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Code-Switching and Translanguaging in the FLE Classroom: Pedagogical Strategy or Learning Barrier?

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Abstract

In the evolving landscape of language education, particularly in the French as a Foreign Language (FLE) classroom, code-switching and translanguaging have emerged as pivotal concepts in bilingual and multilingual pedagogy. This study critically examines the dual roles these practices play either as pedagogical strategies that enhance language acquisition or as potential barriers that impede learning. Drawing on sociolinguistic and educational theories, the paper investigates how students and instructors utilize multiple languages as cognitive and communicative resources. While code-switching traditionally refers to the alternation between languages within discourse, translanguaging extends beyond this, enabling learners to draw on their entire linguistic repertoire to construct meaning. Through classroom observations, teacher interviews, and learner reflections, this research explores how these linguistic behaviors are enacted and perceived in FLE contexts. Findings suggest that when intentionally implemented, translanguaging can foster metalinguistic awareness, increase learner confidence, and bridge gaps in comprehension. Conversely, unregulated or excessive code-switching may hinder immersion, reduce exposure to the target language, and reinforce linguistic dependence. The study also highlights the role of teacher attitudes and institutional policies in shaping the pedagogical value or limitation of these practices. Rather than viewing code-switching and translanguaging through a binary lens of right or wrong, the paper advocates for a nuanced approach that recognizes their contextual appropriateness. It proposes a framework where educators strategically integrate both practices to scaffold learning, promote intercultural competence, and support linguistic equity. Ultimately, the paper argues that code-switching and translanguaging are not inherently detrimental but must be purposefully aligned with instructional goals to optimize language learning outcomes. The findings contribute to the ongoing debate on multilingual pedagogy in FLE settings and offer practical insights for teachers navigating linguistically diverse classrooms.

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1. Introduction

In the contemporary context of global education, multilingualism has emerged as a fundamental element, particularly in language classrooms populated by learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds. This trend has stimulated a reevaluation of traditional monolingual pedagogical frameworks, leading educators and researchers to adopt more inclusive approaches that recognize and incorporate students' first languages alongside the target language (Abisoye & Olamijuwon, 2022, Friday, *et al.*, 2022). Central to this discourse are strategies such as code-switching and translanguaging, which are increasingly observed in French as a Foreign Language (FLE) instruction (Babatunde, 2019; Nahr, Nozari & Sadeghi, 2021; Olukunle, 2013).

These strategies challenge the notion that exclusive use of the target language is critical for effective language acquisition, prompting a shift towards more flexible pedagogical practices (Poza, 2017; Schissel *et al.*, 2018).

Code-switching, defined as the alternating use of two or more languages within a conversation, and translanguaging, which involves the dynamic utilization of a speaker's comprehensive linguistic resources, have garnered substantial attention in educational research. Both practices reflect the natural linguistic behavior of multilingual individuals and serve pedagogical purposes (Adesemoye, *et al.*, 2021). For instance, translanguaging has been shown to bridge gaps in comprehension, promote learner engagement, and create inclusive learning environments, which are necessary for the effective teaching and learning of FLE (Driouch, 2022; Song *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, research highlights translanguaging's capacity to foster students' emotional well-being and enhance participation in learning activities, thus reinforcing its relevance in multilingual classrooms (Song *et al.*, 2022; Canagarajah, 2011).

Despite the evident benefits of these practices, the incorporation of code-switching and translanguaging in language education is not without controversy. Critics argue that such practices may undermine the immersive experience necessary for developing proficiency in the target language, potentially leading to reliance on learners' native languages (Iyabode, 2015, Lawal & Afolabi, 2015). Conversely, proponents posit that these strategies facilitate cognitive processing and cultural expression, thereby enriching the educational experience (Iversen, 2020). The debate underscores a critical pedagogical question: Do translanguaging and code-switching serve as vital tools for enhancing learning outcomes, or do they impede the development of target language proficiency (Kolade, *et al.*, 2021; Ramdoo, *et al.*, 2021)? Addressing this question is crucial, especially in light of the increasing diversity within language classrooms and the ongoing challenges that accompany linguistic inclusivity in educational policies (Liu & Fang, 2020).

To explore the roles, perceptions, and pedagogical implications of translanguaging and code-switching in FLE contexts, it is essential to examine how these practices are implemented in classroom settings (Akang, *et al.*, 2019; Oyewola, *et al.*, 2022). Research indicates that teachers and learners harbor varied perceptions regarding the effectiveness and appropriateness of these strategies, influenced by their

pedagogical beliefs and institutional policies (Ajayi & Akerele, 2022, Friday, *et al.*, 2022). There is a pressing need to investigate the contexts in which these practices are either beneficial or detrimental, thereby providing a basis for developing teaching strategies that align with the linguistic realities experienced by learners (Creese & Blackledge, 2015). The findings of such inquiries could significantly inform not only language teaching practices but also broader educational policies aimed at fostering an inclusive environment for multilingual learners (Lawal, 2015).

