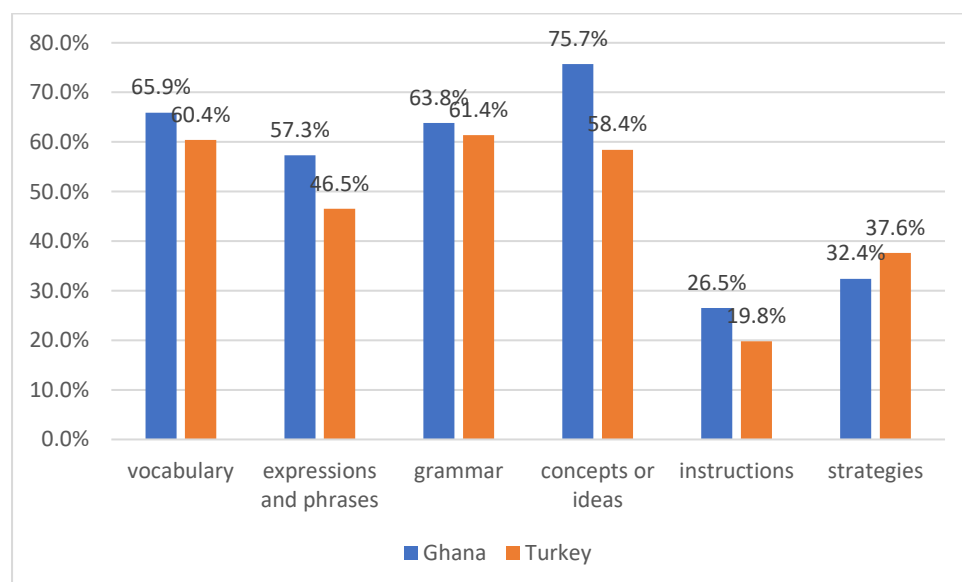


Figure 4. Areas in which CS is considered necessary by learners

Figure 4 shows that the majority of learners in both countries saw the need to engage in CS to explain difficult concepts or ideas, for grammar and vocabulary teaching and to better

understand chunks and idiomatic expressions. This need was not seen for instructions and to get suggestions on how to learn more effectively by no more than a third of the learners. A two-way group independence chi-square was performed to detect statistically significant group differences. Differences were not found for any of these options ($p > 0.05$).

When asked about the reasons for their appreciation of CS, the learners saw more advantages for the process of learning a foreign language rather than for their own emotional/psychological well-being. The results are summarised in Figure 5.

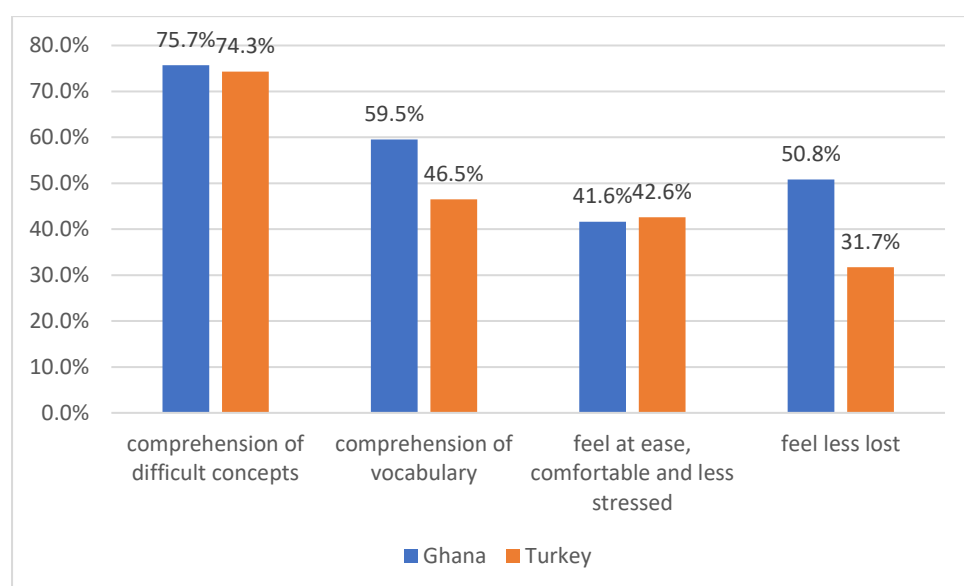


Figure 5. Learners' perceptions on the functions and advantages of CS

As seen in Figure 5, the Ghanaian learners appreciated CS as a tool that enabled them to understand difficult concepts or vocabulary and to avoid feelings of insecurity more than the Turkish learners. The two-way group independence chi-square test revealed a statistically significant difference for the item *I feel lost* ($\chi^2 = 7.8$, $df = 1$, $p = .005$). For the other items, no statistically significant differences between the groups were revealed.

In support of the results of the multiple-choice survey questions, some learners stressed in the open-ended questions that CS would help them to access difficult lesson contents and allow them to participate more fully in class: "Code-switching is a method that I want to benefit from for topics that are new for me or that I feel myself not competent in" (Turkish learner 12); "Some of us are not really familiar with the language so understanding it while it is being spoken is quite complex, hence there should be code-switching" (Ghanaian learner 8); it

“improves and adds up to the student participation in class ..., therefore I will encourage its usage more often” (Ghanaian learner 90). A student pointed to instances when CS might be helpful to explain words that have no straightforward equivalent in the other language (Turkish learner 70). Some students expressed their satisfaction with their teachers who code-switched “when necessary and decreased stress levels that way” (Turkish learner 48).

Another learner emphasised his need for CS by pointing out the opportunities CS provides learners who have just started to learn an additional language: “[I am] very new to the language and I plead to be taught in a way that will help me (us) grasp the language faster to avoid feelings of being lost or dealing with the pressure of learning like us” (Ghanaian learner 68). More specifically, pointing to CS as a tool to learn another language by contrasting the new language with the own language, a student reasoned: “I think code-switching really helps because you sharpen your skills in the L2 language because one gains or uses the ability to blend both the current language spoken and the L2 and that helps a lot in learning an L2” (Ghanaian learner 178).

