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كلية الآداب واللغات

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## Title

*Exploring Code Switching as a Communicative  
Strategy in Informal Virtual Communication: The  
Case of MA Students of the Department of English  
at MMUTO*

Presented by

- Ms. Keltoume RABIA

- Ms. Thileli SEDKI

Supervised by

Dr. Kamila AMMOUR

Board of Examiners

Mrs. Karima ADEM, M.A.A, Mouloud Mammeri University, Tizi-Ouzou; **Chairwoman.**

Dr. Kamila AMMOUR, M.C.A, Mouloud Mammeri University, Tizi-Ouzou; **Supervisor.**

Ms. Malika AKIR, M.A.B, Mouloud Mammeri University, Tizi-Ouzou; **Examiner.**

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*I dedicate this work to*

*Members of my Family.*

*My best-friends Sonia, Kenza and Dyhia.*

*To everyone who provided support of any form, thank you.*

*Keltoume.*

*I dedicate this work to*

*My dear **Mother** and **Father**, may Allah bless for their love, help and support throughout every step of the way.*

*To my sister **Nawel** and my brother **Ouahib**,*

*To all my friends: Lysa, Tiha and Kenza.*

*In memory of my **Grandmother**.*

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**Abstract**

The present research examines the use of code switching by EFL students as a communicative strategy in informal virtual communication. More specifically, it aims at checking how and why EFL learners switch codes in virtual scenes. To reach these objectives, we have analyzed conversations obtained from a Facebook chat group encompassing 30 EFL Master Two students from Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou. The analytical framework consists of a combination of Appel and Muysken's (2006) "six functions of code switching" and Malik's (1994) "ten reasons for code switching". The research methodology revolves around a mixed-methods research that merges quantitative and qualitative methods. In order to get more reliable data and reinforce the validity of the findings, a questionnaire is addressed to the participants. The collected data were analyzed using the Descriptive Statistical Method and Qualitative Content Analysis. The results show that the most dominant functions in students' online conversations are directive, poetic and phatic. Concerning the reasons, the findings have revealed that Master Two students' code switching is dominated by four out of ten reasons for code switching. The reasons are pragmatic reasons, lack of facility, to show identity with a group and to address a different audience. Additionally, it is noted in the findings that the way the participants perceive and use code switching is different. To conclude, the participants use code switching as a communicative strategy to minimize language difficulties to ensure effective communication.

**Key words:** Code switching, Facebook Chat Group, Functions of Code Switching, Online Code Switching, Reasons of Code Switching, Virtual Communication.

## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

- **CMC:** Computer-Mediated Communication.
- **CM:** Code Mixing.
- **CS:** Code Switching.
- **EFL:** English Foreign Language.
- **MMUTO:** Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou.
- **QCA:** Qualitative Content Analysis.

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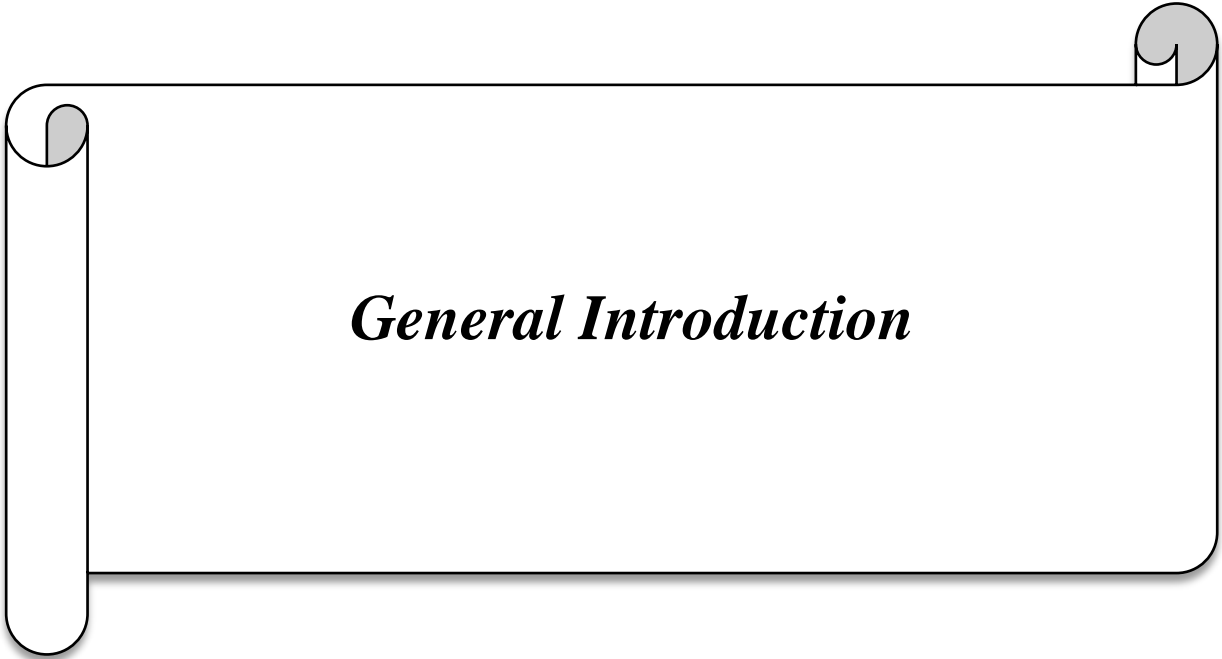
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***General Introduction***

### ▪ **Statement of the Problem**

Algeria, among numerous nations in the world, is known for its linguistic diversity. The country's geographical position and past invasions have brought about its linguistic plurality. Thus, nowadays its sociolinguistic situation is characterized with a strong presence of multilingualism. Indeed, Algerians possess a rich linguistic profile as they speak different languages. The main languages spoken by Algerians are varieties of Tamazight and varieties of Arabic in addition to French and English among others. It is worth mentioning that Classical Arabic and Tamazight are the two official languages. Hudson (1996) claims the co-existence of a number of languages in a multilingual speech community implies inevitable change from one language to another or from one variety to another, which is referred to as code switching (CS).

Blom and Gumperz (1972) argue that CS or situational CS is the ability to use varieties of languages according to the given situation, whereas conversational CS or code mixing (CM) is the shift between two or more languages back and forth in a conversation. Androtsopoulous (2013) claims it has been presumed that spoken interpersonal communication is the primary setting of CS. However, nowadays with advanced technologies, updated Internet features and the recent pandemic, virtual scenes and social networks have gained more popularity. In January 2022, 58.4% of the world population utilize social media, with 2h 27m worth of average daily use. Thus, most interactions occur online through Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) or virtual communication, which is the product of technological evolution; subjects of the conversation communicate through a medium of technology without being in the same physical space. Virtual communication enables fast and flexible long distance interactions with multiple individuals at the same time.

Great attention has been devoted to investigating CS as an oral production, its external and internal causes, effects, patterns, changes and functions. In the University of Mouloud

Mammeri Tizi-Ouzou (MMUTO), specifically the English department, research has been conducted to study CS in an academic context. Ms. Mouaici Narimane Fatima has submitted a study in 2014 entitled, “Motivations, Patterns and Functions of Teachers’ Code Switching in Classroom: The Case of The Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University”. The dissertation, aims to explore patterns, structures and functions of CS produced by teachers in the classroom from a pragmatic perspective. Results show that, teachers switch to French, Kabyle and Arabic for different reasons. Some are external such as physical and linguistic factors and some are internal such as teachers’ awareness of their social roles in the classroom and psychological intentions. Frankie Subon and Siti Tarmim have conducted a research in 2021 entitled “The Code Switching Phenomenon during Oral Presentations among the Business Programme Students” in Malaysia. It investigates Malaysian Business program students’ CS during oral presentations. The findings reveal that the participants perceive CS positively in oral presentations and they have admitted that it is helpful in overcoming their lack of proficiency.

Both studies have tackled the subject in an academic context; to investigate code switching produced by teachers and students in the classroom through face-to-face communication. These investigations significantly provide definitions of CS, its types as well as the distinctions between CS, CM and borrowing; however they are limited. Little attention is directed towards; on one hand, CS generated by students among themselves in informal speech. On the other hand, the patterns and reasons of CS as a written production in virtual contexts such as the widely used Facebook platform. A niche, this present research aims to occupy.

### ▪ **Aims and Significance of The Study**

The overall aim of this investigation is, to understand the way Master Two EFL learners of the department of English use CS as a communicative strategy on virtual scenes. It is

concerned with CS produced by students, in their informal casual online-based exchanges on platforms such as Facebook. It aims to determine, the factors that lead to CS in an attempt to explore how and why students shift between languages online, their opinions about online CS and its influence on their linguistic abilities. Master Two students are chosen as the subject of study, because they are multilingual individuals and they are well familiar with CMC.

This research is significant, because it is a new valuable addition to the works that have been submitted to the English department at MMUTO. Few studies have shown interest in CS in written discourse and outside of the classroom in more informal casual encounters that take place virtually. This paper, centers its focus on enriching that gap and exploring the subject from a sociolinguistic perspective.

### ▪ **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Exploring students' code switching in virtual contexts raises a number of questions:

**Q1.** How do EFL students use code switching in virtual communication?

**Q2.** Why do EFL students use code switching in virtual communication?

In an attempt to answer these questions, we suggest the following hypotheses:

**H1.** Students code switch between English, French, Tamazight and Arabic in virtual contexts.

**H2.** Students use CS as a communicative strategy to minimize language difficulties and to ensure effective communication.

### ▪ **Research Techniques and Methodology**

This study relies on the mixed methods research, which uses both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. The quantitative method deals with large samples of participants using close-ended questions, surveys and experiments. Quantitative results are displayed through numbers, ratings and statistics. The qualitative method focuses on small samples of participants using open-ended questions, interviews and observation.

Qualitative findings are presented in the forms of texts. This work adopts Appel and Muysken's (2006) "six functions of code switching", along with Malik's (1994) "ten reasons for code switching" to examine the results.

We collect data with two instruments; a selection of corpus obtained from the Facebook chat group to observe the functions of students' CS in an authentic, natural and informal virtual environment as the participants are asked to carry out conversations normally as they usually would. . In addition, we rely on a questionnaire to uncover the reasons why students switch codes online. The sample comprises 30 Master Two students of the department of English at MMUTO; they are both the participants of the chat group and respondents to the questionnaire.

### ▪ **Structure of The Dissertation**

The present study follows the simple traditional model. It includes a general introduction, four chapters and a general conclusion. The "General Introduction" is a space reserved for the researcher to state their problem, make claims, assert the significance of their research and establish the gap in previous studies that their work will fill. The first chapter is "Review of Literature", which accounts for the previous works done in regard of the subject under investigation as well as defining terms and further elaboration on the theoretical framework. The second chapter is entitled "Research design"; it explains the methodology of the study as well as the instruments utilized to gather data and its analysis. The third section is "Presentation of The Findings" where the results of the study are to be organized and demonstrated. The fourth chapter is "Discussion of the Findings", which is a space for evaluation of the obtained data, answers of the research questions and confirmation or denial of the suggested hypotheses. Lastly, the "General Conclusion" provides a recapitulation of the work and the conclusion deduced from the discussion section. It also notes the gaps the study has not managed to fill as well as further research recommendations.



*Review of The Literature*

## Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature related to the subject of our inquiry. It marks the sociolinguistic situation in Algeria and sheds light on the concepts of multilingualism and bilingualism. It expounds the phenomenon of Code Switching along with Code Switching in virtual contexts, followed by a section that describes virtual communication.

The goal of this research is to understand how and why Master Two EFL students of the department of English switch between languages on virtual platforms. Thus, it is important to introduce the theoretical framework, which comprises two approaches; Appel and Muysken's (2006) "six functions of code switching" and Malik's (1994) "ten reasons for code switching".

### 1.1. The Algerian Sociolinguistic Context

From a historical standpoint, numerous nations have infiltrated the Algerian territory and blended their cultures, beliefs, customs and languages with the locals because "*Algeria was a place of invasion and a crossroad of civilizations that made the linguistic plurality reign among its speakers.*" (Chami, 2009, p. 387). Nowadays, Algerians speak Algerian Arabic, French, different varieties of Tamazight and the newly integrated English language. This section briefly describes the origin of each language and the way they have come to be prevailing components of the rich Algerian linguistic profile.

#### 1.1.1. Tamazight

Tamazight or 'Berber' belongs to the Afro-Asiatic (Hamito-Semitic) family of languages; it dates back to roughly 3000 B.C according to ancient Egyptian, Roman and Greek records, which show the presence of Berbers residing in the region then known as 'Numidia'. Tamazight is transcribed with an alphabet called 'Tifinagh' or 'Libyco-Berber' and the indigenous inhabitants refer to themselves as 'Amazigh' or 'Imazighen' synonymous of 'free or noble men'. They are scattered across North Africa as ethnic communities throughout Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania along other areas within the continent. Elimam (2009,

p. 32) reports that “*in Algeria, Tamazight is used as a generic term symbolizing the different Berber-speaking varieties*” insinuating that the word does not refer to a sole language but rather a set of geographical vernaculars that today include Kabyle, Tashawit, the Berber of Mزاب and Tamazight of Tuareg to mention a few. The Algerian government has recognized Tamazight as a ‘national language’ since 2002, it has gained an official status recently in 2016 and is currently used in media, education, official documents and the press.

### **1.1.2. Arabic**

Islamic conquests in the 7<sup>th</sup> C also called the ‘Hillalian invasions’ after the ‘Banu Hillal’ tribes, have introduced Arabic to the Northern parts of the African soil. The Arabs, although faced with rebellion from the Amazigh, have managed to transfer a great deal of their middle-eastern lifestyle, religion, language and policies to the natives. Arabic then has continued to spread widely to root itself further within the land moving from being “one simple language of the faith and literary studies. It was going to become an authentic indigenous language which will be strongly influenced by its interference with the Amazigh one” (Chami, 2009, p. 389). In Algeria, Arabic has been an official language since 1963, with two existing varieties; classical Arabic is found in administrative documents and official matters of the country, whereas Algerian Arabic also known as ‘Dardja’ is utilized by almost the entirety of the population in households, the streets and generally everyday life informal contexts.

