Summer 2018

Using L1 In Support Of Learning English: Code-Switching Behaviors Across Wida Levels

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USING L1 IN SUPPORT OF LEARNING ENGLISH: CODE-SWITCHING
BEHAVIORS ACROSS WIDA LEVELS

by

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Hamline University

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August 2018

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“you have to understand,
no one puts their children in a boat
unless the water is safer than the land.”
-Warsan Shire

To those who have sent their children off, in search of a better life.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE ...............................................................7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction ........................................................................7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code-switching ....................................................................9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question ................................................................11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary .............................................................................13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO ........................................................................15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review ................................................................15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions ..........................................................................15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code-switching .....................................................................16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits of Code-switching ...............................................17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models of Code-switching ..................................................21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gumperz’s Interactional Approach to CS .........................21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamwangamalu and Codes-in-between .................................21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political-ideological Approach to CS ...............................22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myers Scotton’s Markedness Model ....................................23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functions of Code-switching ............................................27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity .............................................................................27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger and Defiance ..........................................................28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing or Decreasing Social Distance ..........................29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphorical Functions .....................................................30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Power………………………………………………………………………………31
Task Management………………………………………………………………..32
Academic Support……………………………………………………………….33
Ease of Lexical Recall……………………………………………………………34
Change in Addressee…………………………………………………………..36
Neutrality…………………………………………………………………………36
Exploration………………………………………………………………………36
Other Reasons/Functions………………………………………………………36

Code-switching Across Proficiency Levels……………………………………37
Summary…………………………………………………………………………38

CHAPTER THREE………………………………………………………………40
Methods……………………………………………………………………………40
Rationale…………………………………………………………………………40
Data Collection…………………………………………………………………..41
  Location……………………………………………………………………….41
  Participants……………………………………………………………………41
  WIDA levels………………………………………………………………..45
  Observation Protocol…………………………………………………………45
  Procedure……………………………………………………………………46
Data Analysis……………………………………………………………………47
Ethics………………………………………………………………………………48
Validity of Data………………………………………………………………….50
Summary………………………………………………………………………..51
FIGURES

*Figure 1.* Functions of CS in all classes. This figure illustrates all the functions captured on the recordings. .................................................................54

*Figure 2.* Directionality of CS in the beginning class. This figure illustrates direction of WIDA level one students’ CS.................................................................59

*Figure 3.* Functions of CS in the beginning class. This figure illustrates all the functions of WIDA level one students’ CS in this data set........................................60

*Figure 4.* Directionality of CS in the beginning-intermediate class. This figure illustrates direction of WIDA level two students’ CS.....................................................65

*Figure 5.* Functions of CS in the beginning-intermediate class. This figure illustrates all the functions of WIDA level two students’ CS in this data set..............................66

*Figure 6.* Directionality of CS in the intermediate-advanced class. This figure illustrates direction of WIDA level three through six students’ CS........................................69

*Figure 7.* Functions of CS in the intermediate-advanced class. This figure illustrates all the functions of WIDA level three through six students’ CS in this data set ............70
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

There was a steep learning curve my first year of teaching high school English Learners (ELs) at the beginning level. I wanted to ensure I was teaching in a culturally responsive manner and supporting my students fully, yet I was highly anxious of what they were saying in a language I could not understand. How could I manage behavior, if students were having conflicts and belittling me in the middle of class in their first language? My administration encouraged me to encourage the use of only English in my class. I did.

Now, I look back on my choices that year with a great deal of regret. Five years later, my class is filled with samples of writing in English and Somali. First languages (L1s) are used as a learning tool. Students are encouraged to use their L1, as well as ask me for translations from English to Somali if they have difficulty understanding. If students are having a conflict, I can sense it based on body language, no matter what language is being spoken. I step in, and solve problems in English or invite the students to participate in peer mediation in their first language. I find that the difference between how I responded to other languages in my classroom in my first year of teaching versus now relates not to how my students behaved in the classroom or what they deserved. Rather it was about my own discomfort running a class. I have more confidence now that my students are not snickering behind my back in a language I do not understand. We
have strong relationships. I do not need to take away a valuable learning tool from them due to my own insecurity.

As each new year brings a new group of first year teachers to my school, which has a large population of Somali ELs, I see this process repeat itself. Every year teachers ask, “How do I deal with my students bullying each other in Somali?” An administrator responds, “Tell them they have to speak only English.” I pose different solutions, arguing that if you ban students’ L1s, conflicts remain. Students will merely change the language of their insults, a valuable teaching tool lost. I cite research. Some teachers agree to try the culturally responsive tactic, while others ban Somali in their classrooms.

The majority of immigrant groups face pressure to assimilate to English-only classes, businesses and other spaces in society. Many teachers also believe that it benefits ELs to enforce the use of only English in their classrooms and discourage switching to their other languages. They worry that allowing the L1 will influence students to make mistakes in English that will remain in their language forever. However, many researchers support code-switching, or the complex behavior of switching between two languages or dialects, as an effective learning tool for ELs (Heller, 1995; Kamwangamalu, 2010; Ncoko, Osman & Cockcroft, 2000; Uys, 2010). Although there exists much research on the topic of how and why students code-switch, little evidence has been collected to determine how code-switching behaviors vary between different levels of English development. This paper seeks to investigate how ELs at different proficiency levels code-switch, as well as the purposes behind these behaviors in order to develop effective suggestions for teachers of ELs at each level of English development.
Code-switching

One often hears about bilinguals who speak an amalgamation of two languages. This mixing of two languages or dialects is known as code-switching (CS). To the layman, such behavior seems to occur at random. However, research shows that CS is a complex and systematic language behavior that bilinguals use based on choices that they make; it is not a failure to learn either language (Ritchie & Bhatia, 2012). However, this goes against strong political and social bias in the United States, where it is often argued that the English language should be taught using English exclusively (Kamwangamalu, 2010). This argument is based on the idea that students might transfer language forms from their native language, form negative habits, and cause their language to get stuck or become fossilized. However, this argument is disproven by many studies that show how using the first language benefits students learning English (Kamwangamalu, 2010).

In K-12 public schools throughout the United States, bilingual or multilingual children can face tremendous pressure to speak only English. Students who have little experience with English are often expected to leave their native languages behind. Even teachers who are comfortable with valuing students’ cultural background may feel uncomfortable when students speak a language they cannot understand in the classroom. Using a mixture of two languages is seen as so detrimental to learning English that children are sometimes disciplined for using a language other than English in class (Li, 2008).

However, research offers many reasons for why native language use is an effective support for ELs (Freeman, Freeman, & Mercuri, 2002; Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010). Skills transfer from the first language (L1) to the second language (L2), especially
literacy skills (Escamilla & Hopewell, 2010). Furthermore, ELs are better able to recall English vocabulary words that have been explained in their L1 (Zhao & Macaro, 2016). Perhaps most importantly, the L1 can be a much-needed comfort to refugee learners who are struggling with emotional trauma (Decapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2009).

Furthermore, similar to the research suggesting that use of the L1 is helpful in the classroom, many researchers also support CS as an effective learning tool for ELs (Heller, 1995; Kamwangamalu, 2010; Ncoko, et al., 2000; Uys, 2010). According to these researchers, CS does not confuse learners, or take time away from English studies. Rather, using CS over time can help a student master English more quickly. Also, because CS is purposeful and based on choice, research has helped identify the motivations behind students’ CS usage (Ritchie & Bhatia, 2012; Kamwangamalu, 2010; Ncoko, et al., 2000; Uys, 2010). These motivations will be crucial to this investigation.

While all learners may benefit from specific interventions, such as CS, there is also a great deal of variation among ELs as well. One area of variation is English proficiency. There are significant differences between students who are at the beginning of English learning and those who are very advanced. For example, beginning students may spend a time in the silent period, taking in a great deal of language, but speaking only a few memorized phrases. Beginners often need many supports to be confident in speaking a few sentences in English. Advanced students, on the other hand, may need few supports, perhaps only the use of a graphic organizer for their thoughts, before they can engage in lengthy discourse (WIDA, 2012). Given these differences, it is unclear how CS behaviors change as learners become more proficient in English, information that would be helpful for teachers who allow CS in their classroom to know.
Research Question

In this paper, therefore, I wish to pursue the following research questions: How do multilingual Somali high school students code-switch in English-medium classes? How do the CS behaviors of these students change, depending on their placement on the WIDA\(^1\) English Language Development continuum? I seek to answer these questions through observation at the school in which I teach, a small charter school in an urban center in the upper Midwest. At this school, we have a student body who have a nearly 100% Somali ethnic background. By observing Somali ELs at three different language levels, I will establish how their CS behaviors differ.

The answers to these research questions are crucial to the students, families, teachers and administration at my school for many reasons. Somali speakers currently face a great deal of prejudice and discrimination because of their race, religion, language background, and country of origin (Bigelow, 2010). As of this writing, the current political environment has made many of my students feel unsure of whether it is safe for their families to travel, fearful that family in Somalia will be barred from entering the United States, or anxious that they will face bigotry in the greater Minnesota community. Add to that the past traumas that some of my students have experienced in Somalia or in refugee camps, and there is a great deal of stress and anxiety that my students have to live with on a daily basis. Teachers in my position must offer the necessary supports to students to help them feel safe and comfortable in the classroom before any learning may begin. Cultural sensitivity as well as supporting bilingualism as a positive are key to this effort (Barac & Bialystok, 2012; Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2003).

\(^1\) Please see Appendix A
At the same time, many teachers at my school and in the greater ESL community in the U.S. are very concerned with how to support the learners’ language backgrounds on the one hand, while striving to offer a rigorous education on the other. My students often enter the U.S. school system in high school, and expect to graduate and go on to college. Teachers set high expectations in an effort to combat their educational gaps. In striving for academic excellence, many teachers wonder about the place of the L1 in the classroom, and whether it detracts from English or content instruction. Understanding how and why students at different levels code-switch will help their teachers see where CS is a necessary support to learning. This study may also help address teachers’ concerns of whether students use CS to discuss non-academic topics.

This research question is also crucial to parents, as they are often torn between encouraging their children to reach high levels of academic achievement, while also encouraging them to retain their native language. They may also have misconceptions surrounding the use of CS and whether its use benefits their children. Dhaouadi (1993) found that the majority of parents of Arab bilinguals held beliefs that were ambivalent or negative about CS; it was seen as a sign of impurity in Arabic language mastery. I find that the parents of my students seem to hold similar beliefs. Regardless of their beliefs, parents deserve to know whether teachers support students’ language backgrounds in class, and how research shows this could positively affect students’ additional language growth. Using the information from this study, parents can take into account the reasons why their children are likely using CS in the home as well as in the classroom. Armed with this knowledge, parents may be able to support their children in their academic growth.
Lastly, administrators need to know how and why students codeswitch so they can make policies that affect schools and districts. It has been my experience that administrators may be more focused on the everyday business of running a school, leaving little focus for current second language acquisition research. Knowing what students are doing when they use CS may help administrators feel more comfortable relaxing policies that allow only English.

**Summary**

This capstone seeks to investigate the following questions: How do multilingual Somali high school students code-switch in English-medium classes? How do the CS behaviors of these students change, depending on their placement on the WIDA English Language Development continuum? I will seek to answer these questions by observing Somali students at three levels at my own place of work, a Midwestern public charter high school. This study is necessary given the large number of schools that still promote policies restricting students to the use of only English despite research showing that L1 support is helpful for students’ English growth (Escamilla & Hopewell, 2010; Freeman, et al., 2002; Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010; Garcia & Wei, 2014; Moll, 2005; Scarcella, 1990). This research is close to my own heart, because of my own experiences sorting through how to include CS in my own classroom. Furthermore, if schools such as my own understand how and why students engage in CS, they can determine how to support it, rather than arguing for the use of only English, as my school did. As there has been little research on how CS behavior varies in students’ language use from level to level, this study will give a more nuanced view of CS behaviors in Somali high school students. Teachers, students, parents, and administrators are all affected by CS policies, so this
research question is important to all stakeholders involved. Students want to learn in a safe comfortable environment where their L1 is accepted (Lin, 2013). Teachers wish to help students while maintaining rigorous academic standards. Parents want their children to succeed in school while retaining their first language. Administrators have the power to enact policies that affect students across districts. Therefore, CS policies affect them all.