However, there were also students who stated that CS should not be used at higher proficiency levels (e. g., Ghanaian learner 43; Turkish learner 61). Other learners also held critical views on CS saying that “to improve our English, there should be a native speaker teacher who is not Turkish or students who are not Turkish” (Turkish learner 43). The need to be exposed to the target language was stressed by some learners in both contexts, as they believed that CS would jeopardise the aim of FL learning. A Turkish student expressed his view forcefully: “I wish I had received only classes in which code-switching doesn’t take place” (Turkish learner 78). A similar, entirely negative attitude towards CS was expressed by a learner from the Ghanaian context who claimed that “code-switching breeds laziness because students feel so relaxed and reluctant in class rather than being pushed to further explore the language” (Ghanaian learner 89). This, in the words of another student, would “make students be spoon fed” (Ghanaian learner 95).

Objections of these kinds against CS were sometimes put into perspective in the light of the challenges posed by specific language subjects: “Code-switching does not help me as a student. Since I have less exposure to the language, I prefer that the lecturer does not code-switch so that I can learn better. However, it is needed in specialized courses like history” (Ghanaian learner 96).

5.1.3. Learner views on preferred and actual frequency of CS in the classroom

The learner participants were also asked about their preferences regarding how often CS should be used in the foreign language classroom. The results are shown in Figure 6 below.

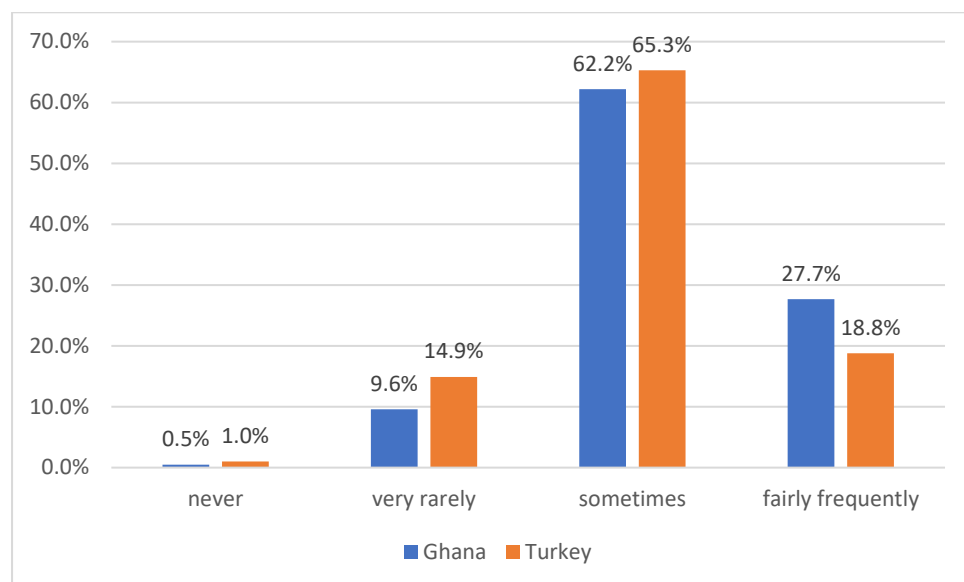


Figure 6. General learner views on the preferable frequency of CS

While Figure 6 shows that learners in both groups tend to appreciate a moderate use of CS, the group differences were statistically significant as evidenced in the Mann Whitney U test, $U(N_{\text{Ghana}}=188, N_{\text{Turkey}}=101,) = 8343.50, z = -1988, p = .047$. It should be noted, however, that the p value (0.47) is remarkably close to the significance level.

To arrive at a more exact understanding of the learner preferences on how often CS should be used in class, the participating learners were asked to select percentages indicating how much class time should be assigned to CS. The results are shown in Figure 7 below.

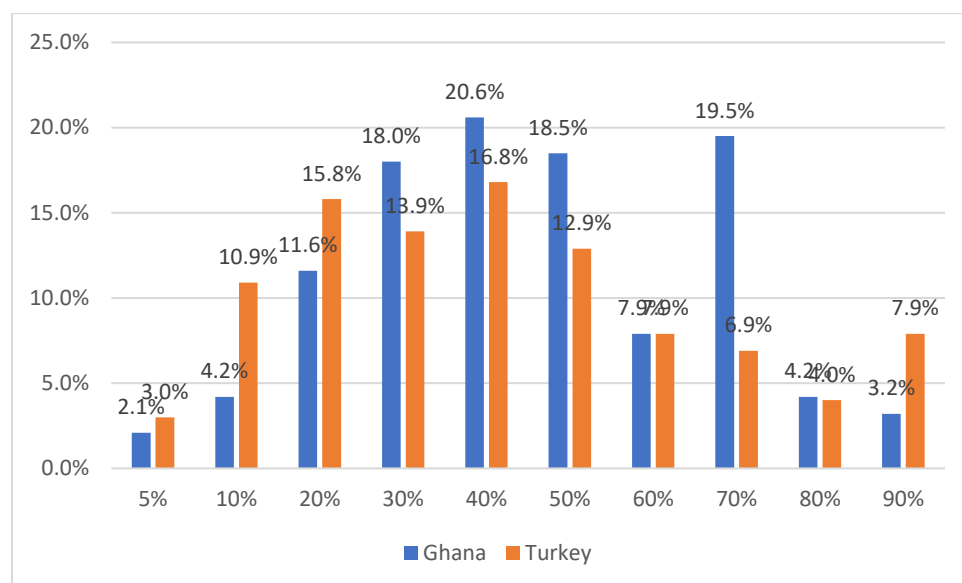


Figure 7. Amount of class time preferred by learners for CS

Once more, responses to this question were quite diverse. However, generally, participants from both contexts indicated a preference for the moderate use of CS. 20.6% of the Ghanaian participants and 16.8% of the Turkish participants showed a preference for 40% CS usage in the FL classroom. While the Mann Whitney U test did not indicate statistically significant differences ($U(N_{\text{Ghana}}=189, N_{\text{Turkey}}=101) = 8844.50, z = -1.040, p = .298$), it is remarkable that some Ghanaian learners (19.5%) preferred as much as 70%, while a few Turkish learners (about 8%) sought to see 90% of the class time reserved for instruction in the learners' own language. One Ghanaian student stated: "Lecturers should kindly know that a fair percentage on the use of code-switching is not deteriorating as compared to completely not using it at all" (Ghanaian learner 92).