### **1.1.3. French**

The history of the French language in Algeria is ultimately attached to the French colonial era, which is the primary agent that has infused the French culture and language into the Algerian terrain. The French colonization has commenced in July 1830 establishing all Algerian land as French property. The French have forced their presence, power and dominance in all aspects including “the French language which was imposed on the Algerian by fire and blood, constituted a fundamental element in the French policy of depriving people from their identity

and deculturation” (Ibrahimi, 2000, p. 66). French has gained an official status in Algeria during the colonial period up until the country’s independence in 1962 and it has heavily affected the country that the language has still been in use as a lingua franca and has been considered linguistic heritage. The government has retained French as a foreign language to be taught in schools, although it is not an official language it is nowadays widely found in all aspects of Algerian society and used in speech, education, constitutional affairs, bureaucracy, media, and the press.

### **1.1.4. English**

The English language owes its widespread to the influences of the British and American political, economic, cultural and military powers which have allowed the language to infiltrate the world. Hussain (2017) argues that, globalization involves people interacting with one another through trade, investment, education and culture. Ultimately, the increase of international relations has created an urgency for a lingua-franca. Crystal (2003, p. 10) suggests that, the reason for which English has been globalized is due to it being “*in the right place at the right time*”. In Algeria, English has found its way in during the post Second World War era “*after the landing of American parachutists in Algiers in November, 1942*” (Fodil, 2019, p. 3). The language has continued to spread within the Algerian speech community and has gained more popularity in recent decades. Nowadays, English is found in education, trade, business and more widely the Algerian media.

## **1.2. Multilingualism**

There exists a major contradiction among scholars about the distinction between ‘multilingualism’ and ‘bilingualism’, whether they mean the same thing and if the terms could be used interchangeably. “Multilingualism is a complex, vibrant and ever-intriguing phenomenon [...].The term *multilingualism* is used here to refer the use of three and more languages and is distinguished, where appropriate, from bilingualism, the use of two languages”

(Singelton & Aronin, 2018). This means that, contrary to ‘bilingualism’ (the use of two languages), multilingualism is dynamic and intricate and refers to the use of three or more languages. Maher (2017, p. 3) makes the distinction claiming that “multilingualism (Latin *multus + lingua* ‘many’ and ‘languages’) is a social situation involving groups or communities who communicate, with varying proficiency, in more than one language, in addition to a national or a standard language. This is called societal multilingualism”; contrarily he declares that bilingualism or ‘*individual multilingualism*’ pertains to individuals. This scholar also suggests that acquiring multiple languages is a quality unique to humans; it travels beyond borders of nations, cultures and continents and involves speech, writing and sign language as well.

A country’s multilingualism can be attributed to a number of underlying factors, including the expansion of languages into new territories due to conquests and warfare, immigration and settlement, the need for language in trade and business and in recent decades media and modernization. In essence, languages spread either for social, cultural, religious, political or economic reasons and the degree to which a speech community identifies with such languages determines whether or not those languages are maintained. The idea of multilingualism implies the existence of a diverse cultural ethnic profile within a community, for instance Algeria is a multilingual country due to the co-existence of Arabic, Tamazight and French in different regions of the land with each tongue being introduced due to one of the aforementioned factors.

### **1.2.1. Bilingualism**

Bilingualism is a linguistic phenomenon that is spread in certain societies, it is known as the ability to speak two languages. According to Baker (2011), bilinguals are individuals who have the ability to use two or more languages or dialects in their everyday lives. There seems to be no clear agreement among sociolinguists about fixed characteristics of a bilingual person

or to classify a community as a bilingual one. Bloomfield (1935, p. 56) defines bilingualism as “*the native-like control of two languages*”. From the latter explanation we can deduce that being bilingual equals being able to speak two languages perfectly. In contradiction, McNamara (1967) proposes that a bilingual is a person who possesses a minimal competence in only one of the four language skills, listening comprehension, speaking and writing in a language other than their mother tongue. Additionally for Myers-Scotton (2006, p. 44) bilingualism “*is the ability to use two or more languages sufficiently to carry on limited casual conversation*”. This definition is similar to Haugen’s (1953, p. 7) point of view in which he claims the notion “*is understood... at the point where the speaker of one language can produce complete meaningful utterances in the other language*”. Bilingualism and multilingualism are often used interchangeably to mean the same. According to Wide (2010), bilingualism can be perceived on two levels, individual and societal. Individual bilingualism refers to the language competence of the individual language user that is basically revealed by characteristics relating to age acquisition, level of attainment, language dominance and ability. Societal bilingualism on the other hand is the linguistic diversity that can be found in a country or a speech community.

### **1.3. Code Switching**

Numerous scholars have supplied different definitions to explain the versatile notion of code switching, which is essentially known as the alternation between two or more languages, dialects or registers of a language during speech. Gumperz (1982, p. 59) defines code switching as “*the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems*”, meaning that individuals pair sentences from two different linguistic structures inside a single speech interaction. Meisel (1994) explains that CS is the skill of choosing a language depending on the speaker, the situation, the topic of

conversation, and other factors, and it involves changing a language in the course of an interaction with respect to sociolinguistic norms and without breaking any grammatical rules.

Cook (2008) claims that code switching exists within bilingual speech communities, similarly to Milroy and Muysken (1995) who attribute the use of code switching to bilingual speakers. The latter frequently transition between codes to change the tone or the emphasis in a conversation, which is a great technique to stress or minimize a point (Clauss-Ehlers, 2010). Questions arise on the reason why the phenomenon is called '*code switching*' and not '*language switching*', and in this regard, Stockwell (2002) distinguishes a code as a symbol of nationalism used by people to speak or communicate in a particular language, dialect, register, accent, or style on different occasions and for different purposes. The choice of the term is the secret, the word 'code' encompasses all linguistic levels, dialects and even accents, on the opposite end, the term 'language' may include only the standard, academic or other forms of language. Thus, code switching is adaptable since it can transition between two dialects or accents in addition to two languages, demonstrating its versatility.

CS is a social phenomenon that occurs through multiple forms, which the following sections aim to conceptualize.

### **1.3.1. Types of Code Switching**

Poplack (1980) divides CS into three types:

#### **1.3.1.1. Tag-switching**

Poplack (1980, p. 589) suggests that tag-switching "*involves the insertion of tag in one language into sentence or utterance in another language*". Romaine (1989) adds that the tag can be placed anywhere with few syntactic restrictions, and it involves "an exclamation, a tag, or a parenthical in another language than the rest of the text [...] The tags etc. serve as an emblem of the bilingual character of an otherwise monolingual sentence." (Appel & Muysken, 1987, p. 118). An example of tag switching can be:

-‘L’homme assis à côté de Marie est Monsieur Baron, the boss’

### 1.3.1.2. Inter-sentential Code-Switching

“*Intersentential switching, in which a change of language occurs at sentence level, where each clause or sentence is in one language or the other*” (Waris, 2012, p. 126). It is the transition between two languages in a single sentence, where one clause is completed in one language and the following clause is in another. This can be seen in the example below:

-‘J’ai vu Lila aujourd’hui, she says hi’

-‘Oh you did? C’est gentil!’

### 1.3.1.3. Intra-sentential Code-Switching

“*Intra-sentential switches occur in the middle of a sentence, as in ‘I started acting real CURIOSA.’ This type of intimate switching is called code mixing*” (Appel & Muysken, 2006, p. 118). The switching happens within the confines of a clause or sentence; it can be referred to as code switching, code mixing, insertion or harmonious lexicalization (Waris, 2012). Such alternation is displayed in the title of Poplack’s (1980) study:

-‘Sometimes I’ll start a sentence in English y termino en español’

Code switching and code mixing are terms often mistaken for each other, and used indiscriminately at times, the following part aims to set them apart.

## 1.3.2. Code Switching versus Code Mixing

Early investigation carried by Gumperz and Blom (1972) in Hennesberget, a town in northern Norway, where they have expanded on their examination of the roles and applications of two dialects, ‘Bokmal’ (the standard dialect) and ‘Ranamal’ (the local dialect). This study suggests a distinction between two versions of code switching: situational and metaphorical.

Code switching is also referred to as Situational code switching, which is the employment of many languages or dialects in various social or sociolinguistic contexts. In other words, it is

the language change according to the situation, where bilinguals find themselves speaking one language or variety in one situation and another in a different one. Holmes (2000) refers to Chinese students residing in England who converse in their mother tongue while preparing meals at home before returning to finish their homework in English because they study economics in that language and they must transition to English for that specific subject or semantic era. Gumperz (1982, p. 60) states that “distinct varieties are employed in certain settings such as (home, school, work) that are associated with separate, bounded kinds of activities (public speaking, formal negotiation, special ceremonials, verbal games, etc.) or spoken with different categories of speakers (friends, family, members, strangers, social inferiors, government officials, etc.)”.

Code mixing is the use of multiple languages in a single social context, that is to say metaphorical code switching or what Hudson (1980, p. 53) has called “*conversational code switching*”. According to Blom and Gumperz (1972), in this kind of code switching, the speaker changes languages in a circumstance where it would be typically and ordinarily necessary to use one language rather than the other. In order to redefine their relationship with the interlocutor, the speaker controls the code choice in conversational code switching, as opposed to situational code switching, when the social circumstance decides the code choice.

The subheading below is dedicated to elaborate on the way code switching on virtual platforms has been examined.

### **1.3.3. Code Switching in Virtual Contexts**

Crystal (2006, p. 26) declares that the internet “*is an electronic, global and interactive medium, and each of these properties has consequences for the kind of language found there*”. Crystal’s (2006) study shows that internet has empowered a dramatic expansion within the variety and creativity of language. This is in relation to the nature of the electronic channel, which means when interlocutors communicate online, the kind of hardware and software they

use to access the internet places restrictions on their linguistic productive and receptive capacities (Crystal, 2006). This reveals how the internet is drastically changing the way we utilize language. Multilingual communities carry their linguistic properties into the virtual world, and use multiple tongues or varieties because the web is an area of versatile settings that vary from professional workplaces to informal environments, which allow unofficial and spontaneous language use.

Code switching in virtual contexts is a subject of recent studies, mainly due to the advanced technologies that have made the internet a more interactive space. Researchers have therefore, sought to understand the way language shift manifests online. Dorleijn and Nortier (2009) assert that CS is common on many internet forums because of its informal character, and digital CS may be exceptional in that it exudes traits of both written and oral speech. Androutsopoulos (2013) has distinguished two types of CS in CMC; ‘conversational’, which encompasses synchronous and asynchronous interactions such as e-mail, chat and instant messaging, and ‘non-conversational’ that refers to content altered and released by one author displayed in blogs and websites for instance. The author adds that there are numerous usage patterns for online CS, which “*range from a few formulaic switches to dense, multilingual code-mixing and polylingual languaging*” (Androutsopoulos, 2013, p. 680). Georgakopoulou (1997) suggests that CMC interlocutors manipulate textual signs by switching codes, in order to accomplish pragmatic tasks that one would often carry out through posture, eye contact, tone of voice and other cues of spoken conversation. Additionally, Montes-Alcala (2007) contends that bloggers may shift codes to produce an all-around aesthetic effect to demonstrate their competence in the usage of two languages and two cultures.

### 1.4. Virtual Communication

According to Wood (2017, p. 18) communication is “*a systematic process in which people interact with and through symbols to create and interpret meanings*”. Communication is an ongoing and indispensable aspect of one’s life; individuals are constantly exchanging information through various forms and channels. In a broad sense, interactions are divided into two levels; those that take place directly in person and those that occur indirectly via mediums of technology.

Face-to-face communication occurs between participants in the same physical space and in real-time without using a medium. In contradiction, virtual communication or CMC is the human interaction carried out through a certain medium of technology that can unfold between participants who engage in the absence of physicality. For instance a phone call between two or more people, whether from a city to another or from a country to another, it can be synchronous (in real time) or asynchronous (at different times). Multiple definitions have been proposed to conceptualize this notion such as, “*a process of human communication via computers, involving people, situated in particular contexts, engaging in processes to shape media for a variety of purposes*” (December, 1997), or more simply “*any human communication achieved through, or with the help of, computer technology*” (Thurlow, Lengel, & Tomic, 2004, p. 15). Individuals can interact using text-based platforms and social media such as E-mail, SMS, Messenger, WhatsApp, Viber, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, chat rooms and so on. It is also possible to converse using added audio and visual features in phone and video calls on virtual spaces that include Skype, Google Meet, Zoom, GoToMeeting and ezTalks Meeting.

CMC has come into existence in the last decades with the emergence of new technologies, Mike Z. Yao & Rich Ling (2020) claim that computers have been big and desktop in 1994 and the internet is being newly integrated into society. They also suggest that, “*online social*

*networking sites were still in the distant future*”, and *“short message service (SMS) was just debuting as a digitally mediated form of interpersonal communication”* (Yao & Ling, 2020, pp. 4-5). According to studies conducted on the subject, CMC has gained more popularity in recent years due to the increase of customer consumption along with rising demand and more recently the COVID19 pandemic, which has made virtual communication the most convenient and prominent way of engagement as most companies have shifted their workplaces to virtual settings all around the world. Advanced technologies have shaped the internet into a requisite part of people’s lives and besides online jobs and professional digital use, it has always been a milieu of leisure and entertainment. Social media are staples for virtual communities, with Facebook being the most prevalent platform for computer-mediated communication.

Social Media is a networking tool, which centers on building online communities of individuals who share interests and activities. “Social media are the online means of communication, conveyance, collaboration, and cultivation among interconnected and interdependent networks of people, communities, and organization enhanced by technological capabilities” (Tuten & Solomon, 2015, p. 4). Social media consists of a group of virtual platforms that contain Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Viber, Telegram, TikTok and Facebook to name a few.

Facebook, which is now known as ‘Meta’, is a social platform co-founded by American ‘media magnate’ and CEO Mark Zuckerberg in 2004. Cravens and Whiting (2014, p. 2) report that Facebook *“is one of the most popular social networking sites (SNS) in the world”*. Users can sign up on the website or the application with a proper e-mail address to create an account and customize their profile. It allows the addition of friends and other members of the Facebook community from all regions of the globe by sending out invitations, as well as sharing posts, stories, videos with extra interactive features of likes and comments; individuals can even do business by creating a Facebook ‘page’ to promote and sell ideas, products and brands. It is

assumed that Facebook has established the sector of social interaction where people share their own thoughts, views and stay updated with what is going on in the world through the news feed posted by organization members and seen by their followers. According to recent estimates there are 26 491 400 Facebook members in Algeria in April of 2022, which makes up for 58.5% of the country's total population.

