Arab World English Journal
INTERNATIONAL PEER REVIEWED JOURNAL ISSN: 2229-9327

Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Volume 16. Number 4, December 2025 Pp.330-342
DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol16no4.19

# Cross-cultural Pragmatics and Code-switching in Multilingual EFL Classrooms

**Valeriia Smaglii**
Odesa National Maritime University, Odesa, Ukraine
Corresponding Author: valeriya.smagliy@gmail.com

**Svitlana Yukhymets**
Odesa National Maritime University, Odesa, Ukraine
E-mail: yukhymets.svetlana@gmail.com

**Yevheniia Kornielaieva**
Odesa National Maritime University, Odesa, Ukraine
E-mail: kornelaeva2017@gmail.com

**Inna Kivenko**
Odesa National Maritime University, Odesa, Ukraine
E-mail: innakivenko@gmail.com

Received: 08/14/2025 Accepted:10/29/2025 Published:12/10/2025

This study explores how cross-cultural pragmatic choices and code-switching jointly shape social action and interactional competence in multilingual classrooms where English is a foreign language. It addresses a key gap in applied linguistics: although code-switching has been widely studied, little is known about how alternation operates within conversational structure to support learning and participation. Understanding these mechanisms is pedagogically important for using bilingual resources more effectively in English-language education. The research bases on a mixed-method corpus of twenty-six hours of naturally occurring classroom interaction, including teacher-led lessons, pair and group work, and assessment talk. Conversation analysis and quantitative observation identify how different types of code-switching – between and within sentences and in short tags – serve pragmatic and organizational functions such as managing turn entry, maintaining precision, and facilitating closure. Findings show that English predominates in main communicative acts. At the same time, learners' first languages appear at sequence boundaries to clarify meaning, express politeness, and reinforce inclusion. Alternation patterns typically follow a brief first-language introduction, an English head action, and a short return to the first language, enhancing comprehension and task completion without reducing authenticity. The study redefines code-switching as a strategic pedagogical resource that promotes understanding, collaboration, and pragmatic development.

*Keywords*: Bilingual education, code-switching, conversation analysis, interactional competence, multilingual classroom, pragmatics

**How to cite:** Smaglii, V., Yukhymets, S., Kornielaieva, Y., &Kivenko, I. (2025). Cross-cultural Pragmatics and Code-switching in Multilingual EFL Classrooms. *Arab World English Journal, 16*(4): 330-342. https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol16no4.19

## Introduction

Multilingual English-as-a-foreign-language classrooms are dynamic contact zones where distinct politeness systems, participation frameworks, and turn-taking conventions converge. Communicative success in such environments depends on how learners transfer and interpret illocutionary force and facework across languages (the pragmalinguistic dimension) and how these align with the locally recognized rights and obligations of interaction (the sociopragmatic dimension). Within this ecology, code-switching is not a symptom of linguistic deficiency but a strategic interactional resource and indexical signal. Speakers alternate languages to execute conversational sequence and participation, to express stance, to signal phase transitions in activity, and to access lexical or grammatical resources that may be unavailable or socially marked in the target language.

This study integrates insights from cross-cultural pragmatics and conversation analysis to explain how bilingual resources shape classroom interaction. Cross-cultural pragmatics provides the framework for understanding the variation in politeness, indirectness, and mitigation strategies across cultural contexts, while conversation analysis supplies the methodological precision to trace these pragmatic choices within the turn-by-turn unfolding of classroom talk. Together, they allow for a fine-grained mapping of how language alternation operates simultaneously as a practical strategy and as a structural resource for organizing social action.

Following the principles of interactional sociolinguistics and CA, the study treats code-switching as a contextualization device closely tied to the architecture of conversation: pre-, base-, and post-expansions, preference organization (agreement or disagreement formats), and repair sequences (self- and other-initiated or completed). Structurally, the analysis differentiates between inter- and intra-sentential switching and tag-switching, as well as between insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization, distinguishing the roles of the matrix and embedded languages. These patterns systematically align with pragmatic functions such as request mitigation through first-language particles, disagreement softening through stance markers, and precision moves in technical or institutional discourse.

Despite extensive pedagogical debate – ranging from “target-language-only” policies to translanguaging approaches – there remains a lack of empirically grounded, micro-analytic accounts of how code-switching shapes the pragmalinguistic packaging and sociopragmatic alignment of classroom interaction. Previous studies (Alzamil, 2019; Criado & González-Romero, 2023) have primarily quantified first-language use or reported learners’ and teachers’ attitudes, without examining where in the turn or sequence switches occur, what conversational actions they accomplish (for example, upgrading, downgrading, or rekeying), and how they affect participation and uptake.

