

## TABLE OF CONTENT

Anita Christina Anthony <b>Pre-Service ESL Teachers' Mindsets and their Approaches towards Assessments</b> <a href="https://doi.org/10.24191/mvahvg19">https://doi.org/10.24191/mvahvg19</a>	1–21
Maryam Muidh Alsulami, Sharifah Shahnaz Syed Husain, Aini Faridah Azizul Hassan <b>Saudi EFL Learners' Attitudes Towards Arabic-English Code-Switching</b> <a href="https://doi.org/10.24191/yjvd8a60">https://doi.org/10.24191/yjvd8a60</a>	22–37
Julazzmie Kambutong, Nur Farha Shaafi <b>Content Validity of a Survey on Knowledge, Skills, and Readiness for Generative AI</b> <a href="https://doi.org/10.24191/xnvcmw23">https://doi.org/10.24191/xnvcmw23</a>	38–57
Aini Syahira Jamaluddin, Nabila Huda Nasir, Nur Azyyati Mohamad Sa'edin, Ummu Habibah Mohd Sakri @ Shukri <b>Can Artificial Intelligence Replace Teachers? Perspectives from Pre-Service Teachers in Elementary Education</b> <a href="https://doi.org/10.24191/vjk6sz19">https://doi.org/10.24191/vjk6sz19</a>	58–73
Xia Yutong, Talaibek Musaev <b>Grammar of Obligation: Syntactic Patterns in Malaysian Reddit AIED Discourse</b> <a href="https://doi.org/10.24191/rs3g1v95">https://doi.org/10.24191/rs3g1v95</a>	74–97
Mohd Hafiz Mat Adam, Geethanjali Narayanan, Juriani Jamaludin, Rafidah Abd Karim <b>Fostering Independent Expository Essay Writing Development Using Song-Assisted Learning (SAL) to Avert AI Over-Reliance</b> <a href="https://doi.org/10.24191/nhh8d038">https://doi.org/10.24191/nhh8d038</a>	98–112
Farhana Atiqah Ahmad Radzuan, Marina Mohd Arif <b>Teacher Perspectives on ChatGPT Integrated Vocabulary Instruction in a Flipped ESL Classroom</b> <a href="https://doi.org/10.24191/9deysg59">https://doi.org/10.24191/9deysg59</a>	113–135
Damia Syafiqah Mohd Salleh, Norlina Mohd Sabri, Fazlin Marini Hussain <b>SpeakEasy Nihongo: Mobile Application for Japanese Beginner Learners</b> <a href="https://doi.org/10.24191/1k11n645">https://doi.org/10.24191/1k11n645</a>	136–152



## Saudi EFL Learners' Attitudes Towards Arabic-English Code-Switching

Maryam Muidh Alsulami\*  
2023282302@student.uitm.edu.my  
The Academy of Language Studies  
Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam, Malaysia

Sharifah Shahnaz Syed Husain  
shahnaza@uitm.edu.my  
The Academy of Language Studies  
Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam, Malaysia

Aini Faridah Azizul Hassan  
ainifari@uitm.edu.my  
The Academy of Language Studies  
Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam, Malaysia

Corresponding author\*

Received: 29 October 2025

Accepted: 16 February 2026

Published: 25 May 2026

### CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Alsulami, M. M., Husain, S. S., & Hassan, A. F. (2026). Saudi EFL learners' attitudes towards Arabic-English code-switching. *Journal of Creative Practices in Language Learning and Teaching*, 14(1), 22–37. <https://doi.org/10.24191/yjvd8a60>

### ABSTRACT

At Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, a quantitative study on Arabic-English code-switching was conducted with 150 Saudi EFL learners. This study primarily draws from Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model of code switching, while L2 Motivational Self-System was also used as interpretive lens. Using a structured questionnaire, primary data was collected through systematic random sampling with 33% response rate demonstrating acceptable construct validity ( $KR-20 = 0.74$ ). Results showed a functional-institutional duality in learners' attitudes in the female-dominant sample, there was strong agreement that comprehension (88.8%) and vocabulary (85.4%) would benefit. However, only a small percentage backed its formal promotion in classrooms (48.8%). This gap suggests that students value code-switching as a helpful aid in certain situations but are cautious about relying on it too much or showing



reservations about its systematic institutionalization. There was no significant difference in gender attitude towards code-switching despite unequal sample size (female = 90.7%, male = 9.3%). The study concludes that Saudi EFL learners consciously endorsed code-switching due to its immediate pedagogical and affective benefits while being cautious about institutionalized use. This is in line with Vision 2030's goal for long-term engagement with English. These findings provide empirical groundings for designing balanced strategies that facilitate code-switching comprehension.

**Keywords:** Saudi EFL Learners, Code-Switching (CS), Language Attitudes, Markedness Model, Classroom Pedagogy

## INTRODUCTION

According to Al-Seghayer (2023), Saudi Arabia vision 2030 has brought several changes to higher education among other things including linguistics practices to help the economy become more diverse and to improve English proficiency for global engagement. According to the preceding chapters, the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom is so constructed as to ensure the pedagogic and psycho-pedagogic fit of what is being done with what is being experienced cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally, by the so-called students entering this classroom. Despite the common use of code-switching (CS), which is the alternation between Arabic and English throughout the instruction, it remains a limited area of research.

