

Code-switching in Communication by Male and Female English-majored Students: A Case Study at Two Selected Universities in Binh Duong Province

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Abstract

Nowadays, code-switching is a common and intricate phenomenon. Together with the rise of increasingly bilingual and multilingual communities, code-switching has become a critical linguistic and academic issue. The purposes of this study are to discover the features of code-switching toward male English learners on the impact of their first language and second language, to investigate the features of code-switching toward female English learners on the impact of their language (L1) and second language (L2), and to identify the differences and similarities in code-switching between male and female English learners on the impact of their first language (L1) and second language (L2). A total of 100 students from two universities in Binh Duong province was included in the study. The data were collected quantitatively and qualitatively through a mixed-method study using the tools of a questionnaire (for students) and a semi-structured interview (for teachers and students in charge of the experimental classes). According to the study results, English-majored students could only occasionally switch from L1 to L2 language during discussions and may require more effort to acquire higher IELTS scores. Furthermore, English-majored students rarely convert from their native tongue to another second language and should regard English as the classroom instruction language. However, alternating between native and L2 languages is beneficial.

Keywords: code-switching, bilingualism, case study, communication, English-majored students

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Bilingual speakers can benefit from code-switching, including increased communication efficacy. This is because code-switching allows bilingual individuals to choose the language or dialect that best matches the context of the communication, leading to more precise expression of ideas, higher comprehension, and more social and cultural integration, according to Poplack (1980). A multilingual speaker discussing a technical subject may employ precise terminology in one language and then move to another to communicate a better-understood concept. Ellen Bialystok, a cognitive psychologist, and bilingualism researcher who has undertaken a considerable study on the cognitive impacts of bilingualism, proposed Bilingualism and Cognitive Control Theory. This theory emphasizes the crucial significance of code-switching in bilingual communication and indicates that it is a beneficial ability that can improve bilingual speakers' communicative skills. As a result, code-switching abilities are critical in developing effective communication for multilingual speakers. The author will research the influence of code-switching and compare code-switching in male and female English-majored students.

According to Wafa's (2022) research, oral communication has been considered as an essential aspect of human contact in our civilization from the beginning to the present. People who have studied two languages exhibit a fascinating phenomenon known as "code-switching" in which they mix words or phrases from the two tongues in speech or writing. The professor, for example, speaks "Swinglish" with her Swedish acquaintances. People switch back and forth between Swedish and English in their interactions. They use both languages in the same sentence or make up words in Swedish and English. In most cases, it sounds strange to outsiders.

Communication also serves to bridge and connect people. Discussions allow people to interpret messages transmitted from one person to another. Code-switching is a procedure that occurs in people's interactions to assure the quality of communication and mutual understanding in a dialogue between two people using their L1 and L2 language. Language and discourse are used in this process, according to Ervin-Tripp (2001). A dialect or language can be defined as a code. This tendency is more widespread among people who share languages in regular discussions. The word "code-switching" can be construed in a variety of ways. This occurs when children interact with information using various elements such as voice registers and style switching. That is why sociolinguistic and developmental experts are particularly interested in bilingual speakers' ability to move quickly between topics in their talks. Someone bilingual can communicate in two languages. A person who speaks more than two languages is said to be "multilingual" (though the term "bilingualism" can be used in any scenario).

According to Braj Kachru's World Englishes Theory, English has become a global language due to historical, political, and economic factors. English is no longer solely for native speakers but has evolved into a "world language" that people of various languages and cultures use and modify. In this context, multilingualism and code-switching are common, and language linkage is essential for effective communication. Linguists, notably Braj Kachru, widely considered the theory's inventor, created the theory. Kachru was a linguist and

professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign who was well-known for his studies on the global spread and alteration of English. In his influential book entitled “The Alchemy of English” published in 1986, Kachru proposed the three-circle World English model, which divides English-speaking communities into three groups: the inner circle (native English-speaking countries), the outer circle (formerly colonized countries where English has official or institutional status), and the expanding circle (countries where English is taught as a foreign language). Later, researchers broadened and refined this paradigm, becoming a well-known framework for understanding English’s global growth and adaptation. According to this hypothesis, linguistic globalization is a developing trend, with many of the world’s speech communities becoming bilingual. As a result, the relationship between languages is critical to most people’s lives. Certain theoretical assumptions also inform this study about bilingualism and communicative ability. Regarding adult code-switching use, older language users are anticipated to utilize code switches more frequently and from a broader range of sociolinguistic activities than younger language users. Poplack (1980) believes that older learners would have gained a higher level of competency in their L2 language and would be well-versed in the grammatical systems of both their first and second languages, which have been identified as crucial for code-switching.

In addition to Poplack’s viewpoint, Tripp (1964) contends that as adults mature, their skills in developing and employing discourse tactics improve. Based on the interpretations of Genesee (2002) and Iliana (2001), the language growth naturally happening in these bilingual communities is interpreted in terms of developing bilingual communicative competence. Furthermore, language development will increase bilingual adults’ exposure to social differences and linguistic experiences. Moreover, these experiences broaden their knowledge and ability to use their various languages, and they then deploy code-switching to gain sociolinguistic targets. Lanza (2004) and Schieffelin and Ochs (1987) report that the patterns of language and code-switching that children use usually reflect how language is used in their communities. Furthermore, Poplack (1980) and Zentella (1982) discovered that code-switching occurs more frequently in adults than children, indicating that those speakers who speak more fluently and become balanced in both languages will be better at alternating and switching languages.

Previous research has discovered a link between children’s and adults’ ages and code-switching. Their L2 language was also evaluated because of the outcome. To highlight the relevance of code-switching as a fundamental ability in human communication, code-switching helps people increase their bilingual capability when they are more exposed to the L2 language. It also broadens communicative skills from a developmental perspective in sociolinguistic theory.

