Code-Switching in French and Francophone Studies Classrooms in a Ghanaian Public University: Exploring Perceptions and Motivations

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Abstract

Code-switching in language classrooms is a contentious topic of debate, with some experts advocating for the monolingual use of the target language as the medium of instruction, while

others support a bilingual approach such as code-switching and translanguaging. This paper examines the motivations for code-switching and the perceptions of both lecturers and students on bilingual practices in French and Francophone Studies classrooms. The study adopted a mixed research design, gathering data through interviews, classroom observation and an online questionnaire using a Google Form interface. The questionnaires were distributed to students via their WhatsApp platforms. A total of 120 French students filled out the questionnaires and 5 lecturers were selected for the interview session. The findings revealed that lecturers employ code-switching to address the linguistic needs of both Anglophone and Francophone students in the classrooms. The reasons for code-switching included students' limited language background, low proficiency in the French language, inadequate teaching materials, situational factors, and the relevance of other languages in French classrooms. Overall, the majority of the lecturers and students expressed a positive perspective towards code-switching use in the classroom stating that such code choices facilitate the understanding of concepts and contribute to interactive classroom experiences. There was, however, the caution against its pervasive use as it hinders the ability to learn and speak the French language.

Keywords: Perceptions, Lecturers, Undergraduate, Code-switching, Positive, Conditional, Translanguaging, Foreign language learning, Medium of instruction, Ghana

1. Introduction

The use of code-switching in foreign language classrooms has attracted a lot of attention. Studies have expressed opinions on whether bilingual and multilingual practices such as code-switching and translanguaging ought to be implemented in classrooms (Muguruza, Cenoz, & Gorter, 2023; Sahan & Rose, 2021; Faltis, 2019; Cahyani, de Courcy & Barnett, 2018; Park, 2013). Sahan and Rose (2021), for instance, note in the case of English medium instruction (EMI) classrooms that English-only and code-switching and translanguaging serve numerous important functions within such classrooms and argue that such language practices should be considered natural features of multilingual communication. Due to the interaction between various languages globally, there exist manifestations of various language contact phenomena. Researchers who study language use a variety of terms to describe this phenomenon and its effects, including metrolingualism, polylanguaging, polylingual languaging, heteroglossia, code meshing, translingual practice, flexible bilingualism, multilanguaging and hybrid language practices (Garcia & Wei, 2014 p. 36ff; Lewis et al., 2012, p. 650). In classrooms, particularly bilingual and multilingual classes, the phenomenon of switching between two or more languages is prevalent.

Code-switching, the practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties of language within a single conversation, has generated intense debate in the field of sociolinguistics (Auer, 1998; Gumperz, 1982; Garcia & Wei, 2014). While code-switching is often associated with bilingual or multilingual individuals in informal settings, it is also prevalent in educational contexts, particularly in classrooms where teaching and learning take place. The selection of the language of instruction in teaching a foreign language is an important decision for academic-related activities. Alenezi (2010) asserts that in a centralized system of education, a governing body, such as a ministry, educational board, or any other type of governing agency, frequently imposes language educational policy on academic institutions. She further adds that these decisions can have a notable impact on the academic performance of learners. Cummins (2000, p. 510) asserts that 'the language of education plays a crucial role in both the production and dissemination of knowledge, as well as in imparting fundamental knowledge and skills to the general population'. The selection of the language used for educational purposes holds significant importance, as it can either enhance or diminish the quality of education (Salami, 2008, p. 2, cited in Jegede, 2011). In bilingual classrooms, the language used in the teaching and learning process is an important factor to consider.

In the context of Ghana, language use in the classroom has gained scholarly attention over the years with scholars acknowledging the importance of code choices in achieving classroom pedagogic goals (Tefeh, 2020; Quarcoo & Amuzu, 2016; Agbozo & ResCue, 2021; ResCue & van Pinxteren, 2023). These studies provide evidence of the place of bilingual and multilingual code choices in the classroom underscoring how teachers and learners adopt their multilingual repertoires in their classroom discourse.

This study, therefore, focuses on code choices in French as a Second Language classrooms at the university level exploring how teachers and learners adopt their bilingual and multilingual

repertoires in their classroom communication. The research further ascertained the attitudes and perspectives of teachers and students towards bilingual and multilingual code choices such as code-switching during French lessons and revealed the motivations for choosing certain codes in the classrooms.

The ensuing sections discuss related literature including the conceptual framework of the study (section 2), the research questions (section 3), the methodology adopted for the study (section 4), data analysis and discussion (section 5), and the paper ended with conclusion and discussions of the implication of the study (section 6).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual frameworks

2.1.1 Code-Switching and Translanguaging

Code-switching (CS) involves using two languages simultaneously in the same interactive events, commonly observed in bilingual classrooms where both the student's native language (L1) and the target language (L2) are employed. Traditional L2 classrooms often do not accept code-switching due to the misconception that it indicates incomplete knowledge of one language (Park, 2013). Grosjean (1982) and Poplack (2000) define code-switching as the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence, or constituent (cf. Zhong, Ang & Sharmini, 2023). Hoffman (1991) highlights that switches can occur intra-sententially within a single sentence, inter-sententially between sentences or emblematically in a tag or exclamation of a sentence. Myers-Scotton (1993a, p. 1) postulates that 'code switching is an alternation between two languages where lexical items and grammatical features from both languages appear in one sentence, used by fluent bilingual or multilingual speakers'. The concept is predominant in the conversations of bilinguals and multilinguals in societies (Kim, 2006). These conceptualizations of code-switching establish the fact that the phenomenon is carried out by bi- and multi-lingual speakers in their conversations. Wardhaugh (1998), on the presence of the concept in human conversations, notes that it is unusual for a speaker to have command of, or use only one code or system or variety of language whether it is a dialect or style. Code-switching has been studied from linguistic (structural), sociolinguistic, pragmatic, psycholinguistic, and applied linguistic perspectives. In this study, the concept code-switching is investigated from the applied linguistic perspective by looking at its use in teaching and learning in universities in anglophone countries specifically Ghana.