Although considerable research demonstrates that code-switching is a natural communicative strategy in bi/multilingual settings (Myers-Scotton, 1993), its function in Saudi EFL classrooms is still under-researched. Most of the researchers have focused on either the structural dimension of language alternation or code-switching practices of teachers (Zaghlool & Altamimi, 2023). Little attention has been given to students' perceptions and evaluation of this phenomenon. In fact, the discrepancy is of particular significance as students' attitudes towards pedagogical practices can significantly impact their motivation, engagement and learning outcomes. Since CS role in Saudi EFL contexts has not been extensively explored, there seems to be a conceptual research gap for a study (Mohamed Ali El Deen et al., 2025). This study aims to address this gap by a systematic investigation of the attitudes of Saudi EFL learners towards Arabic-English code-switching, literature review documents more details on this.

The aim of the investigation is not only to understand those attitudes; at least classroom management, curriculum or even teacher training is expected to be affected by it. Because Saudi universities are attempting to develop their English language programs to international standards, while maintaining their local linguistic and cultural identity, it is essential to develop pedagogically sound and culturally responsive insights into student perceptions (Al-Marzouki & Albeyali, 2025). The central research question—“What are the attitudes of Saudi EFL students towards the use of Arabic-English code-switching?”—guides this investigation. In the Saudi context, a quantitative study of EFL teachers was carried out to provide evidence with theoretical and practical implications for the Saudi EFL educational community (Almusallam, 2024).



Although Project-Based Learning (PJBL) has been noted to have a beneficial pedagogical effect, it is frequently constrained by substantial problems at the student levels. Past studies define time management and unequal distribution of workload as the main sources of stress (Warman et al., 2024; O'Connor et al., 2024), and the complicated nature of the group dynamics tends to cause a social loaf or a breakdown in communication (Mutanga, 2024). But most of the literature available concerns the generic context of EFL, which presents a significant gap in the research concerning how these issues are reflected in the particular socio-cultural and linguistics setting of Saudi higher education (Almziad, 2024; Alzahrani, 2025). Namely, little is known about the way in which Saudi EFL learners overcome these logistical challenges and at the same time steer clear of the identity-shifting quality of Arabic-English code-switching. This attempts to void this gap by investigating Saudi student attitudes through the Markedness Model with a virtual linkage with L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS). Additionally, though PJBL focuses on the student autonomy, a critical gap in the comprehension of the role of scaffolded teacher directions and task segmentation to overcome these difficulties in the Saudi EFL environment exists. The existing literature does not fully recognize how the mechanisms of a particular type of support: digital collaborative tools or formal peer- assessment framework can be combined to maintain motivation among learners (Almziad, 2024; Warman et al., 2024). The study will try to satisfy the linguistic and motivational requirements of Saudi students and will go beyond the one-size-fits-all approach to student-led inquiry.

## **Research Question and Objectives**

This study addresses the following research question:

1. What are Saudi EFL learners' attitudes toward Arabic-English code-switching in classroom settings?

To have this question systematic answers, the study pursues three specific objectives:

1. To describe Saudi EFL learners' attitudes toward code-switching across cognitive, affective and institutional domains using binary response items.
2. To explore whether attitudes toward code-switching differ between males and females.
3. To interpret the patterns observed in learner attitudes through the integrated theoretical lens of the Markedness Model and the L2MSS as a brief interpretive lens.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Framework – Markedness Model**

The Markedness Model (Myers-Scotton, 1993)—a sociolinguistic framework that forms the theoretical foundation of this study—conceptualizes code-switching not as random alternation, but as strategic linguistic behavior. Grounded in social context and communication intention, the Markedness Model categorizes language choices as "marked" (unexpected, socially significant) and "unmarked" (expected, normative). The Saudi EFL context often opts for an "unmarked" choice when teachers in the classroom switch to Arabic to explain complex concepts or to foster inclusivity, although English remains the typical or expected mode of instruction. The social



meanings attributed to different code-switching practices by the learners are explained and interpreted by this theoretical lens. Since motivation influences learners' attitudes, this study also references the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005). This framework shows how classroom experiences shape learners' Ideal and Out-to L2 Selves, complementing the Markedness Model's explanation of social meanings in language choices. By integrating these frameworks, this study aims to uncover the motives behind Saudi EFL learners' attitudes toward code-switching (Mohamed Ali El Deen et al., 2025). Such synthesizing of Markedness Model with the L2 Motivational Self System while viewing code-switching as a "Rational Choice" driven by the Ideal L2 Self, this study operationalize code-switching as a "marked" choice used by Saudi learners to indicate a modern, bilingual identity aligning with their envisaged professional aspirations. Methodically, this integration explicates how internal motivational trajectories manifest as strategic social signals within the Saudi EFL context, which tend to enhance the model's explanatory depth (Al-Nofaie, 2020; Alenezi, 2010). In order to maintain the transparency in how the Markedness Model steers this study, Table 1 bears the operationalization of key concepts mapped to specific questionnaire items used in this study.