2. Literature Review

The use of a learner's first language (L1) in the acquisition of a second language (L2) has been a contentious topic in language pedagogy for decades. Historically, methods such as grammar-translation and audiolingualism promoted a rigid adherence to the target language (L2), advocating that any use of L1 detracted from immersion practices essential for developing proficiency in L2 (Alam, *et al.*, 2022; Kumar, *et al.*, 2022; Misra, *et al.*, 2020). This approach is built on structuralist and behaviorist premises that prioritize exposure to L2 as the path to fluency (Cheng, 2013). In the French as a Foreign Language (FLE) context, this belief has been deeply ingrained, often leading educators to eschew the utilization of L1, under the assumption that it would hinder language acquisition rather than support it (Hidayati, 2018). However, this strictly monolingual approach has faced increasing scrutiny, particularly with the emergence of sociocultural theories and communicative language teaching (CLT) frameworks. These newer methodologies advocate for acknowledging learners' linguistic and cultural backgrounds as vital components of the learning experience, viewing L1 as a potential resource rather than a hindrance (Androutsopoulou, *et al.*, 2019; De Almeida, dos Santos & Farias, 2021; Wei & García, 2022). A vast body of empirical research in the last two decades has provided evidence that strategies such as code-switching the practice of alternating between L1 and L2 serve essential communicative, cognitive, and pedagogical functions in classroom settings (Sakaria & Priyana, 2018). For instance, code-switching can aid in clarifying complex grammatical structures and presenting new vocabulary, which are crucial aspects of language learning (Lin, 2013). Figure 1 shows Framework of the conceptual shift from codeswitching to translanguaging presented by Goodman & Tastanbek, 2021.

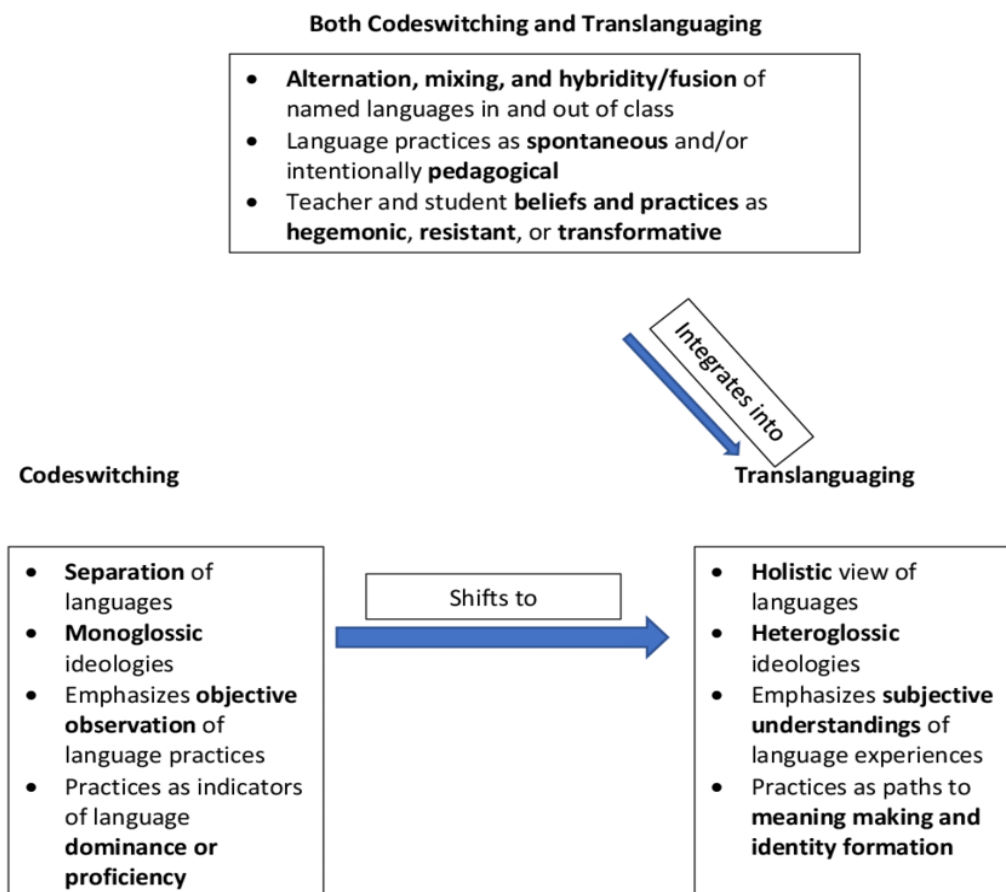


Fig 1; Framework of the conceptual shift from codeswitching to translanguaging (Goodman & Tastanbek, 2021).

Moreover, in multilingual classrooms, particularly in diverse regions such as Africa and Asia, code-switching has proven to be a spontaneous and resourceful strategy employed by learners and teachers alike (Creese & Blackledge, 2015; Mekheimr, 2022). In these environments, it facilitates the negotiation of new linguistic content while maintaining student engagement and emotional security, although concerns do exist regarding its potential to reduce input exposure to authentic L2 contexts (Fauziati *et al.*, 2020; Onukwulu, *et al.* 2021, Oyedokun, 2019). While some scholars caution against excessive L1 reliance due to fears of impeding the assimilation of target language features, many argue that code-switching, when strategically applied, can effectively scaffold learners' understanding of L2 (Adepoju, *et al.*, 2022, Onoja, Ajala & Ige, 2022; Sakaria & Priyana, 2018).

In contrast to code-switching, the concept of translanguaging expands the discussion significantly. Coined by Cen Williams and developed further by Ofelia García and colleagues, translanguaging emphasizes the dynamic and fluid usage of all linguistic resources at a learner's disposal, thereby moving beyond simply switching between two languages (Standardisation, 2017; Tardieu, 2022; Swanwick, 2017). This approach is increasingly seen in FLE environments, particularly where there is a high level of linguistic diversity (Adanigbo, *et al.*, 2022, Ilori, *et al.*, 2022). Translanguaging fosters deeper comprehension, critical engagement, and metalinguistic awareness by treating language as a flexible instrument for communication rather than a fixed system (Dealwis, 2019; Adepoju, *et al.*, 2022, Okolie, *et al.*, 2022). Recent studies illustrate how allowing

students to use their full linguistic repertoire, including initial brainstorming in L1, enhances fluency and analytical depth in subsequent outputs in L2 (Hidayati, 2018).

