

# **Impact of Code Switching in the Teaching and Learning in Multilingual French Classrooms at CEBELAE**

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## **Résumé**

*Cet article examine le rôle de l'alternance codique dans la promotion ou l'exacerbation des fractures socioculturelles dans l'enseignement du français langue étrangère (FLE) dans les classes multilingues du CEBELAE (Centre Béninois des Langues Étrangères). En utilisant une approche qualitative d'étude de cas, la recherche explore comment la pratique de l'alternance entre le français et l'anglais pendant l'enseignement a un impact sur l'apprentissage de la langue française, la dynamique de classe, la négociation de l'identité et l'accès au savoir des apprenants. Les résultats révèlent que si l'alternance codique peut être une ressource pédagogique, elle peut aussi renforcer les hiérarchies culturelles et les inégalités linguistiques existantes, en particulier dans des contextes ethnolinguistiques diversifiés. L'étude appelle à une approche pédagogique plus réfléchie et plus inclusive de la gestion de la diversité linguistique dans l'enseignement du FLE.*

**Mots-clés :** *alternance codique, fossés socioculturels, classes multilingues, français langue étrangère, diversité linguistique.*

## **Abstract**

*This paper examines the role of code-switching in fostering or exacerbating socio-cultural divides in the teaching of French a Foreign Language (FFL) in multilingual classrooms at CEBELAE (Centre Beninois des Langues Étrangères). Using a qualitative case study approach, the research explores how the practice of alternating between French and English language during instruction impacts learners' language learning, classroom dynamics,*

*identity negotiation, and access to knowledge. The findings reveal that while code-switching can be a pedagogical resource, it may also reinforce existing cultural hierarchies and linguistic inequalities, especially in settings with diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds. The study calls for a more reflective and inclusive pedagogical approach to managing linguistic diversity in FFL education.*

**Keywords:** *code-switching, socio-cultural divides, multilingual classrooms, French as a Foreign Language, linguistic diversity.*

## Introduction

Language plays a fundamental role in shaping communication, learning, and social interactions in educational settings. In multilingual classrooms, this role is magnified, as multiple languages coexist, influencing both the cognitive development of students and the social dynamics within the classroom. The use of language is not just a communicative tool; it is deeply intertwined with identity, power, and social inclusion or exclusion. For learners in such contexts, the languages they speak and the languages they learn are not just vehicles for education they are markers of belonging or marginalization. This is particularly relevant in the case of the Centre Béninois de Langues Étrangères (CEBELAE), a language institution in Benin that teaches both French and English to learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

CEBELAE is a microcosm of linguistic diversity. Learners come from a variety of linguistic traditions such as English, Arabic, Spanish, and Turkish. These diverse backgrounds offer rich opportunities for linguistic exchange and cross-cultural understanding, but they also pose challenges for teachers and learners alike. One such challenge is the practice of code-switching (alternating between languages during communication). While code-switching can be a useful pedagogical tool to enhance understanding, it also raises significant concerns about inclusion, power dynamics, and the reinforcement of socio-cultural divides within the classroom.

In multilingual environments like CEBELAE, code-switching between French and English language can have both positive and negative effects on classroom dynamics. On the one hand, it may serve as a bridge between learners of different linguistic backgrounds, promoting understanding and fostering a sense of community. On the other hand, it can unintentionally marginalize learners whose languages are not frequently used in the classroom, perpetuating feelings of exclusion and reinforcing cultural hierarchies. These tensions can create significant barriers to effective learning, as learners may feel disconnected from the learning process or reluctant to participate in class discussions.

This study seeks to explore how code-switching is practiced in multilingual French as a Foreign Language (FFL) classroom at CEBELAE and how it impacts sociocultural divides. By examining how language use in the classrooms intersects with identity negotiation, participation, and access to knowledge, this paper aims to highlight the challenges and opportunities posed by code-switching in such contexts. Ultimately, the study seeks to inform more inclusive and equitable teaching practices that recognize and embrace the linguistic diversity of the classroom while minimizing social divisions.