### **1.5. The Analytical Framework**

The data analysis of the current research paper relies on Appel and Muysken's (2006) "Six functions of code switching" to examine 'how' students code switch in virtual scenes, and Malik's (1994) "Ten reasons for code-switching" to unravel 'why' students swap between languages. This section intends on expounding these approaches in a clearer manner.

#### **1.5.1. Appel and Muysken's (2006) "Six functions of code switching"**

Investigations from diverse linguistic perspectives have studied the functions and motivations that lead to CS. "*Language use involves various functions of the language system*" (Appel & Muysken, 2006, p. 29). Based on research conducted by Jakobson (1960) who suggests '*functional specialization*' and Halliday et al. (1964), Appel and Muysken (2006) present "six functions of code switching", which exist in a hierarchical order.

The referential function, is considered the primary and "*the only function of language*" (Appel & Muysken, 2006, p. 29), because it necessary to draw the object of communication. This function allows the speaker to convey knowledge, transmit information and emphasize the context of conversation. The second function is directive, in which the interlocutors use customary greetings, questions, formal expressions, commands, requests and exclamations to influence other people's actions and behavior as well as to establish a dynamic that secures collaboration between all parties of the conversation. Next, the expressive function aids the speaker to demonstrate their individuality by expressing their opinions, inner states, identity

and emotions. The fourth function is phatic, which is used to establish, maintain or check the connection between speakers in a given interaction; this function is used to “*create a channel of communication and to keep the channel open*” (Appel & Muysken, 2006, p. 30). It allows to confirm that the interlocutors are heard and are understood. The metalinguistic function enables the speakers to reveal their perspectives and awareness of linguistic conventions; this function relates to the use of language to explain language itself or to describe the rules of a code that one already speaks. The last function is poetic, whose purpose is to make the use of language fun and enjoyable. Speakers emphasize information, by playing with language using riddles, tongue twisters and intentional alterations in style and register with attention to the manner of enunciation.

In the sociolinguistic study of the linguistic situation in India, Malik (1994) has listed ten reasons why speakers code-switch in a conversation. The reasons that cause Indians to alternate codes are lack of facility, lack of register, mood of the speaker, to amplify or emphasize a point, habitual expressions, Semantic significance, to show identity with a group, to address a different audience, pragmatic reasons and to attract attention.

### **1.5.2. Malik’s (1994) “ten reasons for code switching”**

Lack of facility, refers to the unavailability of a term, expression or concept of one language in another. Bilinguals switch codes to express words they do not have access to in a given language. Lack of registral competence means the speaker is not equally fluent in the languages they know, thus, the shift occurs to compensate the lack of proficiency. Mood of the speaker is particular to individuals experiencing anger, exhaustion, confusion or anxiety; CS occurs even if the idea can be expressed in both languages because the speaker’s mental state makes one language more accessible than the other. Interlocutors switch codes to amplify or emphasize a point, when a part of a given discourse or an idea has to be stressed.; the switch takes place to add force and highlight to their idea. Habitual expressions are usually composed

of greetings, apologies, requests, imperatives and gratitude; bilinguals switch to convey phrases that are expressed with a certain variety by force of habit. Semantic significance is used as a verbal tool to transmit significant and relevant linguistic and social messages; Malik (1994) asserts that switching codes at a specific time carries semantically important information. Speakers keep words and expressions in their original language to show identity with a group; they use language to mark their cultural values, relations, events and experiences as a way to sustain their bond as a union. To address a different audience, bilinguals switch between languages or varieties to communicate with individuals from different linguistic backgrounds (Malik, 1994). Pragmatic reasons refer to the degree at which the speaker is involved in the interaction; individuals alternate codes depending on where the encounter happens and with whom. Finally, speakers use CS as a strategy to draw attention to their speech and to attract the readers or listeners.

### **Conclusion**

The present chapter has reviewed the literature associated with the subject under investigation. It is divided into five headings. The sociolinguistic situation in Algeria is a heading that has highlighted the languages that are present in the country. The second heading has explained the notions of multilingualism and bilingualism. Thirdly, the section entitled 'Code Switching' has provided definitions of the notion, its types and the distinction between code switching and code mixing as well as an introduction to CS in virtual contexts. Then, elucidations of the concept of communication, its components and virtual communication have been supplied. Lastly, the analytical framework has clarified the approaches adopted for the present study.



***Research Design***

## Introduction

The current study investigates the way Master Two EFL students of the department of English use CS as a communicative strategy in virtual scenes. It explores the functions and reasons why learners switch between languages in informal virtual interactions. Thus, it is crucial to dissect the components of the methodology, the present paper is based on. This chapter describes the research method, context and the sample of the study, it also outlines how data is collected and analyzed.

### 2.1. Research Method

This inquiry opts for a mixed-methods research, which merges both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather and analyze data. It *“is an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks”* (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 41). The quantitative method is concerned with the relationships between variables, numerical data and statistics, whereas qualitative research focuses on exploring the meanings people attribute to social or human issues (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This investigation is a case study that incorporates corpus-based research, which involves the collection and analysis of corpora about a certain topic, and survey research, which is the collection of information from a sample of people through questionnaires, interviews, online surveys and so on. Kurt Schoch (2020) suggests that case study research entails a thorough and in-depth examination of a certain occasion, circumstance, social group or phenomenon in its real-life context.

## **2.2. Data Collection Procedures**

This investigation takes place in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou. To secure the data required to achieve the objectives of our case study, the population comprises Master Two EFL students of the department of English; they serve as sample because they are multilingual individuals and they are well familiar with CMC. This sample encompasses 30 students, which are both the participants in the Facebook chat group and respondents to the questionnaire.

## **2.3. Data Collection Tools**

In pursuance of confirming or denying the hypotheses mentioned in the general introduction, we choose two instruments to collect the needed data. The first tool is a selection of corpus, which is obtained from a Facebook chat group and the second tool is a questionnaire designed for students.

### **2.3.1. The Corpus**

Crystal (2008, p. 117) expounds the term as “a collection of linguistic data, either written texts or a transcription of recorded speech, which can be used as a linguistic description or as a means of verifying hypotheses about a language”. Sinclair (1991) adds that corpus is a set of texts that take place naturally, selected to depict a vernacular or language’s condition.

The corpus of this study derives from the Facebook chat group, where participants carry out conversations casually as they would in their daily interactions. This allows us to observe CS in authentic informal encounters between learners on virtual platforms, since this study focuses on CS as a written production in virtual contexts. The chat group grants information about the manner learners shift codes, which enables us to discover how CS occurs in such setting.

## 2.3.2. The Questionnaire

Lavrakas (2008, p. 652), claims that a questionnaire is “*the main instrument for collecting data in survey research. Basically, it is a set of standardized questions, often called items, which follow a fixed scheme in order to collect individual data about one or more specific topics*”. A questionnaire is composed of close-ended questions that provide quantitative data and open-ended questions that supply qualitative data. A questionnaire is used in this case study to survey 30 students of the department of English since this investigation focuses on CS produced by learners. It is divided into four sections and contains 14 items. The first section is entitled ‘Participants’ Linguistic Practices’, which covers 10 questions that aim to obtain background information about what languages learners speak and the way they use those languages in virtual contexts. The second section is entitled ‘Functions of Code Switching’, it contains one Likert scale question that is designed to understand how students switch codes. The third section is ‘Reasons of Code Switching’, which also contains one Likert scale question that aims to uncover why students switch codes. The fourth and last section is ‘Students’ opinions about Code Switching in Virtual Contexts’, which encompasses two open-ended questions that are destined to collect students views about code switching.

The questionnaire is distributed initially to five students during the process of the pilot study to test the clarity and practicality of the questions. After receiving feedback, the first and second section have been merged, with the addition of items and subtraction of irrelevant ones. Several questions and section titles are reformulated and some multiple-choice questions are replaced with Likert scales ones. The final section has been reformulated to ensure better understanding of the items.

## 2.4. Data Analysis Procedures

To analyze the acquired data we select two data analysis procedures, the Descriptive Statistical Method that examines the quantitative data and Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)

that inspects the qualitative data. The data is categorized and analyzed according to Appel & Muysken's (2006) 'six functions of code switching', and Malik's (1994) 'ten reasons for code-switching'.

## 2.4.1. Descriptive Statistical Method

Descriptive statistical method is a quantitative data analysis technique used to organize data into a concise summary by outlining the connections between variables in a sample or population (Yellapu, 2018). To ensure the reliability of the findings, the present study relies on 'The Rule of Three' to examine the quantitative data obtained from the close-ended questions in the students' questionnaire. The latter aims to explore the variety of languages learners speak and the frequency of their CS in multiple contexts. The percentages are calculated with the following equation  $X = Y \times 100 / Z$  in which, X stands for the calculated percentage, Y represents the obtained answers and Z is the total number of students. The data are displayed in the form of graphs, diagrams, tables and pie charts.

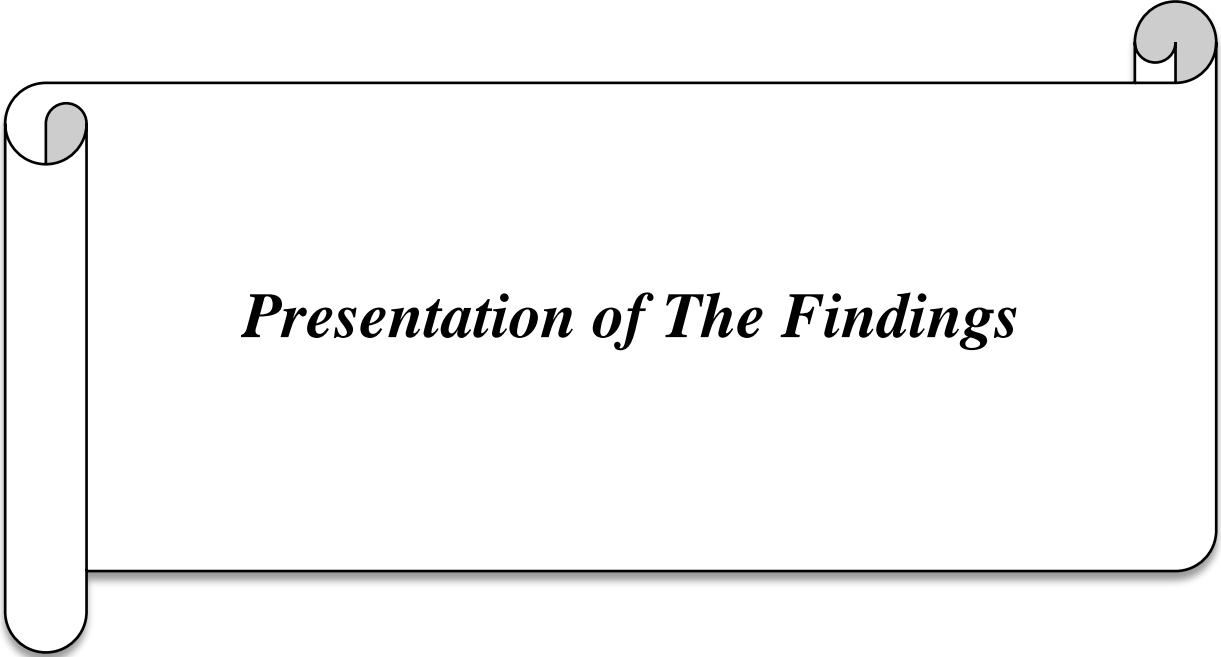
## 2.4.2. Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)

Schreier (2012, p. 1) suggests that QCA is "*a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative material. It is done by classifying material as instances of the categories of a coding frame*". That is to say, QCA is methodical, adaptable and minimizes data. This method is integrated in the analysis of the raw qualitative data taken from the corpus of the Facebook chat group and the open-ended questions in the students' questionnaire, which seek to understand why learners switch codes and their perspectives about CS and its effects. We interpret and present the data in the form of texts.

## Conclusion

The current chapter has put emphasis on the features of the research design our study comprises and it has highlighted four sections. First, it has presented the research method this inquiry follows; then it has explained the context of the study and the sample of participants.

Next, it has elaborated on the data collection instruments that have been used in gathering the required data and it has explained the data analysis procedures that have assisted in the description and interpretation of the data.



***Presentation of The Findings***

## Introduction

This investigations aims to discover how and why Masters Two EFL students of the department of English use Code Switching as a communicative strategy in virtual contexts. This chapter presents the findings of this inquiry and it is divided into two sections. The first section, presents the findings of the analysis of the corpus taken from the Facebook chat group, and the second section provides the findings of the analysis of the students’ questionnaire.

### 3.1. Results of Students’ Conversation Analysis

The corpus obtained from the Master Two Didactics’ Facebook chat group, has been categorized and analyzed according to Appel and Muysken’s (2006) “six functions of code switching”. Each of the six functions’ results are displayed in individual tables as follows:

➤ **Referential Function**

| The Expressions   | The languages   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Referential Function</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literature review should include the major works done by scholars about the topic of your investigation</li> <li>Simone de Beauvoir is a feminist philosopher. She wrote an essay called Second Sex to explain that women are not born as second class citizens.</li> <li>Close-ended question items <b>nni</b> the participants select possible answers, <b>après is3a</b> different categories nominal data <b>anda</b> there are only two options to select like yes/no true/false male/female, <b>Ila daghn</b> multiple choice items <b>anda lant atass n</b> options to select, <b>Ila</b> Rank order <b>c’est</b> to classify items into specific order eg classify the skills according to difficulty, <b>Ila</b> Linkert scale when u give a statement &amp; ask how they agree like strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree</li> </ul> | <p><b>Tamazight</b></p> <p><b>French</b></p> <p><b>Arabic</b></p> <p>English (no color)</p> |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vous avez besoin de la demande manuscrite.. photocopie, le diplôme et le formulaire à remplir sur place</li> <li>• Aqlin di la fac</li> <li>• Ad rouhegh azekka ad steqsigh nchallah don't worry</li> <li>• La réunion nni was supposed to be for shab civilization</li> <li>• Nennayas , tnayaghd vduth les recherches daya</li> <li>• They told me toughaled</li> <li>• Aparement delibirind</li> </ul> |  |
|--|--|--|

**Table 01: Expressions of the Referential Function**

This table demonstrates the referential expressions taken from the Master Two Facebook chat group. In this function, the shift in codes is categorized majorly between Tamazight to English (**They told me toughaled**), Tamazight to French (**Aparement, delibirind**), while the switch to Arabic is rarely seen. There are also cases where switching is absent and the conversations have been carried out in one language (Tamazight, French, Arabic or English).