According to Identity Theory, based on the work of John Gumperz and Erving Goffman, language use is linked to constructing and expressing personal and communal identities. In multilingual communities, code-switching can convey a feeling of identity and affection for both languages and cultures. Code-switching can also express different parts of identity in other circumstances, such as speaking one language in a formal environment and another in a casual setting. Several sociologists, psychologists, and linguists have developed an identity theory. Sociologists such as Sheldon Stryker and Peter Burke developed the concept in the 1960s and 1970s. The work of John Gumperz and Erving Goffman was crucial in developing identity theory in linguistics. Code-switching in bilingual cultures can bridge the two languages and create mutual comprehension of the emphasized differences and contrasts. When attempting to grasp the primary concepts of other speakers or presenters, it is critical to recognize the likely interaction results based on real-life experiences.

Similarly, code-switching happens in L2 languages and influences the native tongue’s dialects or local language use. In regular discussions with other Vietnamese people, we use words like “ghi-ông” (guidon, a pennant that narrows to a point or fork at the free end, especially one used as the flag of a light cavalry unit), “ci-nê” (cinema), “VIP” (important person), and “bít tết” (beefsteak). While investigating code-switching as a crucial aspect of practical communication skills, it is equally critical to comprehend the evolution of communicative competence when learning an L2 language.

1.2 Aims of the Study

The study aims at discovering the features of code-switching toward male English learners on the impact of their L1 and L2, exploring the features of code-switching toward female English learners on the impact of their language (L1) and second language (L2), and determining the differences and similarities between male and female English learners in code-switching on the impact of their first language (L1) and second language (L2).

1.3 Research Questions

The research attempts to answer the following questions: (1) To what extent does code-switching impact male English learners? (2) How does code-switching influence female English learners? (3) What are the similarities and differences in code-switching between male and female English learners in their L1 and L2 languages?

1.4 Significance of Study

Because code-switching is how bilingual speakers communicate with one another in their talks, the research findings may provide greater insight into language teaching and learning by utilizing code-switching skills. The research is essential for English teachers, students, and the Faculty of Foreign Languages. Code-switching tactics can assist students in expanding their spoken vocabulary and gaining confidence in their speaking abilities. From the communication standpoint, this study delivers numerous positive contributions to teachers and students.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Code-switching

Language Contact Theory (LCT) states that contact between languages and cultures fosters language change and variation. Code-switching is a type of language contact in which multilingual people blend elements of several languages and cultures into their speech. Many linguists, including Joshua Fishman, Uriel Weinreich, and Charles Ferguson, have studied LCT. Bilingual speech is common in modern society, with two or more languages spoken in daily conversation.

Code-switching is a complex phenomenon that affects communication style. Sociolinguists have investigated numerous aspects of code-switching from context to context. Gumperz, Myers-Scotton, Auer, and Heller are famous researchers who have contributed to the study of code-switching. Gumperz has done a substantial study of the significance of context in code-switching, and Myers-Scotton has created a framework for assessing the many types of code-switching.

Code-switching is a complicated and diverse phenomenon that several sociolinguists have researched from various viewpoints. Auer has investigated the social and political elements of code-switching in multilingual communities. At the same time, Heller has studied the role of linguistic norms and expectations in code-switching. According to Ting (2007), in terms of multilingual cultures and communities, code-switching happens in everyday life discourse. This extends from our daily life to the working places. It is possible to extend teaching and learning activities in the classroom where a particular language is officially used as instruction language. Whereas for Gumperz (1982), code-switching is defined as using more than one code or language in the program of a particular speech event.

Richard (2002) mentioned code-switching as a change made by a writer or speaker from one language or language variety to another, which could happen in a talk when one speaker uses one language and responds in a different language. This could take place in the middle of a speech or sentence. According to Nilep (2006), code-switching is conceptualized as choosing or changing linguistic factors to contextualize talk in interaction. In short, code-switching is understood differently from different points of view of our sociolinguistic researchers.

These above authors convey the same message in code-switching: transforming information from one language to another during our talk should be considered an essential skill in our conversation in bilingual communities. Previous studies also have primarily concentrated on the benefits and the highlighted aspects of code-switching, which are relevant to language alternation, communicative strategies, and social identities under bilingualism and communicative competence. From the above-mentioned theories, code-switching can be considered as an essential technique for effective communication, especially for learners of English as a foreign or second language (L2). Code-switching can happen at the beginning, within, and at the end of sentences, and flexibly within, at the end, or at the beginning of sentences. With inter-sentential type, also known as mechanical switching or “code-mixing,”; the language switch is completed at sentence boundaries seen most often between fluent or bilingual solid speakers. According to Lipski (1985), another kind of code-switching, called intra-sentential or “code changing,” takes place in the middle of a sentence with no interruptions or hesitations that indicate a shift. The second type of code-switching is motivated by situational and stylistic elements and the switch between intentional and conscious languages.

2.2 Bilingual Communication

Based on Sia & Dewaele (2006)’s study, the term “bilingualism” has focused on “the many kinds and degrees of bilingualism and bilingual situations,” leading to in-depth descriptions of the various circumstances involved in bilingualism, anticipating the recent call for understanding the bilingual situation through its context and purpose, or “someone who controls two or more languages,” establishes the justification for using a flexible definition (the difficulty in defining the problem of being either to be or not to be bilingual).