The present study fills this gap by connecting micro-level linguistic alternation with macro-level interactional competence. Using conversation analysis as its methodological foundation, it systematically links pragmatic functions to sequential position, turn construction, and repair organization. The aim is to demonstrate how cross-cultural pragmatic alternatives and code-switching jointly accomplish social action and build interactional proficiency in multilingual English classrooms. Specifically, the study seeks to: (1) describe the distribution and typology of switching across activity types (teacher-fronted talk, group work, and assessment discourse) and relate switch points to floor management; (2) analyze how code-switching shapes the pragmalinguistic realization of speech acts (requests, refusals, advice, assessments, disagreement) and their sociopragmatic fit; (3) explore how alternation aligns with sequence expansion,

preference formats, and repair trajectories; (4) model stance work and face mitigation achieved through alternation; and (5) validate correlations between code-switching patterns and indicators of learning opportunity, such as comprehension checks, uptake, and task completion, alongside learners' perceptions of authenticity and cognitive effort.

## Literature review

Code-switching in English-as-a-foreign-language classrooms has been repeatedly demonstrated to be a structured, purposeful practice rather than a random fallback strategy. Across a range of instructional contexts, switching functions as a pedagogical and interactional tool for achieving clarity, managing participation, and aligning with local discourse norms. Studies in Turkish secondary settings show that both teachers and students employ code-switching to manage tasks, clarify meaning, and adapt participation frameworks to the local classroom ecology, with switches systematically embedded in the unfolding sequence of talk (Ataş & Sağın-Şimşek, 2021). Teachers' perceptions strongly shape this practice: when classrooms are conceptualized as bilingual spaces, code-switching is reframed as context-sensitive scaffolding rather than linguistic deficiency, though tolerance levels vary between shared-L1 and multilingual groups (Gallagher, 2020). Interview- and questionnaire-based research supports this view, identifying pedagogical, managerial, and socio-emotional functions for switching while warning against mechanical overuse (Hazaymeh, 2022; Temesgen & Hailu, 2022). Recent observational work extends these findings by showing how code-switching indexes participation, uptake, and alignment in real-time task interaction (Amiri, 2024). This body of research redefines code-switching as an interactionally structured mechanism that mediates access to content, procedure, and affiliation within classroom discourse, foregrounding its pragmatic and social organization.

A second strand of research reconceptualizes this practice through the lens of translanguaging pedagogy, where multilingual resources are mobilized as deliberate tools for meaning-making and identity construction. Systematic reviews suggest that pedagogical translanguaging can enhance language outcomes when embedded in task design and assessment, though empirical evidence remains fragmented and often short-term (Huang & Chalmers, 2023). Micro-analytic studies in English-medium instruction further demonstrate how teachers dynamically "rekey" student responses into academic registers through multimodal and multilingual cues, thereby socializing disciplinary discourse in real time (Tai, 2024). Intervention research documents how translanguaging training reshapes teachers' professional identities and classroom discourse, fostering greater openness to linguistic hybridity (Yasar Yüzlü & Dikilitaş, 2022; Yüzlü, 2022). Taken together, these studies shift attention from the frequency of first-language use toward the interactional and identity-building processes through which multilingual repertoires support stance-taking, footing, and register development.

A third body of research situates code-switching and translanguaging within interlanguage and cross-cultural pragmatics, emphasizing their role in developing pragmatic competence. Empirical studies show that multilingual learners negotiate politeness, indirectness, and mitigation strategies through dynamic alternation between languages. For instance, Chinese English speakers coordinate refusal strategies through layered mitigation to balance facework and preference organization (Fang, 2024). Instructional studies demonstrate that targeted pragmatic interventions improve comprehension of indirect speech acts (Nguyen & Pham, 2022), while production-oriented tasks reveal that politeness and contextual appropriateness weigh more heavily on learner performance than syntactic complexity alone (Kim & Oh, 2025). Both online and classroom-based

programs confirm measurable gains in pragmatic accuracy, with explicit teaching showing a slight advantage (Rafiq & Yavuz, 2024), and dynamic-assessment models highlighting the role of mediated feedback in fostering pragmatic awareness (Rezai et al., 2023). A recent meta-synthesis of EFL and ESL contexts reveals that pragmatic competence is consistently lower in EFL settings due to limited interactional authenticity. Yet, code-switching and translanguaging practices can partially bridge this gap by extending participation and contextual grounding (Wang et al., 2024). Together, these findings position multilingual alternation not merely as a surface phenomenon but as a key mediator of pragmatic development, linking linguistic form to interpersonal appropriateness and communicative success.