Additionally, learners were asked what they believed the actual amount of CS used during class time was. The results are presented in Figure 8.

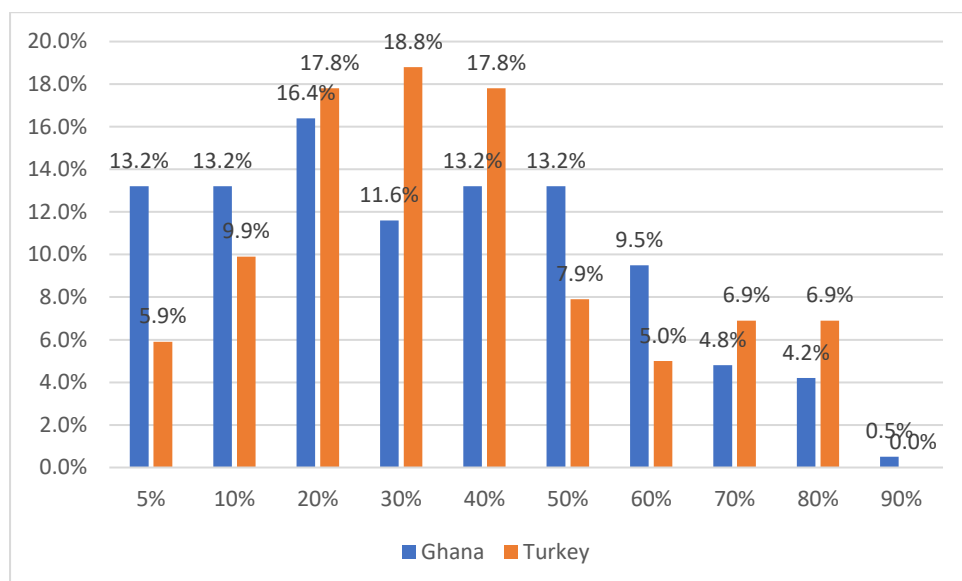


Figure 8. Learner beliefs on the amount of CS used during class time

Regarding the results for the reported amount of CS used during class time, there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups as evidenced in the Mann Whitney U test, $U(N_{\text{Ghana}}=189, N_{\text{Turkey}}=101) = 8617.00, z = -1.374, p = .169$. While the bar graph suggests a comparable tendency for both contexts, a total of 54.4% of the Turkish participants reported 20%, 30% and 40% (the most frequently selected options) CS in their classrooms, while 41.2% of the Ghanaian learners reported the same amounts (20%, 30% and 40%) of CS in their classrooms.

Some learner voices underlined the awareness that CS may be beneficial to FL learning but detrimental when used too extensively. A learner observed: “If the mother tongue is used at an amount of more than 40 or 50%, lessons become ineffective because we do not learn new words. For that reason, it should be restricted to grammar teaching or the clarification of difficult lesson content; I wouldn’t like to see it applied all the time” (Turkish learner 12).

5.2 Data from teachers

5.2.1. Teachers’ perceptions on the appropriateness of CS in the classroom

To evaluate the teacher participants’ perceptions on CS, the survey elicited information on their views on whether CS should be allowed in the foreign language classroom and whether they believed that their learners welcomed their teachers engaging in CS. Results are presented in Figure 9.

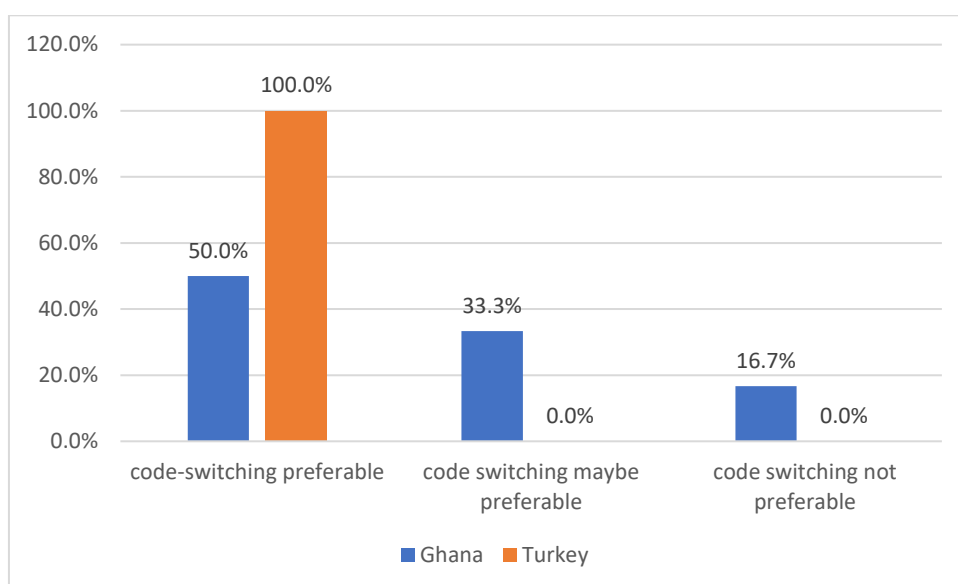


Figure 9. Ghanaian and Turkish teachers' perceptions on whether CS should be used in class

As shown in Figure 9, the teachers working in the Ghanaian context had more diverse attitudes towards CS. Only 50% of them stated that the learners' own language should be used in the foreign language classroom for CS purposes. On the other hand, all teachers in the Turkish context (i.e., 100%) were in favour of its usage.

When asked about their views on their students' preferences regarding teacher CS, both groups held similar views as more than 80% of the teachers believed that their learners would like to see their teachers engage in CS sometimes or a lot (Figure 10).