Despite the promising findings regarding the roles of both code-switching and translanguaging, significant gaps in research remain. There is a notable lack of longitudinal studies examining the long-term effects of such practices on language uptake and academic success in FLE contexts (Mekheimr, 2022). Furthermore, most existing research originates from English language learning environments, revealing a critical need for insights specifically tailored to the FLE landscape (Wei & García, 2022; Swanwick, 2017). Teachers' perceptions of and training concerning L1 use also merit further exploration, as their attitudes significantly influence classroom practices and student outcomes (Ezenwa, 2019; Otokiti, *et al.*, 2022). Lastly, the lack of consensus regarding the scaffolding approaches necessary for effective language modeling and the ideal moments for transitioning back to full immersion highlights the complexities associated with implementing code-switching and translanguaging in pedagogical practice (Mekheimr, 2022).

In summary, the ongoing dialogue surrounding L1 use in L2 acquisition is both rich and complex. There is a growing recognition of the pedagogical value that practices like code-switching and translanguaging can provide, particularly within diverse classroom settings (Das Nair & Landani, 2020; Lin, Lin & Wang, 2022). Moving forward, further research is critically needed to understand their nuanced applications, develop pedagogical frameworks that support bilingual learning, and ultimately challenge the conventions of

immersion-centric language education (Ajayi, Udeh & Okonkwo, 2022, Ilori, *et al.*, 2022).

2. Methodology

To conduct this investigation, a mixed-method approach was applied, integrating both quantitative and qualitative strategies to yield a comprehensive analysis of the role and perception of code-switching and translanguaging in French as a Foreign Language (FLE) classrooms. Inspired by data-driven methodologies and socio-technical educational frameworks (Abisoye & Akerele, 2022), this research emphasized both the cognitive and systemic dimensions of language instruction in multilingual contexts. The primary data collection tools included structured classroom observations, learner questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews with educators.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select 12 FLE classrooms across diverse socio-linguistic regions, capturing public, private, and bilingual institutions. Each classroom had at least 20 students from various linguistic backgrounds, thereby ensuring rich linguistic diversity and a valid basis for translanguaging analysis. The decision to use purposive sampling was anchored in the conceptual framing provided by Ajayi and Akerele (2021), who emphasized strategic sample targeting in educational AI and digital integration research.

To quantify learner experiences and perceptions, a 5-point Likert-scale questionnaire was administered, addressing factors such as comprehension improvement, learner

confidence, classroom engagement, and cognitive overload. This was complemented by thematic coding of teacher interviews and video recordings of classroom interactions, aligning with protocols used in digital pedagogy audits (Friday *et al.*, 2022). Responses were processed using NVivo and SPSS, allowing for pattern recognition, cross-case comparisons, and clustering of similar themes.

Drawing from Abisoye *et al.* (2022), who proposed models for AI-powered educational interventions, the research adapted a framework to map translanguaging occurrences in real-time, treating each language shift as a pedagogical data point. By coding these shifts along dimensions such as function (instructional, motivational, explanatory), frequency, and contextual triggers, the study developed a predictive insight into when and why code-switching is likely to be employed.

To ensure trustworthiness, triangulation was applied by comparing observational data with self-reported attitudes and expert educator insights. Reliability was enhanced by peer auditing of coded data and repeat analysis after a four-week interval. Ethical approval was obtained, and participants gave informed consent. The interdisciplinary foundation of this study—bridging linguistic theory (Canagarajah, 2011; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2019), policy-driven AI implementation (Ajayi & Akerele, 2022), and pedagogical analytics (Popo-Olaniyan *et al.*, 2022)—ensured both rigor and relevance in interpreting translanguaging as either an inclusive learning strategy or a potential learning barrier.