➤ **Directive Function**

|                           | The Expressions   | The languages  |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Directive Function</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hello</li> <li>• Svp a kel heure le match</li> <li>• bonsoir tout le monde</li> <li>• hay les filles</li> <li>• salam svp illa win isenen kach etudiant di l'université de Caen</li> <li>• hey everyone</li> <li>• hello girls , saha ftourkoum</li> <li>• hi everyone nsit to say hi</li> <li>• aslama cami</li> <li>• svp thekchem la bourse ou pas ?</li> </ul> | <p>Tamazight</p> <p>French</p> <p>Arabic</p> <p>English (no color)</p> |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you mean by that?</li> <li>• Thileli what type of anime do you watch</li> <li>• Heyyyy</li> <li>• Azul fellowen</li> <li>• Please do!!</li> <li>• Salut tout le monde, could someone of you explain to me how e-learning exam will be?</li> <li>• Asalama Siham</li> <li>• Je veux me renseigner si qulqu'un parmi vous a travaillé deja dans une école privée?</li> <li>• Cc les amis svp Le site ni n les thèmes déjà traité au département</li> <li>• Klk un asichegge3 un email</li> <li>• Fkewthiyid l'email n madame Berbar svp</li> </ul> |  |
|--|---|--|

**Table 02: Expressions of the Directive Function.**

The results presented above highlight the directive expressions obtained from the Master Two Facebook chat group. In this function, students shift between French and Tamazight (**Fkewthiyid l'email n madame Berbar svp**), while some switch between English and Arabic (**hello girls, saha ftourkoum**) and others switch between Tamazight, Arabic and French (**salam svp illa win isenen kach etudiant di l'université de Caen**). However, some students do not shift at all and they convey messages using only one of the four languages.

➤ **Expressive Function**

|                            | The Expressions   | The languages                                |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Expressive Function</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm just tired and not in the mood of working</li> <li>• i relate to both of y'all ne3ya, no motivation no time</li> <li>• depressed but having a tasty tacos in our mouths</li> </ul> | <p>Tamazight</p> <p>French</p> <p>Arabic</p> |

|  |  |                    |
|--|--|--------------------|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same , sometimes i do live the moments , i cry laugh ... just as if I'm watching</li> <li>• Je suis toujours attiré par tout ce qui est vintage 🥰</li> <li>• Croyez-moi ar tura ihemlagh atas les dessins animés que ziik nii</li> <li>• We're tired all the time 24/7 🤔🤔</li> <li>• Je les trouve très nocifs</li> <li>• i happen to love both actually so</li> <li>• I haaate remdhan in summer</li> <li>• I really like that color it gives me happy vibes.</li> </ul> | English (no color) |
|--|--|--------------------|

**Table 03: Expressions of the Expressive Function.**

The table above exhibits the expressive expressions found in the Master Two Facebook chat group. In this function, the students communicate solely in English (**I happen to love both actually so**) or they shift mainly between English and Tamazight (**I hate remdhan in summer**).

➤ **Phatic Function**

|                        | The Expressions  | The languages                                       |
|------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Phatic Function</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meriem wesh ça va hhh</li> <li>• Azul les filles, how are you guys in this ramadhan</li> <li>• Dessah i agree</li> <li>• hey everyone j'espère que vous allez toutes bien</li> <li>• hey everyone i hope you are all doing well</li> <li>• Guys lets all try to be comfortable and talk freely here ..if anyone has any topic they wanna talk about mrahba bih</li> <li>• Non fihel</li> <li>• Merci je l'ai vu c bon</li> <li>• Ah sorry about that my friend</li> </ul> | Tamazight<br>French<br>Arabic<br>English (no color) |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bon courage à vous</li> <li>• Thank youuuuu</li> <li>• Okay take turns koul yiweth adini rray iss</li> <li>• I wanna say both but i'll go with painting too just like you</li> <li>• Saha aidkounm</li> <li>• Saha shourkounm</li> <li>• Saha ftourkounm</li> <li>• Bonsoir à tous j'espere vous allez bien saha remdhankounm</li> </ul> |  |
|--|---|--|

**Table 04: Expressions of the Phatic Function.**

The findings displayed above demonstrate phatic expressions extracted from the Master Two Facebook chat group. In this function, students relay messages in one of the four languages only most of the time. In case of code switching, they shift from Arabic to English (**...how are you girls in this ramadhan**), French to English (**hey everyone, j'espere que vous allez toutes bien**), Tamazight to English (**dessah I agree**), French to Tamazight (**Azul les filles..**), Arabic to French (**..wesh ça va**) and on occasions, they mix between all four codes.

➤ **Metalinguistic Function**







|                                | The Expressions  | The languages   |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Metalinguistic Function</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halliday spoke about Igge and semiotic circle. Sydney extended the idea to other semiotic resources (images sounds...) Pas seulement Igge</li> <li>• To a linguist a text is an actual use of language, either written or spoken</li> <li>• I wrote discourse is the use of Igge in a specific context</li> <li>• A given context puts a relation between text and discourse</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"> <span style="background-color: yellow;">Tamazight</span><br/> <span style="background-color: #c8e6c9;">French</span><br/> <span style="background-color: #fff9c4;">Arabic</span><br/>                     English (no color)                 </p> |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coherence is related to the semantic relationships between parts of the same text</li> </ul> |  |
|--|---|--|

**Table 05: Expressions of the Metalinguistic Function.**

Above are displayed metalinguistic expressions taken from the Master Two Facebook chat group. In this function, students carry out their communications in English only because they are commenting on its linguistic conventions (**I wrote discourse is the use of lgge in a specific context**).

➤ **Poetic Function**

|                 | The Expressions  | The languages   |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Poetic Function | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matoub yes3a lhaq mis yenna aqvayli d wa3rav machi d athmathen</li> <li>• Hhhhhhhhhhh  I love الأجواء الرمضانية agui graaavve moi</li> <li>• "women are not born, they're made"</li> <li>• The picture tenghayi lol</li> <li>• Baraka f leqlil akken iqqaren</li> <li>• Athan nekfa leqraya a tharwa</li> <li>• Je comprends ce moment de curiosité imbattable </li> <li>• نصومو بصحة و لهنا انشاء الله</li> <li>• أعاده الله علينا بالصحة و البركة</li> <li>• أمين</li> <li>• و في الصحور بركة</li> <li>• اعتزل ما يؤذيك</li> <li>•    و ابتعدو عن الشر جزاكم الله خيرا</li> <li>• I choose the future, my past was سلسلة من الاحداث المرعبة </li> </ul> | <p>Tamazight<br/>French<br/>Arabic<br/>English (no color)</p> |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He would be 50 years old but still 😂🤔 احمق</li> <li>• To me el 3andalib baqraj ta3 attey lmaoooo</li> <li>• Teffi dhow b moukhek mdrrr</li> <li>• أمنيات انسان فقير اك شايف ههههه</li> <li>• شكرا يا العندليب hhhhhhhhhhh</li> </ul> |  |
|--|---|--|

**Table 06: Expressions of the Poetic Function**

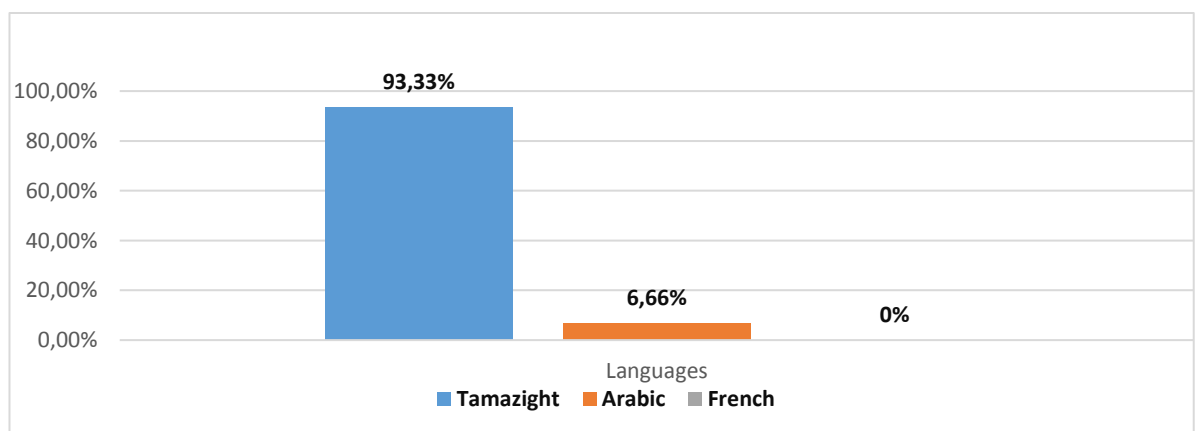
The table above shows poetic expressions obtained from the Master Two Facebook chat group. In this function, there is a major use of Arabic (أمنيات انسان فقير اك شايف ههههه), similarly to expressions found only in Tamazight, English or French. Code switching is mostly visible in the mix of Arabic and English, Arabic and Tamazight and Arabic and French.

### 3.2. Results of Students’ Questionnaire

The following results have been obtained from the questionnaire that has surveyed a sample of 30 Master Two EFL students of the department of English at the Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou. The results have been analyzed following Malik’s 1994 “ten reasons for code switching”.

#### 3.2.1. Section One: Participant’s Linguistic Practices

**Q1: What is your native language?**



**Diagram 01: Students’ Native Language.**

The diagram above displays that the majority (93.33%) of the participant' native language is Tamazight, whereas the minority (6.66%) have claimed that their mother tongue is Arabic.

**Q2: How many languages do you speak and what are they?**

The majority of the participants have answered that they speak four languages, which are Tamazight, French, Arabic and English, while some have stated that they speak three languages that are Tamazight, French and English. A few of the students speak five languages, which include Tamazight, French, Arabic, English and German and one participant who speaks all these five languages along with Spanish.

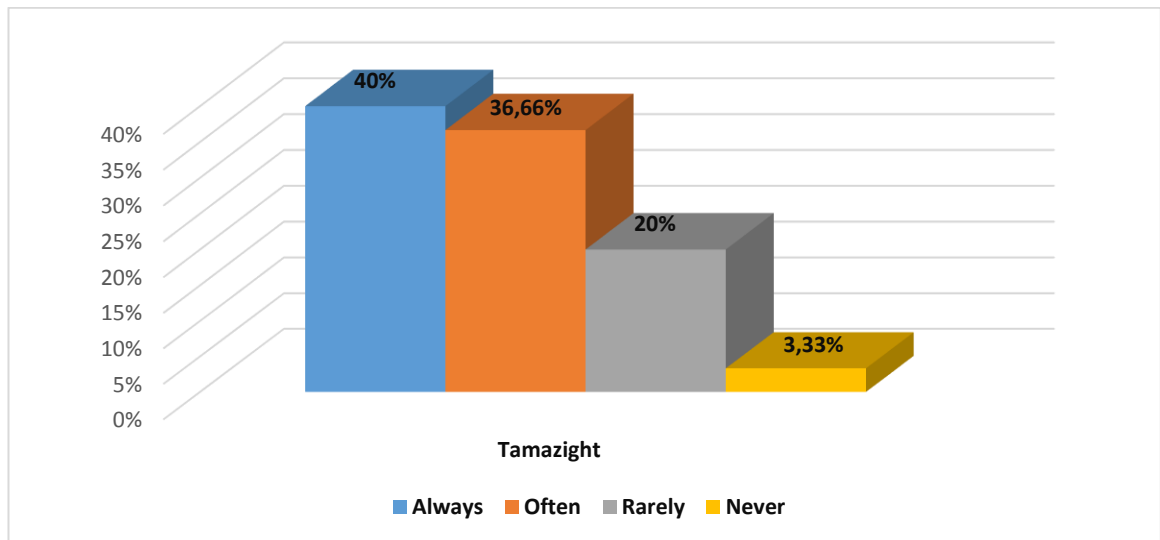
**Q3: What are the languages do you use the most in informal conversations?**

|                     | Tamazight+<br>French | Tamazight+<br>English | Tamazight+<br>French+<br>Arabic | Tamazight+<br>French+<br>English | Arabic+<br>French | Tamazight+<br>French+<br>Arabic+ English | <b>Total</b> |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|--|--------------|
| <b>Participants</b> | 6                    | 1                     | 1                               | 17                               | 1                 | 4  | <b>30</b>    |
| <b>%</b>            | 20%                  | 3.33%                 | 3.33%                           | 56.66%                           | 3.33%             | 13.33%                                   | <b>100</b>   |

**Table 07: Students' Most Used Languages in Informal Conversations.**

This table reveals that 56.66%, which makes up the majority of the students, have answered that Tamazight, French and English are their most used languages in informal conversations. 20% of learners have selected Tamazight and French, 13.33% have claimed that they use all four languages including Tamazight, French, Arabic and English. The remaining three variables have gained the same proportion, 3.33% each.