The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. investigate the practices of code-switching in FFL classrooms at CEBELAE
2. identify the reasons for using code-switching in FFL classrooms at CEBELAE
3. examine how code switching affects the participation, engagement and identity negotiation of learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

## **2. Literature review**

Code-switching in classroom contexts seems to be mostly hindered by its uniqueness. Code-switching is the employment of several languages throughout one speech. Code-switching is recurring issues in multilingual communities, according to Imran and Ain (2019), they become disruptive when it occurs often in academic contexts. Kuma et al. (2021), backed the perspective by adding that the following variances could affect students' learning and dedication: poor appreciation, rejection from non-speakers, irregular support, and limited language development. Inappropriate evaluation and inadequate foundation for good condition. They also noted that these problems might be addressed by using effective institutional diversity and inclusion strategies and efforts. Lin (2013) supported that beginners in school regularly practise code-switching for a number of reasons that reinforces the perspectives. Beginners come from many backgrounds and speak different languages; some may desire to learn in their first language or the language in which they are most competent. (Imran et al., 2019) suggested that in an academic environment code switching and code mixing might also be simplified. Some concepts that students come upon in their first languages might not have a straight translation. Including relevant information allows individuals to employ code switching to cover in the blanks in their self-portraits.

Guiré (2014) posited that code-switching can help to clarify a point, support a request, promote camaraderie and social character, lower stress, and provide humour to a discourse. Though it might be a useful tool for effective classroom communication, code-switching is not usually an indicator of language acquisition problems. Studies show that language learners often fail to discover the suitable vocabulary or grammatical norms while switching languages. Guiré (2014) added that in Burkina Faso code switching has been only

officialised in bilingual education but teachers still ignore its use because the official instructions that approved the use of code switching, lack the significant orientation on how code switching should be employed. Komaklo (2025) posits that code switching and code mixing are helpful strategies for navigating difficult linguistic and cultural environments because language is always changing to meet the demands of society.

Consequently, there is more likelihood of errors, doubts, and confused communication. Code-switching in various ways connected with language acquisition can influence both the learning and use of languages. Shahid, Gurmani, and Kalhor's (2023) findings state that Code switching among language learners are influenced by social and friendly variables and then represents a motivator for students to engage in active language learning. Gumperz (1982) also noted that frequent approaches for learners to interact with classmates who speak the same language as them or to express their cultural identity include code-switching. According to Sarr (2020), code switching is not a marker of linguistic deficiency, but rather a sign of plurilingual competence and adaptability in which hybridization enables speakers to navigate between multiple cultural identities and linguistic repertoires in daily life. Similarly, Essizewa (2014) analysed Kabiye–Ewe Code Switching, emphasizing the bilingual speaker's cognitive flexibility to switch languages and access lexical items as needed.

Heller (2007) contends that unfavourable social views and cultural restrictions can drive students to limit their code-switching attitude. According to him appreciating the challenges language students encounter in trying to switch between languages is fundamental. This kind of practice has tremendous impacts on education. Teachers of languages should be aware of the elements included into these activities to support their understudies.

From past studies, code-switching is confusing linguistic peculiarity that advanced students need to learn about and observe. According to Moustapha Babalola (2025), code switching is triggered by cognitive load of lower-level learners in translation whereas intermediate learners try to naturally seek words equivalence between languages. Research on the topic indicates that findings addressing students' worries about code switching will help to improve communication, increase academic performance, and promote linguistic inclusiveness on classrooms. By means of efficient policies and programs, educational institutions can create an environment that welcomes students with different language backgrounds, motivates them to establish meaningful relationships with one another, and hence improves the educational prospects open to all students. According to Youssef (2001) more study and instructional interventions are required to identify and solve language learners' challenges with code-switching. García (2009) argued that language teaching depends on a knowledge of code-switching. These strategies reflect the normal language use of bilinguals; hence teachers can use them to improve instruction. Teachers may build more inclusive and successful learning environments by acknowledging and validating students' language backgrounds.

Code-switching are no more seen in today's multilingual classrooms as simply mistakes or indicators of language misunderstanding. Rather, they are becoming recognised as useful instruments teachers and students utilise to increase the efficiency of their education. Once criticised, these techniques are today praised for allowing learners to understand challenging ideas, feel more comfortable, and even become more competent in speaking many languages. Moustapha Babalola & Babalola (2018) demonstrated how code-switching and translation function pedagogically in Beninese educational settings. Their research findings challenge traditional monolingual approaches,

revealing that fluid language use serves as a strategic, culturally embedded tool that enhances learning, interaction, and identity in foreign languages classrooms. Actually, code-switching can be rather helpful when done purposefully and carefully in enhancing student knowledge as well as instructional quality.