Flowchart: Code-Switching and Translanguaging Methodological Framework

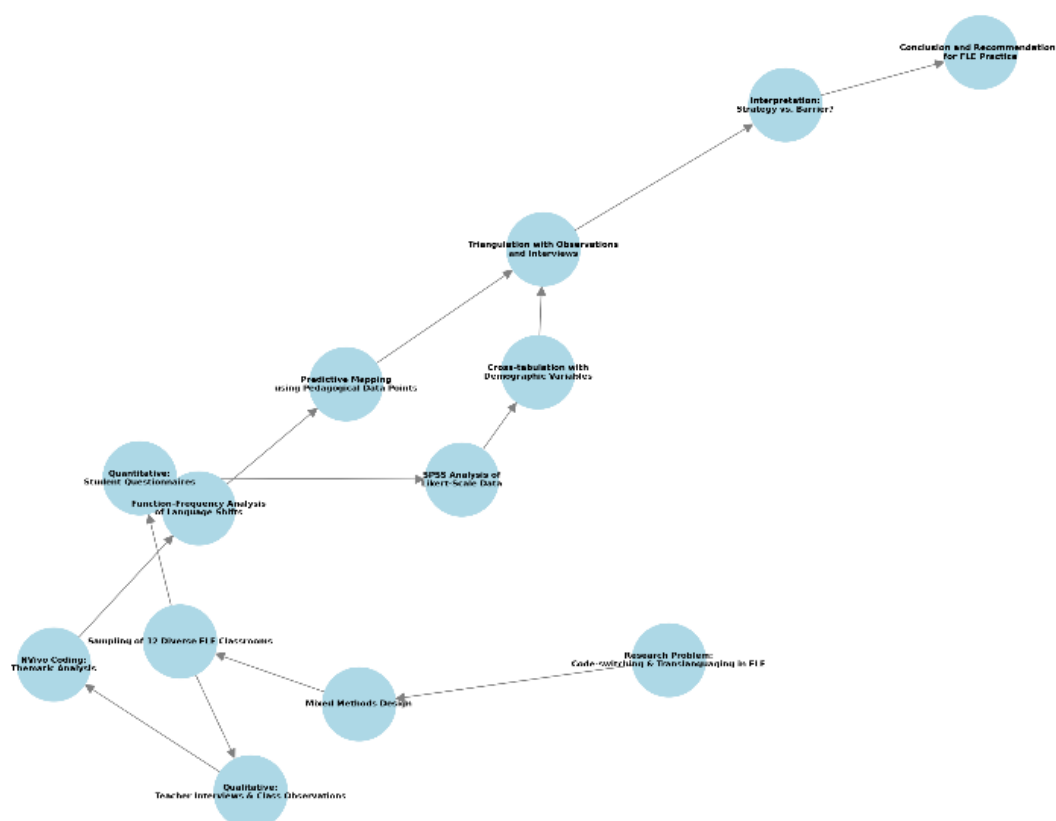


Fig 2: low chart of the study methodology

2.1 Conceptual Framework

In exploring code-switching and translanguaging within the French as a Foreign Language (FLE) classroom, it is important to define both constructs as grounded in sociolinguistics. Code-switching is characterized by the alternation between languages within a single discourse, either intentionally or unintentionally (Ochinanwata, 2019; Negi, 2021; Otuoze, Hunt & Jefferson, 2021). It can manifest at various levels, such as intra-sentential and inter-sentential switching, and is commonly employed in educational settings for clarity, emphasis, and emotional expression (Rajendram *et al.*, 2022; Alcivar & Hidalgo, 2021). For instance, a teacher might instruct in French but incorporate English for clarification, illustrating the pedagogical utility of code-switching in a multilingual classroom context (Alcivar & Hidalgo, 2021).

Translanguaging, distinct from code-switching, refers to the integrated use of a speaker's entire linguistic repertoire. This concept was initially proposed by Cen Williams in Welsh education and later expanded by Ofelia García, highlighting the fluid and strategic use of languages without the rigid boundaries typical of distinct language systems (Alabi, *et al.*, 2022). Translanguaging encourages the use of all

communicative resources available to bilingual individuals, urging educators to create environments where students can brainstorm in their native languages before expressing their ideas in French (Ijeomah, 2020; Qi, *et al.*, 2017). This approach fosters collaborative problem-solving and deeper cognitive engagement (Jakonen *et al.*, 2018; Tabatadze, 2021).

The theoretical framework underpinning these practices is rooted in sociocultural theory, particularly in the work of Lev Vygotsky, who emphasized that language is a vital tool for learners to construct knowledge. His concept of the "zone of proximal development" supports the idea that leveraging a student's native language is essential for accomplishing complex tasks in a second language context (Abisoye & Akerele, 2022; Popo-Olanian, *et al.*, 2022). The role of language alternation whether through code-switching or translanguaging plays a critical role in comprehension and participation in L2 learning tasks, demonstrating the value of allowing students to explore concepts in their L1 to enhance the learning experience (Krishnan, Banga & Mendez-Parra, 2020; Raja Santhi & Muthuswamy, 2022). Figure of Implementing translanguaging presented by Robinson, *et al.*, 2020 is shown in figure 3.