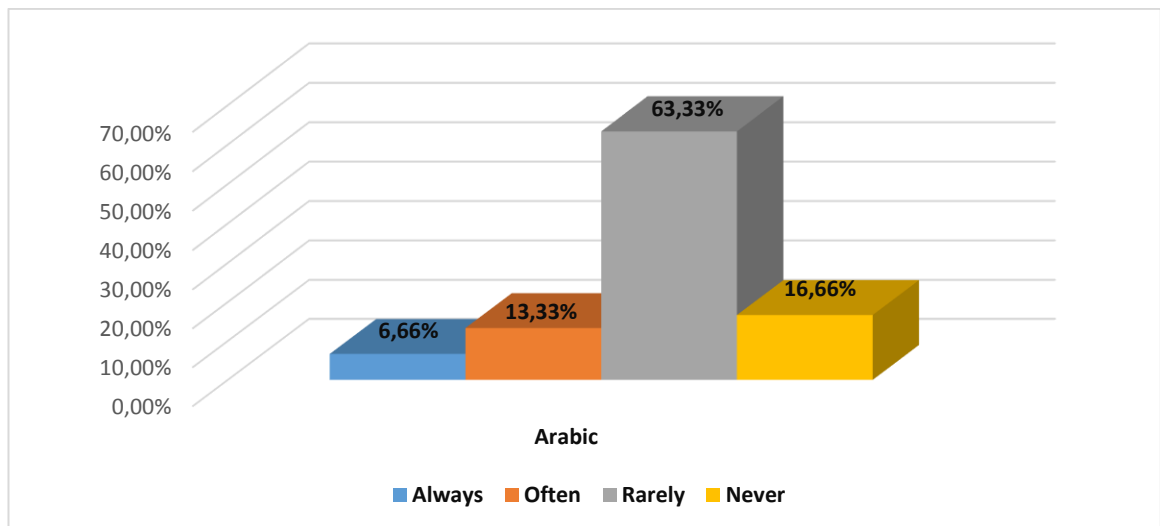
**Q4: How often do you use Tamazight in your online conversations?**



**Diagram 02: The Frequency of Students' Use of Tamazight Online.**

Diagram 02 shows that 40% of the students always use Tamazight in their online conversations, and 36.66% of them use it often. 20% rarely use Tamazight, while 3.33% never use it online.

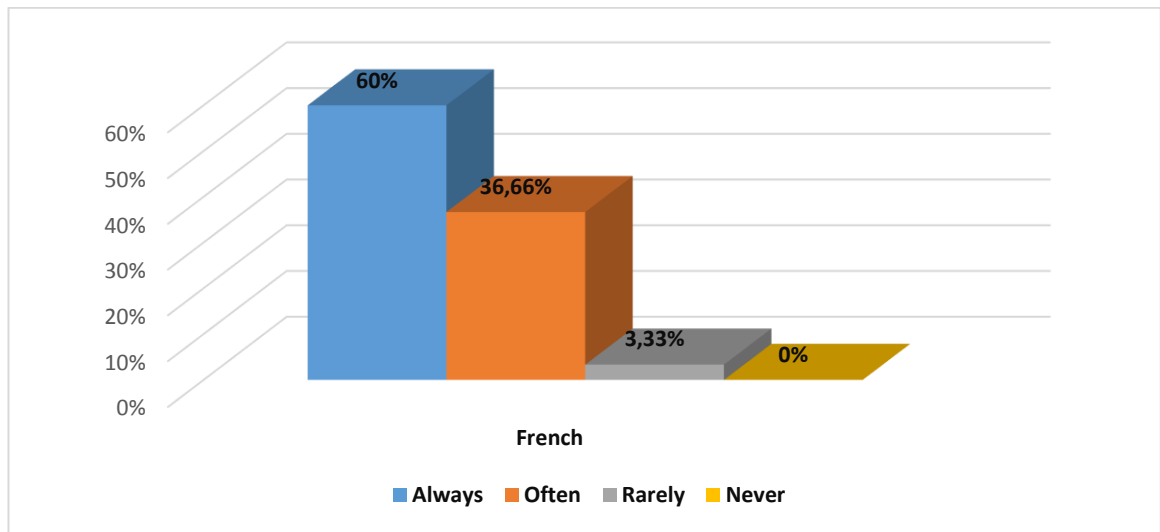
**Q5: How often do you use Arabic in your online conversations?**



**Diagram 03: The Frequency of Students' Use of Arabic Online.**

These results denote that 63.33% of the students have claimed that they rarely use Arabic in their online conversations, and 16.66% of them never use it. 13.33% of them often utilize Tamazight, while only 6.66% always use it online.

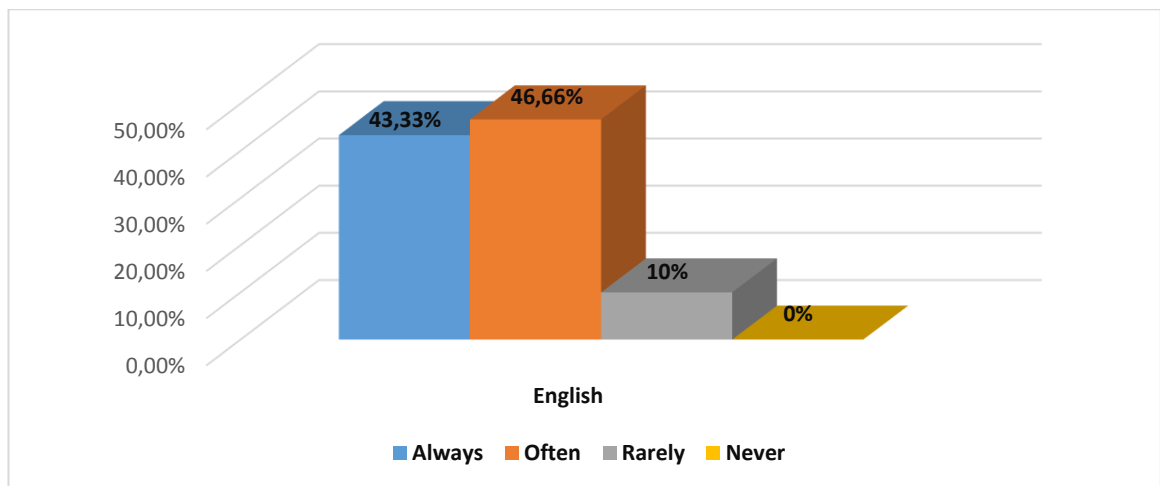
**Q6: How often do you use French in your online conversations?**



**Diagram 04: The Frequency of Students' Use of French Online.**

The findings above depict that 60% of the students always use French in their online conversations, and 36.66% often use it, while 3.33% rarely use French online.

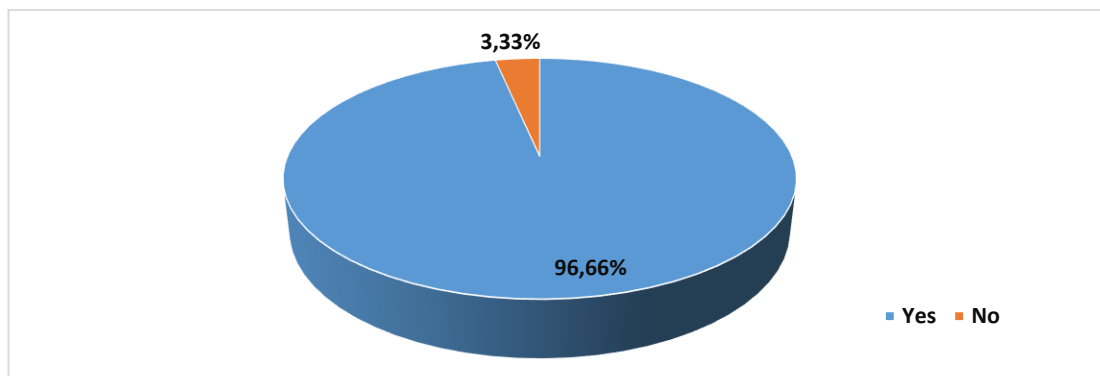
**Q7: How often do you use English in your online conversations?**



**Diagram 05: The Frequency of Students' Use of English Online.**

This diagram demonstrates that 46.66% of the students often use English in their online conversations, a considerable number (43.33%) always use it and only 10% rarely utilize English online.

### Q8: Do you switch between these languages in your online conversations?



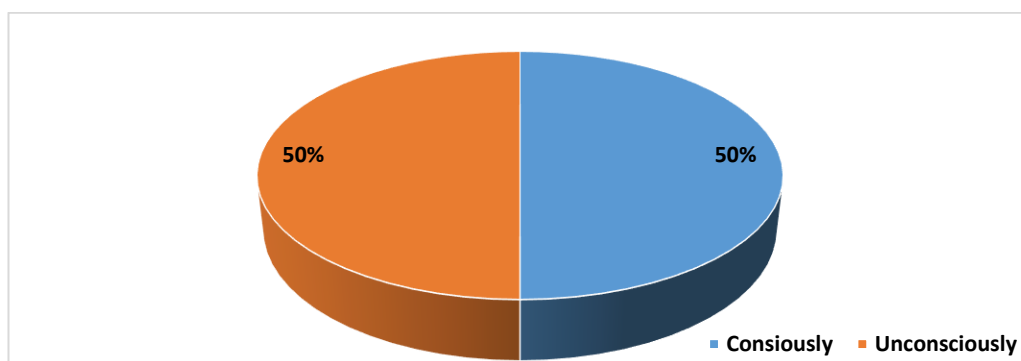
#### Pie chart 01: Students' Code switching in Online Conversations.

The pie chart shows that the greatest majority (96.66%) of the learners switch codes in their online conversations and the rest (3.33%) do not.

### Q9: If yes, what are the languages do you switch between the most? Why?

The majority of the participants have suggested that in their online conversations they mostly switch between Tamazight, French, Arabic and English, **“Because most people I chat with speak the same language”**, as a student has claimed. This shift provides them with speed in message transmission, one participant has worded it **“economy of words”** which infers short, efficient messages and less effort made. They have also stated that it is more practical because it provides them with easy access to terms that are not available in some languages especially in expressions such as idioms, proverbs, jokes, religious texts and so on. A learner suggests that they shift **“sometimes when I lose words or can not remember a word in one language I use the other one”** and another has added **“generally depends on the person that i am speaking with if he is familiar with the language”**. Other students switch between Tamazight French and English to speak with different people from different backgrounds, which allows them to meet new individuals from foreign countries. A few learners have suggested that they shift to French but mostly to English to talk about study related subjects and because it is a global language and the language of the internet.

**Q10: You switch from a language to another in your online conversations**

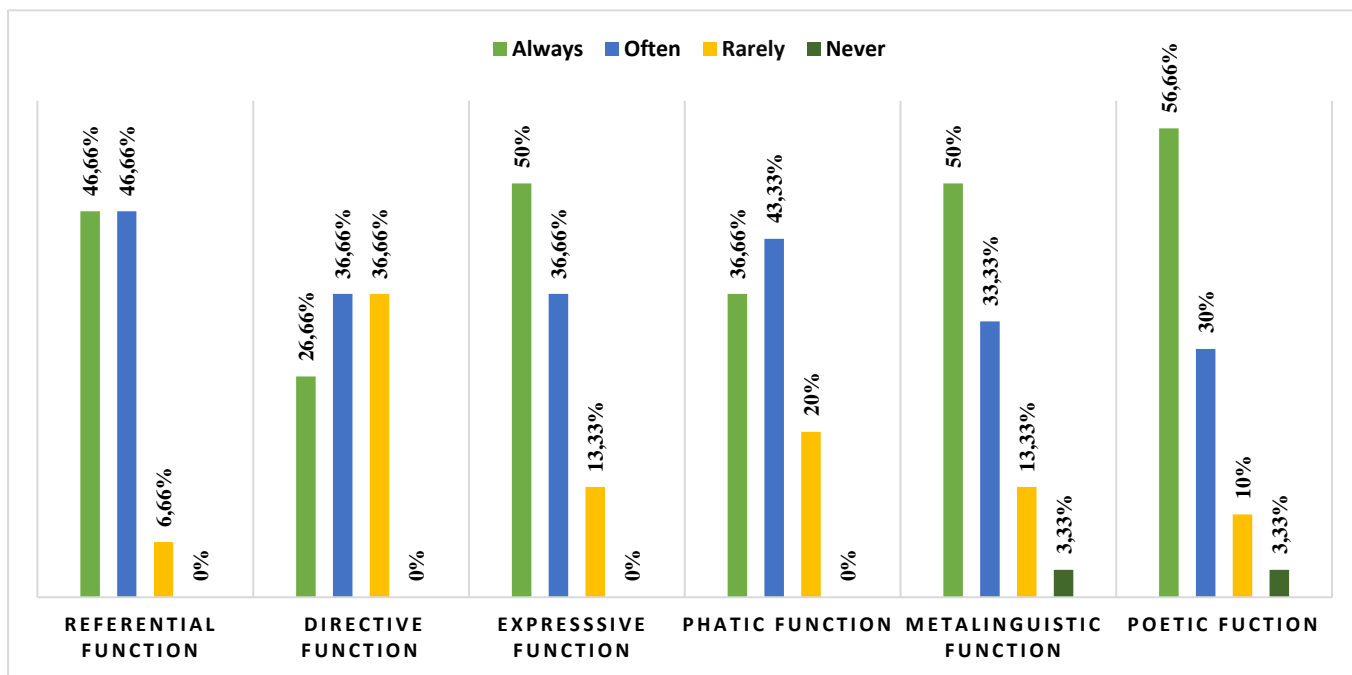


**Pie chart 02: The State of Students’ Code Switching in Online Conversations.**

As indicated above 50% of the students switch codes consciously in their online conversations and the other half (50%) switch codes unconsciously.