Translanguaging, a relatively recent term, originated from Welsh bilingual classrooms and refers to the planned and systematic use of two languages within the same lesson (Baker, 2011). Baker (2011, p. 288) defines translanguaging as 'the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages'. It extends beyond language categories, emphasizing the integrated use of a multilingual speaker's repertoire (Canagarajah, 2011). In classrooms, translanguaging often involves the use of stronger language to develop the weaker language, thereby contributing to a balanced development of a child's language (William, 2003 as cited by Lewis et al., 2011).

On the difference of these terms, code-switching alternates between two language systems

whereas translanguaging transcends language categories, focusing on how speakers use their entire linguistic repertoire to create meaning through interaction (Garcia & Li Wei, 2014). Translanguaging has rooted itself in pedagogy which enables the formation of a space for creative language use especially in education (Nagy, 2018). In contrast, code-switching is less institutionally endorsed and often lacks pedagogical underpinnings (Cresse & Blackledge, 2010). Translanguaging in the classroom allows for cross-language transfer, flexibility in code choices, and varied pedagogic approaches which fosters balanced bilingualism (Lewis et al., 2012). It enhances understanding, literacy and learning achievements by drawing on the linguistic resources available to learners (Canagarajah, 2011; Lin, 1999; Lewis et al., 2012). Translanguaging is not solely a pedagogic tool; it extends to everyday contexts, as seen in multilingual markets (Blackledge, Creese, & Hu, 2015). Translanguaging may seem to be a new term, however, the process of the concurrent use of two or more languages within an interactive event has existed since language contact research emerged (Yevudey, 2017). Scholars acknowledge the close relationship between code-switching and translanguaging, with discussions extending beyond pedagogy to everyday contexts (Blackledge, Creese, & Hu, 2015). Both concepts are used to describe language mixing among bilinguals and multilingual individuals.

2.2 Review of Related Studies

A body of research exists which has investigated the attitudes of teachers and students on the phenomenon of code-switching in classrooms. Studies into the perceptions and attitudes of these phenomena in classrooms have indicated that linguists and language educators have positive attitudes while others show negative and conditional attitudes. For instance, the study by Yevudey (2013) on code-switching indicates that teachers' attitudes towards code-switching are varied. Through the qualitative and quantitative analyses of questionnaires and interviews, it was revealed that the majority of the teachers have positive attitudes towards code-switching. Thus, teachers with positive attitudes adopt it as a medium of instruction whereas teachers who express negative attitudes avoid it to some extent. Similarly, Nordin et al. (2013) investigate ESL learners' attitudes toward code-switching in the classroom. The results revealed that the majority of learners have positive attitudes towards code-switching in English language classrooms. Most of them are of the view that CS help them to learn the English language.

Hakim, Arflida, and Satriani (2019) conducted a study to examine the students' perception towards code-switching in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. The study employed a questionnaire survey and interviews as means of data collection. A total of 30 students participated in the questionnaire whereas 9 students took part in both the questionnaire and interview. The analysis of the students' responses showed that the majority have a positive perception and agree with the use of code-switching in EFL classrooms. Similarly, Alang and Idris (2018) study university students' perception of code-switching used by their lecturers in the classroom. Forty-five (45) students were randomly selected from three different faculties in the Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM). The analysis of the responses revealed that students do not perceive their lecturers' use of code-switching as a sign of their inadequate competence in the language but rather to help students understand

lessons. It was revealed that students have positive perceptions of their lecturers' code-switching practice. To Nur and Fitriyani (2015), code-switching is a beneficial tool for language learning, emphasizing its role in simplifying instruction. The study further stated that code-switching should be used by instructors in their speaking and listening activities during the teaching-learning process with their students. Fathimah (2016) adds that code-switching is used in the classroom because it helps students in learning the English language.

Acquah (2022) investigates the attitudes of English language teachers toward the sociolinguistic phenomenon of code-switching and its pedagogic relevance in the classroom. The qualitative data in the form of interviews and observation were collected and analysed using the discourse analysis method. It was revealed that teachers have a positive attitude towards code-switching during English language lessons since it enhances learners' understanding and vocabulary acquisition. Soku, Simpah, and Adu (2011) researched to investigate differences in students' attitudes toward the study of English and French in a private university setting in Ghana by focusing on gender, age, level, and language background. The results of the study indicated that gender had a significant effect on students' attitudes toward the study of English, females have a better attitude to English-French than their male counterparts. Age and level of students had no significant effects on students' attitudes to the study of both languages. However, the findings of their study revealed that linguistic background had a significant effect on students' attitudes toward studying French and not English. It was indicated that Francophone students have a more positive attitude to the study of French than Anglophone students. In other words, Anglophone students do not have positive attitudes when studying French due to their language background.

Hussein (1999) investigated the attitudes towards code-switching and code mixing in relation to English, Arabic, and other language users in the discourse of Jordanian students at Yarmouk University. The findings revealed that there were no significant differences in the students' attitudes towards code-mixing and code-switching. However, it should be noted that the study's scope was limited to exploring only the students' attitudes, and it did not investigate the perspectives of the teachers regarding code-switching.

Abban, Mensah, and ResCue (*forthcoming*) in their study on the phenomenon of code-switching in French and Francophone classrooms found out that lecturers used code-switching to achieve pedagogic functions such as explaining concepts, vocabulary acquisition and content comprehension. However, their study did not explore the attitudes of lecturers and undergraduate students towards bilingual practices notably English and French code-switching in classrooms.

Although several studies have been conducted on code-switching in the educational context, it appears that limited attention has been given to the perception of lecturers and students on French-English code-switching in French and Francophone classrooms in higher educational institutions in Ghana. Therefore, this present study aims to investigate lecturers' and their students' perceptions of the phenomenon of code-switching in French and Francophone

classrooms in a public university in Ghana.

3. Research Questions

By contributing to the expanding body of knowledge on code-switching within the Ghanaian educational setting, this study focuses on the following research questions:

1) What are the perceptions of French lecturers and students on the phenomenon of code-switching in French and Francophone Studies classrooms?

2) What are the motivations for French lecturers and students' code-switching during French and Francophone Studies classroom discussions?

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study is placed within the mixed research paradigm. The mixed research paradigm involves 'mixing or combining quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study' (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17). Creswell and Creswell (2018) state that the use of a mixed-method approach in a study yields additional insight beyond the information provided by either the qualitative or quantitative data alone. Most importantly, a researcher may use both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study while collecting and analyzing data to deeply investigate and understand the research problems (Creswell & Clark, 2007).