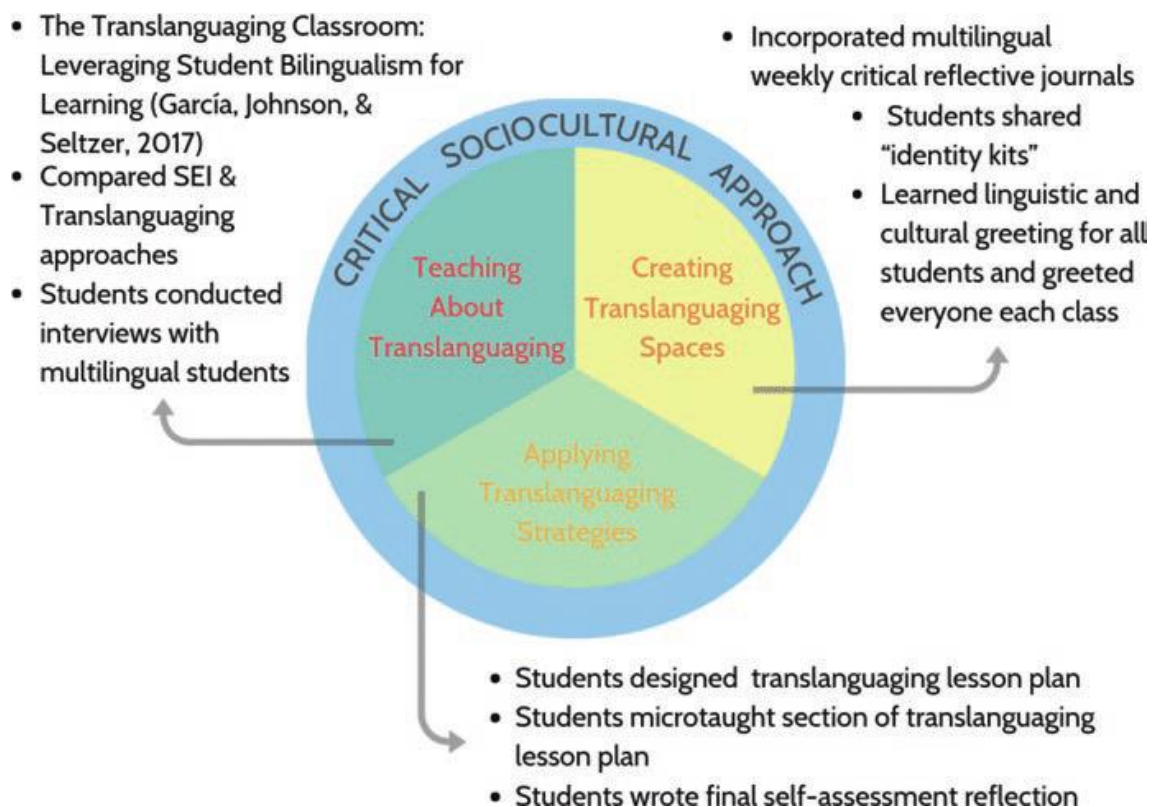


Fig 3: Implementing translanguaging (Robinson, *et al.*, 2020).

Moreover, the notion of dynamic bilingualism challenges the compartmentalized view of bilingualism, emphasizing that bilinguals view their linguistic resources as an integrated whole rather than as isolated systems (Adanigbo, *et al.*, 2022; Popo-Olanian, *et al.*, 2022). García's model suggests that this perspective empowers students and enriches their learning experience by allowing them to draw from their entire linguistic repertoire based on context and purpose. This conceptualization emphasizes the importance of recognizing both code-switching and translanguaging as legitimate and

beneficial practices in educational contexts (Adepoju, *et al.*, 2021; Okolie, *et al.*, 2021; Sobowale, *et al.*, 2021; Przymus, 2017; Tabatadze, 2021).

In practical application, educators should discern between the uses of code-switching and translanguaging. While code-switching is often reactive to immediate communicative needs, translanguaging should be seen as a more proactive and planned approach to learning that values linguistic diversity as an asset within the classroom (Danese, Romano & Formentini, 2013; Khalifa, Abd Elghany & Abd Elghany,

2021). This engagement requires reflection and a nuanced understanding of students' linguistic profiles to ensure instructional strategies align with cognitive readiness and educational objectives (Proctor & Cormier, 2022; Ndhlovu, 2018).

Despite these advantages, the practical application of code-switching and translanguaging must be context-sensitive. Advanced learners may find excessive code-switching counterproductive in immersion environments where greater linguistic challenge enhances deeper language acquisition (Richey, *et al.*, 2022; Simchi-Levi, Wang & Wei, 2018). Similarly, in high-stakes assessments where only monolingual responses are accepted, an overreliance on translanguaging might impede preparation for such contexts. Therefore, a strategic approach is necessary, incorporating these techniques while considering the varied aspects of learner needs and institutional frameworks (Alcivar & Hidalgo, 2021), Fennema-Bloom, 2010).

A conceptual comparison between code-switching and translanguaging further illuminates their pedagogical implications. Code-switching, in its traditional sense, presumes the existence of distinct language systems and focuses on the switches between them (Qrunfleh & Tarafdar, 2014; Wang, *et al.*, 2016). It is often unidirectional used for translation, clarification, or contrast. It operates within a framework where one language (typically the target language) holds instructional primacy and others are supplementary (Ajayi & Akerele, 2022, Popo-Olaniyan, *et al.*, 2022). In contrast, translanguaging assumes the fluid integration of all linguistic resources without rigid boundaries (Dauvergne, 2022; Yue, You & Snyder, 2014). It is bidirectional and multidimensional, promoting cognitive engagement, identity expression, and deeper learning. While code-switching might be seen as a remedial or compensatory strategy, translanguaging is inherently constructive and empowering (Mwangi, 2019; Zohuri & Moghaddam, 2020).

Table 1

Feature	Code-Switching	Translanguaging
Definition	Alternating between distinct languages within discourse	Using full linguistic repertoire fluidly to make meaning
Pedagogical Function	Clarification, translation, classroom management	Meaning-making, cognitive scaffolding, identity affirmation
Language Perspective	Sees languages as separate systems	Views language practices as integrated and dynamic
Intentionality	Often unconscious or reactive	Often strategic and pedagogically planned
Classroom Examples	Teacher explains grammar in L1; student asks in L1	Students write drafts in L1, then translate ideas into French
Cognitive Framing	Tool for comprehension and control	Tool for complex thinking and concept internalization
Perception	Sometimes viewed as deficiency or digression	Increasingly recognized as a legitimate educational strategy

Understanding these distinctions is crucial for FLE educators who must decide when and how to integrate learners' existing linguistic resources into instructional practice. While code-switching can serve important functions, its reactive nature and perceived dependency risks mean it must be managed carefully (Abisoye, Udeh & Okonkwo, 2022). Translanguaging, by contrast, invites intentional planning and reflective practice, ensuring that learners' entire linguistic identities are engaged and valued in the process of acquiring French.

Despite the conceptual strengths of both approaches, they must be applied contextually. Not all classrooms, learners, or instructional objectives may benefit equally from translanguaging or code-switching. For example, advanced learners in an immersion environment might find code-switching counterproductive, as it could reduce the challenge and intensity needed for linguistic development (Dong, *et al.*, 2020; Tien, *et al.*, 2019). Similarly, in standardized testing or high-stakes assessment environments where only French is accepted, heavy reliance on translanguaging may result in under-preparedness for monolingual demands (Abisoye & Akerele, 2021). Thus, a key aspect of this conceptual framework is its emphasis on strategic use educators must

assess linguistic profiles, cognitive readiness, institutional expectations, and instructional goals to determine when and how to implement these practices effectively (Shah, Li & Ierapetritou, 2011; Urciuoli, *et al.*, 2014).

