



## The Lived Experiences of Non-Thai Teachers in Code-Switching at Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University

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**Abstract**

This study investigates the lived experiences of non-Thai teachers' code-switching in delivering their English lessons in EFL classrooms. The study employed a qualitative approach, specifically phenomenology. The teachers were interviewed using semi-structured interview questions. The responses were transcribed and analyzed using Colaizzi's seven-step descriptive phenomenological data analysis approach. The findings of this study showed that teachers' experiences of code-switching were a helpful, practical, and essential tool to foster active participation from the students. The teachers' reasons for utilizing code-switching are to relieve students' anxiety and amplify socialization, word power, understanding of grammar, and instruction. Furthermore, the study also emphasizes that excessive use of code-switching can hinder the student's learning of the target language. Additionally, the teachers face a challenge when they code-switch due to the tone-sensitive nature of the Thai language. Thus, it is suggested that one must be at least conversational in the students' language to use code-switching effectively. It is concluded in this study that teachers should not cease using code-switching since it helps students grasp complex ideas and allows them to be engaged in the classroom.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Being an expatriate in Thailand and a teacher, the researcher has seen a frequent occurrence when individuals, mainly tourists, often switch from English to Thai, particularly while purchasing from Thai vendors. Foreigners inquire about the price of an item when they want to buy at the market. Nevertheless, when the vendor becomes perplexed or fails to comprehend the inquiry in English, tourists often resort to speaking in Thai by using the phrase "Aneeraka, how much?" to ensure mutual understanding with the seller. This strategy enables foreign visitors to quickly and directly address their issues and get rapid assistance from the Thai merchant. The phenomenon of language alternation is often referred to as code-switching. According to Johansson (2013), code-switching is the switch

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between two different languages or dialects occurring in the same sentence or discourse, intentional or unintentional. Also, code-switching occurs in places where people frequently use more than one language, such as in EFL classrooms when students have limited proficiency in the target language. Therefore, the practice of alternating between the target language and the student's language in the school has been a subject of discussion among professionals over its potential benefits or drawbacks.

Jingxia (2010) pointed out that when there is excessive code-switching, students' ability to fulfill the function of English will be damaged, unlike in classrooms with frequent use of English. Besides, the adverse effects of code-switching affect students and teachers. Garcines et al. (2017) from Agusan del Sur State College of Agriculture and Technology in the Philippines pointed out that code-switching usually affects teachers' fluency in English.

On the other hand, Promnath and Tayjasant (2016) revealed that teachers considered code-switching in the classroom a necessity, suggesting that students' mother tongue can benefit both teachers and learners. The benefits of code-switching include alleviating stress, enabling emotional expression, encouraging effective classroom management, and instilling morals and ethics. Likewise, Patmasari et al. (2022) stressed that teachers use code-switching to achieve positive teaching and learning outcomes. When students have difficulty understanding what is being discussed, teachers use code-switching to make the subject more accessible and ensure understanding among the students.

In Thailand, studies on code-switching, especially on the views of Non-Thai EFL teachers' use of the Thai language to learn the target language, are limited. This scenario opens the window of opportunity for the researcher to venture into this uncharted area of language research. As part of the Language Institute that offers EFL courses to undergraduate students at a Thai University, the researcher considers it vital to focus on this particular case evident in EFL classes. Hence, the researcher looks into this case to identify the non-Thai-speaking teachers' reasons for employing code-switching and their experiences of this approach in teaching English to clarify this issue. This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the non-Thai speaking teachers' experiences with the use of code-switching?
2. What were the reasons for non-Thai speaking teachers when switching from English to the Thai language?
3. What are the challenges faced by non-Thai-speaking teachers when switching from English to the Thai language?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Teachers' Experiences of Code-Switching**

Some researchers view the use of code-switching in a positive light, claiming that it has the potential to serve as an effective pedagogical tool for L2 learning. For instance, May May and Abdul Aziz (2020) found that ESL teachers, in this case, displayed impartial or ambiguous attitudes towards implementing code-switching. The role of language philosophy in learning the English language was seen to facilitate approaching a better understanding of the subject. They maintained code-switching and found the practice to aid in understanding instructions, improving task completion. It means that code-switching is an effective tool for language learning. In addition, Krashen (1982) stressed that learners need exposure to comprehensible information to acquire the language effectively. In other words, learners must understand the material presented to complete their tasks and be driven to keep learning.