**3.2.2. Section Two: Functions of Code Switching**

**Q11: How often are these functions present when you switch codes?**



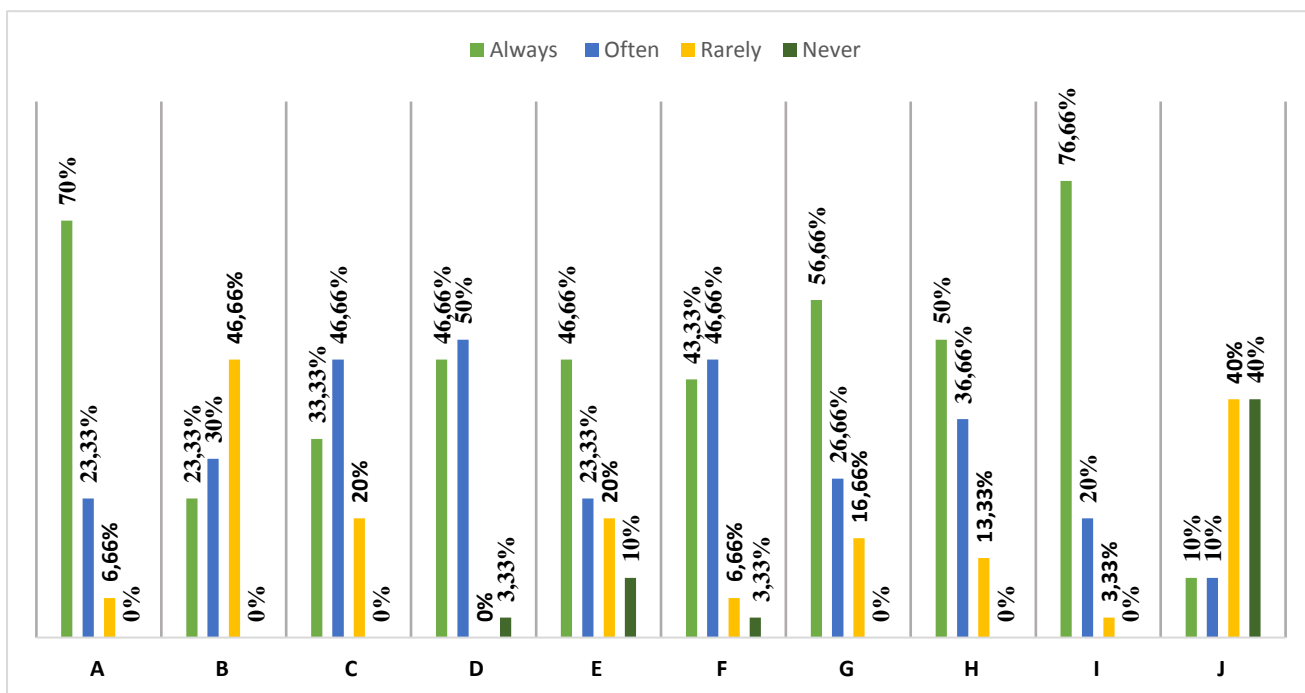
**Diagram 06: Functions of Students’ Code Switching.**

As shown in the diagram above, the results indicate that 46.66% of the students always switch codes to provide information about something or a certain context, and equally 46.66% of them often switch for this function, while 6.66% rarely rely on it. The majority of the students

that makes up 36.66% often switch between languages to influence the behavior or the attitude of other people, with 36.66% of those who rarely switch for this function and 26.66% have claimed that they always do. The diagram also displays that 50% of the learners always shift codes to reveal their feelings and emotions, while 36.66% often switch and 13.33% rarely do so. To start, stop or maintain a conversation 43.33% have answered that they often switch for this function, 36.66% always shift and the remaining 20% do so rarely. As far as the fifth statement, 50% of the learners have stated that they always alternate codes to describe or comment on a language, 33.33% often shift for that, and only 13.33% have selected rarely while the rest (3.33%) never do it. The findings of the last statement also demonstrate that 56.66% of the students always shift to make jokes, puns, riddles, tongue twisters and other wordplay, while 30% often rely on code switching for this function, 10% rarely do and only 3.33% have selected never.

**3.2.3. Section Three: Reasons of Code Switching**

**Q12: How often are these reasons present when you shift codes?**



**Diagram 07: Reasons of Students' Code Switching.**

This diagram exhibits that 70% of students always shift between languages when a term or an expression that exists in one language is not available in another language, while 23.33% often alternate codes and only 6.66% choose this option rarely. Concerning the second statement, 46.66% have answered that they rarely shift because they are not equally fluent in the languages they speak, while 30% often do and 23.33% always switch to another code. The majority of the learners (46.66%) have suggested that they often change languages when they are angry, exhausted, confused or anxious, whereas 33.33% always do and the remaining 20% rarely shift for that reason. When trying to emphasize and highlight an important idea, 50% of students often shift codes, with 46.66% of those who always do and only 3.33% who never switch for that function. 46.66% of learners who are used to expressing something in a given language by force of habit, always switch codes, while 23.33% switch often, 20% rarely shift and 10% never do. The diagram also depicts that on one hand, learners have answered that they often alter languages when transmitting significant linguistic and social messages, on the other hand 43.33% always do, while 6.66% rarely switch for that reason and 3.33% never do. A great percentage of the participants (50%) have suggested that they always switch when showing their identity, cultural values, relations and belonging to a group, with 26.66% of those who often shift and the remaining 16.66% who rarely do. For the purpose of addressing different people from different linguistic backgrounds, 50% of participants always shift codes, 36.66% have answered often and 13.33% chose rarely. The majority that encompasses 76.66% of learners always switch codes because it depends on the setting (when, where, who) and how much they are involved in the conversation, 20% have suggested that they often switch for that reason while only 3.33% rarely do. 40% of students never shift languages to attract attention, equally another 40% have claimed that they rarely do, while 10% often switch and another 10% always do.

### **3.2.4. Section Four: Student's Opinions about Code Switching in Virtual Contexts**

#### **Q13: What do you think about the use of Code switching in virtual scenes (online)?**

A large sample of the students have unanimously affirmed that code switching in virtual scenes is inevitable due to multilingualism and according to a participant, it is **“useful, helpful and necessary”**. The participants also suggest that online CS provides ground for them to practice the languages they speak and as a learner claims, **“it allows more interactivity with people from diverse backgrounds as well as different age ranges”**. The learners have highlighted that **“the use of multiple languages contributes to the successful transmission of the message”**, which allows them to express what they want perfectly with the absence of physicality and non-verbal cues. CS is important and it facilitates communication, grants speed, flexibility and minimizes linguistic ambiguity, while being **“less time-consuming”** a student has claimed. However, a few students have explained that CS online is not a good practice because it makes people lazy and that triggers language deficiency, and threatens the existence of indigenous tongues.

#### **Q14: Can you describe how Code Switching affects your linguistic abilities?**

Almost the entirety of the participants have expressed that CS has both positive and negative effects on them. On one hand, participants have stated that CS enables the constant use of the languages they speak, which helps them maintain those languages. They have declared that it is **“effortless, beneficial and helpful”** when it comes to enhancing their abilities in acquiring and mastering different languages as well as strengthening their communicative skills either orally or in written forms. Additionally, the students claim that, CS is **“enjoyable, enables clarity and ease of expression”** and **“provides motivation to explore new tongues”** and new cultures. On the other hand, students view CS negatively because they think it weakens their autonomy in using the languages they speak separately with equal proficiency. As a result, CS interferes with their vocabulary and prevents them from **“being able to hold a conversation**

**in one language**". They have emphasized that CS, is "**not beneficial**" because it makes them dependent and causes them to make no efforts to improve the lacking aspects in the languages they use, which leads to having no full command of any language, forgetting or mixing up between codes, miscommunications and abandoning their native languages.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the findings of the empirical study taken from the corpus of the Facebook chat group and the students' questionnaire. The first section, has reported the results of the corpus and the second section has displayed the results of the questionnaire. The obtained findings are to be interpreted in details in the following chapter.



*Discussion of the Findings*

### Introduction

The present chapter aims to discuss the results displayed in the previous section. The discussion of the findings is destined to answer the research questions and confirm or refute the hypotheses presented in the general introduction. This chapter is divided into two sections: the first part interprets the results of the analysis of the corpus obtained from Master Two Facebook chat group, which is analyzed according to Appel and Muysken's (2006) "six functions of code switching". The second part discusses the results of the students' questionnaire, which are analyzed following Malik's (1994) "ten reasons for code switching".

#### 4.1. Functions of Students' Code Switching in Virtual Contexts

This section discusses the findings obtained from the analysis of the corpus of the Facebook chat group. It aims to unfold how code switching occurs online.

##### 4.1.1. Most Dominant Languages in Students' Online Conversations

The analysis of the conversations extracted from the Facebook chat group have revealed that students employ code switching when they interact, they shift between English, Tamazight, French and Arabic. However, it has been noticed that the most dominant languages are Tamazight and French. Hymes (1967, p. 9) claims that "*no normal person and no normal speech community is limited in repertoire to a single variety of code..*". This means that no one is restricted to only one variety of language. In the case of multilingual Master Two students of the department of English at MMUTO, their linguistic profile is characterized with diversity.

Tamazight is the most dominant language in students' various online utterances. This is expected because the majority (93.33%) of participants' mother tongue is Tamazight (see Diagram 1). Several students have responded, "***Tamazight is my native language***" and "***Tamazight is my mother tongue***". Furthermore, mother tongues allow people to show their identity and to stress their shared cultural values, experiences and belonging to a certain group.

That is reinforced by Rovira (2008, p. 66) who asserts that language is an essential component of one's cultural identity; she adds that it is *“through language that we transmit and express our culture and its values”*. This can be noted in the occurrences below:

- **“Azul fellawen” [Hello everyone]**: This is a conventional Amazigh greeting, and the participants use it to identify with their fellow Amazigh mates or the Amazigh culture itself.
- **“atan a tarwa nekfa legraya” [We have finished studies at last]**: The participant has switched to Tamazight to share their relief with studies coming to an end. The switch here indicates that students share the same experience, therefore sharing the same relief as well.

French is the second most visible language in students' conversations. Despite the fact that French has no official status in Algeria, it is heavily present in all Algerian societal aspects, and considered the lingua-franca of the country. A participant has declared that they switch to *“French because I can express myself in an easy way”*, another student has responded, *“French is my second language”*. This means that, even though French in Tizi-Ouzou is majorly a third language acquired after Tamazight and Arabic, some participants consider it as a second language. The presence of French is highlighted in these examples:

- *“n'oubliez pas de réviser les moindres détails car pour nos enseignants c'est les plus importants lol”*
- *“oui compliqué, j'ai juste capté que la langue des signes c'est non-naturel, par-ce qu'elle ne remplit pas certaines caractéristiques”*

In the first example the learner has shifted to French entirely to give advice to their classmates, and in the second example the speaker is discussing sign language. The use of French here can be associated with the degree of familiarity and habit the participants have towards the language as a natural part of their linguistic profile.

The presence of English in the learners' electronic interactions is due to their status as English students. The language is used to discuss lesson-related subjects, educational matters or for casual speech, which allows them to exercise the language. Notably, a participant suggests, *"I enjoy talking with others in English either for studies purposes, or fun"* and another has added, *"I use English especially with my mates"*. This shows that, English is widespread and considered a rival to French in Algeria (Benrabah, 2014). This can be accounted for, in the utterances below:

- ***"Coherence is related to the semantic relationships between parts of the same text"***: The learner here is tackling a study related subject, and English here serves a metalinguistic function because the students are using the language to comment on language itself.
- ***"women are not born, they're made"***: The participant has sent an idiom in English, to draw the attention of their classmates and to encourage them to comment and debate about it in order to promote language use.

As far as Arabic is concerned, it is the least visible language in participants' exchanges, as a minimal percentage (6.66%) (see diagram 1) of the learners' native language is Arabic. A student declares, *"I use Arabic with people who do not understand Berber"*. Its use is limited to a few purposes, either when speaking to individuals of Arab origins, for religious matters or for entertainment. One may note these illustrations:

- ***"Saha ftourkoun"*** [Have a good Iftar], ***"Saha aidkoun"*** [Have a happy Eid]: These examples consist of typical Algerian Arabic phrases used by Muslims during religious celebrations. *"Saha ftourkoun"* means the learner is wishing their classmates a blessed *"Iftar"* after a day of fasting. The second example refers to a congratulation that is uttered on the day of Eid, which is an Islamic festivity.

- *“Teffi dhow b moukhek mdrrr”* [Turn the lights off with your brain lol]: The participants here makes a joke in Algerian Arabic, when talking about superpowers in a humorous way. To show that they are entertained, they shift to French to say “*mdr*” which is an abbreviation that means, “dying from laughter”.

These results account for the most dominant languages in students’ CMC obtained from the analysis of the Facebook chat group. The participants have been asked through the questionnaire about the frequency of language use online, and they have responded that they always use Tamazight and French, while they often use English and rarely use Arabic. This concludes that, the way Master Two students perceive the use of languages online and the way they employ them are in fact the same. Additionally, the findings confirm the first hypothesis suggested in the general introduction, which claims that students switch between Tamazight, French, English and Arabic.

Souad Sahraoui has conducted an empirical study in 2020, at The Philipps University in Marburg, Germany; it aims to examine English and the languages of Algeria: Suggestion towards a New Language Policy. The investigation has also tackled participants’ use of languages online. The results indicate that the majority of participants’ native language is Algerian Arabic and they speak French, English, with a small percentage of those who speak Tamazight. In contradiction to the present study’s results, Sahraoui’s (2020) findings show the respondents’ most used languages in daily life are Algerian Arabic, French, English and lastly Tamazight. However, on the social media platform Facebook, English seems to be the most dominant language in use (87%) and Tamazight is in fact the least used tongue, contrary to the present study where it is the most prevalent. The misalignment of the findings of both studies can be linked to the differences in participants’ profile.

### 4.1.2. Most Dominant Functions in Students' Online Conversations

Appel and Muysken's (2006) "six functions of code switching", provide six functions of language where code switching may take place. The results obtained from the corpus, attest that the most dominant functions are *directive, poetic and phatic*.

The findings of this study have revealed that the majority of messages are directive. Appel and Muysken (2006) have reported that the directive function of code switching is one that directly involves and affects the hearer. The students' conversations are full of greetings, requests, and commands. That can be noticed in the following utterances:

- **"Fkewthiyid l'email n madame Berbar svp"** [Give me mrs. Berbar's email please]: The participant starts the sentence with an imperative form of the verb "to give" in Tamazight and then switches to French to express the words that are not available to them in Tamazight such as "email" and "madame". They end the sentence with "svp", a French abbreviation that means "please", which is used here as a form of politeness to indicate that it is a friendly request.
- **"salut tout le monde, could someone of you explain me how e-learning exam will be?"**: The learner aims to ask a question. They begin the sentence with a greeting in French and then switches to English to ask their question. The customary greeting and the use of "could" in this sentence are to ensure cooperation between all parties of the conversation.