4.2 Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

Kothari and Garg (2014) define research instruments as tools for collecting data. To collect the data, we employed three instruments due to the nature of the study and the kind of data to be collected, as well as the population targeted. The instruments employed in the research include personal observation, interviews, and a questionnaire survey. Interviews, classroom observation and online questionnaires using the Google Form interface were the data collection instruments used. Interviews were used to find out the reasons and perceptions that engineered the lecturers for code-switching in classrooms. Specifically, the study employed personal interviews. We interviewed the research participants in a face-to-face setting and recorded the responses using Tecno Camon 12 PRO.

According to Fontana and Frey (2005), there are three types of interviews. These are structured (standardized), semi-structured (semi-standardized), and unstructured (unstandardized). The study adopted the semi-structured interview to collect data from the lecturers only. The study used an interview guide which consisted of questions related to code-switching and the motivations for code-switching. In all, the interview guide served as an outline with some questions. We used open-ended questions which according to Patton (2002) generated rich answers where interviewees used whatever words they wanted to express what they had to say as each interviewee provided different answers. Creswell (2007) stresses that open-ended questions require participants to come up with their responses and allow the researcher to document the opinions of the respondent in his or her own words. The

questions were prepared in English. In all, a total number of 5 French lecturers were interviewed. The researchers used Tecno Camon 12 PRO to record the interview sessions. The interviews took place in each of the lecturers' offices at the university.

The Google Form questionnaire was distributed to students on the 1st, 2nd, and 4th year WhatsApp platforms. One hundred and twenty (120) students participated by filling out the questionnaire. The questionnaire for the students comprised both closed and open-ended questions. For the closed-ended questions, the students were required to choose the answer that was appropriate to them whereas the open-ended questions required students to formulate their answers. The background information on the various language use patterns in the classrooms and the perceptions of lecturers and students regarding code-switching are provided by the interviews and online questionnaires using the Google Form interface, respectively. In total, there were 1hr:50mins of interview recordings of lecturers. For ethical considerations and anonymity, the lecturers are given pseudonyms FREN 1, FREN 2, FREN 3, FREN 4, and FREN 5. On the other hand, students have ST1, ST2 etc.

4.3 Population and Sampling

Borg and Gall (2009) define a research population as members of a real or hypothetical set of people, events and objects the researcher wishes to generalize the results of the research. The population of this study is the total number of lecturers and students within the Department of French and Francophone Studies. The teaching staff and the students are 5 and 120, respectively. Out of five French lecturers, four (4) were males and 1 was female.

Table 1. The number of lecturers and student participants

Name Of Department	Number of Students in Each Year's Class				Number of Lecturers		
French And Francophone Studies	1st	2nd	4th	Total	Male	Female	Total
Participants	32	63	25	120	4	1	5

Sampling is very important in studies that involve human subjects (Murray Thomas, 2003; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The study adopted simple random sampling where each participant was chosen at random and had an equal probability of being chosen. Five (5) lecturers were interviewed. One hundred and twenty (120) students participated in the study. Lune and Berg (2017) assert that using a sample of participants allows researchers to conclude a broader population from a smaller one. Therefore, for the inference to be valid, the sample must accurately reflect the population from which it is collected. We interviewed all the sampled lecturers to know their motivations for code-switching during their classroom discussions with their respective students. Moreover, the questionnaire to solicit the students' opinions on code-switching was made available to only the 1st year, 2nd year, and 4th year excluding the 3rd year students because the latter students were in Benin and France for their year abroad programme as part of their course requirements.

4.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis procedures utilized in this study were the qualitative data reduction and sense-making efforts to summarize the qualitative material and identify consistent core meanings (Patton, 2002). This research method is applied in qualitative research strategies to analyze the data after being collected. The data collected during the interview sessions were analyzed as follows:

The interview responses were recorded, and notes were taken as well. The interviews were conducted in English. The second step involved data coding, where important key concepts, content relevant to the research questions, and pertinent information were tagged. Categorization of unprocessed data occurred during the data interpretation phase. The last part focuses on the presentation and discussion of the data. In writing the report, all the findings were presented following the specific objectives of this study. Themes and sub-themes were created as part of the data analyses.

5. Analysis and Discussion

This section comprises two subsections, which examine the motivations and perceptions of lecturers and students towards code-switching.

5.1 Perceptions towards Code-Switching in French and Francophone Classrooms

The opinions of lecturers and students about code-switching in the classroom are examined in this section. It presents and discusses the lecturers' perspectives that were gleaned from the interviews. Additionally, based on the Google Form questionnaires, the students' perceptions are also given.

5.1.2 The Perception of Students

The present study is a classroom-based research and as such, the researchers deemed it pertinent to solicit the students' opinions on the use of code-switching in teaching and learning. The students were allowed to express their subjective views on the code choices phenomenon in the classroom by the French lecturers through an online questionnaire survey using a Google Form interface.

General information on Code-Switching

Level

120 responses

Legend: 100, 200, 400

52.5%, 20.8%, 26.7%
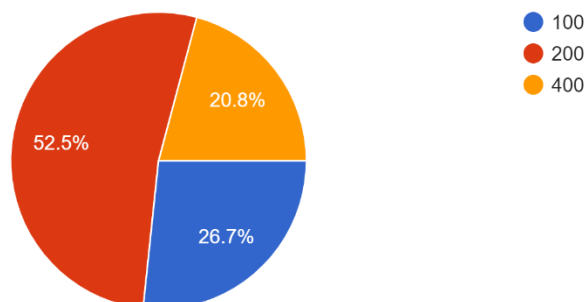
The students who participated in this study are from the Department of French and Francophone Studies. A total number of 120 students participated in the study, 32 (26.7%) were students from level 100, 63 (52.5%), of the students were from level 200 and 25 (20.8%) were from level 400.