Given the research question of how and why ELs at various proficiency levels code-switch, this thesis will be structured as follows. In Chapter One, I have given a background to this study, including the rationale, my personal interest, and potential benefits that can be drawn from the study. Chapter Two gives an overview of previous research related to the research question, particularly CS. In Chapter Three, I explain the methods I used to develop an answer to the research question. I discuss the results of this case study in Chapter Four. Finally, in Chapter Five, I consider what we can conclude from the results given above, and provide some suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Educators know that students can bring a great deal of background knowledge to their learning. ELs are no different, and may bring a great deal more background knowledge in the form of knowledge of an additional language. In my efforts to understand the role of CS in my own teaching practice, I review the literature on code-switching with the following research questions in mind: How do multilingual Somali high school students code-switch in English-medium classes? How do the CS behaviors of these students change, depending on their placement on the WIDA English Language Development continuum? In order to respond to these questions, a working definition for code-switching and an overview of CS is provided, along with a discussion of the benefits of CS. In an attempt to account for the CS in my teaching context, I review theoretical models of code-switching. The bulk of this chapter I spend discussing the various functions of code-switching offered by relevant research in preparation for making my own judgments of the functions of CS behaviors in my classroom and in my school. Finally I note what previous research has to say about differences in CS among learners of varying proficiency levels.

Definitions

Broadly speaking, CS is “the alternate use of two (or more) languages within the same utterance or conversation” (Grosjean, 1982, p. 145). The literature defines code-switching as the inter-sentential (across sentence boundaries) mixing of two languages or
dialects. Intra-sentential (within the same sentence) mixing of languages is typically defined as code-mixing (Ritchie & Bhatia, 2012). However, the common practice is to refer to both of these, as well as other related processes, even borrowing in limited contexts, as code-switching, or CS (Ritchie & Bhatia, 2012; Meyers-Scotton, 1993, 1998, 2006; Setati, Adler, Reed & Bapoo, 2002; Uys, 2010) For the purposes of this paper, I adopt this more inclusive definition as an appropriate working definition. Code-switching does not only apply to two languages. It can also refer to switching between mutually intelligible dialects (Myers-Scotton, 1998). Of course, in this study, CS between two mutually unintelligible languages, English and Somali, is examined.

Another similar yet distinct concept from CS is the idea of translanguaging. In Garcia and Wei’s work on translanguaging (2014), the authors argue that language practices of bilinguals intermingle two languages so completely that they should not even be considered two separate systems. Rather, the bilingual has access to one linguistic system, which includes what is defined as two languages. The bilingual makes purposeful and meaningful choices from an “integrated system” (Velasco & Garcia, 2014, p. 7) This view is distinct from the CS view taken in this study, which focuses on the languages as two separate systems. However, both translanguaging and CS research seek to destigmatize the CS used by bilinguals by noting that the choices are purposeful.

**Code-switching**

The phenomenon of CS has been widely studied in Sociolinguistics literature since the early 1970s. Blom and Gumperz were the first to raise general interest and awareness on the topic of CS in the linguistic community (Macswan, 2012). Myers-Scotton (1993), Kamwangamalu (1998), and Ncoko et al. (2000) focused heavily on CS
occurring in Africa to develop their theories. Heller (1995) developed her theories based on her experiences in French-Canada. Researchers have spread broadly across the globe to study CS, from Unamuno (2008) who studied Spanish and Catalan to Wei’s 2005 study of Chinese and English.

In their handbook of bilingualism and multilingualism, Bhatia and Ritchie (2012) pull together experts who explore the social and psychological factors of CS. According to Ritchie and Bhatia, CS does not occur at random: “There is now a unanimous consensus among linguists and other scholars that the language mixing/switching behavior of bilinguals is systematic but complex” (2012, p. 378). For bilinguals, the choice to switch from one language to another is rarely based in a failure to recall a needed word. In fact, Ritchie and Bhatia report that even children showed CS behaviors for reasons other than missing words. Rather, CS is motivated by a number of factors, including social roles, situational factors, message-intrinsic factors, and language attitudes. These will be discussed later in this chapter in greater detail.

**Benefits of Code-switching**

There are multiple benefits to using CS in the classroom. Teachers use CS to build classroom culture, lower the affective filter of students experiencing culture shock, manage classroom behaviors, explain content and many other reasons (Kamwangamalu, 2010). For example, in her review of classroom code-switching research, Lin describes several master teachers who use CS to build a positive atmosphere in their classrooms, calling one teacher who utilized Spanish and English CS skillful in their use of CS for building classroom culture (2013). In this classroom, the CS functioned as a humorous classroom management tool that helped pique students’ curiosity as well as draw them
together into one learning community (Lin, 2013). Another master teacher was described as using CS to help the students build classroom habits using English, which helped the students to see English as relevant to their lives (Lin, 2013). For example, this teacher built literature lessons around CS by engaging the students first in Cantonese, their L1, and then switching to English, the L2, to focus on the language of the story. During the second part of the lesson the teacher and students would use CS until the students were able to respond to the story in their L2. This is a clear example CS used effectively as scaffolding.

If students are overcome by anxiety, they will have a difficult time focusing on lessons; CS can support students’ emotional health (Kamwangamalu, 2010; Moll, 2005; Üstünel, 2016; Yeh, et al., 2002). Yeh, et al. (2002) cite research that describes how code-switching validates students’ cultural experiences and provides authentic learning experiences. Culturally responsive teaching, including the use of the L1 is especially important for students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE), who are highly likely to have experienced trauma. For these learners, the sense of security that CS to the L1 brings is paramount (Decapua, et al., 2009).

CS is also an effective tool for managing behavior in the classroom. Teachers save time when they use CS to quickly explain a procedure in terms most understandable to the learners (Üstünel, 2016). Lin reports that in one study, teachers who used only English spent more time getting attention of the students and prompting students to act than did the teachers who used CS (2013). Teachers have successfully used CS to motivate learners, as well as encourage learners to participate (Kamwangamalu, 2010; Lin, 2013; Üstünel, 2016; Uys, 2010). For example, Üstünel shows how English as a
foreign language (EFL) teachers use CS to motivate students who are not participating (2016, p. 116-117)

(1) English – Turkish

T: Maybe, maybe. Can you ask her?
T: Sor bakalım ne alcak soruları sen sor ben sormayayım

‘Let’s ask what will she buy. You ask the questions, not me.’

L8: What will you er
T: Neleri sorabilirsiniz?

‘What can you ask?’

L8: What will you take?
T: take?
L8: er thing
T: Buy. What-What will you buy?
L8: What will you buy? Buy.

In (1) above, the teacher uses the L1 to encourage learner participation, and then later continues the language instruction in English once the learner is participating.

One important benefit of CS in the classroom is that bilingual teachers and learners can use CS to explain content to one another. Lin (2013) finds that teachers use CS to clarify confusing topics, to check for understanding, and to give meanings of words in the L1. Üstünel (2016) finds that students use CS to ask for clarification, to confirm their understanding, to negotiate meaning, or to ask for the L2 translation of a word among other purposes. The ability to use the L1 as a resource is an asset to teachers and learners, as it serves to scaffold learners towards their new learning by drawing on the
background knowledge in the L1. Unamuno (2008) sees code-switching as a way to make
difficult classroom tasks doable. Myers-Scotton (2008) also supports this. ELs use a
language that they understand, and some words or phrases from a language that they that
they cannot build complete discourse in to complete a complicated task in the L2.

Additionally, research has shown that CS is an effective tool for vocabulary
instruction. Zhao and Macaro show in their 2016 study that ELs have better recall of
English vocabulary words that have been explained to them in their L1, rather than in
English, based on scores on a delayed post-test. On Macaro’s previous work, Lin states
that the author concluded this was the case because drawing on the learner’s L1 “lightens
the cognitive load freeing up processing capacity to focus on the meaning of the text as a
whole” (2013, p. 13). Yeh et al. (2002) also describe how students transfer their
metacognitive skills in the L1 to the L2. Setati et al. (2002) argue that CS supports
classroom discourse in the content areas of math and science.

Research also finds that students would prefer to be taught in classrooms where
CS is a part of the instruction. In Lin’s review of CS literature (2013), she cites one
instance where only 3% of 1,296 students preferred to be taught in their L2 only. Most
students preferred CS or bilingual methods. Students generally do not prefer the L1 to be
banned from the classroom. On this topic, Üstünel remarks that students may “feel that
their identities are threatened” if they are not allowed to use the L1 (2016, p. 85) Slotte-
Luttge argues in her 2007 study that a monolingual norm detracts from some students’
ability to fully participate in classroom communication.
Models of Code-switching

There are several models of approaching CS, as reported by Kamwangamalu (2010). Each model seeks to explain how bilinguals engage in CS, as well as what their motivations are. In the following section I give an overview of Gumperz’s (1982) interactional approach, Kamwangamalu’s (1998) codes-in-between, the Political-Ideological approach, and finally Myers-Scotton’s (1998) Markedness Model.

Gumperz’s Interactional Approach to CS

In Gumperz’s (1982) interactional model, the focus is on discourse between individuals and CS is a “contextualization cue,” a method of offering context for the message the speaker wishes to relay. Gumperz argues that bilinguals use CS to signal the pragmatic context of discourse the same way monolinguals use intonation, or a change in word choice. For example, one could express a rise in irritation with intonation, as in “JOHNny!” Alternatively, one could use more formal or informal words. Code-switching can be used in a similar way, to express irritation through a switch to a more formal code. This will be discussed in more detail below. See (6) below.

Gumperz (1982) also created the concept of “we-codes” and “they-codes.” In this understanding, the minority language is often the “we-code,” which is used for familial, in-group activities. The “we-code” communicates togetherness and solidarity. The “they-code,” according to Gumperz, is formal and less personal.

Kamwangamalu and Codes-In-Between

Another model of CS is the codes-in-between model put forth by Kamwangamalu, who used the idea of “we-codes” and “they-codes” to develop his own model (1998). In this model, the focus is less on two individuals, and more on the
political state of an entire society. This model addresses situations of diglossia such as in South Africa after the fall of apartheid. Diglossia is the state of language use where a society uses two languages for different functions, such as one for government and another for general life (Ritchie & Bhatia, 2012). When a society exists in a diglossic state, there often emerges one code for home, Gumperz’s “we-code,” while the code of the public sphere is named the “they-code.” Kamwangamalu argues that to live life in such a diglossic state, speakers often require a “code-in-between” in order to not have to constantly pick sides between formal and family language. Therefore, speakers engage in CS to have an in-between option.

**Political-ideological Approach to CS**

The final model that Kamwangamalu (2010) discusses is concerned with how code-switching supports or undermines systems of power. According to Kamwangamalu, among others, CS is a strategy to exercise power, identify with a specific group of people, or resist hegemony. Therefore, code-switching is seen as a political choice. Heller (1995, p. 378) gives one example of how two speakers refuse to switch to the other’s language in a power struggle, despite being bilingual.

(2) English-French CS

Man:    Could you tell me where the French test is?

Receptionist:  *Pardon?*

‘*Pardon?’

Man:    Could you tell me where the French test is?

Receptionist:  *En français?*

‘*In French?’
Man: I have the right to be addressed in English by the government of Quebec according to Bill 101

Receptionist: (to a friend) Qu’est-ce qu’il dit?

‘What is he saying?’

(The episode was finally resolved by the parties responding to utterances in the other: the receptionist agreed to understand English and the man agreed to be spoken to in French as long as neither had to actually produce utterances in the other’s language)

According to Heller, this example shows how language can be used to “exercise domination” and resist domination.