The second function that results in the most occurrences of code switching is the poetic function. Scholes (1974, p. 26) notes that all languages possess a poetic function in which the significant emphasis in discourse is when the message brings attention to "its own sound patterns, diction and syntax". The students in such case employ CS to tell anecdotes, stories, songs that make the use of language enjoyable. That can be seen in these utterances:

- **"I choose the future, my past was تسلسلة من الاحداث المرعبة"** [a series of horrifying events]: The participant has answered their mate by making a joke. They start the sentence by

providing an answer in English and then switched to Classical Arabic to deliver the rest.

The intentional shift to Classical Arabic here is done to highlight that part of the message as the punchline of the joke.

- **“the picture *tenyayi lol*” [the picture has killed me lol]:** The student is commenting on a photograph sent by their mate. They switch from English to Tamazight to express the word “*tenghayi*”. The switch here indicates that the student wants to stress that the picture is so funny and it makes them laugh so much.

The third function that appears in the findings is the phatic function. According to Appel and Muysken (2006), code switching is used to show a change in tone and emphasize important parts of a conversation. It is also to check or maintain the connection between the addresser and the addressee and to make people pay more attention to the information. For example:

- **“hey everyone *j’espère que vous allez toutes bien*” :** The participant begins their sentence with “*hey everyone*”, a casual conventional greeting in English, then they switch to French to express that they hope their classmates are doing well. The shift from French to English is present to show sociability by emphasizing the second part of the message.
- **“Guys lets all try to be comfortable and talk freely here. if anyone has any topic they wanna talk about *mrahba bih*” [..they are welcome]:** The student is trying to establish a comfortable chat environment for their mates. They convey the message in full English but switch to Algerian Arabic at the end to say “*mrahba bih*”, which means that they are welcome to suggest any subject for debate.

The results of the analysis show that three out of six functions of code switching presented by Appel and Muysken (2006) that mark their dominance in this study are directive, poetic and phatic. The latter are followed by the expressive, referential and metalinguistic functions. It can be concluded that Master Two students’ online CS is majorly driven by requests, commands, questions, entertainment and sociability.

Kelkoula Nechoua has submitted an empirical study in 2018 in the department of English at the University of Mohammed Boudiaf in Msila. The research explores the functions and reasons of code switching to Arabic among EFL students at a university in Constantine. There are notable differences between their inquiry and the present one. The findings of Kelkoula's (2018) study reveal the most prominent functions for which the participants switch codes are referential, expressive, directive and poetic. The present study's findings show that the directive and poetic are the two most eminent functions, in contrast, in Kelkoula's findings those function rank as third and fourth. One major difference is that, in the present study the phatic function is one of the most dominant in Master Two learners' online CS. However, in Kelkoula's results, there are no instances that account for the phatic function at all. Similarly in both studies, the students do not switch a lot for metalinguistic purposes. The differences between the present study and Kelkoula's (2018) research can be accredited to the fact that, Kelkoula (2018) investigates CS as an oral production in face-to-face interactions. Conversely, the present study examines CS as a written production in informal asynchronous CMC. As a result, the differences in physical contact, context of interactions and the setting, attest to the contrasting results that the two inquiries have obtained.

### **4.2. Reasons behind Students' Code Switching in Virtual Contexts**

This section discusses the results of the analysis of the questionnaire, which aims to reveal why students switch codes in virtual scenes.

#### **4.2.1. Languages Used in Informal and Virtual Settings**

The findings of the third item of the questionnaire reveal that in informal conversations, Master Two students' most employed languages are Tamazight, French and English (see Table 7). One student has said that they shift between *“English, French and Tamazight*. One participant has declared, *“One is my native language and the others i use them based on the people around me and the situation”*, meaning that CS is employed for pragmatic reasons

which, as suggested by Malik (1994), dictate the context of the interaction and the involvement of the interlocutors. Another participant has added, “*they are the most spoken languages in my surroundings*”, this shows that students use the codes they know to fulfill “*the complex communicative demands of a pluralistic society*” (Sridhar, 1996, p. 53). The findings have also demonstrated that in informal interactions, the majority of participants switch between their languages unconsciously.

In online conversations, the findings have displayed that, Master Two students always use Tamazight and French, while they often use English and rarely use Arabic. They switch between these four languages in virtual contexts, as one learner responded, that they shift between these languages “*Because most people I chat with speak the same languages*”, and another has added that the shift “*generally depends on the person that I am speaking with if he is familiar with the language*”. This supports Bagana & Blazhevic’s (2012, p. 65) point of view that “*people who speak two (or more) languages, usually “distribute” their use depending on the conditions of communication*”. The results have displayed that in online conversations, the majority of Master Two students switch codes unconsciously as well.

### 4.2.2. Functions of Code switching between Perception and Use

The fourteenth item in the questionnaire addressed the most present functions in participants’ code switching. The findings have shown that the way students perceive CS and the way they use it are contradictory. The findings obtained from the examination of the corpus suggest that, the most dominant functions in students’ electronic discourse are *directive*, *poetic* and *phatic*. However, when asked to select which functions are most visible in their conversations, the participants have revealed the prominent functions are *referential*, *poetic* and *expressive*.

The participants use the referential function majorly to transmit information about a certain context. Their messages are characterized by the shift between languages due to the lack

of facility, which according to Malik (1994) means the unavailability of specific terms, phrases or concepts of one language in another. This can be noticed in the following examples:

- **“*Aqlin di la fac*” [I’m at the faculty]**: here the student is informing their classmates that they are at university, they begin the sentence with the clause “*Aqlin di*” in Tamazight and then, they shift to French to say “*la fac*” because they had no access to the equivalent of that word in Tamazight.
- **“*Nennayas, tnayaghd vduth les recherches daya*” [we told her, she said to start the research that is all]**: this example also demonstrates the way the participant has shifted from Tamazight to French to express the word “*les recherches*”, which they have not found a similar word for in Tamazight.

The second most present function according to students is poetic. According to Appel and Muysken (2006), in this function interlocutors intentionally shift between codes to play with words, make jokes, riddles and tongue twisters; making language a source of entertainment. Language can also be a tool to show belonging to a culture or a group. This is visible in this utterance:

- **“*Baraka f leqlil akken iqqaren*” [Blessing in a few]**: the participant is intentionally shifting to Arabic to say “*Baraka f leqlil*” which is an idiom that exists in Algerian Arabic used to express gratitude for small things, the student then continues the rest of the sentence in Tamazight.

The third most visible function in the findings is expressive. The learners in this function always switch between codes to reveal their feelings and emotions. Malik (1994) suggests that the mood of the speaker determines the way they use language, it means one’s mental state makes one language more accessible than the other. This is illustrated in these examples:

- **“*i relate to both of y'all ne3ya, no motivation no time*” [ne3ya: we are tired]**: the learner has started their sentence in English and then shifted to Tamazight to say “*ne3ya*” to

highlight that they are tired or exhausted and then continued the rest of the sentence in English.

- ***“I’m just tired and not in the mood of working”***: the participant here is telling their mates that they are not motivated to work and they employ English only to convey the whole message because it is more convenient for them to reveal their inner feelings with that language.

The contradiction between students’ perception of CS and its use extends to the remaining functions. The results of the analysis of the corpus show that, the most dominant functions in participants’ online interactions are directive, poetic and phatic. The latter are followed by the expressive, referential and metalinguistic functions. Contrastingly, the results of the analysis of the questionnaire that has aimed to reveal the most visible functions in students’ code switching are referential, poetic and expressive; these functions are followed by the directive, metalinguistic and phatic functions.

Choy Wai Fong has conducted an empirical study in 2011 at the University Tunku Abdul Rahman, in Malaysia; it aims to investigate the functions and reasons for code switching on Facebook among English-Mandarin Chinese students. In the findings of Choy’s (2011) research, the most dominant functions are referential, expressive and metalinguistic. Choy’s (2011) findings have revealed that, the most dominant function for which Chinese students switch codes is referential. Likewise, the present study’s results demonstrate that, Master Two students’ most dominant function is referential. It is noted in Choy’s (2011) results that in participants’ asynchronous CMC, there are zero occurrences that account for the poetic function. In contradiction, Master Two students have expressed that they employ code switching frequently for entertainment. Majorly, what the present investigation and Choy’s empirical study have in common is that, both of their findings break the hierarchical order in which Appel and Muysken’s (2006) “six functions of code switching” exist.

### 4.2.3. Reasons of Code switching

The fifteenth item in the questionnaire aims to answer why students switch between codes in virtual scenes. According to the approach suggested by Malik (1994) “ten reasons for code switching”, there are ten possible reasons why speakers would shift between codes in a given conversation. In the case of the department of English at MMUTO, the four most eminent reasons that lead Master Two students to switch codes are pragmatic reasons, lack of facility, to show identity with a group and to address a different audience.

The most prominent reason is pragmatic reasons. The students assert that the setting of a certain interaction and the degree at which they are involved in the conversation have proven to be a prevalent triggers for CS. One participant has said *“I usually switch between tamazight (kabyle), French and English, it depends on the people I'm speaking to and the context of the conversation”*, and another added that they shift between *“the four languages, depending on the situation and people I am communicating with”*. It is implied that, Master Two students' CS is majorly guarded by the context and the level of connection among speakers. Additionally, Malik (1994) asserts that CS is a technique used by speakers to highlight the context of the conversation, as depicted in this example:

- *“Bonsoir tout le monde, j'espere que vous allez bien, qui peut me dire svp melmi ateldi l'administration”* [melmi ateldi: when will .. open]: the participant is asking a question, they have started their sentence in French with a greeting and then shifted to Tamazight to bring more attention or to highlight the important part of the message, which is the question.

The second most dominant reason is lack of facility. The students have expressed multiple times that they are conditioned to shift codes because they cannot seem to find equivalent terms or expressions of one language in another. Malik (1994) explains that bilinguals switch when they are unable to find an acceptable phrase in a language, or when specific concepts are only

available in one language and lack terms that have the same meaning in the other language. In that regard, a participant has explained that they use CS *“because I don't find some words which are equivalent to our native language”*. Furthermore, another student has declared that they shift between *“French and tamazight, the reason why I do this is that sometimes I don't find the appropriate words to express what I want to say in French when it comes to kabyle culture”*. This means that when learners have to talk about a concept that only exists in a given language they ultimately need to switch codes, for instance:

- *“Vous pouvez utiliser descriptive statistical method c'est mieux”*: the participant is trying to let their mate know what to use for data analysis, they begin the sentence in French but in order to mention the *“descriptive statistical method”* they shift to English because they have no access its equivalent in another language.

The third reason that influences students' CS is to show identity with a group. The participants noted that they always switch codes to show their identity and their belonging to a certain group either culturally, religiously or socially. This is reinforced by Di Pierto (1977), who declares that when Italian immigrants make a joke in English, they deliver the punchline in Italian, not only because the joke makes more sense in Italian but to stress that they all belong to the same minority group. One of the participants declares, *“I switch to Tamazight because I am Kabyle and when I want to express something related to my culture like idioms or slogans. I use Arabic sometimes to talk about religion”*. This can be noted in the following examples:

- *“Matoub yes3a lhaq mis yenna aqvayli d wa3rav machi d athmathen”* [Matoub was right when he said an Arab and a Kabyle are not siblings]: the participant here is reciting the words of the symbolic Amazigh singer Matoub Lounes. The student conveys the message in Tamazight to show solidarity, identity and association.

- "أعاده الله علينا بالصحة والبركة" [May Allah bring health and blessings]: this utterance shows the student wishing that the month of Ramadhan is going to bring health and blessings. They convey the message in Classical Arabic to express a religious utterance, which shows their belonging to Islam.

The fourth reason that triggers students to shift between languages is to address a different audience. The learners have stated that conversing with people who do not speak the same language as them urges them to switch codes. Malik (1994) asserts that CS manifests when addressing people from different linguistic backgrounds. The learners declare that they switch when *"talking with people outside of my wilaya using Arabic"*, or as another suggests, *"I switch to English when talking to foreigners"*. The participants assert that when the target audience does not understand their language they switch to adapt. Additionally, Gumperz (1982, p. 77) provided the expression *"addressee specification"*, which means the switch is a useful strategy to target a certain message at a particular individual or audience. For example:

- *"Ila hebitou koul wahed iseqsi supervisor ta3ou f email bach nkounou sur"* [If you want each one asks their supervisor through email to be sure]: the student has switched to Arabic to tell all the members of the chat group to talk to their supervisors and the reason they have switched is to be inclusive of those who do not speak Tamazight.
- *"Thileli what type of anime do you watch"*
- *"Sonia je croyais qriv atfaked"* [I thought you were almost done]

In these two examples, the participants are directing their messages or questions at specific addressees by mentioning their names.

Choy Wai Fong's (2011) aforementioned empirical study has also tackled the reasons for which students switch codes. Correspondingly, there are similarities and differences in their findings and the findings of the present paper. Both studies have shown that students switch

codes majorly because of lack of facility, with it being the most prominent reason in Choy's findings and the second most prominent reason in the current research's findings. However, the rest of the results do not match entirely between the two studies. The most prevalent reason for which Master Two students switch is pragmatic reasons, in contrast, Chinese students have shown a rate of 0% of occurrences that account for pragmatic reasons. The same occurs concerning lack of registrational competence, which in Choy's findings is the second most dominant reason, however in the present investigation it is actually one of the least influential triggers. Both Chinese students and Master Two learners, have demonstrated little to no interest in switching codes to attract attention.

The major differences between Choy's (2011) study and the present research, whether in terms of functions or reasons that trigger students' online CS, can be attributed to the differences in cultures, linguistic profile, the perception of CS and its use. Therefore, the findings cannot be used as fixed facts but rather as sources that provide different perspectives about how different speech communities use language and CS.

#### **4.2.4. Students' Opinions about Code Switching in Virtual Contexts**

The last two items in the questionnaire are destined to uncover students' views about CS in virtual contexts and its effects on their linguistic abilities.