Bilingual speakers often switch between languages, primarily when the two languages are used in the same environment. There are several reasons for code-switching, including filling a lexical gap. The current paper aims to discuss code-switching in communication by investigating a case study of male and female English majors in the educational environment.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Regarding most Vietnamese code-switching, the perspectives regarding subjects, purposes, and expectations are different. As already discussed in “Vietnamese English code-switching as a communication device at workplaces” conducted by Luru and Trần (2014) investigates the code switching between Vietnamese and English which is considered as a communication device in their talks in the working places, “English-Vietnamese bilingual code-switching in conversations: How and Why” implemented by Nguyen (2012) focuses on finding the features of Vietnamese-English bilinguals’ behaviors in general, “Code switching in conversations of Vietnamese teenagers” carried out by Nguyen (2011) addresses only code switching in the conversation of teenagers, the middle age and the old age, specifically the word code switching, “Code-switching in conversations: Case study” done by Luong and Nguyễn (2015) explores the code switching phenomenon that occurred in the daily conversations between Vietnamese and English of Vietnamese-Australian, and “Patterns of Code-mixing of English in Hoa Hoc Tro Magazine in Vietnam” accomplished by Tran and Do (2015) concentrates only on the written form of code mixing which is taken place in a magazine for teenagers. However, the studies specifically target an audience that belongs to the academic informants – English-majored students of the Faculties of Foreign Languages in the universities in Binh Duong Province. The research expectation is to investigate the similarities and differences between male and female English majors and the impact of code-switching on the learners’ L1 and L2 languages.

Auer (2005) maintains that social identity is achieved via code-switching. Tay (1989), Myer-Scotton (1995), and Adendorff (1996) investigate code-switching and figure out the linguistic advantage of association with a particular social group. This study supports the

author's results. For bilingual speakers, who often alternate the code based on their reasons during the talks to maintain the mutual connection between the speakers and listeners, Bista (2010) identifies code-switching and how it applies to situational context to preserve their privacy, to make it easier to speak in their L1 than L2 to avoid the misunderstanding in their conversations.

According to a research conducted by Then & Ting (2009), the direction of the language switch from English to Bahasa Malaysia as well as the proportion of teacher talk in English suggests that the base language for teaching is still English, even for the science lesson, and code-switching is a necessary tool for teachers to achieve teaching goals in content-based lessons involving students who lack proficiency in the instructional language. The study implies that there are few spaces for learners to code their native tongue to another in one period. This helps students to enhance their spoken English, but they also miss the opportunity to experiment with code-switching with bilingual speakers.

With linguistic globalization considered as a developing trend, most of the world's speech communities are multilingual. This trend makes the connection between languages vital in most people's lives. This research was instructed by a few theoretical assumptions related to bilingualism and communicative competence. As the first factor, regarding adults' use of code-switching, it was assumed that the older language users would use the code switches at a higher frequency and from a more extensive range of sociolinguistic functions more often than the younger ones. Poplack (1980) concluded that older learners would have developed a higher level of proficiency in their L2 and could possess a more significant knowledge related to grammatical systems of both their first (L1) and second languages (L2) as the constituents that have been figured out essential for code-switching. In addition to the opinion above, many researchers like Ervin-Tripp and Mitchell-Kernan (1977) have argued that their skills in developing and using discourse strategies are more sophisticated when adults age. Based on the interpretation of Geese (2002) and Iliana (2001), it is possible to infer that the nature of language development in these bilingual communicative environments must be interpreted in relationship with their development of bilingual communicative competence.

When bilingual children age, this will increase their exposure to social differences and linguistic experiences. These experiences impact and widen their knowledge and ability to use their different languages. Then it deploys code-switching intending to gain sociolinguistic targets. Secondly, Lanza (1997) and Schieffelin & Ochs (1987) report that when children use their language and code-switching, it usually reflects how the language is applied in their communities.

A study by Poplack (1980) found that code-switching occurred with adults who were able to figure out ungrammatical code-switched statements with better accuracy and confidence than the children, while Zentella (1982) showed the point is for speakers who speak more fluently and get balanced in both languages; they will tend to be better at switching languages. According to these previous findings, there is a relationship between the number of years children and adults use code-switching. This case study of male and female English-major students at two selected universities takes place to demonstrate the impact of their first L1 and L2 language. To affirm the critical role of code-switching in human communication, code-switching helps people increase their bilingual capacity when exposed to the L2 language. It is operated to lengthen communicative competence from a developmental perspective in sociolinguistic theory. The author expects code-switching to bridge the two languages in bilingual communities to create a mutual understanding. Hence, this research is conducted to fill the gap by providing students with more relevant information on code-switching elements.

2.4 Overview of Studies Related to the Code-switching Phenomenon in Vietnam

In terms of the influence of globalization, English is getting more popular in Vietnam; hence, many Vietnamese, especially younger people, like to mix English terms in their informal and formal interactions. Trần & Đỗ (2015), in the study "Patterns of Code-Mixing of English in Hoa Hoc Tro Magazine in Vietnam," investigated features and constructed models of English terms mixed in the teenagers' Vietnamese magazine. In their research, six volumes of Hoa Hoc Tro magazine were selected to examine the cases of code-mixing. The results showed that there were 1379 English words mixed, and more than 90 percent are nouns, while the rests are verbs and adjectives. Furthermore, many words mixed belong to entertainment or information technology topics. Specifically, most of the verbs refer to everyday actions which are done with a computer and the internet, for example, "hack," "upload," "click," "link," and "remove," or online social networks such as "tag," "like," "comment," "add" (Facebook). Some others are about entertainment like music "debut," "mix," and "cover."

In the study of code-switching in the conversation between Australians and Vietnamese, both with complex educational and social backgrounds, Lurong & Nguyễn (2015) explained the purposes of code-switching, what word classes are switched and the frequency with which they are changed. The study reported the result of code-switching of Australian Vietnamese who have lived in Australia for twelve years and would be influenced by the tongue language and Australian during their talks.

Luu & Trần (2014), in the research titled "Vietnamese English code-switching as a communication device at workplaces," focused on code-switching between Vietnamese and English. The data showed how code-switching operates and its influence on informal processes based on observations, interviews, recordings, and questionnaires of 200 informants from 20 enterprises, offices, and workplaces in Hue, Da Nang cities, and Quang Nam Province. For instance, the code-switching phenomenon popularly occurs in a working environment where some people have a good background in foreign languages. They find it easier to express their ideas when switching between Vietnamese and the foreign language they master. Moreover, some groups of people who want to make a typical feature for their team also use code-switching at work.