**Table 1.** Operationalization of the Markedness Model

Concept	Definition	Questionnaire Items
Unmarked Choice	Language choice that conforms to situational norms and expectations in the EFL classroom	Q1, Q4, Q5, Q8, about comprehension, vocabulary improvement, teacher preference, and self-expression.
Marked Choice	Language choice that deviates from expected norms, carrying social meaning and signalling something beyond literal meaning	Q10: about institutional encouragement of code-switching.
Situational Switching	Code-switching triggered by specific communicative needs within a generally unmarked language context	Q1-Q9 about acceptance of situational code-switching.
Rights and Obligations Set	The balance of rights and obligations signalled by language choice in a given interaction	Q2, Q7, about comfort / participation and supportive environment.
Negotiation Potential	Speakers' ability to use marked choices to negotiate a new RO set or signal identity	Q6, Q9, about bridging languages and enjoyment through Arabic expression.
Unmarked vs. Marked Continuum	The spectrum from fully expected to fully unexpected choices, with degrees between	Comparison across all items, the gradient of agreement from Q1 to Q10.

Cognitive, affective, and institutional domains are selected to be investigated based on the past research on Saudi EFL code-switching. The cognitive domain (comprehension, vocabulary, self-expression) is based on the findings that state that CS supports the process of understanding a complex concept (Omar & Ilyas, 2018), vocabulary acquisition (Al-Tale & AlQahtani, 2022),



and knowledge transmission (Altalhab, 2025). The research has found CS to support the affective domain i.e., reducing learner anxiety, creating rapport, and eliciting positive learner responses (Al-Tale & AlQahtani, 2022; Altalhab, 2025; Omar & Ilyas, 2018), which explains why it is supported by the domain. The institutional sphere (classroom policy, formal encouragement) deals with the issues reported in the literature regarding possible excessive dependence on L1 (Alqarni, 2022) and the necessity of balanced practices that would acknowledge the benefits of CS and at the same time retain English-medium goals (Alsalamy, 2025; Zaghlool & Altamimi, 2023). The three areas are all properties of the multidimensional meaning of learner’s attitude towards code switching.

### Code-Switching in the Saudi EFL Context

Code-switching serves multiple pedagogical functions in Saudi educational settings, as suggested by the previous research, e.g., strategic use of Arabic moderate's anxiety levels and boosts comprehension while English remains the focused learning goal (Al-Tale & AlQahtani, 2022). Similarly, Arabic served the crucial functions of knowledge transmission and rapport building during undergraduate lectures, although a minimal percentage of classroom speech was compromised (Altalhab, 2025). Hence, from these studies, it can be implied that code-switching was not an arbitrary linguistic behavior rather it operated as a deliberate pedagogical tool in the Saudi EFL contexts (Alsalamy, 2025).

### Attitudes Toward Code-Switching

There have been nuanced findings by previous researchers on Saudi students' attitudes toward code-switching. University students, who perceived it as instrumental to comprehend the complex concepts, reported a positive attitude towards code-switching (Omar & Ilyas, 2018). Contrary to that, learners also showed concerns about latent overreliance on Arabic and its repercussions for English proficiency development in the long run (Alqarni, 2022). Built upon this literature, the current study offers a systematic understanding of the code-switching practices among Saudi EFL learners in order to evaluate its various dimensions. These propositions are backed by a comprehensive quantitative data on the attitude patterns across a substantial sample.

**Table 2.** Literature Synthesis

<b>What is Known</b>	<b>What is Unknown</b>	<b>Source</b>
Teachers' code-switching practices and functions	Learners' attitudes toward code-switching	Zaghlool & Altamimi (2023); Altalhab (2025)
Structural patterns of Arabic-English switching	How learners perceive and evaluate these practices	Al-Marzouki & Albeyali (2025)
Code-switching as teaching strategy	Student perspectives on its benefits and drawbacks	Alsalamy (2025)
Small-scale preliminary findings on perceptions	Systematic large-scale attitude investigation	Mohamed Ali El Deen et al., (2025)



The gender differences are examined due to the fact that Saudi higher education is based on the gender-segregated institutions (Almusallam, 2024), which may result into the dissimilar classroom dynamics and attitude towards languages. Since the sample is disproportionate (136 females, 14 males), therefore, this analysis is largely exploratory. To investigate this gender-based variation in attitude towards CS, the following hypotheses were proposed:

*Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant difference between male and female Saudi EFL students on the attitude towards CS.*

*Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant difference between male and female Saudi EFL students on the attitude towards CS.*

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design and Participants

Quantitative survey design was deemed appropriate for this study, aiming at a systematic investigation of the code-switching attitudes of Saudi EFL learners (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). Quantitative method allows the collection of comparable data to facilitate the statistical analysis of the attitude towards code-switching patterns. Random sampling was employed to recruit the survey participants, with a basic criterion of their enrollment in the college and documented experience with code-switching in classroom settings for their selection as survey respondents. Lists of students were obtained in Excel [RAND() function] and each 3rd student was chosen through random selection. Moreover, all learners had sufficient prior experience of the English language as a mode of instruction in Saudi institutions as all of them had studied English as a mandatory course for 12 years of schooling before their enrolment into university.