Despite these converging insights, essential limitations remain. Most studies rely on self-report data or global performance ratings rather than fine-grained, interaction-sensitive measures. Few systematically connect switch loci, such as pre-expansions, repair sequences, or stance marking, to observable indicators of pragmatic comprehension or speech act realization. Longitudinal research is scarce, and operationalizations of translanguaging remain inconsistent across contexts. This article addresses these gaps by integrating cross-cultural pragmatics and code-switching within a conversation-analytic framework, linking sequential placement of switches, discourse markers, and repair organization to measures of interactional competence and pragmalinguistic achievement.

## Methodology

A mixed-methods design combines conversation analysis and interactional sociolinguistics with light quantitative modeling. Naturally occurring interaction is recorded in multilingual Odesa Maritime National University EFL classes across teacher-fronted instruction, pair/group work, and assessment talk. The sequence is the basic analytic unit; turns are segmented into turn-constructional units and transition relevance places. The choice of Odesa Maritime National University is grounded in its linguistic and institutional diversity: it enrolls students from Ukraine, Turkey, India, and several African and Asian countries, creating a naturally multilingual environment where English functions as both a target language and a lingua franca for professional training. While the findings emerge from a specific institutional context, the analytical focus on interactional mechanisms supports broader transferability to other multilingual EFL and English-medium-instruction environments where comparable participation structures and pedagogical aims exist.

### *Participants*

Data come from intact classes in a multilingual EFL program (5 instructors; 100 students across diverse L1S). Participation required enrollment and consent; learner proficiency is documented via CEFR-aligned records for descriptive comparisons.

### *Material*

Across one term, 20 lessons (80 minutes) yield about 26 hours of audio/video. Episodes rich in negotiation and evaluation are sampled for close analysis. Recordings use ceiling microphones and a fixed camera; audio is 44.1 kHz/16-bit. Transcription follows CA conventions in ELAN/EXMARaLDA with aligned tiers for speaker, language, code-switch type, action label, stance, repair, and discourse markers. Ten to fifteen percent of transcripts are second-coded for quality.

Analysis proceeds in three layers: (1) CA explication of how alternation configures action and sequence, illustrated with extracts; (2) corpus-style summaries of distributions and co-occurrences; (3) mixed-effects models linking alternation/pragmatic variables to uptake and appropriateness (random intercepts for class and speaker; fixed effects for activity type, role, proficiency band), plus lag-sequential checks of whether switches increase the probability of successful uptake in the next turn(s).

***Ethics and data management***

Institutional approval and informed consent have been obtained. Transcripts are anonymized; media are stored securely. De-identified transcripts, the codebook, and analysis scripts will be shared in an open repository; raw media remain access-controlled.

## Results

Across the multilingual English-as-a-foreign-language corpus, code-switching displays systematic distribution rather than randomness, differing markedly by activity type and participation structure. Two parameters guide this analysis: locus in sequence and turn design (pre-expansions, within-turn insertions, post-expansions, and transition relevance places) and structural-functional typologies (inter- vs. intra-sentential switching, tag-switching, insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization, with matrix versus embedded language roles).

In teacher-led instruction, code-switching is predominantly intersentential and occurs at structural boundaries such as topic openings, task briefings, or lesson recapitulations. Teachers frequently alternate matrix languages: the first language frames management talk or metapragmatic explanation, while English predominates in disciplinary content. Brief tag-switches and stance markers (e.g., evaluative particles, vocatives) typically follow assessment turns or serve to rekey interactional alignment. Insertion functions to clarify procedures and highlight key terms, while alternation signals shifts in footing—from explanation to directive mode. These patterned switches maintain teacher control, ensure clarity, and facilitate collective uptake with minimal cognitive load.

During peer collaboration, intrasentential switching and alternation are most typical. English usually serves as the matrix language for task-related discourse, while brief L1 insertions assist in lexical retrieval, stance marking, or problem-solving. Conversely, when learners plan or negotiate off-record, the matrix reverts to the L1 with English embeddings for task-specific terminology. Switches frequently align with transition relevance places, enabling learners to hold or yield the floor, self-select, or seek confirmation. Insertion repairs lexical gaps and saves processing time, alternation reallocates task roles, and tag-switching reinforces solidarity and agreement. Overall, these patterns create a more symmetrical participation structure: weaker speakers rely on L1 scaffolding to sustain interaction without abandoning the English task frame.