2.5 Overview of Worldwide Studies Related to the Code-switching Phenomenon

Code-switching techniques could enhance mutual understanding between speakers when they use different languages. Regarding

bilingualism, previous studies have primarily concentrated on the benefits and the highlighted prospective of code-switching, which is relevant to language alteration, communicative strategies, and social identities. The advantages of a speaker taken from code-switching are essential techniques for effective communication, especially for learners with English as their second language (L2). Besides that, there are various forms of code-switching, including code mixing and code changing. Specifically, in inter-sentential code-switching, the language switch is done at sentence boundaries - words or phrases at the beginning or end of a sentence. This type is seen most often in fluent bilingual speakers. For example: “*If you are late for the job interview, işe alınmazsın. (You are not hired) [English-Turkish]*”.

Different types of switches occur within the clause and word levels. In intra-sentential code-switching, the shift is done in the middle of a sentence, with no interruptions, hesitations, or pauses to indicate a shift. The speaker usually needs to be made aware of the change. For example: “You are sleepy *çoğu zaman* (most of the time) [English-Turkish] because you spend much *saat* (Indonesian – when) in your bed.” Moreover, another form of code-mixing is extra-sentential or tag-switching. This is switching a single word or a tag phrase (or both) from one language to another. This type is common in intra-sentential switches. It involves the insertion of a tag from one language into an utterance in another. For example: “*Él es de Oaxaca y as fíos criaron a ellos* [Spanish – He is from Oaxaca, and they raised them], if you know what I mean.” Another example is how Turkish students use boundary words like *ama* (but) or *yani* (I mean) while speaking English.

As the linguistic study of code-switching has been formed in China since the 1950s, this country should be among the first countries which create the beginning platform for the further development of code-switching. This is shown in various projects by different scholars. According to the language varieties involved in the studies on code-switching, previous studies in China could fall into three main categories: Mandarin and dialect code-switching, Chinese and English code-switching, and Mandarin and ethnic group language code-switching (Regarding Wang (2014)’s study). Furthermore, many approaches to studying code-switching are used in specific discourse types, such as news, advertisements, novels, and EFL classroom (Based on the works of Wang (2014); Sameen et al. (2021) and Moradi & Chen (2022)).

Auer (2005) notes that social identity achieved through code-switching is undoubtedly a helpful imitation concept between language and social structure. Bilingual speakers often alternate the codes based on their various reasons during their talk or conversation to maintain a mutual connection.

Towards the same objective, Brista (2010) identifies that code-switching is applied in a different situational context, such as maintaining their privacy, making it easier to speak in their language (L1) than to communicate in English (L2) so that they can avoid the misunderstanding during their conversation. Another study by Lee (2012) figures that code-switching should be accepted as a crucial practice, especially when it is an excellent example of natural bilingual behavior and has exceptional potential for contributing to developing target language learners' bilingual competence. Gómez & Garc ía (2012) also shows the influence of code-switching on different locations or geographies. This study's findings showed that Southern teachers had more prejudices towards code-switching than those from the North, who were more receptive to this sociocultural and linguistic phenomenon due to the ethnic make-up of their classrooms.

A study conducted by Then & Ting (2009) found that flexibility changes when teaching to ensure the most effective way to transfer the content based on lessons to learners as helpful strategies to advance teacher explanation or referential content for students' benefit. According to Chung (2006), the functions of code-switching should be the communication strategy for facilitating the talks in the family within generations of immigrants by lowering the language barriers and consolidating the cultural identity factors in their own family.

Tay (1989), Myers-Scotton (1995), and Adendorff (1996) investigated code-switching and reported that it is a linguistic advantage of interacting solidarity or association with a remarkable social group. Hence, people should decide when the first language (L1) should be applied and when the second language (L2) is appropriate to help them enable students' comprehension and meaningful involvement. This leads to enhancing the quality of our conversation in daily conversations.

3. Method

3.1 Research Instruments

Several factors must be considered to choose an appropriate research method, including the study's objectives, the availability of resources, and the number of participants (D önyei (2007)). This study aims to discover the features of code-switching toward male English learners on the impact of their L1 and L2, to investigate the features of code-switching toward female English learners on the impact of their language (L1) and second language (L2), and to identify the differences and similarities in code-switching between male and female English learners on the impact of their first language (L1) and second language (L2). According to Creswell (2023a), mixed approaches were used in this experimental study since they allow for the investigation of the influence of treatment. According to Krosnick (2017), a questionnaire is provided to obtain participants' attitudes toward intervention. A semi-structured interview is also used to obtain more information, which is used as supporting evidence for the questionnaire results (Based on the study by Harris & Brown, (2010)). Several instruments were used for data collection to address the study questions: (i) a questionnaire; and (ii) an in-depth interview.

The questionnaire: According to Brinkman, Haakma & Bouwhuis (2009), questionnaires have an ambiguous reputation as a research instrument. When asked to compare usability methods, professionals ranked questionnaires and surveys near the bottom of the list of ways they use or have used (Gulliken et al. (2004); Bark et al. (2006); Mao et al. (2005)). This study used semi-structured questionnaires with open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires to collect primary data. A questionnaire is used to manage the data used in the analysis. The questionnaire is available in both English and Vietnamese. The questionnaire is translated into Vietnamese to guarantee that all

informants fully comprehend it, regardless of language proficiency. This helps to ensure that the author receives trustworthy responses.

The in-depth interview: In-depth interviews are frequently used in research and are the most common source of qualitative data. This data-gathering technique frequently entails a conversation between the researcher and the participants, guided by a flexible interview process and supplemented by follow-up questions, probes, and comments. The technique allows the researcher to collect open-ended data, study participants' perspectives, attitudes, and opinions on a particular subject, and delve deeply into personal and, at times, sensitive issues (DeJonckheere & Vaughn (2019)). Three open-ended questions (adapted from Yastibas and Cepik's (2015) research) are provided for the teachers in charge of the experimental group to discover the features of code-switching toward male English learners on the impact of their L1 and L2, to investigate the features of code-switching toward female English learners on the impact of their language (L1) and second language (L2), and to identify the differences and similarities in code-switching between male and female English learners: (1) How often do you communicate with others? (2) Which languages do you usually use in your communication? (3) Have you ever used code-switching in your communication? (4) What do you think about code-switching in your communication?