The population of this study consisted of the students at the College of Languages and Translation at Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. 150 valid responses with a response rate of 33%. Among those, 90.7% were female ( $n = 136$ ), constituting the main cohort, while 9.3% were male ( $n = 14$ ), as the minor cohort. This sample, though gender- imbalanced, provided ecological validity within this specific academic context. Age range was 18- 24 years with an average age of 20.7 years. The majority of those were enrolled in the third year of study ( $n = 45$ , 30%), followed by second-year students ( $n = 41$ , 27.3%), and first-year and fourth-year students each ( $n = 32$ , 21.3%). The availability of the sample at the same college helped a focused examination of attitudes within a specific educational context, as the institutional variables such as curriculum, teaching approaches, and language policies remained under control. This allowed deeper analysis of the attitude patterns, although such a concentrated sample would hamper the generalizability of the outcomes to other settings.

### Instrument and Data Collection

This study used a structured questionnaire from previous study (Gulzar & Al Asmari, 2014), to collect the data for measuring student attitude toward code-switching in EFL contexts. In order to identify a clear quantification of attitudes and obtain a definitive response from participants, the 10 items of this survey gathered the responses on a binary scale (Yes or the positive attitude /



No or the negative attitude), see Table 1 for questionnaire items. Using binary format provide practical benefits that ensure an unambiguous and easily quantifiable data, which can be further used for statistical analysis to identify the prevalence of specific attitudes across the sample. Moreover, this instrument had many dimensions of attitudes such as cognitive benefits (comprehension and vocabulary acquisition), affective responses (comfort and enjoyment), and perceptions of institutional support. The questionnaire follows a validation step to make sure its suitable for the Saudi EFL context; consequently, the questionnaire was validated by an expert panel of three subject specialists in the applied linguistics area and EFL instruction. These experts evaluated each item for relevance, clarity and cultural appropriateness, and suggested some minor adjustments in the questions to enhance the comprehensibility for Saudi students (Hair et al., 2019). Reliability was assessed using Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20) used for the binary responses, which yielded a coefficient of 0.74, indicating acceptable reliability for the 10-item scale (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021).

After the validation process, a pilot study was conducted employing a sample of 20 students who were then excluded from the final sample. The purpose of the pilot study was to ensure the clarity and relevance of the questionnaire items, and that the response was appropriate for the participants. Responses from the selected pool of students confirmed the practicality and psychometric properties of the instrument as they reported that there are no difficulties in comprehending the question statement or using the binary response format. Eventually, the final version of the instrument demonstrated a face validity, as survey participants in the go-live study reported that the items clearly addressed their classroom experiences with code-switching.

In order to ensure accessibility and confidentiality, the questionnaire was sent via the online medium of Google Forms. Informed consent was obtained from the survey participants regarding the study's purpose, procedures, usage of data, and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any time on their own discretion. This survey had an average completion time of approximately 8 minutes, and all data were collected within two weeks to maintain consistency in the responses. This time window was a strategic choice to avoid examination periods and other academic stressors, which might influence responses. Such scheduling ensured that participants could provide attentive responses reflecting their typical classroom experiences rather than ephemeral attitudes influenced by academic pressure.

## Data Analysis

This study utilized SPSS v.28 to analyze the quantitative data to address the study objectives. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to draw implications to describe and understand attitude patterns toward code-switching among Saudi EFL learners. Missing values were avoided by making all questions to be responded mandatorily. Mean value reflected the average while total score reflected the sum of the responses for each question.

### *Descriptive Analysis of Attitudes*

This part aligns with the Objective-1 of this study, a multidimensional and complex attitudes toward code-switching among Saudi EFL learners were revealed by the comprehensive analysis of the 10 attitude items. Functional benefits garnered strong positive attitudes, while learners

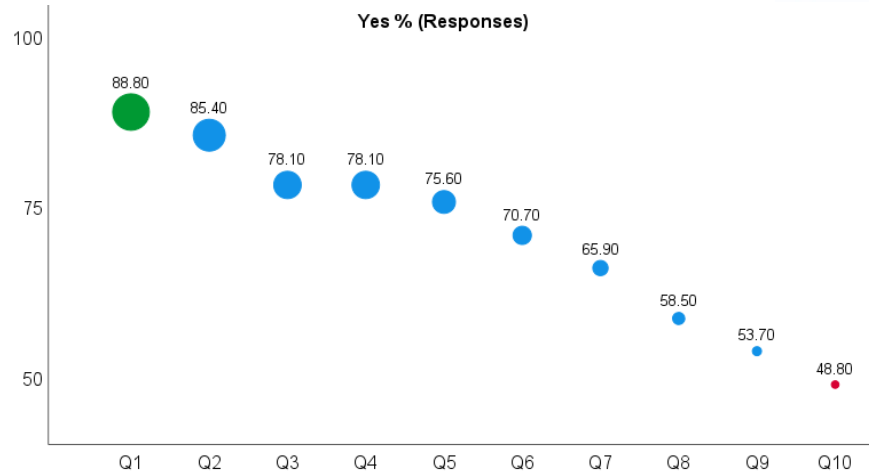


were reserved regarding personal enjoyment and institutional endorsement. The analysis revealed clear patterns across three domains: Cognitive, Affective, and Institutional Domains. As indicated above, items (Q1, Q4, Q5, and Q8) of the Cognitive Domain and Practical Benefits had the strongest endorsement, with agreement rates ranging from 78.1% to 88.8%. Such high percentages suggest that the majority of the learners perceived code-switching as a strategy to facilitate vocabulary learning, comprehension, and self-expression in English classes (see Table 3 & Figure 1). The moderate agreement rates for Affective Domain items (Q2, Q3, and Q7) suggest that while students recognize the emotional and environmental benefits of code-switching, these aspects are less salient than the cognitive advantages. The significance of psychological factors in language learning environments can be established by the fact that 75.6% of the learners were more comfortable when they were allowed to code-switch.