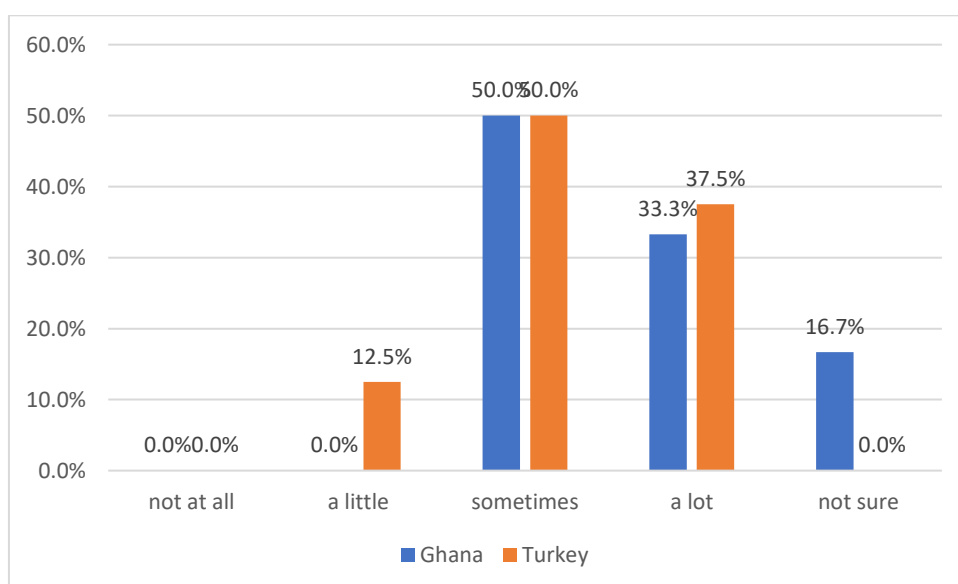


Figure 10. Teacher views on learners' preferences for teacher CS

The teachers were also asked whether their students should be allowed to engage in CS. The responses are shown in Figure 11.

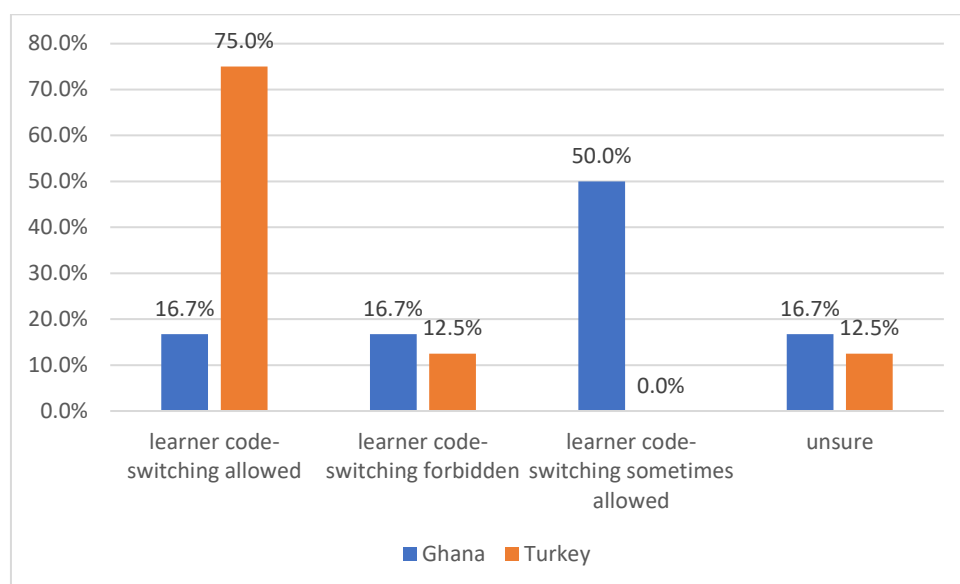


Figure 11. Teachers' beliefs as to whether learners should be allowed to engage in CS

As shown in Figure 11, the teachers in the Turkish context held more tolerant views on learner CS as six out of the eight teachers stated that it should be allowed. Three teachers pointed to the affective component of CS stating that a bilingual environment would make their learners feel more confident and safer. A teacher drew the attention to its potential benefits: “Along with saving time, it facilitates weaker students’ participation in the lessons, thus building self-confidence to be involved in the upcoming lessons” (Turkish teacher 6). Thus, learner CS was explicitly seen as a means of encouraging learners’ participation: “If they cannot find the suitable expressions to complete the task, especially in speaking tasks, there is no problem to allow the students to switch languages” (Turkish teacher 2). Another teacher pointed out that a classroom policy in which “students are not allowed to switch languages and forced to use only the target language in the class can discourage some students who are afraid of making mistakes” (Turkish teacher 7).

In contrast, the rather diverse views of the teachers at the Ghanaian university were reflected in their comments. One teacher claimed that learner CS should be banished because learners “need to use the new language regularly” (Ghanaian teacher 4). It is interesting to note that

despite the striking variance between the Ghanaian and Turkish teacher participants' overall responses to this questionnaire item, this comment (from Ghanaian teacher 4) was in tandem with a Turkish teacher's views that CS "hinders the new language learning process" (Turkish teacher 5). Another Ghanaian teacher perceived CS as a tool that should only be used "for important information not related to teaching" (Ghanaian teacher 6). On the other hand, another Ghanaian teacher perceived CS as a strategy for the "teacher to help students who have difficulty expressing an idea or problem in the target language" (Ghanaian teacher 2).

The mixed views on CS held by the teachers working in the Ghanaian context are illustrated by a teacher who expressed his/her doubts on its usefulness but, at the same time, appeared to perceive it as a means to address challenging teaching conditions:

Code-switching is generally not advisable for effective language teaching but given the very large classes we have today, many students will only pretend to be grasping what the language instructor is saying in Spanish, hence the inevitability of code-switching. (Ghanaian teacher 4)

Overall, the teachers in the Turkish context held more positive views on CS but they also showed awareness of the fact that it needs to be employed with caution. For example, some of them affirmed that CS should be reserved for lower proficiency levels, and that learners should be aware of the need to avoid CS when they reached a higher proficiency level (Turkish teacher 6). Another teacher held the view that the learners' own language could not be turned off and that, it had the potential to facilitate FL teaching and learning:

While learning or teaching a foreign language, it is impossible not to switch languages because we have to link some expressions (idiomatic expressions especially), grammar topics etc. to the ones in the mother tongue. It enables us/our students to express/catch the mentioned tasks more clearly/easily. (Turkish teacher 2)

The Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no statistically significant differences between the two groups, $U(N_{\text{Ghana}}=6, N_{\text{Turkey}}=8) = 15.00, z = -2.250, p = .211$.