3.2 Research Participants

The survey included 100 English-majored students from Thu Dau Mot and Binh Duong University in Binh Duong Province. These students are taking full-time courses, and are mostly between the ages of 21 and 23. To ensure valid data, the informants must have a solid foundation in English. The two colleges are prominent and are regarded as excellent suppliers of quality human resources for Binh Duong Province and Vietnam. Students majoring in English at the two universities will be the target participants. Ten English teachers (05 from each school) participated in the interview as part of the teaching staff. According to the personal profiles collected from the school leaders, these teachers are experienced and dedicated to their English language teaching and learning in high school education, which can significantly contribute to the validity and reliability of the survey data.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher could approach the participants with the support of close friends at the two universities. Firstly, with the lectures' permission, the writer met with all the classroom students and started a warm-up activity to learn their basic background knowledge. Then the author gave the informants clear guidelines related to the main contents and the primary goals of the surveys. After they understood the purpose of the research, they distributed the survey forms to them. After they finished, the author's friend collected the responses.

The survey questionnaire was randomly distributed to any English-majored students. From January 1st to 15th, 2023, delivering and collecting student questionnaires took two weeks. The time of the survey took place toward the end of the academic semester. Most survey sessions were done in the classroom at the main campuses when students finished their last shift. The survey was done with reliable responses. The purpose of the study was clearly explained to the students. Most survey sessions were conducted in small groups, yet the survey result was more precise and quickly done in a limited time. The researcher collected twelve questionnaires when the informants completed them in writing.

The writer interviewed five teachers and five students from each university. Because numerous interviewees had personal concerns and special scheduling issues, they were each questioned separately at a convenient time. To quickly assess the interview data, all meetings were meticulously recorded with the participant's consent and then reexamined. The research team informed the respondents that their responses would be utilized only for the study, and they clarified that the data would not be used for any other purpose. After the interview, the researchers listened to the audio again, entered the data into Microsoft Excel, and began analyzing and contrasting the various participants' comments.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Results from the Questionnaire

Part I: Essential Questions (Questions 1, 2, 3, and 4)

Question 1: Gender

Table 1. The percentage of male and female students

Gender	Percentage (%)
Male	34.00
Female	66.00

As shown in Table 1, the female-to-male ratio in the two chosen universities in Binh Duong Province is 66 to 34 (with the percentages of 66% and 34% respectively). This ratio indicates that there are almost twice as many female English learners as males at the two selected universities, which suggests that female learners are more interested in society majors like English than male students. An English major could be a good choice for female informants regarding their personality and characteristics.

Question 2: How many languages (s) do you speak well?

Table 2. The number of languages students speak well

The language(s) students speak well	Percentage (%)
2	75
3 & 4	15 & 10

As shown in Table 2, the most critical details in this text are that 75% of English majors can speak two languages well, and 15% can interact with three languages. Only 10% of the participants surveyed can communicate in four different languages. This suggests that Vietnamese learners can speak multi-languages outside of their mother tongue (L1 language). In addition to Vietnamese (students' mother tongue), many English-majored students at these universities are also able to use English as well as native English speakers do, which may explain why code-switching occurs widely in Vietnam. It is also interesting to note that 70% of English majors find it easy to switch between English and Vietnamese.

Question 3: Which of the following is your best or highest English test core in TOEFL/IELTS?

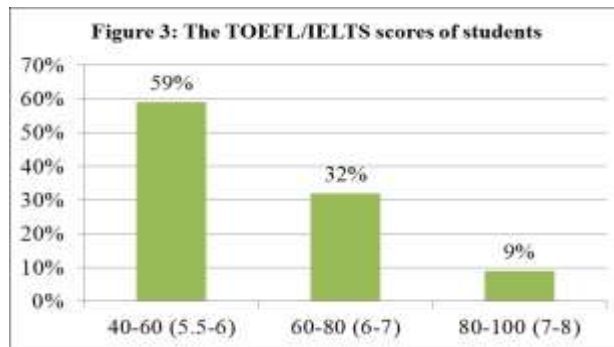


Figure 3. Students' best or highest test scores in TOEFL/IELTS

This question was designed to collect information about the English proficiency of the chosen informants in two selected universities in Binh Duong Province. The results from Figure 3 showed that 59 out of 100 (59%) got IELTS overall scores within the range of 5.5-6. 32 out of 100 (32%) were close to IELTS band 6-7 and ranked as good users with operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies, and misunderstandings in some situations. Only nine out of 100 (9%) could gain IELTS band 7-8 who have a fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies. This shows that Vietnamese students meet the overseas schools' requirements with their academic scores, as mentioned above. Learners who want to achieve higher levels in those academic tests must make further efforts to meet their demands.

Question 4: Which age group do you belong to?

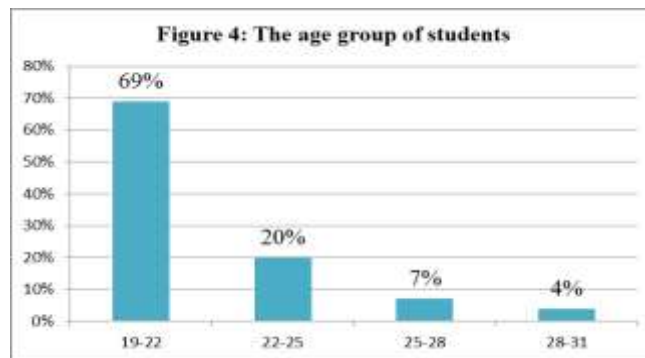


Figure 4. Students' age groups

The striking details in Figure 4 are that 69% of English-majored students in Vietnam are from 19 to 22, 20% are from 22 to 25, 7% are from 25 to 28, and only 4% are from 28 to 31. Most students join the fourth year at the appropriate age (69 out of 100), while only four complete their final year quite late (still, they are from 28 to 31). There are many rational reasons students cannot graduate on time, such as their choices when taking a university entrance examination. Additionally, some students need help to accomplish the learning program at university. Education is open to everyone without paying close attention to their age. Most excellent students can shorten the learning periods by joining summer and introductory classes to graduate earlier than others. Everyone has equal opportunities in terms of educational policies to gain enough knowledge as the first step to building up their stable occupation path.