Bain and Yu’s (2000) study argues that even young children can use CS to demonstrate understanding of systems of power. In their data, a young child begins a conversation in Cantonese only, progressively begins to use Cantonese-English CS as a temper tantrum begins, and finally switches to English in a full temper tantrum. Bain and Yu argue that the child switches to English because it was the language of power within his household. That is, his father spoke only English and was the authoritarian.

**Myers-Scotton’s Markedness Model**

In Myers-Scotton’s work (1993), CS is seen as a choice in response to a complex system of social norms in society. CS can be an unmarked choice, a marked choice, or an exploratory choice. According to the International Encyclopedia of Linguistics, the term “markedness” refers to “distinction between what is neutral, natural, or most expected (unmarked), and what departs from the neutral (marked) along some designated parameter” (Kean, 2003, no p.). Perhaps the most important element of the Meyers-
Scotton Markedness Model is the three-part categorization of CS: CS as an unmarked choice, CS as a marked choice, and CS as an exploratory choice.

CS is unmarked when it is expected. It upholds the norms for the given scenario. For example, in South Africa, a multilingual country, it is common for CS to be the unmarked choice in certain situations (Ncoko et al., 2000; Uys, 2010). For example, Uys (2010, p. 30) gives one example of unmarked CS where all speakers in the class are bilingual.

(3) English-Afrikaans CS

Mr P: Blaai na eenheid 4 op bladsy 61. Ons sal kyk na die totstandkoming van ’n nuwe besigheid.

‘Turn to unit 4 on page 6. We will look at the establishing of a new enterprise’

Mr P: What do you need to establish a business?

Learner: Need capital.

Mr P: Ja, ons het geld nodig.

‘Yes, we need money’

You also need a business plan, ’n sakeplan

‘You also need a business plan, a business plan’

Dit is wat ons met julle bespreek het.

‘That is what we have discussed with you’

In example (3) above, the teacher uses Afrikaans to give the class directions, as well as reiterate the lesson. Because everyone in the classroom understands this utterance in its entirety, and use of the native language is accepted in the class, the utterance upholds the
rights and obligations set of the classroom. According to Myers-Scotton (1993), unmarked CS is casual, and most common among bilinguals and especially new immigrants. She states that new immigrants often “maintain tangible or strong psychological ties with their original community” (1993, p. 482). As with the participants of this study, many new immigrants are trying to fit in with a society while still marking loyalty to their homeland. CS is a clear way to do so.

Myers-Scotton (1993, 1998, 1999) also discusses marked CS. CS is marked when it is an unexpected choice, given the norms of the situation. Kamwangamalu (1996) also discusses how students use marked CS to emphasize in-group membership, and those who are not included, as seen in this example.

(4) English-siSwati CS

Lecturer: What if I gave you a short test tomorrow.

Students: No, sir, tomorrow we are writing a test for another course.

Lecturer: When do you think we can write it? We should definitely have one this week.

One student (turning to his fellow students):

_Yeyi nine ningadli nivune kutsi siyibuale le-TEST. Onkhe maviki sibhala iTEST yakhe ingatsi ngiyo yodwa iCOURSE lesiyentakiko_ ‘Hey you! Never agree to write the test! Every week we write his tests as if his is the only course we are taking this term’

Lecturer (to the student who was addressing his classmates):

What are you saying?

The Student: I’m saying, Sir, what if we write it next week.
In example (4), there is one student using the L1 to increase the solidarity of the students in the class. It is an intense bid for solidarity. The code switching is marked, as well as a we-code for the students. The teacher is excluded.

A third category that Myers-Scotton (1993, 1998) discusses is when CS is used to determine the appropriate norm for the situation. Ncoko et al. (2000, p. 231) gives the following example.

(5) isiZulu-English

A:  Heyi! Wena, awazi yini ukuthi i-tuck shop nge-first break ayivulwa

   ‘Hey! You! Don’t you know that the tuckshop is not opened at first break?’

B:  What are you talking about? I do not understand.

A:  I am so sorry. Are you from Zaire?

B:  No, from Nigeria. I can only speak English.

A:  Okay, I was just saying the tuckshop only opens at second break.

In (5) above, it seems that A is exploring which language will be successful to communicate with B. He or she first uses isi-Zulu to communicate, and when that is unsuccessful, switches to English. Since there is no underlying attitude being communicated by the CS to English, it is determined that the CS was merely an exploratory choice.
While all of these theoretical models of CS are valuable, the scope of this study is not to determine the theoretical underpinnings of CS in the classroom. Rather, this study seeks to determine the functions of CS in the Somali multilingual high school context.

**Functions of Code-switching**

There does not seem to be a consensus among researchers as to how to organize the specific functions of code-switching. For example, originally Gumperz (1983) identified six functional categories whereas Ncoko et al. (2000) describe twelve. Ritchie and Bhatia (2012) define four broad metacategories. Uys (2010) also describes four main categories, but they are different from Ritchie and Bhatia’s. Other researchers, such as Slotte-Luttge (2007), seem hardly interested in providing a taxonomic list of why students codeswitch. Despite these differences, there are some similar elements that appear in researchers’ descriptions of why speakers used CS. I have organized a list of elements found throughout the literature. The functions of identity, anger, social distance, metaphor, power, task management, academic support, ease of lexical recall, change in addressee, neutrality, exploration, and more will be discussed below, as they all may come up in students’ classroom CS.

**Identity**

Nearly all of the researchers found that speakers codeswitch to establish some sort of identity (Auer et al., 2014; Heller, 1995; Kamwangamalu, 2010; Myers-Scotton, 1993, 1998, 1999, 2002; Ncoko et al., 2000; Ritchie & Bhatia, 2012; Slotte-Luttge, 2007; Unamuno, 2008; Uys, 2010). Speakers may wish to display an identity by showing that they speak a certain language. They may also choose to hide their identity by speaking a language of power, such as a student who refuses to communicate in their home language.
because they are trying to appear more American. Furthermore, a speaker might want to use CS to challenge the listener’s perception of their identity, as in (6) below (Ncoko et al., 2000, pp 234).

(6) isiZulu-Fankalo- English CS

A: *Bheka lona uhamba kanjani uhamba njengogo.*

‘Look at how this one walks. She walks like a grandmother.’

B: *No, njengomkhulu.*

‘No, like a grandfather.’

C: *No, wena hamba njengalo* old dog.

‘No, you walk like an old dog.’

Ncoko describes in the example above how A and B use CS to exclude C from the conversation as she walks by. However, it turns out that C does in fact understand, and trades an insult in return.

**Anger and Defiance**

Many researchers find that speakers use CS to express anger or defiance (Bain & Yu, 2000; Myers-Scotton 1993; Ncoko et al., 2000; Uys, 2010). For instance, Ncoko et al. argue that students sometimes use a language that is not permitted in class as a form of defiance. The following example of CS used to express anger is from Myers-Scotton (as cited in Uys, 2010, p. 20)

(7) Swahili-English CS

Bus passenger: *Nataka kwenda Posta.*

‘I want to go to the post office’
Conductor:  *Kutoka hapa mpaka posta nauli ni senti hamsini.*

‘From here to the post office the fare is 50 cents’

(Passenger gives money for which he should get change)

Conductor:  *Ngojea change yako.*

‘Wait for your change’

(Bus nears post office and passenger has still not received his change)

Bus passenger:  *Nataka change yangu.*

‘I want my change’

Conductor:  *Change utapata, Bwana.*

‘You’ll get your change’

Bus passenger:  I am nearing my destination.

Conductor:  Do you think I could run away with your change?

In number (7) above, both speakers switch entirely into English as the conversation becomes more heated.

**Increasing or Decreasing Social Distance**

A number of researchers discuss how speakers use CS to increase solidarity or to distance themselves from someone (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2012; Kamwangamalu, 2010; Myers-Scotton, 1993, 1999; Ncoko et al., 2000; Slotte-Luttge, 2007; Uys, 2010).

Example (4) above is a perfect example of this. The student who is speaking uses CS to try to decrease the distance between himself and the other students. By using a language common to the students, he hopes to create solidarity among them and achieve his goal. The student’s code-switching simultaneously increases the distance between the teacher and students. As he cannot understand the language spoken, the teacher is excluded.
Metaphorical Functions

Many metaphorical functions such as quotations, reiteration, humor, interjections, and idioms are discussed in the literature as reasons to codeswitch. Ritchie & Bhatia (2012), Gumperz (1982), Kamwangamalu (2010), Myers-Scotton (1993), Neoko et al. (2000), and Unamuno (2008) all discuss quotations as one reason to codeswitch. Uys (2010) also gives an example of a quotation codeswitch, but does not list it in his functional categories list. Gumperz gives the following example (1982, p. 76)

(8) English-Hindi CS. From a conversation about young Hindi speaking college teachers. The speaker is talking about his visit to the doctor.

A: He says: ye hi medsin kontinyu kor bhai.

‘He says: continue taking this medicine friend.’

Several researchers describe how speakers use CS to reiterate, or say something twice in two languages (Gumperz, 1982; Myers-Scotton, 1993; Ritchie & Bhatia, 2012; Uys, 2010). This is also not listed as a functional category for Uys. Again, Gumperz has several examples of this. One of them is given below (1982, p. 78)

(9) English-Spanish

Chicano Professional: The three old ones spoke nothing but Spanish. Nothing but Spanish. No hablaban ingles.

‘The three old ones spoke nothing but Spanish. Nothing but Spanish. They did not speak English.’

Ritchie and Bhatia (2012) go into greater detail, including interjections and idioms in their list of message-intrinsic factors. Additionally, Adendorff (2000, as cited in Uys,
2010) and Ncoko et al. (2000) report that students often code-switch in order to be funny. They often note that the addressee laughs as well. See example (4) above.

**Power**

Heller (1995) argues that power is one of the most important reasons behind why speakers codeswitch. People use CS to resist power or exert power over others. Auer et al. (2014), Bain (2000), Ritchie and Bhatia (2012), Heller (1995), and Slotte-Luttge (2007) also cite power as a reason to use CS. The following example, taken from Bain (2000, p. 1408-1409) shows how a bilingual child, Jason, uses English to exert power over his grandmother during a tantrum in a supermarket in Canada.

(10) *Cantonese- English CS*

Ja:  *Ngóh hó-mh-hóyí yauh yāt pìhnggwó?*  
‘Can I have an apple?’

Gr:  *M̀h'hóyih, nīdī pìhnggwó mh'sànsìn.*  
‘No, the apples are not fresh.’

Ja:  *Daahnhaih ngóh yiu yāt go pìhnggwó!*  
‘But I want an apple!’

Gr:  *Tái nīdī sàigwà géi hóu.*  
‘Look at how nice the melons are.’

Ja:  *Ngóh yiu an apple*  
‘I want an apple’

Gr:  *Ngóhdeih hóyih heui daih yih gāan póutáu máaih pìhnggwó.*  
‘We can get better apples at another store.’

Ja:  *Ngóh yiu an apple*
'I want an apple'

Gr:  *Yihgā mh'ányih, chihdı.*

‘Not now, later.’

Ja:  *Néih mḥhóu, I want an apple*

‘You’re not good, I want an apple

I want an apple!!!  [wailing, tears, etc.]

In this example, the child increasingly uses more and more English, as he knows it exerts more power in the English language supermarket context than his grandmother’s Cantonese. Students also switch languages to use power or resist power as well. When students use CS to resist power, it often is simultaneously defiant, as described in example (7) above where the two speakers increasingly switch into English, a language of greater weight or power to exert that linguistic power over one another.