Meanwhile, Ooi's (2017) study also revealed that teachers supported teaching code-switching to low-proficiency students but not high-proficiency students. This principle correlates with İstifci

(2019), who notes that one of the respondents' answers was that code-switching may be beneficial when dealing with lower-level groups. As much as possible, L1 use should be avoided. Yet the fact that L1 might be used wherever needed makes both the teacher and the students feel more at ease, especially in lower-level groups. On the other hand, Phuong (2018) determined that instructors choose to code-switch since, without it, pupils may have difficulties understanding important details given to them.

Furthermore, code-switching is essential for facilitating students' comprehension of challenging terminology and complex grammatical constructions, efficiently managing the classroom, and delivering feedback. Moreover, according to Olivera's (2021) research, code-switching benefits learners' confidence and involvement in English classrooms. This emphasizes teachers' important role in actively inspiring students to participate in class discussions.

Although there is a generally favorable outlook on using code-switching (CS), negative perceptions are associated with its implementation. According to an interview conducted by Phuong (2018), a teacher revealed that students could not focus solely on listening when the teacher spoke in English. Instead, they would shift their attention to the Vietnamese translation. Selamat (2014), as cited by May May & Abdul Aziz (2020), contends that code-switching impedes learners' autonomous development. This constraint arises from the students' reliance on teachers to elucidate English vocabulary and phrases in their mother tongue, restricting their capacity to enhance comprehension independently.

## **2.2. Functions of Code-Switching in EFL Classrooms**

Code-switching, a linguistic phenomenon, serves multiple purposes in language education. Code-switching is a valuable tool that students can use to overcome communication barriers. According to Altun (2021), teachers should use code-switching to maintain conversations with students, promoting efficient communication and aiding in acquiring knowledge. In addition, code-switching facilitates communication in the language classroom and establishes a basis for employing appropriate language expressions. Teachers use code-switching to assist students in comprehending language mechanics, thereby fostering understanding and improving proficiency in the second language. Hussein et al. (2020) identified seven distinct purposes of code-switching in their study. These include expressing emotions, providing instructions, overcoming language difficulties, reinforcing information, facilitating translation, transitioning between topics, and managing classroom dynamics.

Furthermore, Ma (2019) suggests that teachers use code-switching for pedagogical and social reasons. Moreover, the author contends that it is employed to regulate classroom management. In addition, as stated by Nurhamidah et al. (2018), the teacher aimed to deliver explicit guidance and instructions to students in both English and Indonesian languages. At first, the teacher would present the concept in English and provide detailed instructions using illustrative examples in Indonesian. However, the process becomes more challenging when students fail to grasp the methods or purpose of the work. Despite using Indonesian, the teacher was ultimately prompted to provide instructions in English at specific points.

Therefore, teachers may have various reasons for code-switching in their student interactions. Thus, this research also aims to investigate the reasons behind code-switching among non-Thai-speaking teachers in an English Foreign Language (EFL) Thai classroom.

## **2.3. Teachers' Challenges on Code-Switching**

In most academic research, researchers focus on studying the viewpoints of teachers who have the same native language as their students when it comes to code-switching. Nevertheless, an absence of research explores the views of teachers who lack proficiency in the same language as their students. In a study by Siboro et al. (2022), researchers investigated the encounters of indigenous English teachers

employing CS in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting in West Borneo. Various challenges encountered by these educators were uncovered. First and foremost, their students' lack of fluency in their first language hampers effective communication.

Furthermore, they encounter challenges in accurately conveying the intended meanings of words. Finally, these educators acknowledged their inadequate mastery of their students' mother tongue, which posed difficulties in facilitating comprehension of particular ideas or concepts. In contrast to this study, Alshehri (2017) conducted research in Saudi Arabia, where one of the teachers lacked proficiency in Arabic. Alternatively, this teacher sought help from the students. She enlisted students who were skilled in English to translate the words into Arabic during vocabulary lessons. This approach provides notable benefits compared to the teacher's direct translation, as it minimizes the likelihood of inaccuracies when translating into the students' mother tongue. Zimmerman (2007, as cited in Zimmerman, 2020) explained that native teachers may use different forms of language, which could potentially cause more confusion among students.