Items Q9 and Q10, pertaining to the Institutional Domain, showed an even split in learners' opinions, with considerable disagreement in this domain. Only 53.7% of the learners expressed enjoyment in learning English when using Arabic to explain concepts. Furthermore, only 48.8% of the learners agreed to formally encourage code-switching in the classroom, indicating considerable reservation toward institutionalizing code-switching. The variability in the responses in the form of standard deviation added more insights. Q1 and Q4 showed greater convergence or a deep understanding level of the learners, whereas Q9 and Q10 were more discriminant, indicating lesser consistency of endorsement of the idea. This variation suggests that attitudes toward code-switching are not uniform across the student population but are influenced by individual differences, proficiency levels, or learning preferences.

**Table 3.** Descriptive Statistics for Attitudes toward Code-Switching (N = 150)

Item	Questionnaire Statement	Mean	SD	% Yes
Q1	I believe that using Arabic in English classes helps me understand the material better	0.89	0.32	88.8%
Q4	I think that using Arabic alongside English can enhance my vocabulary acquisition	0.85	0.35	85.4%
Q5	I prefer teachers who use code-switching during lessons	0.78	0.42	78.1%
Q8	I believe that code-switching can help me express my thoughts more clearly in class	0.78	0.42	78.1%
Q2	I feel more comfortable participating in class discussions when code-switching is allowed	0.76	0.43	75.6%
Q7	I feel that using Arabic in English classes is a sign of a supportive learning environment	0.71	0.46	70.7%
Q3	Code-switching makes learning English more enjoyable for me	0.66	0.48	65.9%
Q6	I think that code-switching helps bridge the gap between my native language and English	0.59	0.49	58.5%
Q9	I enjoy learning English more when I can use Arabic to explain my ideas	0.54	0.50	53.7%
Q10	I think that code-switching should be encouraged in English language classrooms	0.49	0.50	48.8%



**Figure 1.** Descriptive Statistics for Attitudes toward Code-Switching (n = 150)

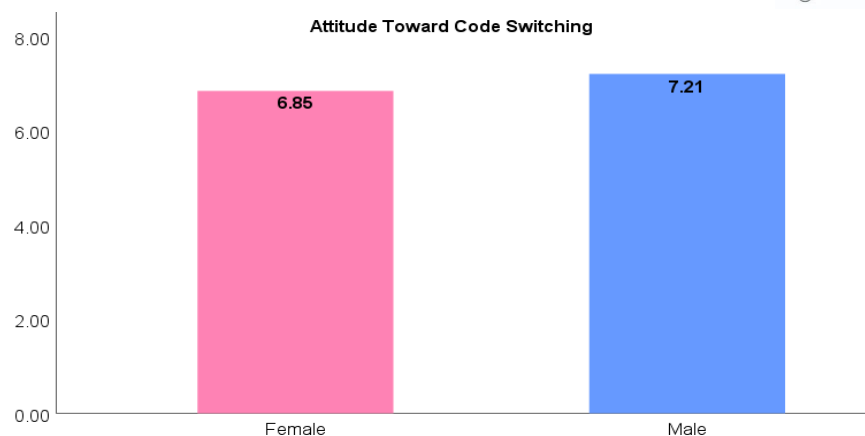
### Gender Differences Analysis

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the attitude scores between male and female students (Field, 2024), with unequal group size (14 males vs. 136 females), such inequality can reduce the statistical power to detect gender differences. Despite this limitation, no statistically significant difference was found ( $p = .397$ ). Male students demonstrated higher mean scores compared to female students. However, the small effect size confirms that this difference lacks practical significance, explaining about 1% of the variance in attitude scores. Thus, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was retained (see Table 4 and Figure 2). These outcomes suggest that learners' attitudes toward code-switching are shaped by other factors than the gender itself. In Saudi Arabian learning environments, which provide equal opportunities for both genders, these findings align with the Saudi cultural context regarding education offered in gender-segregated institutions. These results highlight that Objective-2 was also fulfilled by marking no difference between gender specific EFL attitudes.

**Table 4.** Gender Comparison on Attitudes toward Code-Switching (N = 150)

Group	N	Mean	SD	MD	t	df	P	d
Male	14	7.21	1.72	0.36	-0.850	148	0.397	0.200
Female	136	6.85	1.95					

*MD = mean difference, df = degree of freedom, d = Cohen's (1988) d*



**Figure 2.** Gender Comparison on Attitudes toward Code-Switching (N=150)

### *Response Variability*

This additional analysis relied on the standard deviations of questionnaire items to reveal some additional important nuances in learners' attitude beyond the overall percentages, e.g., standard deviation scores for Q9 and Q10 (SD = 0.50 for both) indicated a bipolar distribution of responses dividing the learners' population evenly on the relevant aspects of code-switching. This finding implies the discriminant attitude profiling of the Saudi EFL learners, deducing that some of them had consistently positive attitudes across all code-switching items, while others had a selective approach, or they endorsed the functional benefits of code-switching yet remained reserved on the generalized implementation of the same.