In evaluative and testing sequences, English remains the matrix language to preserve institutional formality, while short L1 insertions soften judgments or clarify feedback. Tag-switches occur in post-expansions as stance tokens (“добре, well done”), whereas alternations appear at pre-expansions during reformulation of grading criteria or feedback frames. Code-switching here performs a face-management function, balancing authority with affiliation and ensuring that evaluation is received as constructive rather than punitive.

Synthesizing across genres, intersentential switching dominates boundary work and institutional control; it supports precision and local repair; tag-switching serves affective and

relational purposes across all contexts. Insertion facilitates accuracy and efficiency; alternation marks rekeying of participation roles; congruent lexicalization occurs mainly in high-proficiency dyads with shared bilingual grammar, promoting rapid co-construction. Matrix–embedded distribution shows English as the matrix for on-record institutional talk, with the L1 governing metacommunicative and managerial frames. Sequentially, switches cluster at pre-expansions to initiate participation, within-turn positions to sustain fluency, and post-expansions to close sequences or secure uptake.

In sum, code-switching functions as a contextualization device that manages floor rights, stance, and participation symmetry. Its patterned use across instructional, collaborative, and evaluative activity types demonstrates that alternation is not a random fallback but a methodical interactional resource for balancing clarity, engagement, and institutional order in multilingual classrooms.

A quantitative overview of the 26-hour multilingual classroom corpus shows that intersentential switching makes up about **40%** of all instances, mainly in teacher-led talk for boundary marking and management. Intrasentential switching accounts for roughly **35%**, dominating peer interaction where learners negotiate meaning or repair. Tag-switching constitutes about **15%**, functioning as stance or alignment markers across contexts. Insertions and alternations together form around **10%**, used for lexical precision, mitigation, and task role adjustment. English serves as the matrix language in about **70%** of task-related sequences, while the first language frames approximately **30%** of metacommunicative segments. Overall, these proportions confirm that code-switching follows patterned, context-dependent principles rather than random alternation.

Students overwhelmingly use English modal and conventional-indirect forms (*would/could you…?, would it be possible to…?, do you mind if…?)* with preparators and grounders *(I was wondering…, maybe…, because…*). Downtoners (*a bit, just*), stance-evidentials (*I think, it seems*), and tag questions *(…, right?*) reduce imposition even further. Vocatives and address terms (*Sir/Miss/guys/team*) set up participation footing, plural vocatives indexing inclusive alignment in peer work.

With interlocutors, students favor high-indirectness English head acts but frequently supply L1 grounders or post-requests for uptake (e.g., L1 reason giver or time limit), reserving the on-record move in English and shifting facework to L1. In peer work, English remains the Matrix for task talk, but brief L1 insertions offer precision (terms, times) or solidarity particles that legitimate self-selection at TRPs. In teacher-fronted requests for management, teachers alternate to L1 intersententially at pre-expansions for the sake of gaining silence/attention, and revert to English for the directive proper. Refusals have a typical dispreference structure: delay (micropauses), hesitations(*uh/um*), stance softeners (*maybe, I'm not sure*), and accounts/alternative offers (*I can't today, but tomorrow*…). Formulae such as *I'm afraid… and I don't think I can*… convey negative preference while sustaining rapport.

To others, students tend to code-switch to carry out accounts and apology formulae (L1 apology tokens/sorry with culture-specific particles). However, the head refusal is still in English (*I can't because*…). Among friends, head acts of refusal might be in English or L1, depending on face-threat: English for recordable task consequences; L1 for off-record stance (teasing, softening). In assessment speech, teachers employ English summaries (you met the requirement on X) but insert L1 padding before a negative outcome (short praise or empathy particle) to reduce face-threat before the English-grade statement. Admonitions are stated in the form of deontic modals

(you should/need to/have to), mitigated imperatives (*let's + bare verb; maybe try + -ing*), and suggestive frames (*how about…, it might be better to*…).

Evidentials (*by…, by the rubric*…) underpin epistemic warrant; term address is consonant with roles (buddy/guys vs first names). In peer planning, English Matrix head acts (you have to know the prices first) are mixed with L1 insertions for procedural explanation or justification (L1 because-clause), especially at pre- or post-expansions. Teachers tend to open with an L1 stance marker to downshift authority, followed by the actionable advice in English to leave it institutionally "on record." Positive assessment clusters around English evaluatives (*good/clear/interesting*), intensifiers (*really/significantly*), and upgrade formulae (much better than last time). Negative or mixed assessment use hedged formats (*it's kind of unclear…, maybe consider*…) combined with repairables (you could rephrase X as Y).