Furthermore, Yiakoumetti (2022) investigated the viewpoints of indigenous Chinese educators on the utilization of language in heritage-language instruction in the United Kingdom, where English-speaking students are acquiring Mandarin Chinese. The teachers displayed an optimistic perspective regarding using the student's native language, acknowledging its advantageous role in learning. Nevertheless, they also needed more confidence about their linguistic aptitude, considering their restricted command of the English language. As a result, they felt inadequately equipped to teach Mandarin as an ethnic language in an effective manner. Within the same study, the researcher suggested utilizing the teachers' comprehension of the similarities and differences between the first language (L1) and the second language (L2). This recognition of knowledge could aid both teachers and students in understanding and utilizing the complete range of linguistic variations that are accessible.

Nevertheless, non-Thai-speaking teachers may face difficulties in acquiring proficiency in Thai tones. Burnham et al. (2014) emphasize that central Thailand has five tones, consisting of two dynamic tones and three static tones. In central Thailand, for instance, there are five tones: rising, falling, high, mid, and low. Each tone can completely change the meaning of a word. For example, the rising tone [kha:] means "leg," while the falling tone [kha:] means "to kill." On top of that, there are three static tones, each with its meaning. [kha:] in a high tone signifies "to trade," [kha:] in a mid-tone means "to be stuck," and [kha:] in a low tone represents "galangal," a root spice. Research by Kaan et al. (2008) suggests that speakers of non-tone languages, like English, may struggle to pick up on tone contrasts and may not be as sensitive to the unique dimensions of fundamental frequency (F0) and pitch as speakers of tonal languages. This adds another layer of complexity for teachers trying to navigate the intricacies of the Thai language and culture in their classrooms.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative approach to present the issue being investigated comprehensively. Fraenkel et al. (2012) state that qualitative research aims to understand a situation using an inductive approach completely. This methodology is highly relevant to this research, as it explores the viewpoints and justifications of non-Thai-speaking teachers regarding the utilization of code-switching in their English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms and the challenges they face. Also, the study used a phenomenological method, which is particularly suitable for investigating firsthand experiences to understand how individuals perceive and comprehend these experiences.

#### **3.2. Participants**

This study utilized a purposive sampling method, where the sample selection followed the researcher's specific objectives. As Bernard (2017) stated, this method is deterministic and does not necessitate pre-established criteria or a fixed number of participants. Instead, it enables researchers to choose individuals with the requisite expertise or experiences to offer the desired information. The sample comprised seven individuals who were not native speakers of Thai: 5 from the Philippines, one from Cambodia, and one from the United States. These participants were selected based on their proficiency in spoken and comprehension skills of the Thai language, which was evaluated during the interview phase.

Moreover, most participants possessed at least two years of teaching experience at the university level. They had lived in Thailand for a duration ranging from six to twenty years. In addition, they were actively involved in teaching, with a minimum workload of 21 units per week, encompassing both general courses and English for Specific Purposes. Participants conducted their EFL classes in three-hour sessions with their students weekly.

### **3.3. Research Instrument**

The research instrument that was used in this study was a semi-structured interview. This approach was chosen as it allowed for a pre-structured focus while providing flexibility to explore additional, unforeseen topics that could lead to new information (Croker, 2009). To ensure that the presence or input of other teachers did not influence the participant's responses, the researcher also conducted individual, semi-structured interviews. Additionally, the study informed the respondents that the interview would be audio recorded so that the researcher could participate in the conversation and record anything pertinent for the analysis. The interview started by asking for participants' personal information, like their age, how long they have lived in Thailand, how long they have taught at Rajabhat University, and their level of proficiency in the Thai language. Then, the participants were given questions to help them reveal their experiences, reasons, and struggles with code-switching in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom.