3. What is your proficiency level in French language?
120 responses
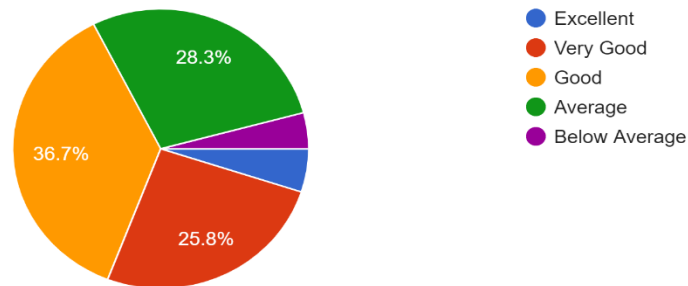
On the proficiency level of the students, the above showed that 6 (5%) are excellent in the French, 31 (25.8%) selected Very Good, 44 (36.7%) selected Good, 34 (28.3%) and 5 (4.2%) of the students are Average and Below Average, respectively.

7. I participate most in class when the lecturer uses ONLY French in class?
120 responses
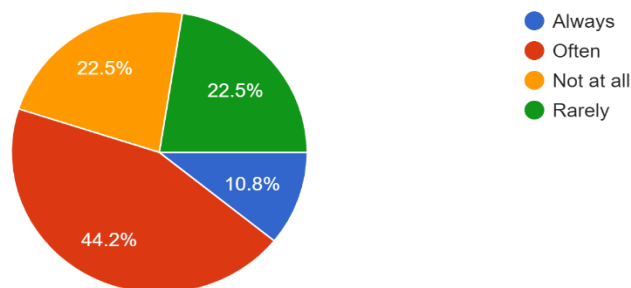
Here, this question was meant for the researchers to know whether the students participate incessantly when their lecturers use only French in class. The result revealed that 13 (10.8%) students chose Always, 53 (44.2%) chose Often, 27 (22.5%), and 27 (22.5%) chose Not At All and Rarely, respectively.

8. I participate most of the time when I am allowed to Code Switch in class.
120 responses
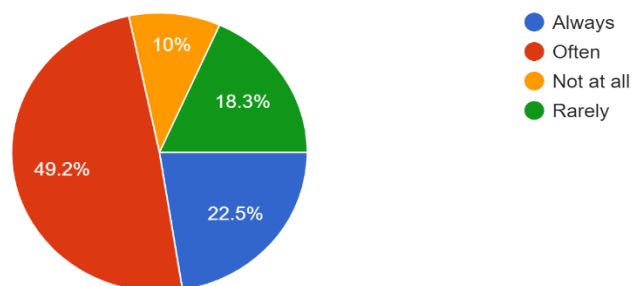
Here, they were asked if they participate in class when permission was granted for them to code switch. A total of 27 (22.5%) chose Always, 59 (49.2%) chose Often, 12 (10%) and 22 (18.3%) chose Not At All and Rarely, respectively. From Q7 and Q8, it is seen that students participate most in class when permitted to code switch.

9. Have you ever been to a Francophone country before?
120 responses
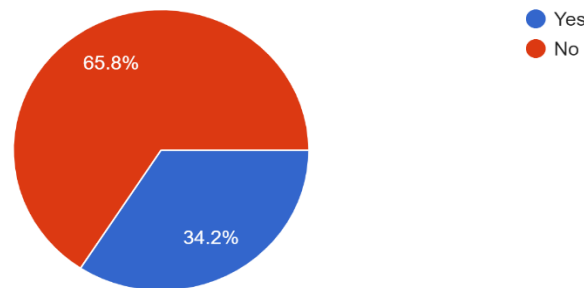
The students who participated in the study were asked if they had been to a Francophone country before. The results revealed that most of them have not travelled to any Francophone countries. Those who have travelled were those who went to Benin and France to study for a year. A total of 79 (65.8%) selected No whereas 41(34.2%) selected Yes. Most of the students who picked Yes were mostly level 400 students who had returned from their one-year study in a francophone country specifically Benin or France.

10. How often do your French lecturers use both French and English in their teaching?
120 responses
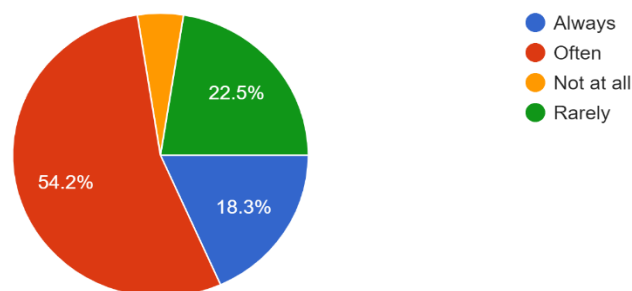
Respondents were asked whether their French lecturers employ code-switching in their classrooms. The results of the study revealed that the lecturers employ both French and English in teaching Francophone courses. A total of 22 (18.3%) chose Always, 64 (54.2%) selected Often, 6 (5%) and 27 (22.5%) picked Not At All and Rarely, respectively.

18. From the list stipulated below, what reasons do you think make your French lecturers CS in their teaching? Tick as many as you consider necessary.

120 responses
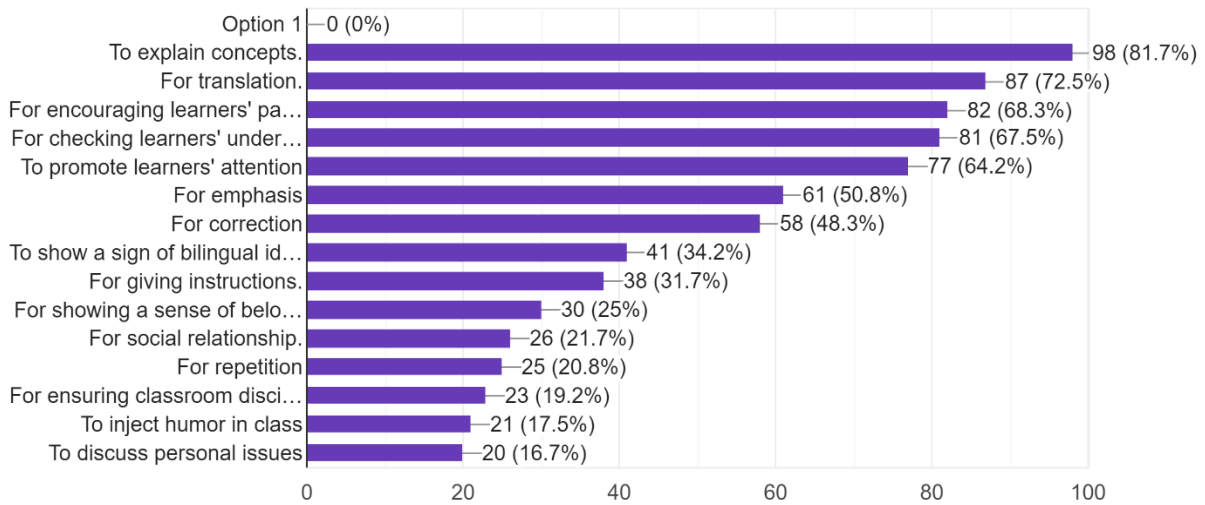
Respondents were asked to select the reasons that make their lecturers code switch in classrooms. Moreover, they were allowed to select as many reasons as possible they thought engineered lecturers' code-switching in the learning and teaching process. From the above chart, it is realized that the most relevant reason for code-switching by lecturers according to students was to explain concepts. CS was largely employed during the translation period which demands the concurrent use of French and English. The last reason is to discuss personal issues.