While examining the response combinations across items, some interesting patterns emerged. 67% of the learners who strongly endorsed functional benefits by agreeing with at least 8 of the first 8 items, also expressed their reservations about institutional promotion by disagreeing with items Q9 and Q10. These patterns reinforce the theoretical peculiarity that learners maintain while using code-switching as a pedagogical tool in comparison with institutional policy. As shown in Figure 1, the distribution of composite scores had a positive skew, confirming that most students had positive behaviors, with a minority having more reserved views. This distribution suggests that the strength of the attitude continuously varies across the population rather than clustering within specific population groups.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This part of the paper in aligned with Objective-3, the results of this study show an obvious hierarchy of the domains and strong support for the Cognitive Domain and reserved attitude towards the Institutional Domain. The study reveals a diversified topography of attitudes toward code switching among Saudi EFL learners, where functional advantages and institutional promotion concern co-exist. Such duality poses a certain paradox which should be carefully analyzed both theoretically and practically. The high positive responses concerning Cognitive Domain, especially in understanding (88.8%) and learning vocabulary (85.4%), are consistent with the findings of earlier studies that showed that code-switching is relevant as a scaffolding tool to students (Omar & Ilyas, 2018; Al-Tale & AlQahtani, 2022). These findings indicated that



Saudi EFL learners are pragmatically able to identify the usefulness of Arabic as a mental gear that can help them comprehend complicated English ideas. Pedagogically, the results will justify the strategic application of L1 to lessen the cognitive load and improve the understanding of the content, particularly in cases of linguistically challenging content. This trend of positive cognitive disposition over a span of over 10 years indicates that the positive attitude of Saudi learners towards code-switching as a means of understanding and learning new words and terms is not a short-lived condition due to the current trends in pedagogy (Alenezi, 2010).

The most interesting discovery of the study under consideration is the sizable gap between the identification of practical advantages and opposition to institutional promotion. Although students are highly enthusiastic about the utility of code-switching, almost half of them are reluctant to support the institutional encouragement of code-switching. This finding concurs with the way students tend to explain their experiences and the internal conflict between valuing short-term assistance and working towards long-term independence in English acquisition. Moreover, it is possible to explain such an apparent contradiction by means of the Markedness Model (Myers-Scotton, 1993). The students seem to see the use of Arabic as a situational (unmarked) solution to the problem of overcoming certain barriers in comprehension, but the use of English as the optimal option (unmarked) for communicating in the classroom in general. This difference signifies the perception of students regarding the fine line between short-term learning support objectives in the context of the Saudi Arabian vision of 2030, which is consistent with the Ideal L2 Self element of L2 motivation in terms of which students want to be skilled English users. This caution is reflective of the fears found in the research conducted on problem-based learning in the context of Majmaah University wherein Almziad (2024) observed that students appreciated the value of structured support but feared the possibility of it compromising their autonomy, a similarity that indicates that other learners in the diverse pedagogical contexts are similarly concerned with the balance between support and autonomy.

The standard deviations of items Q9 and Q10 show the varying views of the population. Instead of having homogeneous views, learners seem to form personalized judgments grounded on personal experiences and learning preferences. This heterogeneity highlights the importance of flexible teaching methods, which would support the diverse needs of the students instead of blanket policies on code-switching. The heterogeneity of attitudes is consistent with the qualitative results of Mutanga (2024) who showed that the preferences and experiences of students in project-based learning situations are heterogeneous and confirms that the population of learners is not a homogenous group and needs to be approached differently. There are no major gender variations, and the effect size ( $d = 0.20$ ) (Cohen, 1988) is small, which means that attitudes towards code switching are not gender segregated. This homogeneity implies the possibility of creating pedagogical solutions to code-switching without much gender-specific distinction, but the gender inequality of the sample is enough to be cautious about the generalizability of this result.

The development of attitudes would provide valuable information on pedagogical sequencing. This propensity of more advanced learners to be more conservative about code-switching indicates that the process is likely to move along a developmental progression whereby learners slowly internalize the target language and forgo L1 support. This trend is congruent with the concept of scaffolding that was described by Vygotsky (1978) when the supports are gradually



removed as the learners get competent. The EFL teachers may thus want to take into account a gradual decrease in code-switching as the students advance through their language acquisition process. The implications of the findings are also in terms of teacher education and professional development. The fact that students distinguish between various functions of code-switching in a very subtle manner indicates that teachers ought to form metacognitive awareness of the way they practice code-switching. A direct conversation with students regarding the reasons and timing of code-switching behavior can be useful to make the teacher's activities more aligned with student anticipations, as well as to minimize the issue of possible overdependence on the use of L1.

As a policy matter, the findings warn against adopting hard institutional stances in favor of or against code-switching. Rather, they embrace context-based solutions, acknowledging the functional advantages and the possible constraints of using L1 in EFL classrooms. This is not the only instance of a duality that can be associated with code-switching, and O'Connor et al. (2024) also found a degree of tension between the advantages of project-based learning and the reservations that engineering students expressed regarding its institutionalization in online learning, with resultant implications of a stronger trend of learner disillusionment with the idea of institutionalizing the pedagogical tools they find useful under specific situations. The results further indicate that the professional development of teachers is a necessity through the training that supports the reflective and intentional code-switching practices. Planned instructions can assist teachers in incorporating both L1 and English immersion. Although at the policy level the outcomes may inform the curriculum frameworks in line with the Vision 2030, they enhance evidence-based bilingual pedagogy that enhances motivation and engagement in learning in learners.