Part II (Questions 5, 6, and 7)

Question 5: What language(s) do you speak most often?

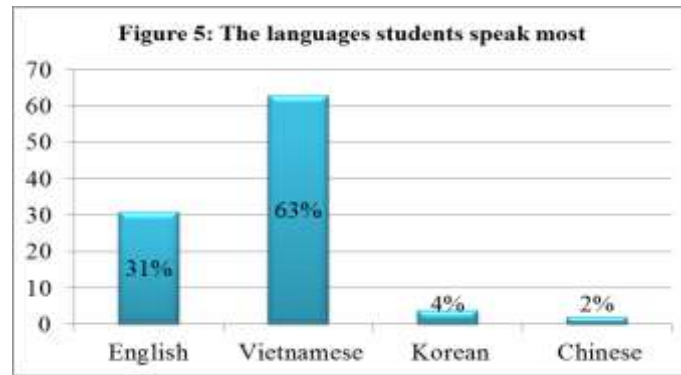


Figure 5. The language(s) spoken most often by students

Figure 5 shows that Vietnamese is the first language the English-majored students prefer to speak most, with English coming second (31%). Korean occupies 4%, and Chinese is only sometimes used to communicate in the classroom. This highlights the trending phenomenon in Binh Duong province that English-majored students have considered their native language the top way to interact with others while their major is English. This suggests that English-majored students need more use of their second language to interact with others in their classrooms. This could explain why English-majored students often have communication issues when English is their primary language to express their ideas or related stuff with university friends and teachers. The percentage of using other foreign languages like English, Korean, and Chinese should be higher than those figures, as the informants do not interact much with the L2 language.

Question 6: What language(s) do you usually use to communicate with your university friends?

Table 6. The languages students use to communicate with their university friends

Languages	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
English	36	36.0	36.0	36.0
Vietnamese	57	57.0	57.0	93.0
Chinese/Mixed	4/3	4.0/3.0	4.0/3.0	97.0/100.0

Similar to the results of Question 5, Table 6 shows that students prefer to communicate with their university friends in Vietnamese (57%). Some students interact with their classmates in English (36%). Only 4% choose Chinese as their language of communication with friends. Only 3% of them speak both languages. As a result, code-mixing is rarely employed in the university setting for a variety of reasons, including the fact that students may find it simpler to communicate or share their thoughts with peers in their local language (Vietnamese), or they may lack the vocabulary to ensure that their partners grasp their meaning. Due to language issues in many Vietnamese schools, they may be more terrified of being wrong than being laughed at by their classmates. As a result, the code-mixing percentage is the lowest. This also implies that English-majored students have not realized the need for code-switching when learning a new second language, such as English, Chinese, or Korean. As a result, English majors would require assistance in talking with people from other nations.

Question 7: In what language(s) do you interact with your English teacher in your home country?

Table 7. The language(s) students use to interact with their English teachers

Languages	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
English	91	91.0	91.0	91.0
Korean	4	4.0	4.0	95.0
Chinese	3	3.0	3.0	98.0
Mixed	2	2.0	2.0	100.0

As can be seen from Table 7 that 91% of students are willing to use English to interact with their teachers, 4% use Korean, 3% use Chinese, and only 2% use mixed language. However, the percentage of code-mixing is still lower than other choices in the collected results. This leads to some assumptions as students feel they need more confidence in code-switching between L1 and L2 language with their teachers. There is a fixed distance between lecturers and students regarding Asian culture, but there is no line between students and teachers. English can be compulsory for English-majored students, so they must use it to interact with their teachers. However, code-switching between native and L2 languages is helpful.

Part III (Questions 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12)

The questions show the influences of informants' L1 and L2 language in code-switching.

Question 8: How often do you switch/change from one language to another one during one class period at university?

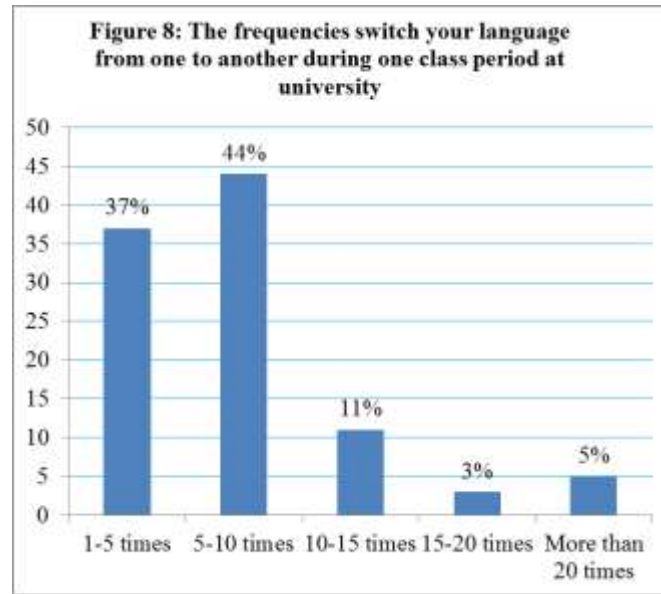


Figure 8. The frequencies of switching/changing from one language to another one during one class period at university among students. Figure 8 shows that 44% of the students switched their L1 language to another 5-10 times, 37% switched from 1-5 times, 11% switched between their L1 and L2 language 10-15 times, 3% altered from 15-20 times, and only 5% of English majors did code-switching more than 20 times. This suggests that English-majored students are unwilling to change their language to another during one school class period.