A Chart Representation on the Perceptions of the Students on Code-Switching

6. Do you think lecturers use of Code Switching (CS) during classroom interaction is important?

120 responses
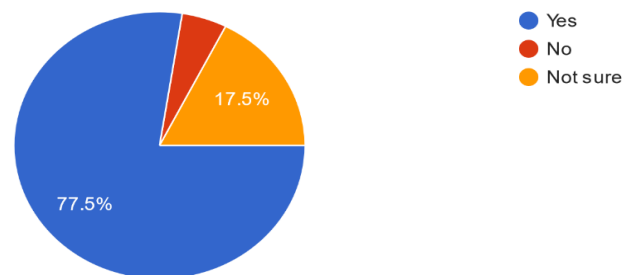
Respondents were asked to choose from the options on whether they think the use of code-switching during teaching and learning of Francophone courses is important. From the above chart, it is clearly shown that most of the students support its use. Out of one hundred and twenty students (120) who responded to online questionnaires using the Google Form interface, 93 (77.5%) selected Yes to show their stance that it is important, 21 (17.5%) students picked No to show disagreement and 6 (5%) selected Not Sure. One plausible interpretation for the majority selecting Yes was because of their low linguistic background.

Most of the students are Anglophones who have been more exposed to English than French. As a result, they are not adequately conversant with French than English. Therefore, the adoption of bilingual codes in the classroom would facilitate understanding of concepts and enhance classroom participation.

15. Do you think Code Switching should be encouraged in classroom?
120 responses
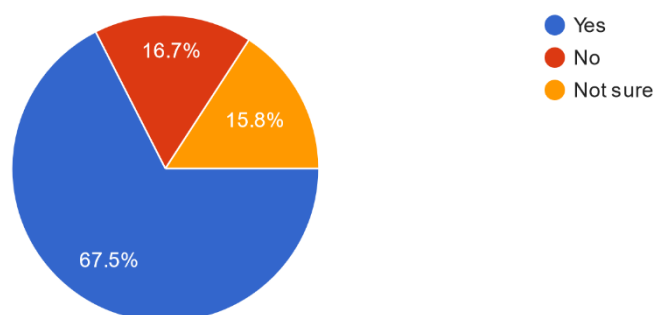
In a similar question, the students were asked whether code-switching should be encouraged in the classroom. Out of one hundred and twenty respondents, 81 (67.5%) selected Yes, 20 (16.7%) selected No, and 19 (15.8%) picked Not Sure. Here, an avenue was given to the respondents on the Google Form to type the reasons for their choice of answers to question 15. Interestingly, eighty-five (85) students wrote that it aids in understanding and reduces pressure thereby making them interactive in class. Some of the responses are as follows with pseudonyms:

ST1 'It helps us to get the understanding of what he is teaching.'

ST2 'It helps students to understand the concept better since we aren't that good at speaking the language.'

ST3 'For good comprehension by average students.'

ST4 'The use of both languages in class makes the class very interactive.'

ST5 'For easy understanding especially the grammar aspect.'

ST6 'Since we fully know and understand the English language, it helps when the explanation is done in English or at least a few English words are used.'

ST7 'Language is to be understood and the only way to make us understand the French language more is to use both the French language and the English language we understand to make it easier to learn French. Since we have grown past the language acquisition period, it will be difficult to understand without an interesting approach. Some find it difficult because they have studied in Ghana for a long time and haven't been to Francophone countries and some also because they were never introduced in their younger years, they find it difficult to study at the tertiary level.'

ST8 'It helps by making students participate in class.'

ST9 'It makes understanding less difficult for weak students.'

ST10 'In order to learn a new language, we need to understand it first in a language familiar to us. When we get it, it will help us.'

On the other hand, fifteen (15) students gave reasons why it should not be encouraged, and others gave conditional reasons. Some of the responses are as follows:

ST11 'So that we would get used to the language. However, they should code switch when they realize that we are still not getting what they are saying after having repeated themselves several times in French'.

ST12 'The more they code switch, the more our mind adopts it, hence causing us to develop that habit which will literally reduce our fluency in French.'

ST13 'It doesn't challenge us to learn the French language.'

ST14 'We would not get used to the language if they do so. However, they should code switch after having repeated themselves several times in French and we're still not getting them.'

**ST15** 'to encourage students to practice speaking French in and out of the classroom.'

ST16 'They should use it but not continually since we have to get used to the French language.

ST17 'It will not encourage the students to use the French language.'

One plausible interpretation is that those who have been to Francophone countries such as Benin, Togo, France, and Cote d'Ivoire, and are adept with the language do not see the essence of code-switching. Aside that, those who did not encourage its use at some point said it should be used when the lecturer has repeated whatever he or she wants to communicate in French and still the students do not understand it. A synopsis of the opinions showed that students encouraged the use of bilingual codes, particularly French and English, in the classroom but it should not be used pervasively since their target is to attain native-like proficiency in French. Linguistically, the use of two languages would help both students, either Francophone or Anglophone, in vocabulary acquisition.