The patterns of attitudes witnessed have high implications when it comes to the implementation of educational reform objectives in Saudi Arabia within Vision 2030. Since the Kingdom is aiming to improve its level of English proficiency to facilitate international interaction, the views of the students towards the pedagogical practices may be key to proper policy execution. The moderate stance that students prefer, including the importance of Arabic aid and the focus on immersion in English, is associated with the orientation of the Vision on competitiveness in the global financial arena and cultural continuity. This is in line with the conclusion of Warman et al. (2024) that project-based learning should be accompanied by structured teacher guidance and support systems in order to achieve maximum benefits and reduced potential drawbacks, which is also paralleled by a suggestion that strategic, principled implementation is important across the pedagogical strategies. The results are also relevant to the current discussions of the purity of language and pragmatic communication in EFL settings. The fact that code-switching is selectively approved by students implies that they act in a pragmatic stance where they prioritize communication over ideological standpoints in relation to language separation. This strategy can be indicative of larger sociolinguistic trends in globalizing societies where the concept of bilingualism is being considered more of an asset than an issue.

Theoretically, the findings indicate the applicability of the Markedness Model in studying educational code-switching in a broader context than it was initially used in sociolinguistics. The model is useful in explaining the ways in which students have on the choice of languages are influenced by the pedagogical requirements and social expectations to offer a model of



predicting when switching between code-switching will be seen as a normal or abnormal act in the classroom. Policies could also focus on the strategic, intentional use of Arabic and leaving English as the main language of instruction, and uphold, therefore, the ambivalent issues of students regarding understanding and acquisition of code switching.

## **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

As a norm, this research also has several limitations – other than self-reported data, which might be attributed to response bias – that ought to be taken into account. To begin with, two important sampling properties influence the generalization of the findings. The context-specific results cannot be generalized to other institutions due to the concentration of participants in one Saudi institution, the learning conditions of other cultures, demographics, and language policies. Besides, the large discrepancy of gender in the sample (90.7% female) also indicates the reality, population distribution constrains the strength and external validity of gender-based disparities which make this study inconclusive and preliminary in nature. Future studies are encouraged to involve multiple institutions and attempt to achieve more gender cohort balance, improve the external validity, and give more evidence on the relationship between gender and attitudes towards code-switching while employing stratified or purposive sampling with more males. Second, methodological decisions also have limitations: the binary response format was used, although it presented the quantitative information in a concise and explicit manner, which might have simplified the issue of student attitudes. Yet this is not a strength future studies may conduct research using a Likert scale to measure levels of concurrence, enabling an attitude strength and ambivalence measurement to be more subtle.

Third, the research design restricts both time and distance. The cross-sectional design gives a picture of attitudes at one point in time and is incapable of representing how this change with time, usually attitudes change during the language learning process of the students. Tracking longitudinal studies, the attitude variations between academic years would increase the knowledge of developmental patterns. Moreover, mixed methods would also be considered to add rigor. Last but not least, a student-centered approach gives an incomplete picture of the situation or code-switching dynamics. The perspectives of the teachers and classroom observations should be included in future research. Observations to build on the consistency of actual code-switching practices with student attitudes and preferences. Irrespective of these shortcomings, this research is of good value to the knowledge of Saudi EFL students' attitude at the studied university towards code-switching.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

In addition to the summary of findings, this study will provide a number of new insights to the literature. First, it presents the idea of functional-institutional duality to describe an intricate difference between the importance of code-switching as a pedagogic instrument (88.8% of the respondents support the idea of comprehension) and the reluctance toward its institutionalization (48.8% of the respondents support the idea of policy) that was never recorded. Second, disaggregating the attitudes into cognitive, affective and institutional frames, the paper shows

that learner attitudes are multiple and domain-specific which undermines the mono-conceptualizations of past studies. Third, the results indicate that the learners were highly metacognitive in terms of trade-offs between short-term understanding support and long-term proficiency objectives, that students independently judge pedagogical practices and not passively receive them. Lastly, the research offers an empirical reference point (N=150, valid instrument) to conduct comparative and longitudinal research on the attitudes towards code-switching in Saudi EFL situations in the future. Based on these insights, the study provides the following preliminary type of recommendations on EFL pedagogy in Saudi situations:

First, the instructors should use code-switching, but in a strategic and not random manner, when there is a need to explain particular aspects of a topic, provide an interpretation of instructions or present culturally specific information. This specific strategy maximizes the cognitive utility and limits the possible overdependence on L1.

Second, code-switching practices should be discussed by the teacher directly with the students to make expectations clear and remove reservations about immersion into the English language. Conversations about the situations and reasons of code-switching that are metacognitive in nature can assist students in using code-switching as a scaffold and not as a crutch.

Third, the final approach towards pedagogy must hypothetically balance between the functional value of code-switching and the adequate opportunities of practicing English only. This could include the use of structured immersion times, coming up with activities that need significant production of English or a gradual reduction of L1 assistance with the students' proficiency.

Fourth, the teacher training programs will need to teach principled code-switching, rather than the oversimplified English-only vs. code-switching argument. Teachers should have methods of effective engagement of L1 and still keep English as the major classroom language.