### **3.4. Data Analysis**

The interviews with the teachers were transcribed and then thematically analyzed to elicit the most recurring and pervasive experiences, reasons, and challenges with the employment of code-switching in an EFL classroom. The data was analyzed and coded according to the study's aims. Besides, the descriptive phenomenological method was also used to give a profound portrait of the participants' experiences. Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step approach of descriptive phenomenological data analysis requires this researcher to extract noteworthy statements, establish clusters and emerging themes, and generate formulated meanings to uncover the basic structure of participants' lived experiences. The first step is having a general understanding of the transcript. In this study, the researcher was the main interviewer, which helped to achieve a holistic understanding of the participants' overall experiences. The second step involves identifying significant statements. According to Colaizzi (1978), the researcher selects the essential words and sentences from the transcript that collectively represent the core of an experience. The researcher thoroughly examined the transcript and analyzed each one to discover significant remarks. Step three is about establishing meanings. In this stage, the researcher sought to create broader restatements and interpretations for each meaningful comment made in the text. Step four consists of clustering the indicated concepts in theme and topic groups. After the emergence of constructed meanings from the significant statements, the researcher organized them into theme clusters. Afterward, the topic clusters were grouped into emerging themes, each internally convergent and externally divergent. Each "formulated meaning" is derived from a single cluster. Step five requires detailing the phenomenon thoroughly. In this phase, the researcher tried to incorporate all ideas to outline all the phenomena. Step six outlines the basic structure of the phenomenon. Through this phase, findings were refined to avoid duplication and provide a brief



yet clear presentation of the phenomena. Step seven involves verifying the findings with the participants. In this phase, the study's finding was validated by "member checking." The final stage of data analysis involves a follow-up interview with the participants to ensure that the emerging phenomenon is in accordance with their lived experiences.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Through the one-on-one interview with the seven teacher participants, several themes were generated, revealing significant insights into their experiences, reasons, and challenges in using code-switching in their EFL classes.

### **4.1. Experiences of non-Thai speaking teachers in the use of code-switching**

#### **4.1.1. Code-Switching: Practical and Essential Tool**

All English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher-participants agreed on using code-switching in their EFL classes as it is necessary for A1-A2 learners who are still at the beginner stage in their English language acquisition. Most importantly, the teacher-participants have reaped the benefits of code-switching in their EFL classes. For example, EFLT1 shared his thoughts on the benefits of using code-switching: *"It allows me to have a more conversational classroom. Conversational meaning. I might not get the attention of my students 100%, but I know there are two to three students, or four maybe, or more, but not really 100%. Who can talk with me, who can speak with me, and Who can reason out with me"*.

The excerpt shows that the teacher participant uses code-switching to communicate clearly with the students and foster active participation among the students during the EFL session. However, not all of them could communicate with the teacher; at least some students could do so, thus making the class livelier and more conversational. This idea aligns with Olivera's (2021) assertion that code-switching has a beneficial impact on enhancing learners' confidence and involvement in English classes. Additionally, the teacher's role in stimulating learners' motivation to engage in discussions is crucial, since the lack of participation in the classroom can impede the achievement of learning objectives as it may stifle learners' creativity and curiosity. Therefore, code-switching can help students feel more included and engaged in the classroom as they not only listen to their teachers during the discussion but are also able to converse in the language that they are comfortable with.

Furthermore, the teacher participants also thought about making use of code-switching to make the classroom run smoothly. Especially when there is a need to provide and clarify step-by-step instructions when performing a class activity. This then makes the teacher-student interaction during the activity section of the class more efficient. This is confirmed by EFLT5, who said, *"It makes my class go smoothly. Yeah, it is important because---like--- like how to say? If I need to clarify something with the students, I can deal with it."* When EFLT 6 was also asked the same question, she responded: *"Do not read the script otherwise, your points will be deducted so that instructions do not (inaudible). I would, uh, code-switch. I would say do not read the script. OK, (speaks Thai) script) OK. That is to emphasize the importance of not reading the script otherwise, they will get their points deducted."* In this case, the teacher participant utilizes code-switching to emphasize the importance of the instruction "not to read the script." By switching from English to Thai, the teacher participant can draw attention to important parts of instructions to emphasize what to do and what not to do. Moreover, by using a language that the students are more comfortable with, teachers can ensure that everyone

understands what is expected of them and can participate fully in the activity. Furthermore, teacher participants also saved time by not reiterating the instructions, and students did not have to redo the activity because the instructions were completely understood.