16. How do you feel when your lecturer Code switch in the classroom?
120 responses

- Very positive
- Positive
- Uncertain
- Negative

62.5% • 15.8% • 20%
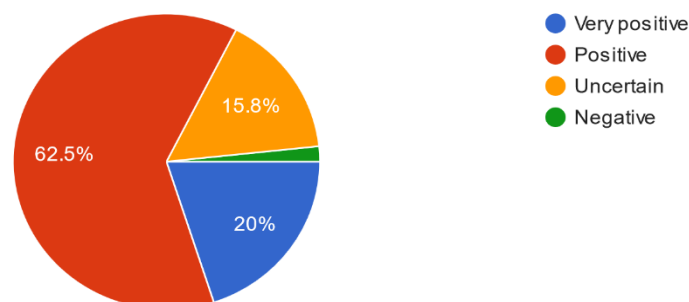
The chart presents details of the quantitative analysis of the students' attitudes towards code-switching. The finding revealed that 24 (20%) were Very Positive, 75 (62.5%) were Positive, 19 (15.8%) were Uncertain and 2 (10.7%) had a Negative attitude toward the use of both French and English in teaching French courses. The findings revealed that most of the students have (very) positive attitudes towards code-switching.

5.1.3 The Perceptions of Lecturers Towards Code-Switching

In answering this research question, we interviewed 5 lecturers to know their subjective opinions on code-switching. These lecturers were those whose classrooms were observed. Out of the five (5) lecturers, four were male and one was female. The participants were given pseudonyms FREN I, FREN 2, FREN 3, FREN 4 and FREN 5.

Table 2. Background Data of the Lecturers

Lecturer	Year of teaching French
FREN 1	17 years
FREN 2	20 years
FREN 3	22 years
FREN 4	22 years
FREN 5	13 years

Table 2 shows that all the lecturers involved in the present study have taught for over ten (10) years in the Department of French and Francophone Studies. All the lecturers interviewed in this present study teach courses in either 1st year, 2nd year, or 4th year.

During the interview sessions, the lecturers were asked about the languages they used in teaching. These are the responses from each of them.

FREN 1 – 'Basically, when you are teaching a French course, you are expected to use French but because we are in an Anglophone country where French is a foreign language and yet to be a second official language I use both French and English.'

FREN 2 'Of course it is French. We encourage the use of French to teach our students because it helps our students to think in French unless it is a translation class, if it is not a translation class, it is always French.'

FREN 3 'Yeah French and English and sometimes local language. I am a man of languages.'

FREN 4 'Depending on the situation, I use both French and English. I examine the situation and check whether I need to shift from French to English or vice versa''

FREN 5 'Okay, we use French but we realized that some of the students have a low linguistic background in French so the use of only French won't help therefore we use both French and English'

Based on the responses, all the teacher respondents employed bilingual practices, particularly

French and English in their classroom pedagogy mainly due to the linguistic background of the students in French as most of the students may not have high competence in French to comprehend lessons taught in French-only medium of instruction.

During the interview sessions in each of the lecturers' offices, they were asked whether code-switching would hamper the student's proficiency in learning the target language, French. These are the respective responses from the lecturers:

FREN 1 'It will not affect them that is why I was saying that we use the English though but we do not make it a comfort zone. It is not advisable to always code switch therefore we do it wisely. We do it in a way that will not hamper the proficiency of the students.'

FREN 2 'As I said earlier, we encourage the use of French to teach the students because it helps them to think in French unless it is a translation period. If it is not a translation period otherwise it is always French therefore it will not affect their proficiency. Sometimes we use English in other lessons but just to help them understand.'

FREN 3 'It won't affect their proficiency because they are aiming at four different competencies which are expression écrite (written expression), expression orale (oral expression), communication écrite (written communication) and communication orale (oral communication). The use of code-switching will help in one way or the other to achieve them and will not inhibit their proficiency.'

FREN 4 'No, it will not limit them from becoming eloquent in the language. What if I speak French throughout and they don't understand? Therefore, the target is to make sure they understand whatever I want to communicate. Also, speaking French throughout would be okay but you will speak and speak, and nobody will understand. When it happens, you have not achieved anything so if there is the need to switch, quickly switch.'

FREN 5 'It will not affect their proficiency because when they get the understanding better, they will be able to formulate their own sentences in the French language at their own level. Moreover, the class is a combined class of both major and minor students. Code-switching brings them to the same level.'

At the end of all the interview sessions when the participants have answered the questions we asked them, these are the major themes that were formulated during the interview sessions with lecturers on code-switching. They are situational factors, the low linguistic background of the students in French, low proficiency in the language, inadequate teaching materials conducive to learning a language, and the relevance of other languages in achieving pedagogic goals.

RQ2. What are the motivations for French lecturers and students' code-switching during French and Francophone Studies classroom discussions?

First, situational factors encourage code-switching in the classrooms. FREN 4 expressed his views on code-switching in French classrooms. He is of the view that he does not feel comfortable with his student's code-switching to English in the French classroom but would love to use monolingual French throughout his teaching since it is a prerequisite to better the

students' competence and proficiency in the language. However, the situation he finds himself in would not permit that. The students are not proficient in French even though some are very good but not to the extent of using monolingual French to teach throughout the learning process. He further added that 'I am not there to teach for teaching sake but to make sure the students understand whatever information I want to convey and when I use French throughout the lesson and the students do not understand, then nothing has been achieved'. Based on this, the adoption of both languages helps the students to comprehend lessons thereby making teaching effective.

This is another response from FREN 4 '[t]he purpose of teaching the French language is to help the students to be able to express themselves… so I will prefer to use French throughout since that is the only way to have contact with the French language. Most of the time, it is by speaking the language that you can perfect yourself in the language so I would prefer to use French but the situation will not permit me to use it'.

Extract 1: Teaching for a purpose

> 'It is not a matter of let me teach and you are teaching sake. You teach and make sure the students understand what you are doing. If there is something that technically they have to know, you don't need to stick to the French that they don't understand, use the language that they will understand better. When they grasp it, you will see they will be able to use...."

II. Linguistic Background of Undergraduates

The linguistic backgrounds of the students were gathered from the interview sessions. The limited/or poor linguistic background of students in French was a major factor in the use of bilingual practices during teaching. Some of the lecturers postulated that their students' linguistic backgrounds led them to adopt different code choices in the classroom. The class is made up of both Francophone and Anglophone students. The online questionnaires using the Google Form interface revealed that most of the students are Ghanaians and English language was their first foreign language learned. Therefore, the use of bilingual code choice creates a conducive atmosphere for learning. An excerpt from a lecturer with the pseudonym FREN 5 revealed the following: 'We realized that some of our students here have a very low linguistic background as far as French is concerned so sometimes French alone may not help them, so we try to use a little bit of English'.