**Task Management**

Classroom management by teachers and task management by students are two additional reasons for code-switching. Unamuno (2008) finds that students use CS for discourse-based functions, such as planning, organizing, and structuring an activity as well as holding the floor or managing and resolving problems. Üstünel (2010) also gives examples of students using CS to hold the floor in the class. Meanwhile, Kamwangamalu (2010), Ncoko et al. (2000), Üstünel (2016), and Uys (2010) describe how teachers use CS as a classroom management technique. Uys gives the following example (2010, p. 42):

(11)  **English-Setswana CS**

Ms. S:  Take out your work and go to page 138
Nina abangenayo, lo dira lerathla
‘You who have entered the room now, you are making a noise.’

OK, a retloheleng se re se dirang
‘OK, if you don’t shut up, you must go out of the class.’

In the example above, the teacher uses CS as a classroom management technique to signal displeasure with the students making noise.

**Academic Support**

Uys (2010) includes academic reasons as one of his main functions for teachers’ CS behavior. Lin (2013), Setati et al. (2002), Üstünel (2016), and Uys (2010) note that teachers and learners use CS to clarify content. This may take the form of asking and responding to questions about the content, asking and giving L1 definitions of vocabulary words, or checking for understanding. The following conversation is taken from Üstünel (2016, pp 104-105).

(12)  *Turkish – English CS*

L1:  *Ben şimdi bir şeyi bağdaştirdim da*

‘Now I have made a relation with something’

T:  huh?

L1  Adulthood *yükşünlik*. Childhood *çocukluk*.

‘Adulthood (means) being adult. Childhood (means) being child

neighbourhood *komşuluk olmaz mı?*

‘Isn’t neighbourhood being neighbors?’

L2:  *ben de öyle düşündüm komşuluk diye*

‘I thought the same being neighbours’
In the conversation above, we see two learners checking their understanding, as the teacher listens and affirms that they have drawn the correct conclusions. Lin (2013), Setati et al. (2002), and Üstünel (2016) suggest that teachers also use CS to scaffold students’ understanding of content. Lin makes the following comment of teacher CS: “It appears that by always starting in L1 […] she can also push the students to move from what they are familiar with (e.g., L1 expressions) to what they need to become more familiar with (e.g., L2 counterparts of the L1 expressions)” (2013 p. 11). Uys (2010) also lists several more functional categories of CS for academic reasons, including “assisting learners in interpreting subject matter,” checks for understanding, increasing participation, as well as increasing learner talk (p. 27)

**Ease of Lexical Recall**

The idea that students might sometimes have difficulty remembering a word and find it easier to recall in their L1 is reported by Myers-Scotton (2006), Slotte-Luttge (2007), and Unamuno (2008). For example, Slotte-Luttge gives this conversation between learners trying to figure out how rain is formed (Slotte-Luttge, 2007, pp 119-120)

(13) **Swedish – Finnish CS**

Samuel: *Nähå*

‘No’

Mats : *Jå d-de kommer salama*
'Yes lightning is coming.'

Samuel:  
nä ja vet hur de kommer de kommer

‘No I know how it comes it comes’

Tommi:  
De sumu

‘It’s fog’

Samuel:  
De kommer usva å nousee de dit upp så regnar de de e ju

‘It comes mist and it rises up there so it rains so it is

vet ni int va e usva

‘Don’t you know what mist is?’

Mats:  
nä int e de nu så de kommer från have å sen kommer de nån fukt

‘No, it isn’t that way at all. It comes from the sea and then there
comes some moisture’

Tommi  
ja su-sumu kommer opp så går de i pilvina å sen regnar de ner

‘Yes, mi-mist comes. Then it goes into the clouds and then it rains down’

In the example above, the boys discuss rain by using several weather terms in the
language which first comes to them, their L1, Finnish. This has sometimes been referred
to as “lexical deficiency” (Slotte-Luttge, 2007). However, Unamuno (2008) takes issue
with that term. Instead, she would rather see code-switching as a way to make a difficult
task doable. Myers-Scotton (2006) also sees CS as an empowerment tool for language
learners who don’t yet have a full enough understanding of a language to make a full
clause.
**Change in Addressee**

Ncoko et al. (2000) describe change in direction or addressee as one of their major functional categories for CS. In addition, Bain (2000), Ritchie and Bhatia (2012), Unamuno (2008), and Uys (2010) also give examples of this behavior, although they may not label it as such. If one is speaking in one language, but decides to address another person who does not speak the language, one will naturally change the language spoken to address the second addressee.

**Neutrality**

Of course, as Myers-Scotton (1993, 1998) argues in her Markedness Model, CS is sometimes a method of expressing neutrality. Ritchie and Bhatia (2012), Kamwangamalu (1998), and Uys (2010) also describe cases of using CS to remain neutral. For example, Ritchie and Bhatia (2012) describe a situation where a Telugu-English and a Hindi-English bilingual are speaking. They use English, and when a third, Telugu-English speaker joins and greets the first speaker in Telugu, the first speaker responds in English. In this way, the first speaker uses CS to remain neutral and not exclude the Hindi-English speaker.

**Exploration**


**Other reasons/functions**

Finally, there are additional functions of CS not discussed in detail above. For example, Ritchie and Bhatia (2012) describe several linguistically motivated reasons for
CS, such as CS within a relative clause, CS as a message qualification, or CS in order to hold the floor. Gumperz and Kachru state that CS can be used to express modernization, confidentiality, sympathy, and intimacy (as cited by Kamwangamalu, 2010).

The functions explored above will suffice for the purposes of the current study, which investigates how multilingual Somali ELs at different WIDA levels code-switch and vary in their CS behaviors. The different functional categories of identity, anger, social distance, metaphor, power, task management, academic support, ease of lexical recall, change in addressee, neutrality, exploration, and other will be used in Chapter Three to form a coding system to respond to the research questions.

**Code-switching Across Proficiency Levels**

There appears to be a dearth of research on how CS behaviors vary between students of different proficiency levels. I found only two mentions of proficiency level in the research. Cipriani studied CS as a participation strategy in beginning classroom. (Üstünel, 2016). Üstünel argues that more advanced learners “do not often need such kind of support” based on their higher competency (2016, p. 85). However, it is unclear upon what basis she has drawn this conclusion. Lin, on the other hand, argues that learners benefit from CS regardless of their proficiency level (2013). Furthermore, it is not entirely clear how these researchers define beginning and advanced proficiency levels. The terms are used, but not truly explained. In the context of this study, I define beginning ELs as students who score a level one score on the WIDA proficiency scale, while advanced students are those above a WIDA level four. (See appendix A for more information on the WIDA proficiency levels)

This gap in the research is exactly what this study stands to address.
Summary

In this literature review, I have given an overview of CS, including a working definition: CS is using two or more codes, or in this context languages, in a single discourse act. I will use the wide definition of CS to include related phenomena, such as code-mixing and use of borrowed terms. CS is considered to be a complex process based in choices speakers make, either consciously or unconsciously. It is not random; it is subject to certain rules.

I also reviewed some benefits to using CS in the classroom. CS can be used to build classroom culture, as well as support the emotional wellbeing of SLIFE and other students who have experienced trauma. CS is also an effective classroom management technique. It supports students’ academic understanding of content when teachers or peers use CS to explain content or define new vocabulary terms. Additionally, students often prefer to be taught in classrooms that allow CS.

There are many models of code-switching, including Kamwangamalu’s (1998) codes-in-between model, where speakers use CS to find a way of speaking in between the home and business tone of two languages. The interactional approach to CS comes from Gumperz (1983). In this view, CS provides context for discourse. This approach encourages researchers to describe the many functions of CS. The political ideological approach views CS as a way of supporting or protesting against power. In the Markedness Model by Myers-Scotton (1998), CS is based on norms for a given situation and can be unmarked, marked, or exploratory.

I have also discussed above several functions that explain why speakers use CS, such as identity, defiance, social distance, metaphor, power, task management, academic
support, ease of lexical recall, change in addressee, neutrality, exploration, and other reasons. These functions will be crucial to determining why ELs use CS.

It is crucial to note that while there are numerous studies discussing how and why ELs engage in CS, I could find little research discussing how code-switching behaviors vary between different levels of L2 language development. This gap is what the current study seeks to address in answering the following questions: How do multilingual Somali high school students code-switch in English-medium classes? How do the CS behaviors of these students change, depending on their placement on the WIDA English Language Development continuum? In the next chapter, I will first offer a description of how I have selected three classes of various WIDA levels to determine how the students engage in CS. Chapter Three also details the study I have designed to draw out the different styles of code-switching in a natural context. I will determine the specific reasons why students and teachers codeswitch, as well as benefits these specific students seem to receive.
CHAPTER THREE

Methods

This chapter gives an overview of the research methods used to begin the answer the following research questions: How do multilingual Somali high school students code-switch in English-medium classes? How do the CS behaviors of these students change, depending on their placement on the WIDA English Language Development continuum? The purpose is to provide teachers with a deeper level of knowledge of the potential benefits of CS at different levels of English language instruction. First, the rationale for using a case study is given. The next sections discuss the location school and student participants in the study respectively. Data collection and analysis are described, as well as the human subjects review process and validity concerns.

Rationale

This research study is a case study of CS among Somali high school students in a small urban charter school. Mackey and Gass describe a case study as “[providing] detailed descriptions of specific learners (or sometimes classes) within their learning setting …” (2016, p. 235). A case study is most likely to draw out the most typical examples of student CS in the classroom, as the students attend their normal classes, unlike in an experimental study. Mackey and Gass define experimental research as “research in which there is manipulation of (at least) one independent variable to determine the effect(s) on one (or more) dependent variables. Groups are determined on the basis random assignment” (2016, p. 393). Unlike an experimental study, which would
most likely have taken place outside of the classroom, this study observed students in their own school environment and recorded examples of CS as they naturally occur in class. Despite the case study design, this study also includes quantitative data. Three classrooms have been chosen as a case to determine how Somali ELs codeswitch in class and to note how they vary in their CS behavior across proficiency levels. The functions of CS in different levels were quantified, as well as the direction of the CS, so it is also possible to view this study through a mixed methods lens.

Data Collection

Location

This study took place at a charter school in an upper Midwestern metro area. It is the largest metro area in the state and home to a number of immigrant groups, including a large number of Somali immigrants. Of immigrants living in the state overall, 80% live in this metro area. There were approximately 20,000 individuals of Somali descent living in the metro area as of 2015, according to the United States Census (Liuzzi, n.d.).

The school in which this study took place maintained a mostly Somali ethnic student body, as well as a staff that was nearly 50% Somali. Many of the students in the school had been refugees, or are children of refugees. According to the state Department of Education, greater than 80% of the student body received free or reduced lunch in 2016 (Minnesota Department of Education).

Participants

Instead of looking at individual participants in this study, I will focus on three classes, with three different levels respectively. This choice was based on the fact that I did not have a large number of participants in the intermediate-advanced range. Had I had
broken down the results by individual WIDA scores, I would have had only one representative of WIDA level six, and only two representatives of WIDA levels three and four respectively. It did not seem wise to draw conclusions on an entire proficiency level group based upon the actions of only one or two individuals. The 29 students who agreed to participate in this case study were first generation immigrants of Somali descent from East Africa. Bigelow found that the Somali aspect of one’s identity is very important to many members of the Somali diaspora community (2010). All of the participants in this study also identified as Muslim. Several of the participants in the study were students with limited formal education (SLIFE). Many experienced living in a refugee camp, or have parents or other relatives who had this experience. For example, Dadaab, a refugee camp in Kenya was home to 240,000 Somalis in 2009. In refugee camps such as Dadaab, educational materials were scarce, and families often could not afford to send their children to school. (Bigelow, 2010) Violence there was also high (Bigelow, 2010; Farid & McMahan, 2004). Due to these factors, many participants in this study experienced trauma either first hand, or experienced generational trauma. In their handbook on accommodating and educating Somali students, Farid and McMahan argue, “We also need to be aware that an estimated 35 percent of Somali refugees have been tortured, and all of them have experienced the loss of everything” (2004, p. 18). Despite these challenges, families have typically been highly engaged in their children’s learning in the school and highly supportive of teachers and education in general. Typically, oral skills of Somali students are strong, based on the emphasis on oral language, storytelling, and poetry in Somali culture (Bigelow, 2010; Farid & McMahan, 2004).
A greater number of females agreed to participate in this study than males. Just over one third of the participants were male, 11 participants to be exact. Eighteen participants were female, on the other hand. The participants skewed female in this study partially because one of the classes selected happened to only have females in it. As the classes took place in a high school, the learners are aged 15 to 20.