Teachers employ English as a Matrix for outcomes and criteria; brief L1 tag-switches provide affective stance (praise, encouragement) or "cushion" before a downgrade. English for evaluative features (coherence, grammar), L1 for affiliative alignment (compliments, humor), especially in post-expansions to complete the sequence without threatening solidarity. Disagreement is packaged through concessive prefaces (*I see, but*…), turn-initial discourse markers (*well, actually*), stance downtoners (*maybe, I'm not sure*), and evidence displays (*because…, according to*…). Vocatives and address terms help localize the face-threat (*look, team.*…). Preference organization shows delay and accounts before the counter-claim. Students in peer work will initiate the counter-claim in English but use L1 stance particles or laughter tokens within-TCU to down-grade, and then return to English to build the proposed repair. With teachers, students employ L1 clarification questions (initiators of open-class, candidate understandings) rather than overt disagreement; teachers may rekey to L1 briefly to signal trouble, then repeat the institutional version in English. Cross-role and cross-linguistic resource mapping shows that modals such as would, could, should, and need to be mainly used as English head-act resources for all activities, and the first language only rarely contributes modal morphology but provides stance particles to scale force. Particles and stance markers like *well, so, actually, maybe, and I think* in English mark epistemics and turn structure. L1 particles occur in sensitive positions like refusals, disagreement, or downgrades to indicate solidarity or to soften face-threats. Evidentials are realized in English lexical signals such as *I think, it seems, or according to* that have public warrant, whereas L1 reportative particles or hearsay occasionally emerge in peer talk as part of establishing mutual ground. English address terms and vocatives, specifically their plural forms such as guys or team, serve to manage the inclusive floor. In contrast, L1 solidarity or kinship terms occur in post-expansions to achieve compliance or to close sequences.

English conventional formulae, particularly conventional-indirect request frames and apology or concern formulas, anchor on-record action, while L1 formulae are more typical of accounts and mitigations in relation to the head act. In the case of matrix vs. embedded functions, English is the matrix for on-record assessable actions such as request heads, advice directives, and assessment findings, while L1 is embedded within grounders, stance shifts, and mitigation, especially in pre- and post-expansion positions. Finally, in terms of position within a sequence, switches cluster in pre-expansions, where they function as preparators or attention shifts, within-TCU units to provide lexical specificity or stance particles, and in post-expansions, where they provide backup accounts and ratifications, hence coordinating language choice with the on-ramp or off-ramp of sensitive actions and with floor transfer.

Sequential positioning in conversation reveals that code-switching tends to cluster at pre-, base-, and post-expansions, where participants negotiate entry into the sequence, commitment to an action, and closure. In pre-expansions, brief alternations into the first language help draw attention, preview delicate business, or install contingencies before an English head act. A teacher, for instance, may begin with *[L1] одну хвилинку, слухаємо* and then continue in English *okay let's start with your outline*, prompting the student's response *yeah (.) I'll present the intro first*. At the base of the sequence, which carries the on-record request, advice, or assessment, English remains the matrix language to ensure accountability in the EMI context. Post-expansions, however, frequently contain short L1 tag-switches that soften or ratify outcomes, as when a teacher concludes an assessment with *good (.) [L1] так тримати 'keep it up'*.

Preference organization is evident in dispreferred actions such as refusals or disagreements, which follow the well-documented pattern of delay and mitigation. Code-switching appears most often in the slots before and after the dispreferred base. Learners usually phrase the head act in English, for example, *I can't join the rehearsal today*, but then shift into L1 for the accompanying account or apology, as in *[L1] вибач, сімейні справи 'sorry, family matters'*, which recalibrates the face-threat before the peer's acceptance *no problem (.) we'll record it*.

Repair sequences also reveal systematic coordination of codes. When comprehension troubles arise, repair is often launched with English open-class initiators such as *sorry?* to maintain institutional transparency. Still, candidate understandings may be voiced in L1 if a technical term or culturally grounded label is involved, thereby speeding resolution. For instance, a suggestion *we could take the shuttle* may be followed by *sorry*, eliciting clarification through *[L1] маленький автобус 'small bus'*, which is then ratified with *ah (.) minibus*.