5.2.2. Teacher views on CS as a teaching aid

Three questions in the survey (questions 3, 4 and 5) were related to the potential of CS as a teaching aid. The teachers' perceptions regarding the extent to which CS helps students learn a foreign language is displayed in Figure 12.

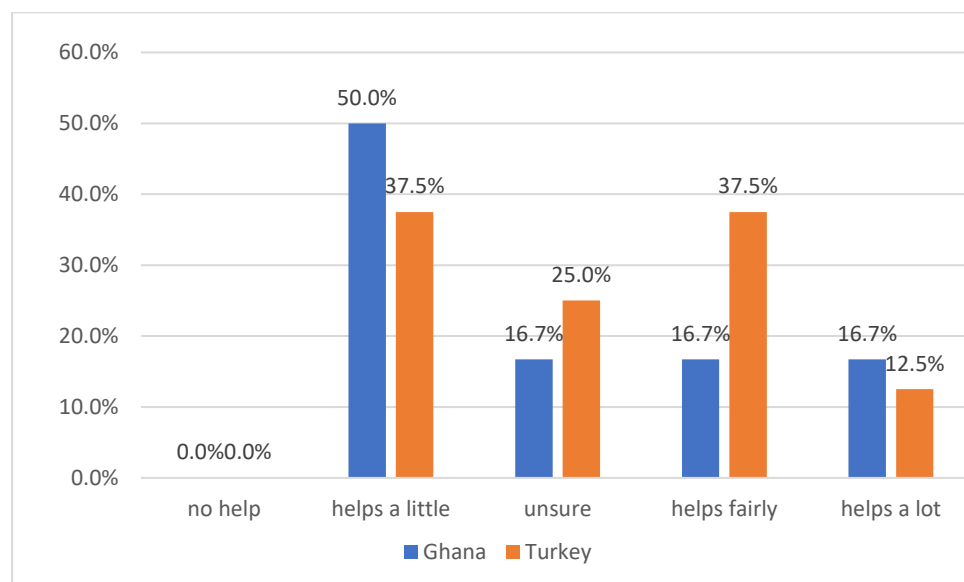


Figure 12. Teacher perceptions of CS as a learning aid

Figure 12 shows that the potential of CS to facilitate FL learning was more strongly appreciated by the teachers in Turkey. The Mann-Whitney U Test however revealed no statistically significant differences between the two groups, $U(N_{\text{Ghana}}=6, N_{\text{Turkey}}=8) = 18.00, z = -.811, p = .417$.

Asked about areas in which CS is most useful, the teachers in both contexts arrived at similar understandings. The results are shown in Figure 13.

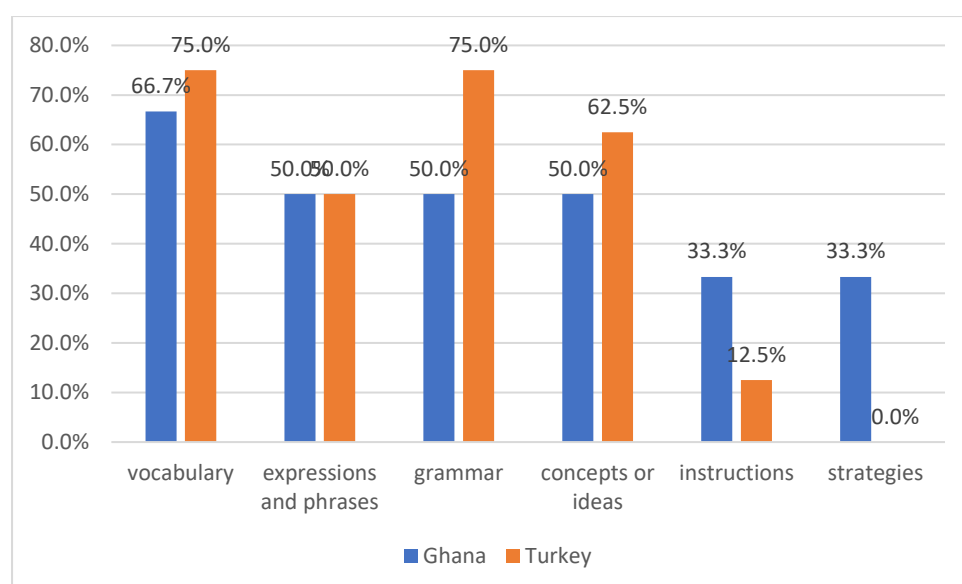


Figure 13. Areas in which CS was considered useful by teachers

Figure 13 shows that at least 50% of the teachers in both contexts appreciated the role of the own language for language related aspects of teaching. However, a lesser percentage of the teachers regarded CS as necessary for classroom management (e.g., instructions) and explanation of strategies (e.g., giving suggestions on how to learn more effectively).

Addressing more strongly the usefulness of CS, the teacher participants were asked about three potential advantages of CS: facilitation of comprehension, general effectiveness, and timesaving. The results are summarised in Figure 14.