The students and teachers participating in this study were taken from three classes. First, there was myself and my own class, EL 1.5, which was a class focused on the acquisition of beginning English vocabulary and some sheltered English Language Arts content. Participants in this class had a WIDA level between 1.0 and 1.9, described as “entering.” They had some level of literacy in either English or in their native language. They were beginning level ELs. They attended class for two hours four days a week, from Monday through Thursday and every other Friday. Eleven students from this class participated in this study. Two were boys and nine were girls.

The second class involved in this case study was EL 2 with Ms. Lewis (all names given in this study are pseudonyms). EL 2 is a sheltered English Language Arts class for students who have reached a composite WIDA level of 2.0 to 2.9, or “beginning.” They might be considered beginning-intermediate English learners. They also attended class for two hours four days a week and every other Friday. The participants in this class had experienced formal English instruction, including instruction in reading or writing either in their home country or in the U.S. for one or more years. Seventeen students from this class participated in the study. Eight of the participants were female, and 9 were male.

The final class participating in this study is Ms. Smith’s differentiated American Literature class. This class is a regular English Language Arts class with greater support
given to students who are at intermediate levels of English language development. The participants in this class may have been anywhere from a WIDA level 3.0, or “developing,” to level 6.0, “reaching.” They were intermediate and advanced ELs. Of the participants from this class, two were level three, two were level four and one was level six. This class met only one hour four days a week, with an additional hour on Fridays every other week. Participants in this class usually had already had several years of formal academic education either in English or in an additional language. Five students from this class participated in the study. All were female.

The classes chosen had been taking place for five months at the point of data collection, and most students had been in attendance for this period of time. One participant joined the Level One classes late in the year. Two participants joined late in Level Two. The three classes selected give a good sampling of participants from different levels of English language development, in order to determine if their CS behaviors vary.

The identities of the participants involved in this study are protected and pseudonyms were used as students were referenced. The teachers were referred to by pseudonyms, in order to protect their privacy. The instructors recorded were all fluent English speakers. All three teachers were female. Two of the teachers were Caucasian, with the native language of English. One of the teachers was Hmong and had been an EL herself at one point. All the teachers were multilingual, and spoke other languages in addition to English, but not Somali. In addition, all of the teachers in this study had either completed or were in the process of completing Master’s degrees in English as a Second Language instruction.
WIDA Levels

In order to fully understand the context of this study, one needs more information about the WIDA consortium. WIDA is a consortium of states, including several states in the Midwest, seeking to establish guidance and policy for teachers of ELs (WIDA Consortium, 2014a, 2014b). WIDA follows research-based guiding principles in the best practices for ELs. They write assessments for establishing how far along students are in their English language development. Most important to this study, they define five different levels of English language development: Level 1, Entering; Level 2, Emerging; Level 3, Developing; Level 4, Expanding; Level 5, Bridging. Level 6 is considered to be native or native-like English proficiency (Appendix A). Students may have different levels for each language domain of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, and they are also given a composite score. The composite scores are relevant to this study, which will investigate the ways in which ELs at different levels vary in their code-switching behaviors. This composite score is what will be used to determine the students’ English proficiency levels in this study.

Observation Protocol

In order to answer the following research questions - How do multilingual Somali high school students code-switch in English-medium classes? How do the CS behaviors of these students change, depending on their placement on the WIDA English Language Development continuum? - I needed to collect data in various real classroom settings. Observation, when well designed, can create a valid snapshot of the inner workings of a classroom community. In advance of this study, I conducted a pilot study, in which I recorded three minutes of student conversation during group work in my own classroom.
The recording was translated and transcribed fully with the assistance of a translator. From the transcript, I coded each instance of CS for markedness, directionality and function. The main modifications I made to this study based on the pilot was to restrict the amount of data. I determined that I would seek to record only 20 minutes of each class session rather than an entire class session, which could last up to 2 hours long.

For each class selected, I chose to record a small group activity designed by their teacher as part of their regular curriculum. In order to determine an appropriate 20 minute recording time, I communicated with each teacher and collaborated with them to determine the ideal class session and time period for recording. During the activities selected, students worked and discussed the classroom topic in small groups of 2-4. The beginning class wrote and discussed how to tell a story about a young girl in the past. The beginning-intermediate class discussed narratives in first, second, and third person, and answered questions about them in writing. The intermediate-advanced class discussed analysis of the graphic novel *Maus*, and answered questions about the novel orally.

**Procedure**

One class session for each class was audio-recorded with two standard smartphones positioned on either side of the class to record the data in the most unobtrusive way possible. The recording devices were barely noticeable, in hopes that the students and teachers would continue to behave as usual in class. I planned to sit in the corner of the class, so that the students would have less cause to look at me or take interest in my work. If it seemed my presence was distracting, I intended to leave the class, and use the audio as the sole source of data collection. At the school in which this study is located, departmental coaches and administrators observe teaching several times.
a year. As this is a common practice in the school and for me particularly in my role as a departmental coach, I believe my presence did not seem out of the ordinary.

The audio was used to create a transcript of the students’ and teachers’ discourse. I transcribed the audio recording, with the help of a Somali translator. Although I am familiar with common Somali phrases, my translator was crucial to make the translation of Somali phrases accurate and nuanced.

**Data Analysis**

Through the process of data coding, I was able to draw effective conclusions from the transcription data. I coded the data for the specific elements being investigated in this study, which included direction of the CS as well as function of the CS. Though I did also code for the element of markedness, it did not produce any results that were worthwhile. This element was generally discarded from the analysis.

A functional coding scheme was used to analyze the transcriptions, in order to identify the functions of each CS instance. The functional coding scheme was informed by the functions of CS that are discussed in the literature (Auer et al., 2014; Bain & Yu, 2000; Heller, 1995; Kamwangamalu, 2010; Lin, 2013 Myers-Scotton, 1993, 1998, 1999, 2002; Ncoko et al., 2000; Ritchie & Bhatia, 2012; Setati et al., 2002; Slotte-Luttge, 2007; Unamuno, 2008; Üstünel, 2016; Uys, 2010). A list of functions is provided in appendix B. In this coding scheme, it is possible for a single instance of CS to display more that one of the functions listed above. For example, it could be a humorous way to decrease social distance. Additionally, in this coding scheme I have chosen the term “ease of lexical recall” over “lexical deficiency” in order to reflect an asset based mentality.

Additionally, I recorded the directionality of the CS occurrences. That is, I observed
whether the example of CS is student to student, student to group, student to class, student to teacher, or teacher to student, teacher to group, or teacher to class.

Once the directionality and functions of CS were identified, it was possible to determine similarities and differences between the ELs at different proficiency levels. In this way, a preliminary response to the research questions – How do multilingual Somali high school students code-switch in English-medium classes? How do the CS behaviors of these students change, depending on their placement on the WIDA English Language Development continuum? – could be formulated.

After the data had been coded for directionality and function, it was analyzed both as a whole and according to the class of the speaker. Essentially, the data was broken down into three groups. The beginning class, in which participants were WIDA level one; the beginning-intermediate class, in which the participants were WIDA level two, and the intermediate-advanced class, in which the participants ranged from WIDA level 3-6. All data was entered in to an Excel spreadsheet to facilitate the search for trends. I determined the percentage of time the CS was student-to-student, student-to-group, student-to-class, or student-to-teacher and then compared the percentages of different classes. A similar process was used to examine trends for function. I identified the number of times each function occurred overall as well as in each class. Data trends are displayed in charts in Chapter Four.

**Ethics**

The objective of conducting research in an ethical manner is paramount to any studies involving human subjects. In addition, this study involves young adults. Therefore, it was crucial to take proper care that all parties consented, and would not be
impacted negatively by this study. Hamline University’s Institutional Review Board oversaw the plan for this study to assure that it complied with all standards of ethics regarding human subject participation. Administrators at the school also gave permission for the study before it took place.

Students in the classes being observed received a consent form meeting the requirements of the Hamline IRB. This consent form was written in Somali and English, and was explained orally in class before it was sent home, so that all parties could understand that it was not required that they participate and that non-participation would not affect their grades or standing in the school. Before recording began, students’ guardians signed and returned the form, unless the student was 18 or older, in which case he or she was able to complete his or her own form. Furthermore, students themselves gave their consent either in writing or orally. Even if a parent consented to the recording, students were allowed to decide themselves if they did not wish to be recorded, and these wishes were respected. Students who did not consent to be recorded were involved in the activities, but placed far enough from the recording equipment that their voices could not be heard. Participants were also able to drop out from the study at any time without repercussions. Any participants who dropped out of the study had their comments removed from the transcripts.

Recordings obtained for this study were saved on a secure computer in the home of the researcher until they were transcribed, at which point they were deleted. Students were be identified by name in the transcription. Rather, they were given pseudonyms. Teachers were identified by pseudonym as well.
Validity of Data

Despite my best efforts in designing this study, there are some specific validity concerns. Foremost among them, I wanted to be sure that my presence in the classroom would not influence the students to behave unnaturally. To avoid falling victim to the Hawthorne effect, which refers to the effect an observer has on the behavior of those being studied, the method of data collection was primarily recording with limited observation (Mackey & Gass, 2016). Each class was recorded for approximately 20 minutes. However, students did notice my presence in the classroom and comment on it.

Having a translator assist me in creating a transcript also assisted in maintaining objectivity through the observation process. The translator is also an added variable, though, as he could potentially modify the content of the language in the student discussion. Therefore, I needed to select a translator carefully. In selecting a translator, I chose a fellow teacher, who speaks Somali as his native language. He was my first choice as translator, because he was a licensed interpreter, who had completed a program in translation and interpreting at a large state university. So, not only was he familiar with the context of the research, but also highly qualified to translate with fidelity and nuance. The primary method of data collection is audio recording and transcription. Therefore, my biases will have less chance of impacting what data is recorded.

Finally, the coding scheme was needed to make the data more concrete and quantitative (Mackey & Gass, 2016). While this coding scheme was strongly informed by the literature, such as Kamwangamalu (2010), Lin (2013), Myers-Scotton (1998), among others, some bias could undoubtedly have crept in during the coding of the data. This subjectivity is somewhat balanced by the quantitative data that resulted from the coding
scheme. It is perhaps important to note that I am not seeking to establish statistical validity. Rather, the results of this study were compared to accepted knowledge to determine if they were corroborated by previous studies. I hope that by showing that my findings are supported by the literature it will be clear that my presence in the classroom or my bias during coding has not significantly diminished the value of the data. If the results of this study were quite different from established research, the validity of the data would be drawn into question.

Summary

This chapter explains the research methods used in this study. This case study attempts to reveal natural CS behaviors in three Somali EL classrooms. The study took place at a small charter school in a large metro area in the Midwest. The participants were three teachers, including myself, and several students who are all Somali. All students and guardians signed consent forms before anyone participated in the study. The classes were audio-recorded, transcribed, translated, and analyzed using a coding scheme based on previous research. I used a functional coding scheme to determine if the students are code-switching for the functions defined above in the literature review. The coding scheme also included the direction of the CS examples.

Data was entered and analyzed for trends in the overall group of students as well as in groups for various WIDA levels. This allowed me to determine whether the results are corroborated by previous research, as well as how these results corresponded with the questions that initiated this study.