The statement above supports Phuong's (2018) claim that code-switching allows teachers to conduct classroom activities smoothly and effectively. For the teacher to run the class smoothly and effectively, students should understand every activity's instruction. Hence, the teacher must provide clear, concise instructions to avoid confusion and redoing the activities. Nurhamidah et al. (2018) agree that teachers use code-switching to give procedures and direction. The author also asserted that the teacher is doubtful regarding the student's ability to do the activity due to the lack of specific guidance. The author also asserted that the teacher is doubtful regarding the student's ability to do the activity due to the lack of specific guidance. On the other hand, it also aligns with one of the functions of code-switching proposed by Ferguson (2003), which is the management of classroom discourse. Ferguson (2003) defines it as showing a change in the way students should behave in the classroom during the lesson. It involves encouraging, correcting, and praising the students. It also includes getting and keeping students' attention and explaining how to do the task, which is what the teacher participants emphasize in their statements based on their experiences with code-switching in their classroom. In other words, in order to run the class smoothly, code-switching is a helpful tool that the teacher uses as a go-to strategy to meet the objectives. The theme may also appear as the reason for code-switching. However, this section highlights the teacher's experiences of code-switching, which is to run the class smoothly.

#### **4.2.Code-Switching: Impediment to Student's Learning**

Regardless of their positive responses toward using code-switching in their EFL classroom, Some of the teacher participants emphasized that students may not exert effort to communicate in English because their teachers are capable of speaking Thai. Respondent EFLT7 said: *"...for the negative points, some students lost interest in learning. They don't dare to speak because, you know, the teachers speak Thai, so they try to speak Thai, you know."* EFLT4 shared the same sentiment: *"When I teach them, sometimes I use their language. So I feel a little disappointed for myself because they might think that it's OK, it's just OK to code-switch."*

It is important to note that code-switching should be used strategically and not too heavily. It is recommended that teachers strive to balance the use of code-switching in an EFL classroom to promote language learning and development. Hence, Over-reliance on code-switching can lead to a lack of English language exposure and hinder students' language learning progress. Students may become too reliant on the teacher's code-switching and not have enough opportunities to practice their English language skills. In relation to this, students may not develop their critical thinking skills in English. They may struggle to communicate effectively in real-life situations as they may not be able to apply what they've learned in the classroom to real-world contexts.

As Zohra, Adder, and Bagui (2020) asserted in their research, teachers believe that code-switching may lead to students' laziness and reliance on translation, which can hinder their vocabulary development. Furthermore, if teachers often speak the student's native language, they may no longer make an effort because they feel at ease and comfortable. Along these lines, code-switching plays a significant role in an EFL classroom, providing many benefits. However, if it is overly used, it can also stunt their learning progress. They might not pay close attention to the English language and wait for the teacher's translation of Thai.

### 4.3. Conversational Thai: Effective Use of Code-Switching

When teacher participants were asked how important speaking Thai at any level is as a requirement for code-switching in an EFL class, three teacher participants reported the following. EFLT7 said, *“I would say it's advantageous if you speak conversationally. But then, if you don't do it. Um, I'd say it still is a benefit if you speak the language. It's going to be helping you a lot. You know, like some schools and some classroom settings, they even hire teacher assistants to communicate if the teacher does not speak Thai.”* EFLT5 emphasized the same idea: *“I think it is like at least your Thai is like you are in a conversational. At that level, you are OK already to you know to use. You communicate like you have enough skill to communicate.”* Last but not least, EFLT3 also supported the same perception about the importance of knowing how to speak Thai: *“How important is it? I think it's a huge benefit. When those situations come up, and they can't translate a word, I can help them do that.”*

Based on the excerpt, the teacher participants agreed that to use code-switching in an EFL classroom effectively, one should be at a conversational level in the Thai language. This idea confirms Khaisaeng's (2020) research, as cited by Khojan (2022), which suggested that the lack of teachers' proficiency in their students' mother tongue may result in ineffective translanguaging practices. Moreover, when the teachers know Thai, it can improve communication and help the teacher easily explain complex concepts or give instructions. It also enables teachers to tailor their lessons to students' needs and create a more inclusive, welcoming classroom environment. Besides, knowing the Thai language is also advantageous as teachers will no longer have to rely on the students for correct pronunciation of the student's native language, more so because the Thai language is tone-sensitive. The teacher may also avoid confusion and inaccurate translation as students may translate differently, or if not, the teacher has a better way to explain to those who are not able to understand. This is shown in EFLT2's response: *“With me now. I really, really find speaking in Thai important in my level, when I'm explaining grammar rules. In some grammar lessons, when I'm already feeling frustrated that even my interpreter is interpreting what I'm trying to say in a wrong way, that's when I OK, I'll do it. EFLT 2 Continued. “Or it's not only about the translation is correct or wrong, because the translation is correct, but that's not how I want it to be.”* EFLT 2 states that while students might translate accurately, there may be a better and more efficient way to translate such information. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that students might not get the correct or exact word when translating into Thai because their understanding of the English language is limited. However, because the teacher participant is at a conversational level in Thai, he was able to determine whether the translation was correct or whether to explain in Thai more clearly. As a result, speaking Thai at a conversational level offers an advantage since it is beneficial for explaining complicated concepts and giving accurate directions, and it does not depend on students' support to determine if the pronunciation is right or not.