Lastly, the assessment practices must recognize the importance of code-switching in learning without dismissing the fact that the English production must be expected. Formative assessment can be planned to use L1 to test the knowledge, but summative assessment should be designed with the primary purpose to test the skills of operating in English in students.

## REFERENCES

- Alenezi, A. A. (2010). Students' language attitude towards using code-switching as a medium of instruction in the College of Health Sciences: An exploratory study. *Annual Review of Education, Communication & Language Sciences*, 7, 1–22.
- Al-Marzouki, H. K., & Albeyali, W. M. (2025). Investigating the functions of code-switching among EFL lecturers and undergraduate students in Saudi Arabia. *World Journal of English Language*, 15(1), 330–341. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v15n1p330>
- Almusallam, I. (2024). Code-switching in speech acts: A focus on offer interactions by Saudi EFL female bilinguals. *Majallat al-Bahth al-'Ilmi fi al-Adab*, 25(5), 55–83. [https://journals.ekb.eg/article\\_365653.html](https://journals.ekb.eg/article_365653.html)



- Almziad, A. A. M. (2024). Problem-based learning and its effect on writing performance, critical and creative thinking skills: A study at Majmaah University, Saudi Arabia. *Pakistan Journal of Life & Social Sciences*, 22(2), 18744-18761. 18744-18761 PDF ([www.pjlss.edu.pk](http://www.pjlss.edu.pk))
- Al-Nofaie, H. (2020). Saudi university students' perceptions towards virtual education during Covid-19 pandemic: A case study of language learning via Blackboard. *Arab World English Journal*, 11(3), 4–20. <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol11no3.1>
- Alqarni, A. M. (2022). Code-switching and English language: A linguistic study in the Saudi perspective. *World Journal of English Language*, 12(7), 196–205. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v12n7p196>
- Alsalam, A. I. (2025). Foreign language acquisition through English–Arabic code-switching in EFL classroom: a systematic literature review. *Saudi Journal of Language Studies*, 5(4), 291–307. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SJLS-02-2025-0015>
- Al-Seghayer, K. (2023). The new found status of English in 21st-century Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 15(4), 82–103. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v15i4.21262>
- Al Tale', M. A., & AlQahtani, F. A. (2022). Code-switching versus target-language-only for Saudi EFL students. *Arab World English Journal*, 13(2), 437-450. <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol13no2.30>
- Altalhab, S. M. (2025). Saudi lecturers' code switching in English undergraduate lectures: L1 functions. *King Khalid University Journal of Educational Sciences*, 12(1), 281–292.
- Alzahrani, S. A. (2025). Does context affect code-switching? A case study of Saudi Arabic self-reported code-switchers. *Fonseca Journal of Communication*, 29(1), 105–127.
- Bougie, R., & Sekaran, U. (2019). *Research methods for business: A skill building approach* (8th ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioural sciences* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- DeVellis, R. F., & Thorpe, C. T. (2021). *Scale development: Theory and applications* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410613349>
- Field, A. (2024). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Gulzar, M. A., & Al Asmari, A. (2014). Code switching awareness amongst teachers and students in Saudi universities EFL classrooms. *Higher Education of Social Science*, 6(2), 1–13.
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2019). *Multivariate data analysis* (8th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Mohamed Ali El Deen, A. A. M., Nasim, S. M., Mohamed, A. M., & Mujeeba, S. (2025). Exploring Saudi EFL students' perceptions of code-switching as a communicative technique in EFL classes. *FWU Journal of Social Sciences*, 19(3), 41–56.
- Mutanga, M. B. (2024). Students' perspectives and experiences in project-based learning: A qualitative study. *Trends in Higher Education*, 3(4), 903–911. <https://doi.org/10.3390/higheredu3040052>
- Myers-Scotton, C. (1993). *Social motivations for code-switching: Evidence from Africa*. Oxford University Press.



- O'Connor, S., Power, J., Blom, N., & Tanner, D. (2024). Engineering students' perceptions of problem and project-based learning (PBL) in an online learning environment. *Australasian Journal of Engineering Education*, 29(2), 88–101. <https://doi.org/10.1080/22054952.2024.2357404>
- Omar, A., & Ilyas, M. (2018). The sociolinguistic significance of the attitudes towards code-switching in Saudi Arabia academia. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 8(3), 79–91. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v8n3p79>
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Warman, L. A. D., Hadriana, H., & Awang, M. (2024). Project-based learning to improve students' English skills: Issues and challenges. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 14(9), 1123–1138. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v14-i9/22843>
- Zaghlool, Z. D., & Altamimi, N. M. (2023). Saudi EFL teachers' and students' perceptions towards using English-Arabic code-switching as a teaching and learning strategy. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 14(4), 1049–1057. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1404.23>

### **Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies in the Writing Process**

This manuscript was developed with the assistance of DeepSeek for the Purpose of language refinement, text enhancement and paraphrasing. The tools supported the authors in reviewing and refining the content, and the authors assume full responsibility for the final version submitted for publication.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

### **Acknowledgement**

Thank you, Almighty Allah, for providing us with the time, courage, and strength to complete this work. We would like to thank everyone who provided us with direct or indirect assistance in completing our paper.

### **Authors' Contributions**

The main and co-authors contributed to the study.