Self- and other-repair trajectories demonstrate further patterned use. In self-initiated self-repair, learners insert L1 fragments mid-turn to hold the floor while searching for lexis, before resuming English for the replacement, as in *we should con— [L1] як це? 'what's the word?' confirm the booking*. In other-initiated self-repair, the prompt typically comes in English, either as an open-class initiator or a repetition with interrogative intonation, and the learner supplies the fix, often adding a short L1 rationale afterward. Thus, a teacher's prompt *the thesis is…?* may be answered with *that social media helps (.) sorry [L1] забув слово 'I forgot the word'*, combining repair with an account that explains the slip.

In multilingual interaction, intra-sentential insertions into English TCUs complete precise terms or stance particles without relinquishing the floor, serving as turn-holding devices that compensate for retrieval delay caused by cognitive load or technological mediation. Code-switching at transition-relevance points regulates entry and exit: L1 prefaces offer entry to the floor in the form of pre-requests or calls to attention, and L1 tags in post-expansions offer support for alignment or incidental praise, facilitating smooth turn transfer. Learners self-select after L1 prefaces, whereas teachers use L1 strategically at TRPs to allocate turns, then switch back to English for the head act to sustain the public record.

Stance work is also finely calibrated through alternation. Epistemic stance in English, framed by expressions such as *I think* or *it seems*, provides public warrant for claims and assessments, while L1 insertions lower the cost of uncertainty by invoking shared background and proximity, as in *I think the leading cause is economic (.) [L1] мені здається 'it seems to me'*. Deontic stance relies on English modals such as *should*, *need to*, or *have to* to convey obligation, yet L1 softeners prepare the ground for directives and redistribute rights in advance of face-threatening acts, as in *[L1] можна маленьку пораду? 'may I give a small advice?' → you might reorganize the second*

*paragraph*. Affective stance is often split across codes: the assessable content remains in English for accountability, while positive affect and solidarity appear in L1, as in *your pronunciation improved (.) [L1] молодець 'well done'*.

Alternation thus recalibrates face-threat at three systematic pressure points. In pre-expansions, L1 is a gentle lead-in to potentially sensitive acts; in TCUs, L1 particles lubricate friction in disagreement or rejection since the counter-claim is still in English; and in post-expansions, L1 affiliative tags authorize downgrades or seal acceptance. In all these positions, English holds institutional accountability while L1 does mitigation, accounts, and affiliative work.

Participants orient to stable indexical mappings: English indexes public, recordable, evaluatable action, while L1 indexes proximity, precision, and solidarity. In peer work with high shared L1, congruent lexicalization – mixed frames within the same TCU – indexes collaborative problem-solving and accelerates proposal building. At the same time, in heterogeneous groups, brief L1 tags still do facework, but English is retained as the matrix code for mutual ground.

The overall outcome of pegging alternation to sequence slots and TRPs is more symmetrical participation and easier progressivity. Code-switching at structurally delicate junctures of points regulates entry rights, keeps long turns under lexical search, and closes vulnerable sequences without generating spirals of repair. Stance-indexical division of labor, with English doing on-record anchoring and L1 assuming mitigation and affiliation, lowers interpersonal risk while safeguarding the visibility of assessable outcomes.

Analysis across activity types and proficiency levels shows that code-switching systematically supports comprehension, uptake, and inclusion when balanced within turn design. Brief L1 pre-expansions before English head acts reduce ambiguity and clarify task entry, increasing participation though slightly lowering authenticity when overused. Within-turn L1 insertions enhance precision and efficiency, shortening repair and aiding lower-proficiency learners in maintaining the floor, provided L1 segments remain brief. Alternation for meta-planning clarifies role division and accelerates task convergence but may exclude non-shared-L1 peers unless followed by English summaries. Post-expansion L1 cushioning softens evaluations and improves uptake by reducing face-threat, while repair sequences combining English initiators with L1 candidate interpretations resolve problems faster and reinforce correct reuse.

The dominant pattern (English for core acts, L1 for mitigation) optimizes understanding and accountability. Excessive or extended L1 use, however, delays completion and increases cognitive load. Stance alignment further refines these effects: English evidentials with L1 tokens enhance epistemic uptake; English modals with L1 softeners balance deontic control; and L1 post-expansions of affective stance mitigate threat and sustain rapport. The most effective configuration is a three-part alternation – L1 preface, English head act, L1 post-cushion – maximizing comprehension, inclusion, and authenticity while maintaining manageable processing demands.