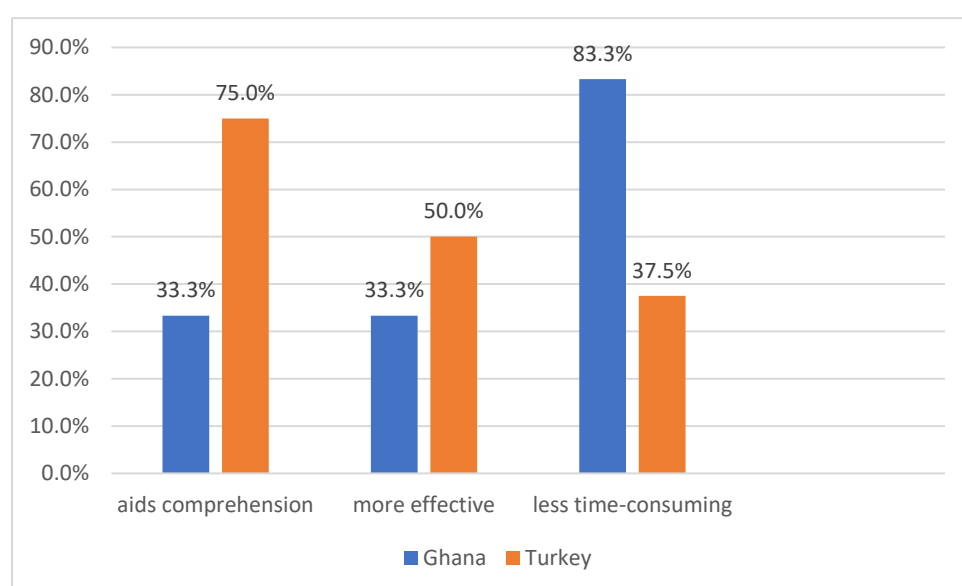


Figure 14. Perceived advantages of CS

As seen in Figure 14, the results differed in that the Ghanaian teachers appreciated especially the time-saving aspect of using the learners' own language, whereas the Turkish teachers particularly pointed to the advantage of enhancing comprehension.

5.2.3. Teacher views on preferred and actual frequency of CS in the classroom

The teacher participants were also asked about their perceptions regarding the preferred frequency of CS in the foreign language classroom. The response option *unsure* was not given in the survey for the Turkish teachers. The results are shown in Figure 15.

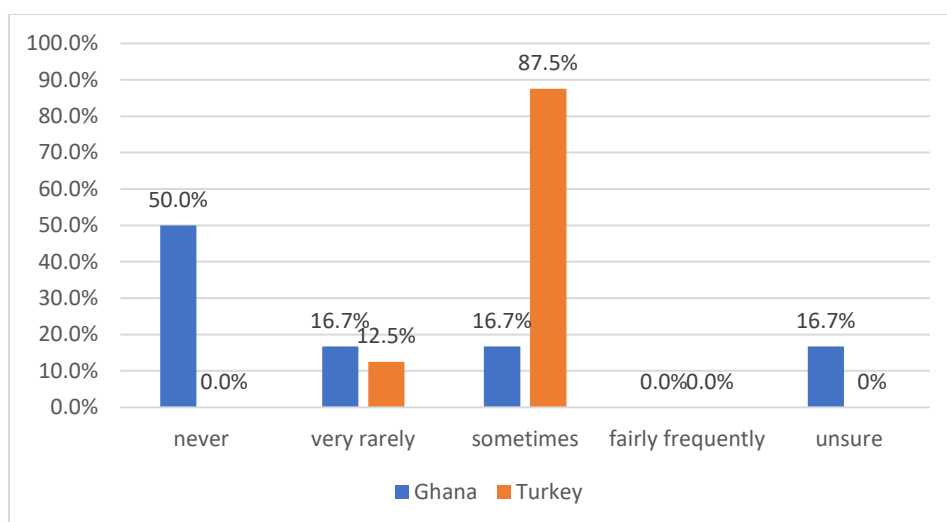


Figure 15. Teacher perceptions on the preferable frequency of CS

Figure 15 shows that the participating teachers in Ghana held more diverse views on how often CS should be allowed in the foreign language classroom. Strikingly, half (50%) of them were of the opinion that CS should never be used. On the other hand, the majority of the Turkish teachers, seven out of the eight, stated that CS should be used sometimes.

To arrive at a better understanding of the teachers' preferences on how often CS should be used in class, they were asked to select percentages indicating how much class time should be allowed for CS. The results are shown in Figure 16.

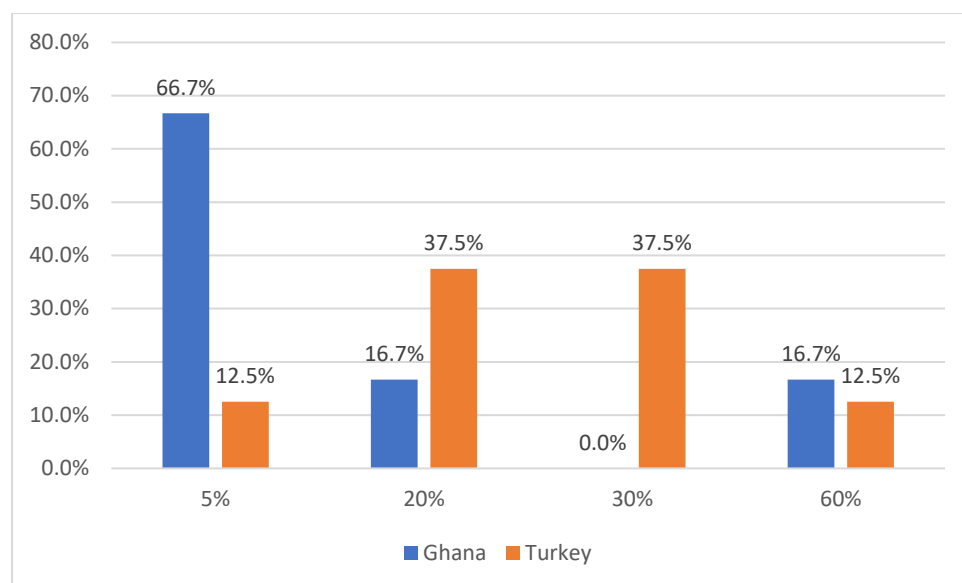


Figure 16. Teachers' perceptions on the percentage of class time during which CS should be allowed

Figure 16 shows only the responses that were selected by the teachers. Whereas a greater percentage of the Ghanaian teachers (66.7%) recommended only 5% usage of CS, the responses of the teachers in the Turkish context were more varied. A participant from the Ghanaian context stated that CS should be “just another resource for teaching but [used] very moderately” (Ghanaian teacher 2). One teacher in each group preferred the use of the learners' own language as the main medium for giving instructions. The Mann Whitney U test did not indicate any statistically significant differences, $U(N_{\text{Ghana}}=6, N_{\text{Turkey}}=8) = 12.00, z = -1.612, p = .107$.

Additionally, participants were asked about the actual amount of CS which they believed they used in their classes. The results are presented in Figure 17.