### 4.4. Reasons for non-Thai speaking teachers when switching from English to Thai in their EFL classes.

#### 4.4.1. Code-Switching: Pedagogical Functions



One of the reasons that the teacher participants agreed on the use of code-switching is a pedagogical function, namely, bridge to word power and understanding grammar, instruction, and content. The teacher participants used code-switching to help expand the student's vocabulary. In fact, two participants expressed this notion in their acknowledgments.

EFLT1 stated that it is easier to translate the word in Thai than to provide the definition of the word, as some definitions can even be more difficult than the word being defined. An example is the word "apple. When the teacher participant attempted to describe the meaning of the term "apple," he would explain that an apple is a spherical fruit that grows on trees and normally has a thin skin, either red or green, and has a crunchy flesh. The students take longer to process the definition compared to when the teacher participant simply uses the Thai term for apple. Moreover, EFLT 5 also expresses the same encounter. *"For some vocabularies. Yeah, I do like for example, like for like we give examples sentence in grammar, right? So, make sure that they understand the sentence that you're giving. Yeah. So, before you can explain the concept of the grammar. So yeah, so that's yeah."* This intended message of EFLT5 pertains to the use of sample sentences in the teaching of grammar. For the students to comprehend a given sentence, the teacher must ensure that the words are comprehensible. Therefore, before discussing the grammar topic, EFLT5 first introduces selected vocabulary items to the students. This approach aims to enhance their comprehension of the entire sentence, allowing them to correct grammatical errors and ensure proper sentence structure. In this context, code-switching facilitates the student's comprehension of unfamiliar words.

The teacher participants' responses align with Phuong (2018), that code-switching must also be used to facilitate students' understanding of difficult vocabulary words and complex grammatical structures. When students are learning a new language, they often encounter unfamiliar words and phrases, making it difficult for them to understand and participate in a conversation. Code-switching can bridge this gap by providing students with a translation or explanation of a word or phrase in the Thai language. For students to understand the topic, the teacher participants resort to code-switching, which they think is the easiest available strategy. Furthermore, code-switching is also helpful in EFL classrooms as it can reinforce word power. For example, when students learn new vocabulary, providing translation or explanation in Thai can aid comprehension and retention. One effective way to teach vocabulary using code-switching is by presenting new words in context and using phrases and short sentences that show their meaning. The teacher may then provide a translation or explanation of the new term in the Thai language, followed by a repetition of the word in English. This method may assist students in comprehending the definition, pronunciation, and use of a term.

Another particular situation in which the teacher participants also code-switch is to ensure that the students understand the lesson regarding the content, difficult ideas, grammar topics, and instructions and check students' comprehension. EFLT2 articulated that: *"...for clarity. Of understanding what I am and what I'm asking them to do. Because the main point of code-switching in my class is really happening when I'm giving instructions step by step process."* In addition, the teacher participants emphasized using code-switching to explain difficult lessons, such as grammar and the topic itself. Here's an example extract. *"Number 2, to explain complex ideas, concepts like ideas like... for grammar..." (EFLT6).* The extracts

showed that the teacher participants used code-switching to ensure that students carried out the assigned tasks. It is also a way for teachers not to spend too much time providing instructions, especially when giving such information solely in English. Following the delivery of instructions, teachers may still have to demonstrate the instruction to ensure the student's understanding of the given activity. Furthermore, code-switching helps to scaffold the learning process. Just like what the teacher participants emphasize, scaffolding is when breaking down a complex task into smaller and more manageable parts.