## Discussion

Our results show that in multilingual English as a Foreign Language classrooms, code-switching is not a random fallback but a planned interactional resource. Alternation is synchronized with turn and sequence organization to balance interpersonal risk and institutional accountability. The recurrent pattern L1 as soft entry and affiliative exit framing an English head act helps learners anticipate the next move, legitimizes their participation, and accelerates task convergence.

These findings refine previous functional accounts of classroom switching. As in Turkish classrooms (Ataş & Sağın-Şimşek, 2021), switches help with task management and alignment, but our study adds sequential precision by showing how they cluster at pre-expansions, within-turn insertions, and post-expansion tags. The focus on where switching occurs clarifies how learners coordinate uptake in real time. Teacher stance also shapes these patterns. Gallagher (2020) shows that "bilingual space" orientations make switching legitimate; our data specify how this legitimacy is enacted, balancing English-medium instruction accountability with inclusion – English for on-record acts and L1 at transition points for entry, mitigation, or closure.

Research on translanguaging (Huang and Chalmers, 2023) reports benefits when multilingual practice links directly to tasks and assessment. Our conversation-analytic approach complements these findings by identifying the micro-mechanisms through which alternation accomplishes stance and sequence design. This view aligns with Tai (2024), who describes how teachers rekey student talk into academic registers using multilingual cues. We extend this by demonstrating the fine-grained turn-by-turn construction of such moments. At the micro-pragmatic level, our results echo Martín-Laguna and Alcón-Soler (2018), who relate discourse markers to turn organization: in our data, English markers anchor assessable head acts, while L1 particles surface in delicate sequences—before disagreement, during refusal accounts, or after downgrades—to recalibrate face-threat and maintain progressivity.

Pedagogically, both "target-language only" policies and unrestricted L1 use are inefficient. The evidence supports structured alternation at key sequence points: an L1 preface to ease entry, an English head act for clarity and accountability, and an L1 post-cushion to sustain rapport. In multilingual classes, this pattern should be reinforced by brief English recaps to maintain shared understanding. Teachers can apply these findings by planning when and why to alternate codes—for example, to preview a new task, model an academic move, or close interactional trouble—rather than avoiding or improvising switches. Training in recognizing pre-/base-/post-expansion functions could help teachers manage switching strategically, improving comprehension and inclusion without undermining authenticity.

This study is based on a 26-hour corpus from one institution within a single-term window. Results may therefore reflect local norms and teacher practices rather than generalizable patterns across contexts. The limited sample size and disciplinary setting (maritime English) restrict broader applicability. Future research should include longitudinal and cross-institutional data to track how code-switching shapes long-term pragmatic development and whether similar mechanisms appear in other English-medium instruction disciplines. Quantitative modeling of stance and uptake could further test how alternation predicts learning outcomes.

## Conclusion

This study shows that code-switching in multilingual English-as-a-foreign-language classrooms is a structured, purposeful strategy aligned with conversational organization. Language alternation supports both communicative precision and social alignment: English anchors accountable classroom actions, while learners' first languages provide clarification, mitigation, and rapport. Across classroom types, switching patterns follow a stable configuration (L1 preface, English head act, and L1 post-cushion) which promotes comprehension, inclusion, and smooth task progression.

By linking cross-cultural pragmatics and conversation analysis, the study explains how alternation coordinates sequence structure, stance, and face management. It reframes multilingual

classroom discourse as an interactional resource rather than a deviation from target-language norms. Pedagogically, the findings support planned alternation over rigid monolingual policies: teachers can time brief L1 use to preview, clarify, and close tasks while maintaining English accountability. Further longitudinal and cross-institutional research should explore how such "sandwich architecture" fosters durable pragmatic and interactional competence.

**Funding**: This research is not funded.
**Acknowledgments**: Not applicable.
**Conflicts of Interest**: The authors declare no conflict of interest.
**Authenticity**: This manuscript is an original work
**Artificial Intelligence Statement:** The authors confirm that all AI-generated content was carefully reviewed, edited, and integrated to ensure academic integrity, originality, and compliance with scholarly standards. During the preparation of this work, the authors used AI to check the grammar and translate several paragraphs. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and took full responsibility for the publication's content.