In Chapter Four, I introduce the data collected in this study. First the data for all of the learners will be presented in an attempt at answering the question How do
multilingual Somali high school students code-switch in English-medium classes. Next, I will take a deeper look at each class individually, and describe the trends for WIDA levels one, two, and three-six. Finally I will compare and contrast the results of these various level classes in order to respond to the research question: How do the CS behaviors of these students change, depending on their placement on the WIDA English Language Development continuum.
CHAPTER FOUR

Results

In my experience as an EL teacher at a high school with a large Somali immigrant population, I have found myself having the same conversation over and over. Teachers and administrators worry that L1 use is a problem in their classrooms, while I seek to support the use of CS between both the L1 and English. Teachers and administrators worry that students may not learn English perfectly if they are relying on CS, or that using only English will help manage behavioral issues. In response I offer research that supports CS as an effective tool for teaching English. My work in this context has brought me to the following research questions: How do multilingual Somali high school students code-switch in English-medium classes? How do the CS behaviors of these students change, depending on their placement on the WIDA English Language Development continuum?

In Chapter Four, I discuss the results of this case study. I hope these results will assist teachers in understanding benefits of CS at different levels of English language instruction. First, I give an overview of the results of this study in general. Then, I discuss the data, as divided by the WIDA levels of the participants. The following chapter will be organized as follows: overall results; results for WIDA level one, or beginners; results for WIDA level two, or beginning-intermediate; and results for WIDA level three through six, or intermediate-advanced.
Overall Results

As discussed in Chapter Three, the instances of CS in the three classrooms were labelled using a coding scheme. Each instance of CS was labeled with a primary function, as well as one or more secondary functions, if applicable. As I was labelling each instance, I found that many of the examples of CS that signaled identity not only signaled identity in general, but identity as a Muslim individual. Students were signaling their Muslim identity through fixed religious phrases in Arabic. Due to the fact that these phrases were not in Somali, I believed the coding scheme needed to be modified to show this specific facet of identity. This change to the coding scheme is reflected below in the discussion of the functions of CS as well as given in appendix B.

Figure 1, below, shows how many occurrences there were of each CS function in all the data, including each of the three classes recorded.

![Graph](image_url)

*Figure 1.* Functions of CS in all classes. This figure illustrates all the functions captured on the recordings.
When looking at the primary functions of CS in this study, noted in blue above, we find that academic support is the most common reason for CS. One typical example of students using CS to support their academic understanding is given below. During this conversation, student participants Khalid, Rahima, and Amina are working on determining the point of view of several texts. They discuss the point of view of each text, and give reasons to support their answers. Again, all participant names are pseudonyms.

(14) English – Somali CS

Khalid: Is this first or second? I think it’s first
Rahima: He using “I” so mahan?
‘He using “I”, isn’t that right?’
Khalid: Yeah. They’re using “I…”
Rahima: “…It…”
Khalid: They’re using “Was.”
Amina: [pointing to another text] This is second point of view.
Rahima: [referring to the same example as Amina, disagreeing] This is third person point of view. They using “He.”
Rahima: [returning to the previous text] Maxaa way
‘What is it?’
Khalid: I think it’s first.
Rahima: First.
Khalid: Because he using “I.”
Rahima: Yeah. I think so.
While much of this conversation occurs in English, Rahima uses CS twice to check her understanding in Somali. Rahima directs her questions to the group. In addition to marking these CS as “academic support,” I also marked the tag question, so mahan, as “other” for grammatical CS.

The second and third most common functions respectively are task management and neutrality. There is a significant gap between the three most common primary functions and the following three most common; a gap of 40% or more lies between Muslim identity, anger, and social distance and the most common functions. However, the same CS instance can often fill more than one function. An example of this is given below, when two boys argue about whether the assignment is group work, or independent.

(15)  *Somali – English – Arabic*  CS

Musse:  
*Qof walba kaligii buu shaqaynayaa.*  
‘Everybody is working separately.’

Bana:  
No.  
*Waan wada shaqaynaynaa.*  
‘No. We are working together.’

Musse:  
*Maya, qof walba waxaa laga rabaa inuu kaligii shaqeeyo.*  
‘No, everyone is required to work by themselves.’

Bana:  
No.  
*Wallahi Billahi! Naa noo sooq qabo!*  
‘No. *I swear to god!* Hey give it to me!’

Musse:  
No I know this!  
*Qof walba waxaa laga rabaa inuu kaligii shaqeeyo. Kan waa inaad kaligaa samayso.*
‘No I know this! Everyone is required to work by themselves. This
you have to do by yourself.’

Bana: Uh

Musse: Wallahi! Everybody wax every person waxaa laga rabaa inuu kaligii shaqeeyo.

‘I swear to god! Everybody is every person is supposed to be working alone.’

Bana: Fiiri look waraq baa halkaan na sugaysa.

‘You look there is one piece of paper that is among us’

During the conversation above, Musse first switches to Somali for task management purposes, that is to explain that he believes the assignment is meant to be independent. Bana responds first in English, and switches to Somali to argue that the assignment is a group assignment. I marked this second line as task management, but the English word “no” is also a bid for power. Musse continues his argument in Somali. He decreases distance by using the L1, but is still managing the task. Bana again uses English in a display of power, as well as the phrase Wallahi Billahi, or “I swear to god.” In addition to managing the task, and displaying power, Bana is now signaling his Muslim identity. Musse now becomes heated as well, and uses English, in a bid for power. Then he switches to Somali to decrease the distance and argues urgently about the task. In the second to last line, Musse also signals his Muslim identity. He switches to English to hit some specific words with some power, the words “Everybody” and “Every person.” He decreases distance again, while using Somali. Finally, Bana wins the argument. His last CS instance is coded for power, task management, as well as distance. This conversation
perfectly illustrates how participants used CS for multiple purposes, but especially for task management. As mentioned above, social distance and Muslim identity were also seen fairly often.

Another large gap falls between these medium functions and the less common functions of identity, metaphor, ease of lexical recall, and change in addressee. There were no examples of CS whose primary function is power, exploration, or other. Rather, they were mostly seen as secondary functions.

When the secondary functions are added, task management usurps academic support as most common. Neutrality is also equally as common as academic support. Muslim identity, defiance, and social distance remain in the middle of the pack, along with identity in general. Metaphor, ease of lexical recall and change of addressee remain lower functions, with the addition of power as a less common CS function. Finally, there are five instances of “other” CS functions, such as excitement, playfulness, and grammatical CS. The metaphorical functions of CS in this study included repetition, humor, quotation, and emphasis.

**Level One Class**

When examining the examples of CS seen in the Level One class, the majority of the CSs fall into the categories of ‘student to student’ or ‘student to small group.’ ‘Student to class’ CS and ‘student to teacher’ CS were very rare. The chart below illustrates the directionality of the CS.
Figure 2. Directionality of CS in the beginning class. This figure illustrates direction of WIDA level one students’ CS.

As one delves into the functions of CS in this Beginning English class, one begins to find some interesting results. As shown in Figure 3 below, the most common function of CS was that it was simply the most neutral way to communicate.
Figure 3. Functions of CS in the beginning class. This figure illustrates all the functions of WIDA level one students’ CS in this data set.

Students spoke in Somali to one another, just because it seemed more natural than English. One example of this is given below in (16). In the following conversation, students had just been assigned their task and were settling into group activity with some non-academic chit-chat.

(16) Somali – English – Arabic CS

Roda: Kafee ma wadataa? Isii, isii

‘Do you have Coffee? Give it to me. Give it to me.’

Zaynab: maba dhigee

‘I don’t leave without it’

Roda: Wallahi Billaahi kafee bay wadataa. ii dhiib, ii dhiib

‘I swear to God she has coffee. Give it to me. Give it to me.’
Zaynab:  *ma qaraar ba? Aniga shah ma cabo oo kafee ma cabbo.*

‘Is it bitter? I don’t drink coffee or tea.’

Roda:  *Maxaad adduunka ku nooshahay hadaba?*

‘How do you survive [without them]?’

Zaynab:  *Wallaahi? Wallaahi kafee ma cabo oo shaah ma cabo.*

‘Do you swear to god? I swear to God I don’t drink coffee or tea.’

Ismahan:  *shaahu waa kululaa xalay*

‘The tea was hot last night’

Sundus:  *Aniguna waan qorayay adiguna waad iska hadlaysay*

‘I was writing and you were just talking’

In example (16) above, the CS primarily serves a neutral purpose. The participants use CS because it is the simplest way to communicate. The use of Arabic conveys Muslim identity through the use of fixed religious phrases, such as *Wallaahi.*

The next most common functions of CS both relate to completing the academic task, task management and academic support. Students both gave directions to one another as well as asked and answered questions about the subject material in Somali, because it helped them to understand the lesson better. In example (17), one student is giving a direction to another. She tells another student to be quiet, because that student has been discussing other topics than the lesson at hand.

(17) *Somali – English CS*

Sundus:  *Abayo Anuusa*

‘Be quiet sister’
The example above is coded as student to student CS. It fills a task management function.

Below, a clear example of CS for the function of academic support is given in (18). In this group work activity, the participants are attempting to retell a story where a child crawls on a window ledge to follow a cat and then becomes terrified of heights. One participant, Zaynab, explains to another student that the vocabulary term that they want to use in their writing is “ledge.”

(18)  
Somali – English CS

Zaynab:  Miss, what is called this one?  Miss, what is this called?
Teacher:  Ledge.
Roda:  *Ha wey did*  
‘Yes they do’
Teacher:  Ledge. [writes “ledge” on the board]
Zaynab:  [To the small group] *Waa kas meshin hada rabtid*  
‘That’s what she wants’
Zaynab:  [Pointing to the image] Ledge *waa kas*  
‘that is Ledge’

This is an example of a student using CS to support herself and other students academically. In (18) Zaynab asks the teacher to provide the vocabulary term, “ledge” in English and then explains the term to her peers using Somali-English CS.

The next most common function was signaling Muslim identity. These CS occurrences involved Arabic words such as *Wallahi*, “I swear to God” or *Alhamdullilah*
“Thank God,” which signal the Muslim identity of the speaker. This was shown in example (16).

Other, less common CS functions were social distance, metaphor, power, ease of lexical recall, and change in addressee. Students distanced themselves from the teacher, while at the same time expressing solidarity to one another, when they remarked in Somali “Watch out! This [recording] will go to [the discipline dean]” This example also reveals a challenge with this specific study. As students discussed the recording, it is clear that their behavior was not unaffected by the presence of a recording device. A metaphorical function of code-switching can be seen in the example below. In example (19), a participant shares what she wrote on her paper with another student.

(19)  
Somali –English CS

Zaynab:  It is waan qoreysaan

‘I wrote it is’

In example (19), the participant is quoting her paper. Using CS for a quotation is an example of metaphorical CS.

As discussed in the literature review, students sometimes use their native language as a grammatical foundation for a sentence and insert an English word because it is easier to remember. Example (20) below is an example of CS for ease of lexical recall. In this example, the student asks about the day of the week.

(20)  
Somali –English CS

Zaynab:  Wednesday soo mahan? Hada waa Wednesday.

‘Isn’t it Wednesday? It’s Wednesday.’

---

2 Name removed to protect the identity of the staff member
Rather than forming an utterance in English, Zaynab uses Somali for the grammatical sections of the sentence, with English for the content.

Example (21) is offered below to illustrate CS for a change in addressee. Here, the student Ilwad is having a conversation with the teacher in English. When she hears that another student is going to jump in and give the answer, she tells her to be quiet in Somali, so that she can finish her answer, “The girl can go outside.” See (21) below.

(21) *Somali –English CS*

Teacher: [to Ilwad] Tell me about number 3

Ilwad: I wanna… I didn’t finish.

Teacher: [to Ilwad] Well can you tell me in speaking? What happened?

Ilwad: The girl…

Nawal: Can…

Ilwad: *-Naya amuus- go outside*  

‘-Girl, quiet!- go outside’

In this example, Ilwad switched to Somali, because she was directing her speech at another individual, not the teacher. The CS is very effective, because all three people in the conversation can understand without expending much effort that *naya amuus* is directed at Nawal, while “The girl can go outside” is directed at the teacher.