Using code-switching, the teacher can provide instructions or explanations in Thai, which can help students understand the task and complete it successfully. This is stipulated by Sittattrakul (2018), who asserted that this function includes explaining grammar, vocabulary words, and technical terms, translating ideas, discussing assignments, checking students' comprehension, and giving instructions, which is evident in this research. Teacher participants resort to code-switching to explain in Thai after students fail to get the idea of the topic discussed or the instruction given. As a result, code-switching is effective in promoting comprehension. Using the Thai language can provide a bridge between their prior knowledge and the new concepts they are learning in English. By using familiar terminology and explanations, the students may be able to connect the new information to their existing knowledge more easily. On the other hand, it can also elaborate or clarify important concepts. If a student struggles to understand a particular point, the teacher can provide additional explanations or examples in Thai to help them better grasp the concept. Furthermore, it may seem unrealistic to expect the English language to be used exclusively in the EFL classroom because teachers need to use every available tool to meet their teaching objectives and ensure that they have the best learning experience possible where students' engagement and conversational classroom are achieved.

#### **4.4.2. Code-Switching: Social Functions**

Another reason the teacher participants articulated on the use of code-switching in their EFL classes is for social functions, specifically relieving student stress and anxiety and amplifying socialization. The teacher participants stated that they used code-switching to lower the students' anxiety as it provided them with a sense of comfort and familiarity when communicating with the students in Thai. Teacher participant EFLT6 said: "So when you speak Thai to them, they can feel: "Ohh, teacher, you can speak." You know, it lightens up the environment" (EFLT6). EFLT 3 shared the same sentiment: "...so basically, it lowers their anxiety to speak in English because of code-switching." This approach is beneficial as students may not feel intimidated at the start of the discussion as the teacher participant was able to create a classroom environment where students do not have to feel anxious when they raise or answer questions. The engagement of teacher participants in student interaction before the class starts is reinforced by Adriosh and Razi's (2019) assertion that socialization takes place during the study, typically at the beginning and end of the class, during which the teacher engages in an informal interaction with the students.

Furthermore, EFLT1, on the other hand, stressed that when students observe their teacher mispronouncing Thai words, it lessens their nervousness about speaking English. Students

seem to be motivated to learn English more after their teacher makes an error in Thai pronunciation because it impresses upon them that making mistakes is a normal part of the learning process, particularly when learning a new language. Furthermore, while learning a language, allowing oneself to learn and progress through making mistakes is essential for achieving fluency. Here's the exact excerpt. *"But I guess it would reduce their anxiety in speaking English also because I can see a foreigner trying to speak other languages, mispronouncing it."* The responses provided by the participants are aligned with the findings of Sittatrakul's (2018) research that teachers engage in code-switching for two distinct purposes, namely pedagogical and social functions. In educational settings, social functions are utilized by educators as a means of mitigating student stress and fostering a conducive learning environment. Moreover, to foster a sense of value among students in the classroom, it is necessary for teachers to establish a connection with them. One effective approach to achieve this is through conversations with the students. By adopting such an approach, the level of anxiety experienced by the students is likely to decrease, as they will perceive the teacher to be more receptive towards them. This idea is supported by May May & Abdul Aziz (2020), who reported that code-switching helps enhance language learning by making input more understandable and reducing the student's affective filter. Thus, when students struggle to express themselves in their second language, code-switching to their first language can provide relief and allow them to express their ideas more fluently. This can help lower their anxiety and increase their confidence in using the target language, making it easier for them to continue practicing and learning.

The use of code-switching by an EFL student produces a similar reaction from the teacher since code-switching is used by the teaching participants to reduce their nervousness. Furthermore, it promotes student engagement by allowing them to freely express their thoughts as they code-switch to bridge the gap with their teacher to learn English. Indeed, learning English as a foreign language is so stressful for students, and since psychological barriers such as negative feelings and opinions about the new language have a negative impact on gaining meaningful input, learners feel stressed; thus, the more flexible they are while learning English, the easier it is for them to concentrate on the subject and successfully participate in activities.