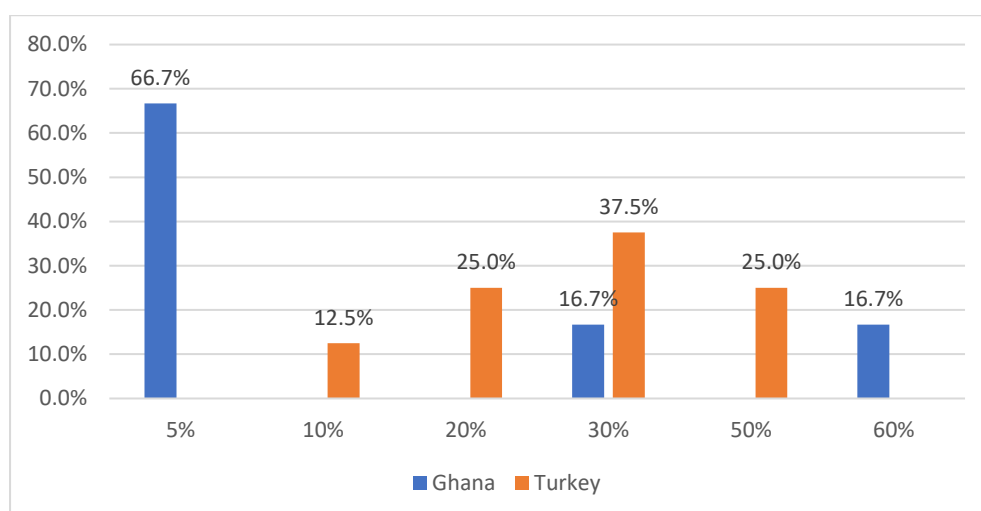


Figure 17. Teachers' self-reported amount of CS used in their classes

Varied responses were once more recorded for this questionnaire item. Within the Ghanaian context, 66.7% reported using only 5% CS in their FL classrooms, 16.7% indicated that they used 30% CS whereas another 16.7% of the participants reported using 60% CS. As can be observed from figure 17 above, the responses from the Turkish context were less polarised as a wider range of responses were given by the teacher participants. There was no statistically significant difference between the two groups as evidenced in the Mann Whitney U test, ($U(N_{\text{Ghana}}=6, N_{\text{Turkey}}=8) = 15.00, z = -1.552, p = .128$).

Before proceeding to the Discussion Section, some few observations need to be made. It should be noted that the responses from the teacher participants appear to mirror their own practices depending on the proficiency level of the class being taught: “Personally, I don't mind code-switching in A1 and A2 levels as long as they know/realise and admit they won't be able to code-switch that frequently in B1 and plus. This policy is part of my class agreement/management” (Turkish teacher 6).

6. Discussion

This study investigated the attitudes of foreign language learners and teachers in Ghana and Turkey towards CS. The findings suggest that, overall, the teacher participants within the Turkish context had more positive attitudes towards CS (Figure 9). However, in reference to the student participants, the Ghanaian students had slightly more positive attitudes towards CS than the Turkish students (Figure 1).

It is worthy to note that both contexts examined differ in several aspects. While both countries display a linguacultural diversity, the diversity is more pronounced in Ghana. Also, a low number of Turkish learners participating in this study came from a bilingual background. Furthermore, the Turkish learners participating in this research were students of only one FL (English). In the Ghanaian context however, a combination of different FL programmes was possible (i.e., Spanish and French). These factors may account for the slightly higher levels of positive attitudes among the Ghanaian student participants towards CS. The authors submit that this is a result of the fact that Ghanaian students experience and benefit from CS more frequently in out-of-class contexts and consequently, their attitudes towards CS may be shaped distinctively by their multilingualism. Indeed, CS has been characterised as the “Third Tongue” in Ghana, and sometimes, even the “First Tongue” (Amuzu, 2005, p. 162).

It is important, however, to point out that despite the slight differences in the Ghanaian and Turkish student participants’ attitudes towards CS, in general, it was perceived positively in both contexts. Nonetheless, the need for a judicious use of the learners’ own language to avoid crowding out the target language was emphasized by participants from both contexts. The intricate nature of this long-standing debate on the use of CS in the FL classroom was mirrored in the insightful but sometimes inconsistent (e.g., Ghanaian teacher 4, p. 22) observations made by the participants of this study.

Leaving aside (but not ignoring) inconclusive attitudes some participants had in this research, the current study confirms Shin et al.’s (2020) observation that “most students appear to favour L1-inclusive approaches, but in forms which use L2 as the dominant medium of instruction and utilise L1 as a resource” (p. 412). This finding was supported by participants’ indications of their preferred amounts of CS in the classroom. Both groups stated that they would not like to have their own language as the dominant medium of instruction in their FL classrooms. Indeed, the qualitative data suggests that some participants from both contexts also held critical views on CS as, for example, also reported by Kkese (2020). However, a general appreciation of CS was observed among the learner participants. Both groups acknowledged the potential of CS to contribute to foreign language learning. They perceived CS as a tool to make lesson contents more accessible. This reported perception strengthens arguments put forward to support bilingual approaches in FL teaching and learning (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; G. Cook, 2010). The potential of CS to create a safe learning environment (cf. Brooks-Lewis, 2009) was more strongly appreciated by the Ghanaian learners (Figure 5), which may, again,

be explained with their more diverse linguacultural environment and assumingly stronger familiarity with translingual practice outside the classroom.