Table 9. The correlation between gender and code-switching frequencies

The correlation between gender and code-switching frequencies								
			Q8 ^a					Total
			1-5 times	5-10 times	10-15 times	15-20 times	More than 20 times	
Q1 ^a	Male	Count	11	18	3	1	1	34
	Female	Count	26	26	8	2	4	66
Total			37	44	11	3	5	100

To provide more information about the relationship between gender and code-switching frequency, a comparison of the two factors will be made. Based on the responses from the students, the results in Table 9 reveal that there is a relative fall in the code-switching frequencies of both male and female students, from the first option (1-5 times, accounting for 37%) to the last option (more than 20 times, accounting for 5%). The striking fact is that the total frequency obtained by female participants is much higher than that of male ones (with the total frequencies of 66% and 34% respectively). In oral communication, females are typically believed to talk more than males due to their personality, socialization, and styles. This point can prove that the hypothesis of this thesis is precise. Code-switching typically happens among English-majored students in the universities in Binh Duong province.

Question 9: Why do you use words in your language even while speaking English? (as in the case of [I do not like that “món ăn”])

Table 10. Rationales for using words in students’ language even while speaking English

Reasons	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
It is easier to speak your language	74	74.0	74.0	74.0
It is to avoid misunderstanding	60	60.0	60.0	60.0
There are similar words in English	46	46.0	46.0	46.0
I do not know the English words	38	38.0	38.0	84.0
It is to avoid privacy	25	25.0	25.0	25.0
It is to add emphasis	26	26.0	26.0	26.0
It is to fill the stopgap	16	16.0	16.0	16.0
It is to convey intimacy	15	15.0	15.0	15.0

English-majored students use words in their language even while speaking English. The collected results show that there are similar words in English (46%), and students do not know the English words (38%) while they want to fill the stop gap (16%) (see Table 10). These students also responded that they need more vocabulary to describe their ideas or express their opinions in English, so they should fill the

gaps with the best-known words and try to use their mother tongue when finding the appropriate words to fill in the blanks is challenging for them.

Table 10 also proves that English-majored students feel it is easier to speak in their language even while speaking in English (accounting for 74%) and to add emphasis (accounting for 26%). From these statistics, it cannot be denied that people should have no obstacles when conversing in their native tongue due to its conveniences and benefits. It could ensure mutual understanding between the speaker and the listener. Emphasizing is also the target of using their language to help their partners realize the keywords in the sentences; it should be more comfortable for them to choose the right words to verbalize. Furthermore, they may be confident using the familiar words switched between English and Vietnamese in their minds. However, English-majored students should crucially know how to logically balance using their L1 and L2 languages to achieve better outcomes after graduation.

It can also be reflected from Table 10 that the response “It is to avoid misunderstanding” accounts for 60%. This is due to the fact that when students do not know the right words to express their implications in English, they should switch to their tongue language to ensure that there is no gap or that they do not struggle in providing understandable speech or words to their partners. The response “It is to have privacy” accounts for 25%. These students may sometimes choose to engage in discussion with their classmates in privacy. As a result, they will very often code-switch from their L1 to L2 language so that those around them can understand what they are talking about. Last comes the response “It is to convey intimacy”, accounting for 15%. This feature is excellent for couples or male students who want to attract their female classmates' attention but need assistance finding similar words in the L2 language. In most cases, English-majored students are likely to transfer from the L1 to the L2 language because they fear producing mistakes in their communication, wish to share personal information with others, and must be more confident in presenting their thoughts to their classmates in the L2 language.

4.1.2 Results from the Interviews

To increase the reliability and persuasion of the study related to the code-switching phenomenon of male and female English-majored students at two selected universities in Binh Duong Province, the writer carried out in-depth interviews with five teachers and five students from each university. Because numerous interviewees had personal concerns and special scheduling issues, they were each questioned separately at a convenient time. To quickly assess the interview data, all meetings were meticulously recorded with the participant's consent and then re-examined. The research team informed the respondents that their responses would be utilized only for the study, and they clarified that the data would not be used for any other purposes. After the interview, the researchers listened to the audio again, entered the data into Microsoft Excel, and began analyzing and contrasting the various participants' comments.

4.1.2.1 Results from the Interviews with the Students

After analyzing the records from selected students at each university, the results show that students are unwilling to switch between their L1 and L2 languages due to their lack of vocabulary and expressions when interacting with their classmates. The students supposed it could be much easier to use their L1 language (Vietnamese) to communicate in the classroom as English-majored students. Besides that, some students with better English backgrounds or proficiency, especially female students, find it beneficial when applying code-switching during the learning period. Hence, English-majored students probably think they may struggle with higher education after graduation.

4.1.2.2 Results from the Interviews with the Teachers

Similarly, the interview teachers mentioned that teachers rarely switch between the L1 and L2 languages. At the same time, L2 (English) should be the instructional language in the classroom. Some teachers supposed they are afraid some weak students could deal with challenging situations when they do not get their teaching points if they consistently use English as the universities recommend. Also, from the recorded interviews, teachers agree that teaching foreign languages, they should maintain an English-speaking environment for students, especially English-majored ones; they committed teachers will make some changes and contributions to the current programs to assist the students more and bring a better English platform for their future career path.

It could be concluded that the results collected from the questionnaires and in-depth interviews are similar in code-switching towards male and female English-majored students at two selected universities in Binh Duong province.

4.2 Discussions of Results

By analyzing the data collected from one hundred participants at Thu Dau Mot and Binh Duong University, the author examined the data relevant to the above research questions. Initially, the code-switching phenomenon occurs in the conversations of male and female English-majored students between their L1 and L2 language. Gender also influences the frequency with which they code the language, especially since the results show that female informants switch languages more than males. What is more, students' English proficiency affects the capability of language alteration in their classroom talks. Additionally, the data shows that female students code-switch more often than males due to their socialization and personalities. Notably, the data demonstrates that code-switching is helpful to foreign language users in bilingual communities, such as foreign language majors.