Code-switching in education has one of the main advantages since it clarifies difficult or new concepts for the students. To clarify a difficult grammatical rule, describe new terminology, or link abstract ideas to something familiar, teachers can turn to a language learners know better. Macaro (2009) states that this is about making learning more accessible rather than about decreasing standards. In a second language, students also use their first language to make sense of what they are learning, therefore facilitating a more meaningful information processing mechanism. Other studies by Arthur and Martin (2006) found that teachers frequently switch languages to assist in the understanding of technical courses including science and maths. Such switching also helps students pay closer attention and think more deeply about language, so demonstrating that code switching are far more than just fast fixes, in as much as they are effective teaching strategies.

Apart from improving understanding, code Switching assist with the emotional and social aspects of education. Learners in schools where many languages and cultures coexist may occasionally feel lost or disconnected. On the other hand, a more friendly and courteous environment results from teachers letting learners use their first language. Based on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, it is abundantly evident that language serves not only as a means of communication but also helps learners and teachers feel included and connect with each other. García and Wei (2014) contend that including several languages in the classroom helps students feel like they belong and have identity. Code-switching between the teacher and learners, according to Moodley (2007), helped foster trust and

create a more intimate classroom. Setati (2005) also discovered that students felt more confidence when their languages were valued in school. These results show that code switching can help build classrooms where students feel recognised and valued, hence promoting diversity.

For practical classroom management, teachers also employ code switching. It is about keeping the class going smoothly, not only about simplifying content for understanding. Obviously, one should also take into account the challenges that arise. Not everyone feels that code-switching is always beneficial. Using the L1 too extensively worries some scholars about hindering learners access to the language they are seeking to acquire. If teachers rely too much on switching, Turnbull and Arnett (2002) propose that learners might not get adequate foreign language practice. Similar issues are raised by Macaro (2005), who notes that excessive code-switching could confuse students or lower their confidence in speaking the target language. Strict language rules, according to Macaro (2009), can unintentionally exclude teachers and students depending on these techniques to make learning effective.

Scholars have proposed more careful classroom uses for code switching in order to balance the advantages and risks. Macaro (2009) discusses the concept of "optimal use", in which switching is done with a defined goal in mind like assisting with a challenging issue or fostering classroom rapport. García and Wei (2014) meanwhile suggest a more flexible and open approach known as translanguaging. Under this perspective, every student's language ability is a tool from the same toolkit; thus, teachers can assist them to apply what they know to understand, communicate, and develop. In classes where students come from many origins and speak several languages, this method is particularly helpful. The ultimate aim is not to forbid code-switching or support it mindlessly but rather to use it deliberately as a strategic component of instruction honouring

students' linguistic reality. Based on this existing literature, the study adopts Vygotsky 'sociocultural theory to understand better the phenomenon of code switching in multilingual French classrooms at CEBELAE.

### **3. Clarification of theoretical frameworks**

This study draws on two complementary theoretical perspectives: Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Long's interaction hypothesis in order to critically investigate the impact of code-switching in multilingual French classrooms at CEBELAE. These frameworks are not only foundational in foreign language education research, but they are also particularly relevant to understanding the complex dynamics of teaching and learning in multilingual and multicultural environments.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory places social interaction and cultural context at the heart of cognitive development, including language learning. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning occurs most effectively through interaction with more knowledgeable others (teachers or peers), particularly within what he termed the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the space between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with support.

In multilingual classrooms at CEBELAE, learners often draw on multiple linguistic resources to access and process new content. Code-switching, in this context, becomes a socio-cognitive tool that enables students to bridge the gap between their current level of understanding and the target language outcomes.

Furthermore, Vygotsky emphasizes the cultural embeddedness of cognition. CEBELAE's classrooms are culturally and linguistically diverse, and learners bring their first languages and cultural frameworks into the learning process.

Code-switching serves as a mechanism for negotiating meaning, maintaining cultural identity, and creating an inclusive classroom culture where all languages are valued. This directly supports Vygotsky's claim that learning is not a solitary cognitive activity, but rather a collaborative, culturally situated practice.

While Vygotsky's theory explains the social and cultural foundations of language learning, Long's (1983, 1996) Interaction Hypothesis provides a more linguistically oriented framework that highlights the role of interaction in developing language proficiency. According to Long, negotiation of meaning during interaction is crucial for second language acquisition (SLA). When learners face communication breakdowns, they modify their speech, ask questions, and seek clarification; in short, processes that make input more comprehensible and encourage output. These interactional adjustments facilitate learning.