The functions of defiance, exploration, and other were not found in this group of students.

**Level Two Class**

Similarly, the majority of interactions in the Level Two class are between individual students. The fact that student to group interactions are less common is
probably due to the fact that the design of the activity allowed for students to work in pairs as well as triads, whereas the level one activity did not. One can see the directionality of the CS in this recording represented in the chart below.

![Figure 4. Directionality of CS in the beginning-intermediate class. This figure illustrates direction of WIDA level two students’ CS.](image)

Unlike the Level One class, there was one example of marked CS. A student responds in Somali “what a bunch of lies” when a teacher tells her in English that she does not have a pass to leave the class. The utterance is directed at a teacher who does not understand Somali, so it is considered marked.

There are some similarities and differences between the functions of CS in the beginning and beginning-intermediate class. See Figure 5 below for more information.
Figure 5. Functions of CS in the beginning-intermediate class. This figure illustrates all the functions of WIDA level two students’ CS in this data set.

Task management and academic support continue to be strong functions of CS at the intermediate level. Neutrality is no longer the main reason for CS. Two new functions which are just as common as the academic support and task management are defiance and social distance. For example, the student who told her teacher “What a bunch of lies” was code-switching in order to display her anger and defiance. Defiant or angry CS was sometimes simultaneously used to demonstrate power over another, as seen in the example below. In example (22), two participants, Amran and Sadiya are having an argument about whether or not Amran threw Sadiya’s pencil. Amran denies that she was involved, while Sadiya believes Amran did throw the pencil.

(22) Somali – English CS

Amran: Aniga? (Decrease Distance)
‘Me?’
Sadiya: Waaye. (Anger)

‘It is’
Amran: No no no no no no. (Power, Anger)

‘No no no no no no.’
Sadiya: Waad ku jirtay. (Anger,)

‘You were a part of it.’
Amran: -kuma jirin. (Decrease distance)

‘-I was not a part of it.’
Sadiya: You waa ku jirtay. (Anger, Power, Emphasis)

‘You were a part of it.’
Sadiya: You are the one qof oo qalinka tuuray, right? (Anger, Power, Emphasis)

‘You are the one who threw the pencil, right?’
Amran: I don’t care! (Anger, Power)
Sadiya: What do you mean I don’t care? (Anger, Power)
Amran: Qalin kaamaan qaadan (Decrease Distance)

‘I didn’t take the pencil from you.’
Sadiya: xataa haddaadan iga qaadan adigaa tuuray (Decrease Distance)

‘Even if you didn’t take it from me, you’re the one who threw it anyway.’
Amran: I maqal, ma adigaan qalin kaa qaataay? (Decrease Distance)

‘Excuse me, did I take a pencil from you?’
In the example above, Amran begins the argument with a bid for solidarity. She begins in Somali to decrease the distance between herself and Sadiya. Sadiya continues in Somali, but does not drop the accusation. Amran switches to English, to add more power to the assertion that Amran is wrong. They quickly exchange more words in Somali; then Sadiya begins to use English as well. She specifically chooses which words to switch into English, in order to emphasize, and give power to those words “You” and “You are the one!” This bears startling resemblance to (7), where the bus passenger and bus driver also switch into English to display power and show displeasure. In (22), the girls use more and more English words, in order to give power and weight to their side of the argument, but this escalation does not resolve the argument. Amran tries again to decrease distance and Sadiya follows suit. Unfortunately, the rest of the argument becomes indistinguishable after the last line shown here, as it is covered up by other classroom chatter, so it is unclear whether Amran and Sadiya solved this issue.

**Level Three-Six Class**

In the Intermediate-Advanced class, there are students with a variety of English levels from WIDA level three through WIDA level 6. In this class, there are a number of student to student and student to class CS, as shown in Figure 6 below.
Figure 6. Directionality of CS in the intermediate-advanced class. This figure illustrates direction of WIDA level three through six students’ CS.

The differences in directionality between this class and the other classes are again, largely due to the difference in classroom activities. By the time I began recording, the activity had moved from a small group to full class game.

During this class session, the CS functions of academic support and task management, so common in the other classes, were not used at all. As one can see in Figure 7 below, the most common functions of CS for the intermediate-advanced students were those related to identity. In this class, students no longer switched into Somali to ask for academic help. Rather they used the CS to add layer to their conversation.
Figure 7. Functions of CS in the intermediate-advanced class. This figure illustrates all the functions of WIDA level three through six students’ CS in this data set.

The most common primary functions of CS were identity and Muslim identity. For example, students commonly sprinkled in Arabic words in their English phrases, which signal Muslim identity. In example (23), Hamdi discussed her point total in a game, but she used *Bismillah* rather than “In the name of God.”

(23) **Arabic** – English CS

Hamdi: *Bismillah* One hundred twenty!

*In the name of God* One hundred twenty!

Another common use of CS was for metaphorical purposes. For example, one student repeated a phrase both in Somali and English to give it greater emphasis.

Repetition is considered metaphorical CS. Below, in (24) the participant wants to get
credit for her correct answer to the question, so she emphasizes her words by repeating them in both English and Somali.

(24)  *Somali – English CS*

Samira: I said it *Aniga!*

I said it! *I!*

Change in addressee was also seen, when students changed their direction of speech. Much like example (21), the advanced student switches to Somali when switching from speaking to the teacher to another student. In this example, the group was discussing visual characterization in the graphic novel *Maus.* The characters in this graphic novel are represented by animals.

(25)  *Somali – English CS*

Samira: Like the Jews they use mouse, the – *Anaga amuus!* – and then the Germans cats.

Like the Jews they use mouse, the – *You quiet!* – and then the Germans cats.

In the example above, Samira sees another student begin to open her mouth to speak. In order to hold the floor, she tells the student to be quiet while she continues her thought. The English in this phrase was directed at the large group, while the Somali was directed at one student.

Many of the other functions are either not seen, or only seen as secondary functions.
Summary

In examining the CS for these three classes, it appears that these multilingual Somali high school students used CS to support their academic acquisition of English. They were largely on task during each class. CS in the beginning and intermediate classes focused heavily on academic support, though the beginning class had a large number of CS occurrences merely because it was the most neutral way to communicate. The intermediate class displayed a larger number of CS instances that were angry or defiant, but often these occurrences were simultaneously managing the task at hand. For the advanced class, we find that the CS is more to signal identity and add layer to the speech of the students. This class also had far fewer instances of CS recorded, only 14 in all.

In Chapter five, I present a conclusion about what was found in this study. First I review my data and discuss implications that can be drawn from them. I then discuss limitations of this study as well as areas of potential future research, and discuss how I will share the findings from this study. Then I draw my conclusions. All of these will be centered around responding to the research questions of how multilingual Somali high school students use CS in English classes, as well as how these CS behaviors vary based on level.
CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions

As I reflect upon this research and upon five years of teaching English to high school Somali learners, I find myself wishing I had the resources I have used to guide this study when I first began teaching. It strikes me as somewhat odd that the recommendations of fellow teachers and administrators to ban CS from the classroom were so out of touch from research, such as that presented here. I think of this chapter as a guide to what I would like to tell myself five years ago, or perhaps what I would tell a new teacher today about CS in our context.

The goal of this study was to begin to answer the questions: How do multilingual Somali high school students code-switch in English-medium classes? How do the CS behaviors of these students change, depending on their placement on the WIDA English Language Development continuum? In this chapter, I discuss the results of this study, first in reference to the first research question. Next I break down my commentary by proficiency level. I discuss how my findings interact with my own biases as an educator, as well as limitations of the study. Finally I will give a suggestion for potential areas of future research.

Major Findings

It is important to mention that the most common primary function of CS found in this study was CS for academic purposes. First and foremost, the multilingual Somali high school students used CS to support their academic acquisition of English. This is
supported by the literature discussed in Chapter Two, including Lin (2013), Setati et al. (2002), Üstünel (2016), and Uys (2010). When I add in the instances of CS for the function of task management, I find that 46% of the CS recorded in this study were examples of students using CS to directly accomplish the academic task. This is supported by the literature, such as Unamuno (2008). However, it flies in the face against what I hear commonly in schools, teachers who say that students use the L1 to swear or bully one another. While a teacher obviously making a recording of the class might not be the best source of illicit class conversation, I noted that I did not record a single instance of swearing or bullying, only a single students saying that he was going to swear, though he never did.

With regard to the research question how do multilingual Somali high school students code-switch in English-medium classes, I found significant differences in the most common CS functions. Beginning ELs, or those at WIDA level one were most likely to code-switch because it was the most neutral way to communicate. Neutrality is considered a common function of CS by the researchers Kamwangamalu (1998), Myers-Scotton (1993, 1998), Ritchie and Bhatia (2012), and Uys (2010). Based on my experiences teaching and learning from these ELs, I believe that CS was the most neutral method of communication, largely because it was simpler than communicating primarily in English. This is supported by what Myers-Scotton argues in her Markedness Model (1998). For these learners, it would be a burden to have the use of Somali taken away from them, as it served as an ever-present communication tool. Beginning ELs require the use of CS simply to get by throughout the course of a class session. Furthermore, while it might appear that Beginning ELs had less CS for academic or task management
purposes than the Beginning-Intermediate class based on the graphs above, this is not true. The Beginning English class merely had more CS overall. While they used CS for a neutral purpose the most, CS for academic or task management purposes occurred over forty times.

Beginning-Intermediate, or WIDA Level Two ELs used CS for academic or task management purposes on forty different occasions, just slightly fewer than the Beginning class. Academic CS was one of the most common functions of CS in the intermediate class. Again, this is expected, given the research by Lin (2013), Setati et al. (2002), Üstünel (2016), and Uys (2010). For these learners, CS for the purpose of conveying anger was just as common as the academic CS. Anger is discussed as an important function of CS by many researchers (Bain & Yu, 2000; Myers-Scotton 1993; Ncoko et al., 2000; Uys, 2010). However, it is important to add that several of the anger examples discussed above are heated discussions of how to complete the task at hand. Take for example Bana and Musse who argue strongly against one another about whether the task is supposed to be group work or individual. The intermediate learners greatly benefitted from CS, as they used it to express questions about the task, as well as emotional responses toward one another.

The Intermediate-Advanced group of learners, which included two WIDA level three learners, two from WIDA level four, and one level six EL, did not show any instances of CS for academic purposes. This is surprising, and perhaps not what researchers would predict. On the other hand, Üstünel (2016) did argue that more advanced learners did not need CS to support their academic acquisition of the L2. In this study, the learners in this group used CS to express their identity as Somali and,
especially, Somali Muslims, rather than for academic purposes. This is an expected function of CS as reported by most of the researchers in this area (Auer et al., 2014; Ritchie & Bhatia, 2012; Heller, 1995; Kamwangamalu, 2010; Myers-Scotton, 1993, 1998, 1999, 2002; Ncoko et al., 2000; Slotte-Luttge, 2007; Unamuno, 2008; Uys, 2010). As validating students identities is an important way to connect and build trust in the classroom, I suggest maintaining open CS to allow students to bring all aspects of their identity to the classroom community.

One conclusion that struck me, as I reviewed the classroom recordings with my translator was how wrong my own intuitions about what students were saying in their L1 CS often were. During my observations when a recording was being made, I would look at a group of boys and make an assumption. They don’t look like they are discussing the content. I bet they’re off task. Then, when I went over the recording with the translator, I found out that what the students were actually saying was “How many pages am I writing?” “It’s six,” “Is it possible to work with you?” “No. Don’t work with me,” “And this one, I will teach you.” Instance after instance were remarkably on task, and I marked them as either task management or academic support in my functional coding. Even one moment where the boys seemed to be in heated discussion turned out to be an argument about whether the assignment was meant to be group work or independent work. Furthermore, there was a moment when a student told another student, “I’m going to swear!” and I missed that moment entirely. In another example, I stopped a student in the Level Two class from leaving the room, saying “Your teacher says you don’t have a pass,” as this student and I have had a relationship for a long time. She said something to me in Somali with what I thought was such anger, I believed it must have been a curse
word. Yet again, when I shared this bit of recording with my translator, he translated it as “Uh, what a bunch of lies.” The student was frustrated because she believed the teacher did give her permission to leave the class. She went on to explain to me in English that someone had sprayed perfume in the class, and she couldn’t breathe well.