III. Inadequate Students' Proficiency in the Language

The lecturers code switch due to the students' low level of proficiency and competence in the French language. These students have different exposure to the language because of their different educational and linguistic backgrounds. Due to that, the lecturers have to code-switch to meet the linguistic needs of their respective students. This helps in the

acquisition of vocabulary in either language. Most of the students are good in English, unlike French. They can express themselves well in English than in French since the majority are exposed to English from birth. Due to this, the lecturers then adopt the technique of French-dominant and English-less dominant approach. An extract from the interview from FREN 2 revealed that: 'Okay, normally it should be French but because our students are not strong in French, we have to break it down by speaking and interacting in English to help them understand'.

FREN 3 also said that 'most of the students have vocabulary limitations. Okay, so when it happens that way then it is difficult for them to express their thought and sometimes, they have the idea to give you feedback for your questions, but they hesitate not because they don't know but rather because they have inadequate lexical items to express themselves'.

IV. Inadequate Teaching Materials

The medium of instruction to use in French and Francophone classrooms is French unless the 'Translation Period'. However, lecturers adopted French and English through a technique known as French-dominant and English-less dominant. This means lecturers adopt bilingual codes as the medium of classroom interaction. Yevudey (2017) asserts that the medium of instruction is the expected code in the classroom whereas the medium of classroom interaction is the actual code choices in the classroom which may or may not be the same as the medium of instruction (cf. Bonacina & Gafaranga, 2011). FREN I postulated that inadequate learning materials also engineered their code-switching. He asserts that the classroom where students are taught French and Francophone courses is not a typical language classroom that has all the learning tools and materials for teaching French. This is the conversation that transpired between the researchers and FREN I on whether he would encourage code-switching in the classroom.

Extract 2: Inadequate teaching materials

> Yes, I do. For those who have French as their foreign language, the first language is important in teaching them because if you use only French then it has to be backed with other instruments such as language laboratory, cinema sessions, and read-aloud exercises. Unfortunately, these learning materials are not adequate in their numbers for them to use and even the form of the classroom is not a typical language class so it makes it difficult.

V. The Importance of Another Language

During the interviews, some of the respondents highlight the importance of other languages most especially English in the acquisition of the target language, French. Even though the optimism for the use of English teaching is low, they believe that the official language of Ghana, English, plays a significant role in the acquisition of the French language. The fact that their primary aim is to make sure their students are well-trained and adept in the French

language does not pave the way to downplay English since in one way or another it aids students' understanding of concepts. A discussion with one of the lecturers with the pseudonym FREN 2 is presented as follows:

Researcher: Aside from English, during one of your observed classes, you spoke Twi, what role does it play in your teaching?

FREN 2**: '**laughs ..., it is a very interesting question, you see the fact that we are teaching French does not exclude the use of other languages... the idea is that if I should speak Krobo, Yoruba or any other language to let them understand at that point of teaching, I will use it just to help them understand'.

At the end of the interview, he emphatically stated that it is a Department of French therefore French is the expected language, but the use of English comes in when the students do not comprehend any discussion done in French. Another lecturer with FREN 4 as a pseudonym emphasized the relevance of employing English in teaching grammar. He asserts that grammar goes with certain rules and principles and therefore when students do not understand these principles, then, it is necessary to adopt English to help them understand. He further added that at times he resorts to English because French at that moment cannot be used to explain some unfamiliar concepts to students. In the process of interviewing, lecturers were asked whether code-switching would hamper the student's competence and proficiency in French. The overall responses indicated that it may affect them negatively and as such they employ the technique of French-dominant, English-less dominant. A lecturer with the pseudonym FREN 5 said that *''*it will not affect their proficiency because they get the understanding better, they will be able to formulate their sentences in the French language at their level. She further added that 'the class is a mixed class made of both major and minor French students, some are good, and others are not too bad so you do that to try and bring all of them to the same level*'''*.

Here, FREN 5 thinks code-switching does not affect their proficiency when rightly used, but rather creates a conducive atmosphere for all kinds of students. Another lecturer with FREN 3 as a pseudonym asserts that there are four different competencies in the acquisition of the French language: *Expression Orale* 'Oral Expression', *Communication Écrite* 'Written Communication', *Communication Orale* 'Oral Communication', and *Comprehension écrite* 'Written Comprehension'. According to him, *Comprehension écrite* is 'when I write and then I give you the written work, when you read, do you understand it? then *Expression écrite* is 'How much can you as a student express yourself in writing to me too', then we have *Comprehension Orale* is 'When I speak how much of what I say? what percentage are you able to get as a student and, finally, *Expression orale* is 'how much expression and to what extent can you speak?'. From the FREN 3, their students do not have all these competencies to the maximum. Therefore, code-switching helps in their understanding and acquisition of vocabulary.

At the end of the interviews, the lecturers were asked whether they would recommend the use of French and English in French language classrooms. This question is relevant since it helped the researchers to know their respective opinions on bilingual code choices, thereby

displaying their attitudes towards code-switching in French and Francophone classrooms. Out of the five (5) lecturers interviewed, three (3) encouraged the use of bilingual codes in French classrooms, one expressed conditional use and the last person discouraged its use.

FREN 5 encouraged its use even though she is of the view that it has two side effects: good and bad effects. She encouraged its use but advised that it should be used minimally and not pervasively. FREN 4 expressed a conditional attitude towards code-switching. He asserts that it depends on the course one is teaching. FREN 4 teaches grammar and grammar deals with certain rules and principles therefore the official language plays a key role in teaching French grammar. At times, English would be the right language to use to explain concepts they do not understand in French. He further added that even in Francophone countries where he was trained and brought up, teachers at times use their local languages when teaching French students in Francophone countries therefore '*you cannot throw it away*'.