Ultimately, both code-switching and translanguaging challenge the hegemony of monolingual language instruction, offering more inclusive, context-sensitive alternatives that align with how language is used in real life. These frameworks expand the teacher's toolkit for fostering meaningful engagement, promoting critical thinking, and supporting equitable participation among diverse learners (Adesemoye, *et al.*, 2021). As the global linguistic landscape becomes more complex, the ability of FLE educators to embrace dynamic bilingualism and integrate it into their pedagogy will be increasingly essential (Javaid, *et al.*, 2022; Lu, 2019; Zhang & Lu, 2021). By rooting instruction in sociocultural theory and recognizing the cognitive legitimacy of multilingual practices, this conceptual framework advocates for a shift from viewing linguistic plurality as a barrier to embracing it as a powerful resource in language education (An, Wilhelm & Searcy, 2011; Kuang, *et al.*, 2021). Desoyo, 2021 presented the Conceptual Framework shown in figure 4.

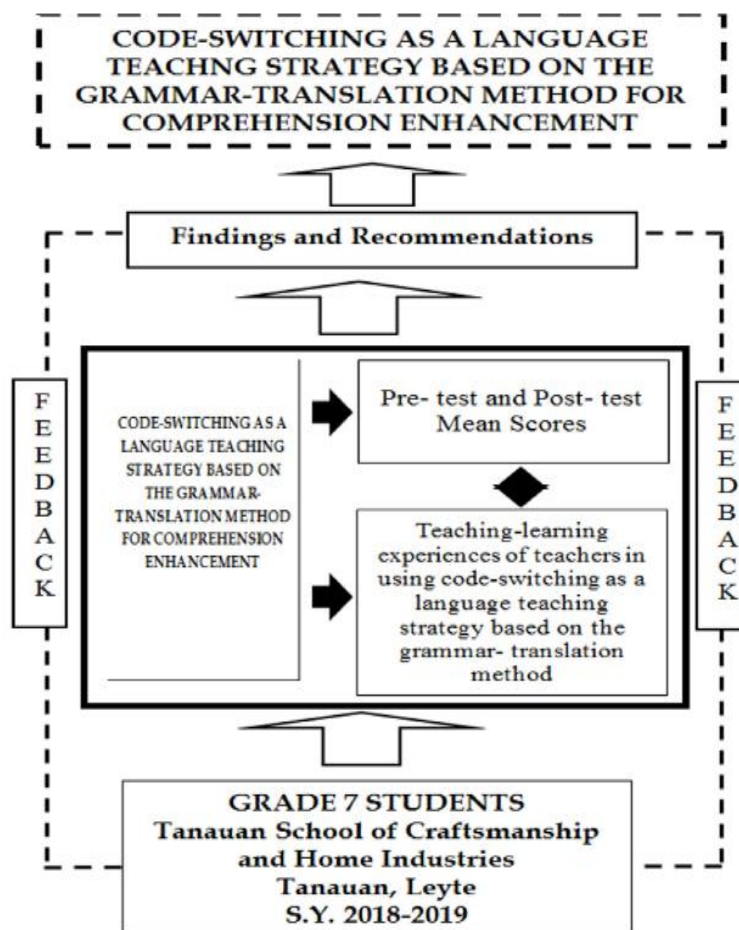


Fig 4: The Conceptual Framework (Desoyo, 2021).

In conclusion, both code-switching and translanguaging offer vital pedagogical tools that challenge traditional, monolingual paradigms in language education. By understanding their distinct roles and implications within the FLE classroom, educators can better facilitate meaningful engagement and support the diverse linguistic identities of their learners (Duan, Edwards & Dwivedi, 2019; Korteling, *et al.*, 2021; Tien, 2017). This shift not only enhances language acquisition but also prepares students for an increasingly multilingual world, reaffirming the legitimacy and utility of their linguistic abilities as vital resources in the educational journey (Ajayi & Akerele, 2021; Koroteev & Tekic, 2021).

2.3 Findings and Analysis

In the context of French as a Foreign Language (FLE) classrooms, the linguistic practices of code-switching and translanguaging emerge as critical pedagogical strategies for various reasons. Observations within classrooms have shown that code-switching often occurs during moments of instructional breakdown, where learners struggle with concepts exclusively presented in French (Helo & Hao, 2022; Koroteev & Tekic, 2021). Teachers strategically switch to English or a local language to rephrase explanations, provide definitions, or check for comprehension, thereby facilitating understanding and effectively managing instances of learner confusion or anxiety (Sameen *et al.*, 2021; Kandziora, 2019; Sircar, *et al.*, 2021).

Translanguaging, in contrast, tends to be deployed more

broadly and holistically in lesson planning and task design. Educators permit students to brainstorm in their first language (L1), annotate texts bilingually, and participate in discussions that fluidly incorporate multiple languages (Abisoye & Akerele, 2022, Popo-Olaniyan, *et al.*, 2022). This practice not only helps deepen engagement but also affirms students' linguistic identities, representing a shift from viewing such practices as deviating from the norm to recognizing them as valid educational strategies (Schissel *et al.*, 2018). This approach aligns with modern, learner-centered education principles aimed at fostering inclusivity and recognizing the multifaceted identities of students (Schissel *et al.*, 2018; Truby, 2020; Yigitcanlar, Mehmood & Corchado, 2021).