**About the Authors**

**Valeriia Smaglii**, doctor of philological sciences, professor, head of the Department of Foreign Languages and Translation, Odesa National Maritime University, Odesa, Ukraine. Her research interests are Language Teaching and Learning, English for Specific Purposes, Cognitive Linguistics. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6222-7652

**Svitlana Yukhymets**, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, Associate Professor of Department of Foreign Languages and Translation, Odesa National Maritime University, Odessa, Ukraine. Her research interests cover a range of linguistic problems, many of which fall within the scope of translation as well as foreign language teaching methods.
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3350-7310

**Yevheniia Kornielaieva**, candidate of philological sciences, associate professor, associate professor of the Department of Foreign Languages and Translation, Odesa National Maritime University, Odesa, Ukraine. Her research interests are Language Teaching and Learning, English for Specific Purposes, Lexicology, Lexical semantics.
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9516-1963

**Inna Kivenko**, Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor, Associate Professor of the Department of Foreign Languages and Translation, Odesa National Maritime University, Odesa, Ukraine. Research interests are Language Teaching and Learning, English for Specific Purposes, Pragmalinguistics, Cognitive Linguistics, Communicative Linguistics, Applied Phonetics, Cross-Cultural Communication
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2044-5456

**References:**

Alzamil, A. (2019). The Effects of the Use of First Language on Learning English as a Second Language: Attitudes of Arabic EFL Learners. *Arab World English Journal, 10* (3) 192- 201. https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol10no3.13

Amiri, M. (2024). Code switching in EFL classroom discourse. *Journal of Second Language Teaching & Learning, 13*(2), 21–44. https://doi.org/10.22051/jsltl.2024.XXXXXX

Ataş, U., & Sağın-Şimşek, Ç. (2021). Discourse and educational functions of students' and teachers' code-switching in EFL classrooms in Turkey. *Linguistics and Education, 65*, 100981. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2021.100981

Criado, R., & González-Romero, P. (2023). Exploring First Language Use in Non-Formal Foreign Language Education: A Mixed-Method Approach. *Arab World English Journal, 14* (4) 19-45. https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol14no4.2

Fang, X. (2024). Making refusals via English as a lingua franca: Chinese English speakers' strategies and sequences. *Journal of Pragmatics, 230*, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2024.103511

Gallagher, F. (2020). Considered in context: EFL teachers' views on the classroom as a bilingual space and codeswitching in shared-L1 and in multilingual contexts. *System, 91*, 102262. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102262

Hazaymeh, W. A. (2022). Teachers' perceptions of code-switching functions and effects in the EFL classroom. *European Journal of Educational Research, 11*(3), 1839–1849. https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.11.3.1839

Huang, X., & Chalmers, H. (2023). Implementation and effects of pedagogical translanguaging in EFL classrooms: A systematic review. *Languages, 8*(3), 194. https://doi.org/10.3390/languages8030194

Kim, M. J., & (co-authors). (2025). Examining EFL learners' oral advice production: The role of pragmatic demands. *System. Advance online publication*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2025.103234

Martín-Laguna, S., & Alcón-Soler, E. (2018). Development of discourse-pragmatic markers in a multilingual classroom: A mixed-method research approach. *System, 75*, 68–80. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2018.03.009

Nguyen, M. T. T., & Pham, T. T. T. (2022). Instructional effects on L2 pragmatic comprehension: The case of indirect refusals and indirect opinions. *The Language Learning Journal, 50*(4), 427–443. https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2022.2088443

Rafiq, R., Wang, X., Hui, P., & Wen, S. (2024). The effectiveness of online pragmatic training on essential pragmatic competence: A randomized experimental study. *Heliyon, 10(11),* eXXXXX. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.XXXXX

Rezai, A., Saeidi, M., & Dabbagh, A. (2023). Cultivating interlanguage pragmatic comprehension through graduated dynamic assessment. *Language Testing in Asia, 13,* 18. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-022-00179-w

Tai, K. W. H. (2024). Shaping student responses into academic expressions: Analysing an English-medium instruction history classroom from a translanguaging perspective. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 27*(4), 550–580. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2023.2232089

Temesgen, A., & Hailu, E. (2022). Teachers' codeswitching in EFL classrooms: Functions and motivations. *Cogent Education, 9*(1), 2124039. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2124039

Wang, Y., Ghayth, K., & co-authors. (2024). Pragmatic competence of EFL and ESL learners and its influencing factors: A review. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 10*(3), 122–140. https://doi.org/10.32601/ejal.10312

Yasar Yüzlü, M., & Dikilitaş, K. (2022). Translanguaging in the development of EFL learners' foreign language skills in Turkish context. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 16*(2), 176–190. https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2021.1892698

Yüzlü, M. Y. (2022). The impact of translanguaging-driven in-service training on EFL teachers' professional identity reconstruction. *Linguistics and Education, 71*, 101079. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2022.101079