In CEBELAE's multilingual French classrooms, code-switching often emerges during such negotiation of meaning. Teachers may switch to a language shared with students to provide immediate clarification, while students may switch to their first language to seek assistance from peers. These moments of code-switching reflect the interactive scaffolding that Long identifies as essential to language development.

Additionally, code-switching can lower learners' affective filters a concept aligned with Long's concern for creating conditions that support interaction. By allowing students to use languages they are more comfortable with, code-switching reduces anxiety, increases participation, and sustains engagement, especially when learners are struggling with complex French input. This dynamic reinforces the hypothesis that interaction not just exposure to input, is fundamental to acquisition.

#### **4. Methods of the study**

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach, which is particularly well-suited to exploring the nuanced and context-dependent phenomenon of code-switching in multilingual French classrooms at CEBELAE. Given the complexity of classroom interactions, language practices, and sociocultural dynamics, a qualitative design allows for a deep, interpretive understanding of how code-switching influences teaching, learning, and social relations among learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

The choice of a case study is further justified by the need to investigate this phenomenon within its real-life educational context. CEBELAE represents a rich multilingual environment where French, English, and other local or foreign languages intersect in daily classroom interactions. A case study allows for an in-depth exploration of this particular setting without attempting to generalize beyond it, thereby preserving the authenticity of the findings and the voices of participants.

Data collection through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, enables the triangulation of perspectives from teachers and learners, capturing both the instructional strategies employed and the learners' subjective experiences. This multi-source data strengthens the credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

Ultimately, this methodological approach is aligned with the research goal of uncovering both the pedagogical benefits and the socio-cultural risks of code-switching. It provides a comprehensive and context-sensitive lens through which to analyse the educational and social implications of language use in multilingual FFL classrooms.

The study involves 28 FFL learners and 8 FFL teachers at CEBELAE. The learners' participants include Ghanaians, Nigerians, Chadians and Equatoguineans with backgrounds in English, Arabic and Spanish. The teachers are experienced French language teachers who regularly use code-switching or avoid code switching in their teaching practices. The researcher observed 15 French language classes, focusing on instances of code-switching and analysing the patterns of language use by both learners and teachers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 28 learners and 8 teachers. The interviews explored students' experiences with code-switching, their perceptions of linguistic inclusion or exclusion, and their views on the role of language in shaping classroom participation.

From classroom observations and interviews, thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns and themes in the data related to code-switching practices, classroom interaction, and socio-cultural dynamics in order ensure the reliability and validity of the findings.

The interview questions are presented as follow:

a) Do you code-switch in classroom? why?

*Faites-vous de l'alternance codique en classe ? Pourquoi?*

b) Why do you use code-switching in the classrooms?

*Pourquoi utilisez-vous l'alternance codique en classe ?*

c) What are the impacts of code switching in French language education?

*Quels sont les impacts de l'alternance codique dans l'enseignement du français ?*

d) Do you encourage the use of code-switching in classroom situations? Why?

*Encouragez-vous l'usage de l'alternance codique en situation de classe ? Pourquoi?*

## 5. Findings

The findings of this study are drawn from classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with learners and teachers. These data sources provide insight into the role of code-switching in multilingual FFL classrooms, particularly in terms of its effect on classroom interactions, language participation, and students' identity negotiation. The following key themes emerged from the analysis of the data:

### ***5.1. Practices of code-switching and classroom interaction***

Classroom observations revealed that code-switching was a frequent occurrence in FFL lessons at CEBELAE, especially when beginners (A1 level learners) had difficulty understanding French or when teachers sought to ensure comprehension. The practice of code-switching at CEBELAE is pervasive, systematic, and contextually driven, demonstrating their central role in multilingual classroom dynamics rather than being incidental occurrences. Teachers consciously employ CS, particularly in beginner and elementary classes, as a pedagogical scaffold to ensure comprehension, reduce cognitive strain, and maintain classroom participation. For instance, during an English class, a teacher stated: *“Now, work in pairs to complete the exercise. Travaillez en binômes, s’il vous plaît.”* This deliberate code switching ensured that instructions were understood by learners, enabling effective classroom management and participation. Learners also engaged actively in code switching practices. For example, a learner in a French class asked: *“Teacher, does ‘apporter’ mean ‘to bring’ or ‘to take’?”* Here, the learner code-switched to clarify lexical nuances, demonstrating learner-initiated scaffolding to negotiate meaning. Code-switching allowed for smoother communication between learners and teachers, particularly when learners faced

linguistic barriers in French. Since anglophones students are the majority, teachers would often switch to English to clarify points or answer student questions, ensuring that students understood key concepts. For example, a teacher in a French class remarked:

*“On utilise l'imparfait pour les actions habituelles. It's like saying 'used to' in English.”*

Learners similarly engage in code switching to clarify meanings and sustain conversation flow, as one learner stated from the interview conducted: *“Sometimes I don't know the word in French, so I use English to explain to my friends.”* This interaction facilitates comprehensible input, aiding language acquisition.

However, the use of English language created a dynamic where students who did not speak English, particularly students from Chad and Equatorial Guinea, felt excluded from these interactions. For example, a Chadian student expressed frustration during an observation when the teacher switched to English to explain a grammatical point, leaving him unable to follow the discussion. This sense of exclusion was amplified when Anglophones students used English to discuss points amongst themselves during group activities, further marginalizing minority linguistic group.

## ***5.2. Reasons for using code switching in FFL classrooms at CEBELAE***

The reasons for Code switching among teachers and learners are diverse, rooted in cognitive, pragmatic, affective, and social needs. Code switching is primarily used to bridge comprehension gaps when learners encounter complex grammatical structures or unfamiliar vocabulary. For example,

from the classroom observation, a teacher in a French class remarked:

*“On utilise l'imparfait pour les actions habituelles. It's like saying 'used to' in English.”*

This explanation reduces extraneous cognitive load allowing learners to process new grammatical structures without overwhelming their working memory.

Learners similarly engage in CS/CM to clarify meanings and sustain conversation flow, as one student stated during the interview: *“Sometimes I don't know the word in French, so I use English to explain to my friends.”* This interactional attitude facilitates comprehensible input, and help the learner acquire quickly French language.

Code switching also serve to reduce anxiety and create a supportive classroom environment. Teachers use phrases like: *“Take your time, ça va aller.”*

### ***5.3. Impacts of code switching in FFL classrooms at CEBELAE***

The impacts of CS/CM are predominantly positive while also revealing complexities that require pedagogical management. Code switching ensures learners understand complex lessons and vocabulary. As Teacher 6 (FLE) explained:

*“At certain stage of my classes, my foreign students have trouble grasping the essential notion of the past tense... I quickly code switch or code mix to make them better understand.”*

Code switching increases learners' confidence to participate, particularly for beginners. One learner noted: *“It helps me express my ideas clearly.”*

Teachers noted that code switching helps reduce fear of making mistakes, with Teacher 3 (FLE) stating: *“It leads to the ability to be reassured, and that releases fear.”*

Teachers expressed concerns that excessive code-switching leads to learner dependency on L1, hindering L2 immersion. Teacher 1 (FLE) stated: *“When we start to exploit code-switching and code mixing, there are some students who don't want to force themselves... it will compromise students' French proficiency.”*

In multilingual FFL classroom, the dominance of English in code switching practices marginalizes Arabic and Spanish speakers, creating sociolinguistic tensions. Teacher 5 (FLE) noted: *“When Nigerians use the code-switching... the learners who don't speak English are frustrated and feel marginalized.”*

This shows that based on language identity and power code switching can reflect and reinforce power dynamics if not managed sensitively.

Power dynamics in the classroom are clearly influenced by the use of different languages. English is the dominant language in the classroom, and learners who speak this language had greater access to information, participation, and recognition. This created a power imbalance, with learners who speak languages such as Arabic and Spanish being left out of many classroom discussions. Teachers, while often using code-switching to ensure understanding, seem to favour the use of English for explanations, as these has been observed in the majority of the FFL classes.

Classroom observation showed that this power dynamic emerged during a group activity, where the group of students who speak English dominated the conversation, while non-

English-speaking learners remain silent or struggled to contribute meaningfully. As such, the language of instruction (French) appeared secondary to the informal, but powerful, linguistic practices of the classroom.