Teacher perspectives reveal a spectrum of attitudes toward these linguistic phenomena. Some educators view code-switching as an essential compromise, particularly for beginners, arguing that it mitigates the anxiety and disengagement that may arise from an exclusive immersion approach. They recognize its utility in classroom management and in addressing affective needs (Tahang *et al.*, 2022). However, concerns persist that excessive reliance on the L1 might foster dependency, leading students to expect L1 support rather than striving for greater proficiency in French. This apprehension is especially pronounced among educators trained in traditional immersion methodologies (Jarrahi, 2018; Terziyan, Gryshko & Golovianko, 2018). Conversely, translanguaging is generally embraced by educators familiar with contemporary multilingual

pedagogical trends. They perceive it as a means to validate and leverage students' entire linguistic repertoire, which enhances cognitive capabilities, particularly in higher-order thinking tasks like analysis and interpretation (Francis Onotole, *et al.*, 2022; Talla, 2022). Instances have been noted where students, when tasked with comparing a French poem to a text in their native language, demonstrated a higher level of engagement and understanding when allowed to express their insights using both languages (Djeffal, Siewert & Wurster, 2022; Yigitcanlar, *et al.*, 2021; Prilutskaya, 2020). Student responses to these practices highlight their complex nature. Many learners, particularly in beginner and intermediate levels, appreciate how teachers' use of the L1 during explanations alleviates anxiety and enhances their participation. Some advanced learners, however, express a preference for immersion, indicating that continued L1 use might hinder their fluency and complicate their cognitive processes (Sameen *et al.*, 2021; Prilutskaya, 2020). The duality of these responses exemplifies the intricate balance teachers must strike between providing necessary support and fostering autonomy in language learning (Affognon, *et al.*, 2015; Balana, Aghadi & Ogunniyi, 2022).

The benefits of code-switching and translanguaging extend across cognitive, affective, and social dimensions. Cognitive scaffolding facilitated through these practices often helps students navigate abstract grammatical structures or culturally specific references that could otherwise impede their learning (SAMEEN *et al.*, 2021). Affective benefits are notable as well, where learners report feeling more confident and willing to engage in discussions when they can utilize their L1 (Tahang *et al.*, 2022; Sameen *et al.*, 2021). Socially, these practices create a more collaborative environment, prompting intercultural competence among students from diverse linguistic backgrounds (Schissel *et al.*, 2018).

However, drawbacks are also evident. Excessive use of code-switching may engender a dependence that undermines the effectiveness of immersion strategies, reducing exposure to the target language (Akanke & Diei-Ouadi, 2010; Morris, Kamarulzaman & Morris, 2019). In some instances, teachers noted that heavy reliance on the L1 diminished students' opportunities to develop vital inferencing skills essential for real-world language comprehension (Schissel *et al.*, 2018). Additionally, in multilingual classrooms, the pedagogical value of code-switching can be limited, leaving some learners confused or excluded if a shared L1 is not present.

Furthermore, there exist linguistic power dynamics that may influence perceptions of legitimacy among learners. For instance, in classrooms where English is frequently used, students from non-English-speaking backgrounds might feel their linguistic contributions are undervalued, thus perpetuating inequalities if translanguaging is not approached inclusively (Schissel *et al.*, 2018).

In conclusion, the evidence indicates that both code-switching and translanguaging play vital, albeit multifaceted roles in the FLE classroom. Their effectiveness hinges on intentional and mindful application, reflecting the linguistic diversity and developmental needs of students. Teachers must remain flexible yet purposeful, adapting their methodologies to align with learners' evolving proficiencies while considering curriculum and assessment contexts (Ogunyankinnu, *et al.*, 2022, Kolade, *et al.*, 2022). Explaining the specific conditions under which these practices serve educational purposes will enrich the

landscape of language education and promote an environment where bilingual and multilingual speakers can thrive.

3. Discussion

The interplay between sociocultural theory and dynamic bilingualism in the French as a Foreign Language (FLE) context reveals several essential findings that highlight the role of language as a mediating tool for learners navigating linguistic challenges. Drawing on Vygotsky's sociocultural framework, it is recognized that learning occurs through social interactions and the utilization of cultural tools, with language being paramount among these tools (Ilori & Olanipekun, 2020). Code-switching and translanguaging emerge as critical linguistic practices that support students' ability to traverse their zones of proximal development. Empirical studies show that strategically introducing a learner's first language (L1) during challenges in French aids in scaffolding their comprehension and facilitates the internalization of new materials (Newman, 2018; Back *et al.*, 2020; Song *et al.*, 2022). These practices not only enhance students' metalinguistic awareness but also validate their fluid language use, supporting claims of the dynamic bilingualism theory, which emphasizes that language use is adaptable and context-driven (Newman & Latifi, 2020; Garcia & Schlepppegrell, 2021).

In practical terms, this implies that FLE instructors need to reconceptualize their attitudes toward language use in the classroom, particularly concerning the strategic integration of L1 through code-switching and translanguaging. This shift can help cultivate a learning environment that leverages all of a student's linguistic resources rather than adhering strictly to monolingual immersion principles (Ajibola & Olanipekun, 2019; Olanipekun & Ayotola, 2019). Research has evidenced that when students are allowed to employ their L1, it significantly reduces anxiety levels and enhances participation, particularly in the early stages of language acquisition (Back *et al.*, 2020; Song *et al.*, 2022; Deng *et al.*, 2020). As learners advance, purposeful use of translanguaging activities such as collaborative projects and bilingual journals can promote deeper cognitive engagement and critical thinking skills (Garcia & Schlepppegrell, 2021; Song *et al.*, 2022).