My intuitions were wrong. The moments I thought students were misbehaving when using CS, were in fact, benign moments. If this could happen to me - a veteran teacher who has worked on affirming L1 for five years and who has read the research on the importance of CS in the classroom, a teacher who was at this very moment conducting classroom research to affirm the use of CS in the classroom – it could happen to other teachers. Furthermore, if it could happen to other teachers who had not read the research, what conclusions would they draw? Would they decide to ban the L1 from the classroom as a response? I bring up this topic to show that I, like others, am not above bias. Unconscious biases cloud my judgments of which students are off task and when. In fact students seemed to be using CS for academic purposes far more often than not.

So to myself and future teachers, I urge you: do not let your biases rule what language is used in the classroom. The L1 is an important tool for ELs to use, and this study, along with many others supports CS between English and the L1 in the high school classroom at all levels. I once had an administrator say to a teacher “Just give the newcomers a buddy. They can speak Somali with that buddy, but everyone else, the advanced students, they should speak English.” My response to this type of statement is a decisive no. While I found that beginning and intermediate ELs used CS more often to support their academics or navigate a task, that does not mean that advanced ELs should
not be allowed to use CS. Advanced learners used CS to express their identity, which is still a valuable goal that should be maintained.

**Limitations**

While this study provides a clear response to the question, how do multilingual Somali high school students code-switch in English-medium classes, the results are strongly tied to my own lens as a teacher. In order to take these results as valid, readers must trust my judgment that I have coded each of these unique instances of CS rightly. Individual instances of CS are debatable. One researcher may code something as “social distance,” while another researcher may code it as “power” or “anger.” In order to avoid this difficulty, I have tried to be as inclusive as possible, rating the examples as all of the functions that they fall under.

Additionally, while my goal was to be as unobtrusive in the classroom as possible, students did react to me in the classroom. They asked me questions about the content, asked me to remind them about why I was in the classroom, and even whispered to one another that I was recording them. It is clear that my presence had some effect on the recording, as these comments about me are present in the data. However, based on the common practice of teacher observation at my school, I believe that the student reactions to my presence were not unrealistic as to any given day in the classroom.

**Future Research**

I believe future researchers should continue delving into how CS of second language learners varies based on learners’ proficiency levels. Although this study attempts to discover the answer to the question how do the CS behaviors of these students change, depending on their placement on the WIDA English Language Development
continuum, it is impossible to draw complete conclusions after only one study. Further studies are needed to determine whether these findings are supported in other contexts, or only the limited context of my own school setting. I believe that more studies by teacher-researchers are always welcome in the field of ESL research. Teachers could use the same observation protocol and coding scheme as this study with their own classrooms and in their own school settings. For example, it would be interesting to determine whether ELs at the elementary or middle school level would use CS for the same functions as high school ELs.

Furthermore, I was able to only access two participants in some of the higher proficiency levels. In order to extend the findings of this study, researchers should increase the study size to include many more ELs at WIDA level three, four, five, and six. Then the field will be more prepared to give suggestions to the many teachers who support ELs at advanced levels.

Another option would be to observe the same ELs as they grow in their English language development over time. The field would especially benefit from such longitudinal studies. Another example of a longitudinal study that could bring a great deal of knowledge to the field could be conducted by teachers who use CS, change their CS practice, and then report what results from the change.

**Summary**

It is clear that CS serves a valuable purpose in the classrooms of multilingual Somali high school students. These learners use CS mainly to support their academic achievement on any given task, but there are some differences between proficiency levels. In addition to using CS for academic and task management purposes, beginning
ELs use CS because it is simply the most normal way to communicate. Intermediate ELs use CS mainly for academic purposes, but also to express anger in disagreements as well. Advanced ELs use CS most often to express their identity as distinctly Somali and Muslim. These are important findings because they go against the intuitions of myself and many teachers who may find themselves wondering if students are getting off task when they use their L1. Due to these findings, and the findings of many other studies, it is clear that ESL teachers and other advocates should continue the push for the inclusion of L1 in EL classrooms as well as for bilingual education. To this end, I will seek to share the findings of this study with my colleagues in education by creating workshops and professional development sessions based on this study. Another possibility would be sharing this study at an academic conference. Of course, this study is limited by my own judgments of why my students are CS, but this could be cancelled by future researchers continuing to add to the research foundation laid by many others. To all teachers, I ask this question, when it comes to CS, what is there to be afraid of? I urge all educators to incorporate CS into their classrooms.
Appendix A

The following chart is taken from WIDA consortium (2007, p. iii)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Definitions for the levels of English language proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners will process, understand, produce, or use:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Reaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- specialized or technical language reflective of the content area at grade level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- oral or written communication in English comparable to proficient English peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Bridging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- the technical language of the content areas;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays, or reports;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- oral or written language approaching comparability to that of English proficient peers when presented with grade level material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Expanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- specific and some technical language of the content areas;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related paragraphs;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with occasional visual and graphic support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- general and some specific language of the content areas;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that may impede the communication but retain much of its meaning when presented with oral or written, narrative or expository descriptions with occasional visual and graphic support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- general language related to the content areas;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- phrases or short sentences;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with visual and graphic support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Entering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- words, phrases, or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-questions, or statements with visual and graphic support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following charts are taken from WIDA consortium (2012, p. 6-7)

### Within sociocultural contexts for processing language...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Dimension</th>
<th>Sentence Dimension</th>
<th>Word/Phrase Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Linguistic Complexity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Language Forms and Conventions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Vocabulary Usage</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Level 6 - Reaching

English language learners will process a range of grade-appropriate oral or written language for a variety of academic purposes and audiences. Automaticity in language processing is reflected in the ability to identify and act on significant information from a variety of genres and registers. English language learners’ strategic competence in processing academic language facilitates their access to content area concepts and ideas.

At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, English language learners will process...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 5 Bridging</th>
<th>Level 4 Expanding</th>
<th>Level 3 Developing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rich descriptive discourse with complex sentences</td>
<td>Connected discourse with a variety of sentences</td>
<td>Discourse with a series of extended sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesive and organized, related ideas across content areas</td>
<td>Expanded related ideas characteristic of particular content areas</td>
<td>Related ideas specific to particular content areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 2 Developing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Level 1 Emerging</strong></td>
<td><strong>Level 1 Entering</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse with a series of extended sentences</td>
<td>Multiple related simple sentences</td>
<td>Single statements or questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related ideas specific to particular content areas</td>
<td>An idea with details</td>
<td>An idea within words, phrases, or chunks of language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 5 Bridging</strong></td>
<td><strong>Level 4 Expanding</strong></td>
<td><strong>Level 3 Developing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound and some complex grammatical constructions</td>
<td>Compound grammatical structures</td>
<td>Compound grammatical structures (e.g., commands, Wh-questions, declaratives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence patterns across content areas</td>
<td>Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas</td>
<td>Common social and instructional forms and patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 2 Emerging</strong></td>
<td><strong>Level 1 Entering</strong></td>
<td><strong>Level 1 Entering</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General content words and expressions, including cognates</td>
<td>General content-related words</td>
<td>General content-related words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas</td>
<td>Everyday social, instructional and some content-related words and phrases</td>
<td>Everyday social, instructional and some content-related words and phrases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- Levels 1-6 correspond to the WIDA Placement Scale.
- The charts illustrate the progression of language processing skills across Levels 1-6.
- The skills are organized by Discourse Dimension, Sentence Dimension, and Word/Phrase Dimension.
### Figure E: WIDA Performance Definitions Speaking and Writing, Grades K–12

**Within sociocultural contexts for language use...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Dimension</th>
<th>Sentence Dimension</th>
<th>Word/Phrase Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic Complexity</td>
<td>Language Forms and Conventions</td>
<td>Vocabulary Usage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Level 6 - Reaching**

- English language learners will use a range of grade-appropriate language for a variety of academic purposes and audiences. Agility in academic language use is reflected in oral fluency and automaticity in response, flexibility in adjusting to different registers and skillfulness in interpersonal interaction. English language learners’ strategic competence in academic language use facilitates their ability to store information and ideas with precision and sophistication for each content area.

As each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, English language learners will produce...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 5 Bridging</th>
<th>Level 4 Expanding</th>
<th>Level 3 Developing</th>
<th>Level 2 Emerging</th>
<th>Level 1 Entering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - Multiple, complex sentences  
  - Organized, cohesive, and coherent expression of ideas characteristic of particular content areas | - A variety of complex grammatical structures matched to purpose  
  - A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas | - Technical and abstract content-area language, including content-specific collocations  
  - Words and expressions with precise meaning across content areas | - Specific content language, including cognates and expressions  
  - Words or expressions with multiple meanings used across content areas | - General content-related words  
  - Everyday social and instructional words and expressions |
| - Short, expanded, and some complex sentences  
  - Organized expression of ideas with emerging cohesion characteristic of particular content areas | - Compound and complex grammatical structures  
  - Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas | - Specific and some technical content-area language  
  - Words and expressions with expressive meaning through use of collocations and idioms across content areas | - Phrases or short sentences  
  - Emerging expression of ideas | - Words, phrases, or chunks of language  
  - Single words used to represent ideas |
| - Short and some expanded sentences with emerging complexity  
  - Expanded expression of one idea or emerging expression of multiple related ideas across content areas | - Single and compound grammatical structures with occasional variation  
  - Sentence patterns across content areas | - Specific content language, including cognates and expressions  
  - Words or expressions with multiple meanings used across content areas | - Formulaic grammatical structures  
  - Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas | - Phrase-level grammatical structures  
  - Phrasal patterns associated with familiar social and instructional situations |
| - General content words and expressions  
  - Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas | - General content-related words  
  - Everyday social and instructional words and expressions |
Appendix B

List of functions:

a. Identity
b. Defiance/anger
c. Social distance
   i. Increase social distance
   ii. Decrease social distance
d. Metaphor,
   i. Quotation
   ii. Repetition
   iii. Humor
   iv. Other metaphorical purposes
e. Power
f. Task management
   i. Classroom management
   ii. Task management
g. Academic support
h. Ease of lexical recall
i. Change in addressee
j. Neutrality
k. Exploration
l. Other reasons.
Coping scheme Original:

## Thesis data

### Which Class Session

- Pretest
- Level 1.5
- Level 2
- Level 3+

### Timestamp

Your answer

### Content of utterance

Your answer

### Speaker Pseudonym

Your answer

### Direction

- Teacher to student
- Teacher to class
- Teacher to small group
- Student to group
- Student to student
- Student to class
- Student to teacher
Markedness

- Unmarked
- Marked
- Exploratory

Function

- Identity
- Defiance/Anger
- Increase Distance
- Decrease Distance
- Quotation
- Repetition
- Humor
- Other Metaphor
- Power
- Classroom management
- Task management
- Academic support
- Ease of lexical recall
- Change in addressee
- Neutrality
- Exploration
- Other:
Thesis Data

Which Class Session
- Level 1.5
- Level 2
- Level 3+

Timestamp
Your answer

Content of utterance
Your answer

Speaker pseudonym
Your answer

Direction
- Student to small group
- Student to student
- Student to class
- Student to teacher
Function

☐ Identity

☐ Muslim Identity

☐ Defiance/Anger

☐ Social distance (Increase, Decrease)

☐ Metaphor (Quotation, Repetition, Humor, Other)

☐ Power

☐ Task management

☐ Academic support

☐ Ease of lexical recall

☐ Change in addressee

☐ Neutrality

☐ Exploration

☐ Other:
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doi:10.1080/13670050008667709