FREN 3 encouraged its use. He is of the view that it helps both Francophone and Anglophone students within the same classroom. He asserts that during the 'Translation Period', the Francophone students who are very good in French find it difficult to express their thoughts in English due to low proficiency in English. Such students may understand the passage but may not have the English vocabulary and lexical items to express the same thought in English. The same applies to Anglophone students regarding French. Therefore, code-switching is very important and would recommend its use. Thus, the use of bilingual code enables the Anglophone and Francophone students to increase their competence and vocabulary in both languages. He further added that imagining a classroom where a French teacher uses monolingual French to teach local students who are English-speaking students, how efficient would that class be? FREN 3 gave an example of what happened during his youthful age. According to him, his primary French teacher decided to use monolingual French throughout his teaching without resorting to English. The teacher tried all he could to explain '*sale*' to them. He did not want to use English even though he could see that the students did not understand what he was trying to convey. Finally, the teacher sat on the ground and showed them the **dirty** part of his trousers. Similarly, he was trying to teach them '**snail**'. According to FREN 3, the lecturer went back and forth to explain it, but the students were not getting the picture. He could not explain '*escargot*'. He then drew it but still, the picture was not clear to the students. One day on the school field, the teacher saw a snail and picked it. He then ran to the classroom and showed it to them saying '*escargot', 'escargot', and 'escargot*' persistently. Meanwhile, he could have just said "snail" to the students which is the easier option for the students to understand what he was talking about.

A lecturer with the pseudonym FREN 2 discouraged its use in the classroom. He posits that it is the Department of French and Francophone Studies therefore the lecturers should be the first to encourage the use of the French language. According to him, the use of English is primarily to aid understanding in the classroom, aside from that we (referring to other colleagues) encourage answers in French. The students are here purposely to better their French to become French teachers, translators, and ambassadors therefore he does not encourage the use of the English Language. To him ''*code-switching is not good, it is something that we won't wish for*''. Moreover, he added that he expects to see the students

speak French for a long period when conversing without mixing it with English and when the students fail to do that then it means they (lecturers) are not doing what is expected of them. The last lecturer interviewed with the pseudonym FREN 1 encouraged its use because the first language plays a significant role in the acquisition of the target language, French. This is supported by a study conducted by Garcia (2009) and Yevudey (2017) that the first language of learners plays a role in the acquisition of the target language or second language, therefore, it should be accommodated in classroom pedagogy. The lecturer stated emphatically that the classroom for the teaching and learning of French is not a typical classroom for French language learning. Moreover, he added that he does not feel comfortable switching because switching does not challenge the students much. He gave an example that it is like using a phone and having access to the internet when you want to research, you are always quick to go to the internet instead of challenging yourself to bring out something". He, therefore, entreats teachers not to code-switch pervasively.

6. Conclusion and Implication

The paper investigates the motivations and perceptions of lecturers and students on the phenomenon of code-switching in French and Francophone classrooms. It is worthy of note that the attitudinal studies towards code-switching are changing (Acquah, 2022; Yevudey, 2013). Code-switching has been used as a worthwhile research subject for academic studies. Forson (1979, p. 123) states that code-switching (CS) was not a code choice in Ghana until the early 1950s when English was used as a medium of instruction in elementary schools; and further asserts that attitudes towards code-switching as recounted in the early 1950s to 1970s have been negative. Nonetheless, research has demonstrated that language educators and scholars have positive attitudes toward code-switching (see Asare-Nyarko, 2012).

The findings that emanated from this study conformed with other studies conducted in educational settings in Africa and other continents (Clegg & Afitska, 2011; Amekor, 2009, Yevudey, 2015 & 2017; Alang & Idris, 2018; Acquah, 2022). This study has proved that code-switching even takes place at the university level among educators and undergraduates who are deemed to be competent in their linguistic repertoire. This, then confirmed the study by Aguirre (1988 cited by Atiemo 2015) that culturally and linguistically diverse people cannot avoid code-switching.

In the study, the findings showed that the majority of students agree that CS is significant to their learning of French because it aids in understanding concepts which makes class interactive. Few opposed its use because it did not challenge them to learn and speak the French language. Several of them expressed conditional use of CS. Hence, the students have (very) positive attitudes toward code-switching. On the other hand, the interview session revealed that lecturers code-switch because of situational factors, inadequate proficiency and the low linguistic background of the students in the French language, inadequate teaching materials for learning, and the relevance of other languages. The results also indicated that lecturers adopted French-dominant and English less-dominant techniques in the teaching of the French language. This, therefore, shows that lecturers' code-switching in the classrooms has nothing to do with linguistic incompetence. This study does not support the claim by

Cummins (1981) that people who code-switch are those who do not have mastery in a language but rather supports Valdes-Fallis (1978 as cited in Atiemo, 2015) that code-switching is not a sign of language deficit.

Out of five (5) lecturers interviewed, three (3) encouraged its use. Thus, they expressed a positive attitude towards code-switching. They are of the view that it aids understanding and helps both Anglophone and Francophone students within the classroom. One lecturer discouraged its use on the note that CS hampers the students' proficiency in the acquisition of the target language, French. Thus, FREN 2 expressed a negative attitude towards the use of code-switching in French and Francophone classrooms. FREN 4 expressed conditional use on the note that it should be used when the situation one finds himself or herself in calls for the use of bilingual practices. However, the lecturer who discouraged code-switching happened to be the one who used it mostly to explain concepts to students in class. This is described in the literature as contradictions (cf. Atiemo, 2015). Yevudey (2013), for instance, points out that there is a practical use of code-switching to achieve teaching and learning goals whereas there is a disparity in how students and teachers perceive and talk about code-switching.

On the other hand, the opinions of lecturers on CS and their students are correlated because the students share similar views with their lecturers on code-switching. The study proposes a potential blueprint for language curriculum designers and language educators to consider code-switching as an integral pedagogic resource that needs to be incorporated into teachers' training courses in universities in Ghana, and other classroom contexts to equip lecturers and students to employ code-switching effectively to achieve pedagogic functions. It is time for foreign language educators to realize that code-switching is not a sign of linguistic deficiency but a code that can be used effectively in the acquisition of a target language.

Also, it is important to consider individual differences among students, such as their educational backgrounds, linguistic proficiencies, as well as genders in future research on code-switching. Additionally, recognizing that code-switching is an unavoidable phenomenon in French and Francophone Studies classrooms in Ghana, academics should be aware of the advantages and perils of code-switching as a teaching approach. In this regard, French lecturers and language instructors can utilize the languages in the students' repertoire, in this case English, consciously so that it would not affect students' competence in French.

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