In addition, the teacher participants also utilize code-switching to socialize with the students. In this context, code-switching has facilitated effective communication, as the teacher participants use the technique to convey messages that students can comprehend easily. Students have been able to provide feedback, as they, too, are allowed to code-switch. Therefore, considering the ability of students to communicate with the teacher fosters a sense of connection and camaraderie within the classroom. Here are some of the extracts. *"Um, number 1, #1, yes, number one, I want to build a connection to them. I can connect to them when I speak Thai, you know. So because if I speak purely English like there's, there's like a barrier," (EFLT6)*. Also, EFLT1 stated, *"You have to develop that sense of connection between you and them, that you're encouraging them to speak English and you're not to judge their pronunciation."* Code-switching builds positive relationships between the teacher and the students as they become more comfortable and engaged in the classroom, especially if they struggle with English. This can lead to improved learning outcomes and higher student motivation. Furthermore, creating a learning environment in which learners thrive and interact meaningfully is crucial. Thus, awareness of the importance of including all learners, not just for effective teaching and learning but also for fostering learners' self-worth and confidence, is possibly the best way to ensure success in the classroom.

Tabassum et al. (2020) also believe that code-switching develops relationships by demonstrating empathy and compassion. It is critical to ensure that each student feels acknowledged and respected while simultaneously attempting to improve class involvement. In an EFL classroom, code-switching may make students feel appreciated; thus, when a teacher code-switches, it demonstrates that the teacher participants respect and value the Thai language and cultural heritage. Also, when students feel appreciated, it may boost their self-esteem and create positive classroom dynamics in which they feel comfortable expressing their language and culture with their teacher. Lastly, the teacher participants recognized that with their responses above, such an environment was not constrained and was defined by the freedom to express and engage.

#### **4.4.3. The challenges non-Thai-speaking teachers face when switching from English to Thai.**

##### **Thai-Language: Tone Sensitive**

Since the participants did not speak Thai as their first language, they faced a common challenge that was entirely acknowledged. The challenge faced pertains to the tonality of the Thai language, which means the essence of one word can vary significantly with a change in tone. This is shown in the excerpt *because my accent is not correct, because the Thai language is tonal. When you do not hit the right tone of certain words. They will understand it differently.*” (EFLT2). When asked the same questions, EFLT4 answered: *“The challenge is that I cannot pronounce the Thai words properly.* Furthermore, EFLT3 stated, *“Sometimes it’s hard for me to understand the students’ language. They have different accents that come from all different parts of the country.”* Although EFLT3 did not explicitly address his accent, he was referring to the potential impact of students’ accents on his ability to understand them accurately. However, it is understood because EFLT3 is a fluent speaker of Thai. Each teacher participant may use different terms such as accent and pronunciation, but they refer to one thing: the tone of the Thai language.

According to Burnham et al. (2014), in Thailand, most specifically in central Thailand, there are five tones: two dynamic tones, for example, [khaː˥˥]-rising tone, meaning “leg”; and [khaː˨˨˦]-falling tone, “to kill”; and three static tones, [khaː˥˥]-high tone, “to trade”; [khaː˥˥]-mid-tone, “to be stuck”; and [khaː˨˨˦]-low tone, “galangal, a root spice.” This makes it difficult for the teacher participants to identify the correct tone.

Kaan et al. (2008) highlight that native speakers of a non-tone language encounter challenges in distinguishing tone contrast and exhibit sensitivity towards distinct dimensions of F0 and pitch compared to speakers of a tone language. It is important to note that tone can be complex for non-Thai speakers to master, and even slight variations in tone can lead to misunderstanding. As such, learning Thai requires considerable practice and attention to detail, particularly its tonal system. Thus, it is difficult for the teacher participants to be acquainted with the Thai tone even if they have been in Thailand for a long time.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

From the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn. Firstly, EFL teachers should not cease using code-switching since it helps students grasp complex ideas, allows them to express themselves, promotes classroom management, and relieves anxiety.

However, it should be noted that excessive use of code-switching can hinder the students learning of the target language as they might rely on the Thai translation. Secondly, EFL teachers should employ strategies that limit the use of code-switching, such as the direct method, the oral approach, situational Language teaching, the audiolingual method, and Communicative language teaching, to name a few. Thirdly, the teacher's reasons for code-switching are pedagogical and social functions. Lastly, code-switching requires conversational proficiency when a teacher doesn't speak the same L1 as their students. It prevents cultural misunderstandings, such as when a teacher accidentally uses unsuitable language, which may strain student relationships. Moreover, the same perception and functions are found in investigations of teachers who share the same L1 as students. However, if the instructor is unfamiliar with the student's language, problems may arise.

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