It can be reflected from the research results that code-switching's critical role and benefits in conversations are apparent. It has positive impacts on English students' studies. It is a fundamental skill that can support and improve the skills of reading, writing, and listening time impacts English students' studies. It is a fundamental skill that can support and enhance the skills of reading, writing, and listening. Concomitantly, it is exciting and a massive source for students to widen their background knowledge and experience. If English-majored students fully understand the vital role of coding skills and commit to speaking English early on, they will surely obtain better results in their

English studies.

Based on the study's inquiry findings, it is possible to confirm that English-majored students are the topics teachers must pay particular attention to since they will graduate. Because of its popularity, English-speaking abilities will be critical to its success. The researcher expects this study to provide valuable and sufficient guidelines for educating significant English students at Binh Duong universities. From the research findings, the present study has several contributions as follows:

- (1) The study helps recognize the practical problems English-majored students face at their chosen universities.
- (2) The study shows that the critical point is that the heads of foreign language faculties should think more about the quality of students' outcomes after graduation.
- (3) The research findings reveal that teachers had better maximize the knowledge or skills the students might apply for their future jobs after graduation and minimize the subjects or curriculums that could be unnecessary for their occupations later.

Based on the research findings, the following applications in bilinguals' code-switching can be made:

(i) To the Students

This study reinforces the recommendation for English language users in the context of the code-switching field in bilingual groups. Switching from L1 to any language they may know well could help Vietnamese students develop the vital steps to becoming global citizens. Additionally, code-switching is crucial to improving the quality of learners' outcomes after graduation. English-majored students should increase the frequency of code-switching in the conversations in the educational environment and be more receptive to older learners so that they will find it easier to benefit from code-mixing.

(ii) To the Teachers

These findings contribute to developing and evaluating teaching programs regarding teachers' roles in supporting students to gain confidence in enhancing their English skills. English should be used as the instruction language in the classroom, and students should be encouraged to switch from L1 to L2 as much as possible to enhance their verbal skills. Code-switching does not mean changing from L1 to L2 language all the time during one class period, but teachers should use their native language to explain grammatical points and structure. This will lead to better results for English-majored students when they graduate.

(iii) To the Faculty of Foreign Languages:

The training and education departments of universities could benefit from regular observation in written form to track the progress of each English major in the classroom. Additionally, the faculty may organize different events like academic competitions and game shows to enhance the proficiency of English users. On a larger scale, the universities might adjust their internal learning programs to provide better outcomes for English-majored and foreign language students. For example, they should give English majors more chances to experiment with theories they have learned in the course books. Finally, the heads of universities may change the Ministry of Education and Training so that students can join better learning programs connected to the excellent quality education platform in developed nations worldwide. This would help boost their confidence in using the languages acquired via the university programs.

5. Conclusion

Summary of the Study

This study demonstrates that code-switching occurs among male and female English-majored students in Binh Duong province. In this research, the authors focused on the alteration between their L1 and L2 languages. The results show that the participants need help switching between those two tongues. Due to their personalities and characteristics, it is surprising that female participants do more code-mixing in their talks than males. Also, the age gap between male and female English-majored students influences code-switching.

Regarding English proficiency, the informants can meet the primary demand of academic tests such as IELTS and TOEFL to fulfill the requirements of the colleges they apply to. In addition, the informants (both male and female) do not interact much with the L2 language, so the code-switching between their L1 and L2 accents rarely occurs in the classroom. Thus, through the surveys, it is shown that English-majored students need help when they interact with their classmates in English. In short, male and female English-majored students must change from L1 to L2 language or vice versa to avoid misunderstandings and share private information with friends. Specifically, they need to be more confident using the L2 language to express their opinions with classmates.

Implications

Via theoretical and empirical evidence, this study reveals common speaking problems encountered by English-majored students at two universities in Binh Duong province. The results come up with practical ways to help students to overcome these problems, including the application of appropriate code-switching strategies from one language to another in speaking. As it has been stated in the literature review, these strategies can prove to be suitable and applicable for teaching speaking skills to English-majored students in Binh Duong Province. On the one hand, students should know what a good speaker is in a bilingual community and what coding skills need to be considered and practiced effectively. They should especially "dive" into the language they learning and using. On the other hand, it is also necessary to show how code-switching impacts male and female students in their oral communication so that they pay more attention to the alteration frequencies. To achieve the best results, it is equally important that teachers should realize their roles in developing confidence for students

in communicating together in the target language.

Limitations

This study was primarily limited by its small sample size (N = 100). The sample size could have been expanded by including learners from other majors like Chinese, Korean, and Japanese. An earlier start in data collection would have increased the time needed to survey more participants. However, the researchers had only three months to complete the investigation at the chosen universities. Another area for improvement is the variety of references. Many references relevant to the code-switching field are available in printed materials and on the internet. At the same time, finding connections in Vietnamese is not easy because more research needs to be done. More contact between researchers and the target sample may have increased participation. Ideally, the number of participants would have been more evenly distributed across gender and school years regarding code-switching. The participants represented a narrow range of ages (English-majored students only). A larger sample with more diversities may have benefited the results. Including multiple colleges and groups on campus could have diversified the information represented in the model. Participants may have a more accurate and complete understanding of the the survey items once term definitions related to code-switching areas are fully presented right in in the questionnaire, or thoroughly explained to the respondents before taking the interviews.

Recommendations

An improvement in the study could have been to interview the participants. Personal interviews elicit more incredible information regarding participants' knowledge and attitudes. This may have added important qualitative data and greater insight into the participants' thoughts and opinions. My methodology could have also included surveying or interviewing individuals involved with the participants. For instance, family, friends, significant others, co-workers, supervisors, etc., could have been a part of the study. From the results of this study, future research could focus on code-switching between L1 and L2 languages such as Chinese, Korean, and Japanese.

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