## **6. Discussion**

The findings of this study underscore the complex relationship between code-switching, socio-cultural divides, and classroom dynamics in multilingual educational contexts. While code-switching has the potential to serve as a useful pedagogical tool, promoting understanding and facilitating communication in linguistically diverse classrooms, it also has the potential to reinforce socio-cultural divides when not managed inclusively.

Concerning the practices of code-switching the findings revealed that code-switching is systematically practiced within French classrooms at CEBELAE. reflecting clear differences between teachers and learners. Teachers primarily engage in code-switching as a deliberate instructional tool to clarify complex grammatical concepts, manage cognitive load, and maintain classroom control, especially in beginner and lower-intermediate classes. Learners engage in using it to negotiate meaning, seek clarification, and sustain participation during interactions. This aligns with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, highlighting the role of Code switching as a scaffolding tool to maintain the flow of communication and negotiate meaning.

Talking about the reasons for using code-switching teachers and learners identified clear cognitive and communicative reasons for employing Code switching in the classroom. Teachers used code-switching to scaffold learners' understanding, clarify difficult vocabulary and grammar, reduce cognitive overload, and manage learners' anxiety. Learners used code-switching to overcome vocabulary limitations, express ideas clearly, confirm understanding during tasks, and maintain

active participation without fear of making mistakes. These motivations align with cognitive theories such as Sweller's cognitive load theory, which emphasises reducing extraneous cognitive load to facilitate learning, and with affective dimensions of learning, aligning with Peace Linguistics principles that support learners' emotional well-being.

As far as the impacts of code switching is concerned, the study revealed that the impacts of code-switching were found to be largely positive only in bilingual classrooms. In bilingual context, code-switching significantly enhanced learners' comprehension, motivation, participation, and confidence in using the target language. In that context learners reported that code-switching allowed them to understand complex content, reduced anxiety, and encouraged active participation. Teachers observed that the use of code-switching enabled them to maintain lesson flow and ensure that learners did not fall behind due to language barriers in bilingual classrooms. However, the study also identified the negative impacts of code switching regarding potential dependency on L1, which could limit learners' target language immersion if not managed with a gradual reduction strategy. The findings align with Swain's output hypothesis, indicating that learners use code-switching to produce meaningful output and negotiate complex ideas, and with Long's Interaction Hypothesis, supporting learners' communicative engagement. The data thus confirm the hypothesis that code-switching significantly impact learners' French language acquisition and participation in bilingual way. In addition, code-switching is predominantly used by English speaking learners in which they gain more access to learning opportunities, while learners from minority linguistic backgrounds, such as Arabic and Spanish, speakers feel marginalized. This finding aligns with Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital, where languages associated with higher social

prestige (English speaking learners) hold more power in shaping learners' participation and access to knowledge.

## **7. Implications for pedagogical practice**

The findings of this study suggest that educators at CEBELAE and in similar multilingual contexts must adopt more inclusive teaching strategies that recognize and validate the linguistic diversity of their students. While code-switching can be an effective tool for facilitating communication, it must be used in a way that ensures all students, regardless of their linguistic background, have equal access to learning opportunities. Translanguaging, which encourages students to draw on their entire linguistic repertoire, could be an effective pedagogical strategy to promote inclusivity and mitigate socio-cultural divides. By embracing the linguistic resources that students bring to the classroom, teachers can create a more equitable learning environment that fosters greater participation and engagement from all students.

## **Conclusion**

This study has highlighted the complex and dualistic nature of code-switching in the context of multilingual French as a Foreign Language (FFL) classroom at CEBELAE. While code-switching emerges as a powerful pedagogical strategy to enhance comprehension, mediate meaning, and support learner engagement, it also carries the potential to deepen socio-cultural divides when not applied thoughtfully. The research demonstrates that the strategic use of both French and English can facilitate access to knowledge, particularly for learners from anglophone backgrounds. However, this same practice may marginalize students whose linguistic repertoires are less represented, thereby reinforcing cultural and linguistic hierarchies within the classroom.

The findings call for a critical re-evaluation of language use in FFL pedagogy, emphasizing the need for inclusive and reflective teaching practices that acknowledge and value the full spectrum of learners' linguistic identities. Educators must move beyond seeing code-switching solely as a functional tool and consider its broader social implications. Ultimately, managing linguistic diversity in multilingual classrooms demands not only pedagogical sensitivity but also a commitment to equity, ensuring that language choices support, rather than undermine, the inclusive goals of education.

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