However, the incorporation of these progressive strategies is impeded by various institutional constraints. Centralized curricula often prioritize native-like fluency and monolingual assessments, thus undermining the benefits of dynamic bilingual practices such as code-switching and translanguaging (Olanipekun, 2020; West, Kraut & Ei Chew, 2019). This institutional bias creates a dilemma for teachers, who may recognize the instructional benefits yet feel pressured to adhere to standardized, monolingual frameworks (Back *et al.*, 2020; Newman & Latifi, 2020). Current pedagogical practices may lead educators to apply translanguaging informally, thereby limiting its scope and impact on student learning (García & Kleifgen, 2019). To bridge the gap between innovative pedagogical strategies and institutional requirements, systematic reforms in teacher training and curriculum development are necessary (Ahiaba, 2019; Hodges, Buzby & Bennett, 2011). Enhancing educators' understandings of multilingualism, complemented by robust support systems, can foster an instructional climate that embraces linguistic diversity while aligning with broader

educational policies (Deng *et al.*, 2020; Gianni, Lehtinen & Nieminen, 2022; Kankanhalli, Charalabidis & Mellouli, 2019).

Balancing immersive language exposure with necessary learner support constitutes a central challenge in FLE education. While immersion strategies are vital for developing fluency, excessive use of L1 could lead to dependency, potentially slowing down language acquisition (Zano, 2022). Conversely, completely restricting access to L1 may foster frustration and disengagement (Jagtap, *et al.*, 2020; Sibanda & Workneh, 2020). Research points to a gradual release model, where in the early stages, code-switching serves as essential scaffolding, while increasing exposure to French occurs as proficiency builds (Song *et al.*, 2022; Zano, 2022). This phased approach not only enhances learner independence but also reaffirms the value of multilingual engagement as integral to the learning process (Chaudhuri, *et al.*, 2018; Stathers & Mvumi, 2020).

Moreover, fostering student agency through inclusive practices underscores the importance of nurturing diverse linguistic identities within the classroom. Translanguaging creates a space where all languages and cultural backgrounds are respected and valued, facilitating collaboration and equity among students (Al-Besher & Kumar, 2022; Taeihagh, 2021; Song *et al.*, 2022). Educators are tasked with establishing norms that promote the open sharing of linguistic resources, enriching the collective learning experience while ensuring that no single language dominates the discourse (Garcia & Schleppegrell, 2021; Newman & Latifi, 2020). Aligning classroom practices with broader educational objectives particularly in bilingual or Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) settings further enhances the impact of dynamic bilingual approaches (García & Kleifgen, 2019).

In summary, the integration of code-switching and translanguaging within the FLE classroom illustrates that these strategies can significantly enhance learning when implemented thoughtfully. The success of these methods is contingent upon multiple interrelated factors, including educational philosophies, the proficiency levels and emotional needs of learners, and overarching institutional frameworks (Belot, 2020; Olanipekun, Ilori & Ibitoye, 2020). By embracing a multilingual pedagogical perspective, FLE instructors can cultivate more engaging, equitable, and effective language learning experiences that resonate with the realities of multilingual students.

4. Conclusion

The exploration of code-switching and translanguaging in the French as a Foreign Language (FLE) classroom reveals a nuanced and multifaceted understanding of how multilingual practices function within educational settings. The findings of this study underscore that neither code-switching nor translanguaging can be universally categorized as inherently beneficial or detrimental. Instead, their impact is shaped by context, intentionality, and the pedagogical framework in which they are employed. When used thoughtfully, code-switching provides immediate scaffolding and facilitates access to complex content, particularly for beginner learners. Translanguaging, meanwhile, allows students to engage more holistically with language learning by drawing upon their full linguistic repertoire, fostering cognitive engagement, emotional comfort, and deeper conceptual understanding. Reframing the traditional strategy-versus-barrier debate

requires moving beyond binary interpretations that cast code-switching and translanguaging as either right or wrong. These practices should instead be recognized as dynamic tools within a continuum of pedagogical options that respond to learners' evolving needs. The question is not whether they should be used but how, when, and to what extent they can be integrated into instruction to optimize learning. By embracing the fluid nature of language use and acknowledging that language learning does not occur in isolation from students' existing linguistic and cultural identities, educators can create more inclusive and effective learning environments. This reframing also challenges outdated monolingual ideologies that continue to dominate many FLE curricula and assessment systems, urging a shift towards a more pluralistic and learner-centered approach.

For educators, the findings suggest the need for professional development that equips them with both the theoretical grounding and practical strategies to implement code-switching and translanguaging meaningfully. Teacher education programs must include components that address multilingual pedagogy, provide examples of effective implementation, and foster critical reflection on language use in the classroom. Policymakers should work to align language policies and curricula with contemporary understandings of bilingual and multilingual education. This includes revising assessment frameworks to reflect the complex, non-linear nature of language acquisition and allowing for greater flexibility in classroom language practices. Institutions must also recognize that rigid immersion policies may not serve all learners equally, and that strategic multilingual support can lead to stronger long-term proficiency and engagement.

Future research should further investigate the longitudinal impacts of these practices on language development, particularly in FLE contexts that are underrepresented in existing literature. Studies should explore how learners transition from reliance on L1 scaffolding to independent use of French, and under what conditions translanguaging facilitates this progression. Additionally, comparative studies across different cultural and linguistic settings would offer valuable insights into how institutional context mediates the use and perception of these practices. Research should also consider the voices of learners themselves, examining how their experiences of multilingualism shape their motivation, identity, and educational outcomes. Ultimately, the continued exploration of code-switching and translanguaging must be grounded in a commitment to equity, inclusion, and pedagogical responsiveness, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to succeed in language learning regardless of their linguistic background.

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