Positive views of CS were also identified in the results of the teacher survey—particularly, the unanimous consensus among the Turkish teachers and their more tolerant attitudes towards learner CS was striking. In line with this result, the Turkish teachers appreciated the pedagogical values of CS as a tool to aid comprehension and increase general effectiveness in teaching, while the Ghanaian teachers focused more on the practical advantages of CS as a time-saving device. Given the multilingual context and frequent use of CS in Ghana, it was expected that Ghanaian teacher participants would also have positive attitudes towards CS as learners from their context did. However, the data showed that the Ghanaian teachers' perceptions of CS were not in tandem with the expectations of their students and additionally, they held more critical views on FL classroom CS than their colleague teachers in Turkey. Put differently, Turkish teachers had more positive attitudes towards CS than their peers in Ghana. These results also suggest that while teachers in the Ghanaian context were aware of learners' needs and preferences for CS, they were reluctant to allow it. The authors interpret this finding to be a result of the negative attitudes towards CS (see Section 1) and the target language-only teaching doctrine in the Ghanaian research context. As explained by Lomotey (2020b) in her study carried out in the same research setting, “although there is no official institutional policy on language use” for foreign language teaching in the research setting “there is an undocumented institutional preference for the monolingual approach” (p. 103). Additionally, this finding could be an indication of the Ghanaian teachers' (inadvertent) underestimation of the importance of considering learners' needs. As Borti (2021) observes, “educators sometimes underestimate learners' ability to make informed decisions about their learning needs” (p. 192). This is, however, detrimental to the formation of a conducive FL learning environment. As Chambers (1992) observes, the failure to recognise FL students' need for a moderate usage of the own language “can result in alienation and demotivation” (p. 66).

These negative attitudes towards CS, be it in the context of the language classroom or regular social interaction, should be overturned since there is a lack of convincing empirical findings to support them. In fact, for the case of Ghanaians in particular, it is important to cite Amuzu (2012) who contends that “bilinguals like them [Ghanaians] who use marked code-switching alongside unmarked code-switching normally have the mental capacity to keep their languages

apart as codes with separate identities” (p.1). This calls into question the negative reactions towards CS. Teachers must capitalize on its ability to facilitate FL learning rather than its assumed potential to cause the own language to interfere with the new language.

Additionally, the number of Turkish teachers who believed that CS contributed only a little or fairly to FL learning was higher than those who believed CS helps students a lot in their learning of the FL (Figure 12). An explanation for these observations may be the tendency, well documented in FL teaching in Turkey, of delivering grammar focused instruction that favours the use of Turkish to teach about the target language (Dağtan & Cabaroğlu, 2021). An additional explanation for this somehow contradictory finding may be that the Turkish participants may perceive CS as only one factor among many which facilitate FL learning, and especially because FL learning is not considered successful in Turkey (Dağtan & Cabaroğlu, 2021).

Overall, the results suggest that in the Turkish context, CS is perceived as a tool to be utilised by teachers. However, in the Ghanaian context, it is accepted more as an instrument in the hands of learners.

7. Conclusion

The similarities and differences identified in the perceptions of CS in the Ghanaian and Turkish FL classrooms examined in this study can be attributed to contextual factors. The learner participants from both contexts were aware of the facilitating potential of CS and desired its strategic usage. However, they were also aware of its debilitating effects when used indiscriminately and expressed their desire to avoid such a situation. The advantages of CS emphasized by participants point at the need for considering CS and translingual practice in FL teacher education and professional development. It is necessary for learners and teachers to negotiate on the implementation of the learners’ own language into FL classroom teaching. Such opportunities should help teachers and learners capitalize on the advantages of CS and provide them with examples of bilingual activities, so that they can develop a more systematic understanding of CS as a tool for foreign language education. Indeed, exploring learners’ and teachers’ attitudes and views towards CS is an appropriate starting point for arriving at an

understanding of what is meant by judicious use of the own language (Daniel & Pacheco, 2016; Vold & Brkan, 2020).

However, these findings and conclusions need to be interpreted against the limitations of the current study. This paper only documents perceptions and does not examine the actual translanguaging practices in the Ghanaian and Turkish contexts. In other words, collecting quantitative and qualitative data on attitudes and views cannot confirm how CS is really used and to what extent it actually contributes to FL learning. Despite these limitations, this study contributes valuable comparative data on how learners' and teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards CS could inhibit them from making beneficial use of CS as a valuable FL teaching and learning strategy. The study also shows that despite the negative perceptions that still persist regarding CS, the language learners' own language is an inescapable pathway on the long journey to attaining proficiency in a foreign language.

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Appendix A

Learner questionnaire

B. YOUR ATTITUDES TOWARDS USING CODE-SWITCHING IN THE CLASSROOM

1. Should there be code-switching in the foreign language classroom?
a) Yes b) No
2. Do you like your teacher to code-switch in the classroom?
a) Not at all b) A little c) Sometimes d) A lot
3. When do you think it is necessary to code-switch in the foreign language classroom?
(Please check all that apply)
a) to help define some new vocabulary items (e.g., some abstract words)
b) to practice the use of some phrases and expressions (e.g., doing translation exercises)
c) to explain complex grammar points.
d) to explain difficult concepts or ideas.
e) to give instructions.
f) to give suggestions on how to learn more effectively.
g) other, please specify _____
4. If you think the use of code-switching is necessary in the foreign language classroom please indicate why. (Please check all that apply.)
a) It helps me to understand difficult concepts better.
b) It helps me to understand new vocabulary items better.
c) It makes me feel at ease, comfortable and less stressed.
d) I feel less lost.
e) other, please specify _____
5. Do you think the use of code-switching in the classroom helps you learn this language (Spanish)?
a) No b) Yes. A little c) Yes. Fairly d) Yes. A lot e) Am not sure
6. How often do you think code-switching should be used in the classroom?
A) Never b) Very rarely c) Sometimes d) Fairly frequently
7. What percentage of the time do you think code-switching **should be used** in the classroom? (Please choose only one option).
a) 5% b) 10% c) 20% d) 30% e) 40%
f) 50% g) 60% h) 70% i) 80% j) 90%
8. What percentage of the time do you think code-switching **is used** in the majority of the classes you currently attend? (Please choose only one option).
a) 5% b) 10% c) 20% d) 30% e) 40%
f) 50% g) 60% h) 70% i) 80% j) 90%
9. Is there anything you would like to add? Please write your comments here.

8. What percentage of the time do you think you code-switch in your classes? (Please choose only one option).
- a) 5% b) 10% c) 20% d) 30% e) 40%
- f) 50% g) 60% h) 70% i) 80% j) 90%
9. In your opinion, should students be allowed to switch languages?
- a) Yes b) No
10. Please explain your answer to question 9.
11. Is there anything you would like to add? Please write your comments here.

Simon, D.-L. (2001). Towards a new understanding of codeswitching in the foreign language classroom. *Trends in linguistics studies and monographs*, 126, 311-342.