Based on the majority of learners' responses, code switching in virtual communication is favorable and in fact crucial for them as multilingual individuals; it allows them to put the languages they speak into use. One participant has said, *"It is mandatory if I may say"* and another student has added, *"I think it is a good thing, this helps us speak and practice the languages that we are learning"*. The learners have asserted that online CS ensures the successful transmission of messages but more importantly the intended meaning by the speakers. A learner suggests, *"In my opinion code switching in virtual scenes is quite useful"*

*as it allows us to transmit the exact intended meaning especially with the absence of body language which plays a major role in face to face conversations. Therefore I strongly believe that when we switch codes 99% of intended message or meaning is understood and well received*”; this confirms Georgakopoulou’s (1997) point of view that, speakers online direct textual cues by alternating codes, to accomplish tasks that one usually performs with body language, eye contact, tone of voice and other prompts of spoken discourse. Furthermore, students affirm that online CS grants them speed, flexibility and ease of expression. Learners explained, *“It is another way to express ourselves easily”* and *“I think the internet has made us in a hurry to transmit our messages quickly and code switching grants flexibility that contributes in that speed, instead of searching for words or expressions i would just fill the sentence with the different languages that i know”*. These findings are supported by Green and Wei (2014) who note that bilinguals who have the capacity to switch codes can express their meanings accurately, while avoiding lexical gaps.

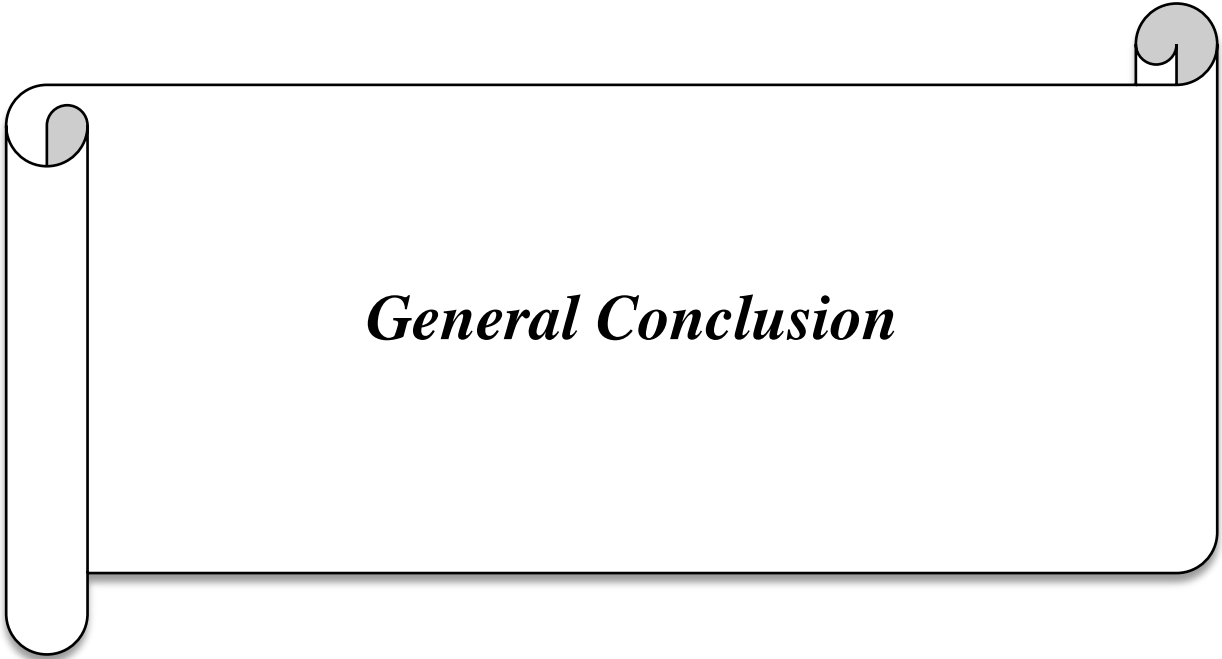
Concerning the effect of CS on participants’ communicative competencies, the learners have had diverse opinions. Likewise, they have admitted that CS encourages them to practice the languages they speak regularly, which allows them to preserve those languages. The shift in codes is considered beneficial, fun, motivational and helpful in sharpening their linguistic skills. On the other hand, the students have claimed that CS is not a beneficial mechanism because it reduces their proficiency in the languages they know, which minimizes their fluency in those languages. Thus, it is difficult for them to carry out full conversations in one sole code, which infers that they have no complete mastery of any language fully. The use of CS triggers dependence and laziness that prevent them from trying to ameliorate their levels. These results align with an empirical study, which Ulvia Imanova has submitted in 2017 at the Eastern Mediterranean University, Cyprus. The study investigates reasons for and attitudes towards CS. Likewise, Imanova’s (2017) findings reveal that the majority of the students have positive views

about CS; they have admitted that it is beneficial, it enhances their understanding of lessons and helps them to speak comfortably. On the other hand, some participants declare that, CS is not useful and its use slows their progress in acquiring different languages properly.

These findings demonstrate that students' use of CS is largely associated with the achievement of effective communication. Different researchers, such as Hymes, (1968, p. 200) establish that code switching is "*used as a strategy of communication [...] to maximize the efficiency of the communications*". Additionally when investigating CS in Singapore, Tay (1989) elaborates that, it serves as a discourse tool, which promotes effective communication among bilinguals. The results confirm the second hypothesis suggested in the general introduction, which claims that students use code switching as a communicative strategy to minimize language difficulties to ensure effective communication.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the findings of the empirical study displayed in the previous section. It is divided into two sections; the first part interprets the findings of the corpus obtained from the Facebook chat group; it has answered the first research question and confirmed the first hypothesis. The second part has interpreted the results of the questionnaire; it has answered the second research question and confirmed the second hypothesis.



***General Conclusion***

### **General Conclusion**

The present research has investigated the way Master Two EFL students of the department of English at MMUTO use CS as a communicative strategy in virtual contexts. Its two main objectives are two to uncover how and why CS occurs in learners' informal online discourse on Facebook. To answer the advanced research questions, the study suggests two hypotheses; whether Master Two EFL students switch between Tamazight, French, Arabic and English online, and if the learners switch codes online to minimize language difficulties and to ensure effective communication. The present study has relied on a framework that consists of two approaches; Appel and Muysken's (2006) "six functions of code switching" and Malik's (1994) "ten reasons for code switching".

To answer the research questions and to confirm or refute the hypotheses suggested in the general introduction, this investigation incorporates corpus-based research and survey research. It relies on mixed method research, which combines quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. The sample encompasses 30 Master Two learners of the department of English at MMUTO. The data is collected through two instruments; a selection of corpus obtained from a Facebook chat group, where the participants are asked to carry out casual conversations. The second instrument is a questionnaire destined for the same sample of participants. The quantitative data are analyzed using the Descriptive Statistical Method and the qualitative data are analyzed using Qualitative Content Analysis.

The selection of corpus obtained from the Facebook chat group are categorized and analyzed, according to Appel and Muysken's (2006) "six functions of code switching". The findings have revealed that students switch between Tamazight, French, Arabic and English, however, the most dominant languages in students' online conversations are Tamazight and French. This confirms the first hypothesis, which claims that students shift between four

languages online. Furthermore, the findings show that the most prevalent functions for which participants switch codes online are directive, poetic and phatic. The questionnaire is categorized and analyzed following Malik's (1994) "ten reasons for code switching". The results demonstrate that the most eminent reasons that trigger learners' online CS are pragmatic reasons, lack of facility, to show identity with a group and to address a different audience. The results have also demonstrated that Master Two students contradict themselves when it comes to their perceptions of CS and its use. The analysis of the corpus has shown that students' conversations are dominated with requests, commands, entertainment and sociability. However, the results of the questionnaire reveal that the students perceive that they switch codes mostly to transmit information, entertainment and to express their emotions. Additionally, the majority of the students have admitted that online CS is beneficial and helpful to enhance their linguistic skills, to converse with people from different linguistic backgrounds and most importantly to maximize the efficiency of the messages. This confirms the second hypothesis that claims that students switch codes to minimize language difficulties to ensure effective communication.

Similar to all research, the present study has few limitations as well. The major limitation of this study is that the participants have shown inconsistency in their online activity, which has made the collection of the corpus challenging. Additionally, some participants have failed to answer or complete the questionnaire, despite our persistent requests for them to submit their answers. Consequently, it has taken us longer to gather the data. Moreover, the study has investigated a group of 30 Master Two English students, which is a relatively small sample, thus, the findings cannot be applied to all EFL learners. However, it is hoped that the significance of the results would not be overlooked despite the aforementioned constraints and that they will be viewed as a relevant contribution that widens the scope of the field. To conclude, in the hopes that the current study inspires further research, we suggest a research that examines CS as a communicative strategy in synchronous formal virtual communication

on a different social media platform. Another study can be carried out to investigate the use of CS in a diglossic environment.



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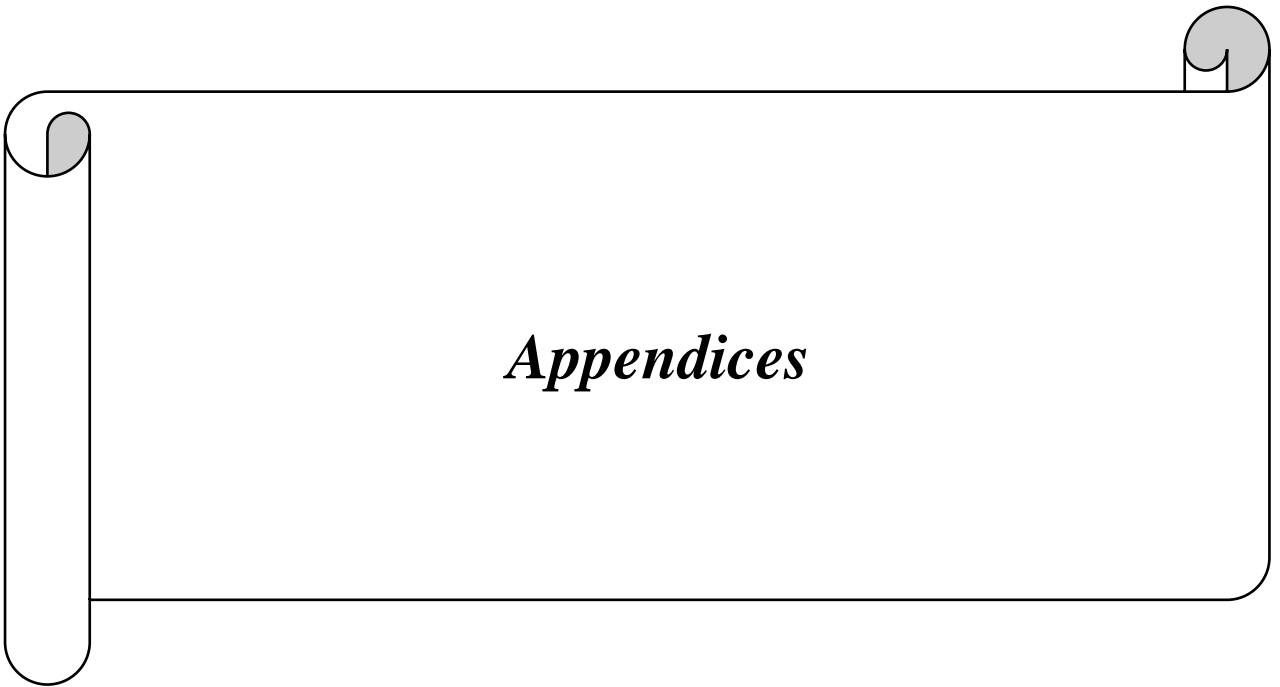
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***Appendices***

Appendices

Appendix 01: The Selection of Corpus

➤ Referential Function

|                                    | The Expressions   | The languages   |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| <p><b>Referential Function</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literature review should include the major works done by scholars about the topic of your investigation</li> <li>Simone de Beauvoir is a feminist philosopher. She wrote an essay called Second Sex to explain that women are not born as second class citizens.</li> <li>Close-ended question items <b>nni</b> the participants select possible answers, <b>après is3a</b> different categories nominal data <b>anda</b> there are only two options to select like yes/no true/false male/female, <b>Ila daghn</b> multiple choice items <b>anda lant atass n</b> options to select, <b>Ila</b> Rank order c to classify items into specific order eg classify the skills according to difficulty , <b>Ila</b> Linkert scale when u give a statement &amp; ask how they agree like strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree</li> <li><b>Vous avez besoin de la demande manuscrite.. photocopie, le diplôme et le formulaire à remplir sur place</b></li> <li><b>Aqlin di la fac</b></li> <li><b>Ad rouhegh azekka ad steqsigh nchallah</b> don't worry</li> <li><b>La réunion nni</b> was supposed to be for <b>shab</b> civilization</li> <li><b>Nennayas , tnyaghd vduth les recherches daya</b></li> <li>They told me <b>toughaled</b></li> <li><b>Aparement delibirind</b></li> </ul> | <p>Tamazight<br/>French<br/>Arabic<br/>English (no color)</p> |

➤ Directive Function

|                    | The Expressions  | The languages  |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Directive Function | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hello</li> <li>• Svp a kel heure le match</li> <li>• bonsoir tout le monde</li> <li>• hay les filles</li> <li>• salam svp illa win isenen kach etudiant di l'université de Caen</li> <li>• hey everyone</li> <li>• hello girls , saha ftourkoun</li> <li>• hi everyone nsit to say hi</li> <li>• aslama cami</li> <li>• svp thekchem la bourse ou pas ?</li> <li>• What do you mean by that?</li> <li>• Thileli what type of anime do you watch</li> <li>• Heyyyy</li> <li>• Azul fellawen</li> <li>• Please do!!</li> <li>• Salut tout le monde, could someone of you explain to me how e-learning exam will be?</li> <li>• Asalama Siham</li> <li>• Je veux me renseigner si qulqu'un parmi vous a travaillé deja dans une école privée?</li> <li>• Cc les amis svp Le site ni n les thèmes déjà traité au département</li> <li>• Klk un asichegge3 un email</li> <li>• Fkewthiyid l'email n madame Berbar svp</li> </ul> | <p>Tamazight</p> <p>French</p> <p>Arabic</p> <p>English (no color)</p> |

➤ Expressive Function

|                     | The Expressions   | The languages   |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Expressive Function | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm just tired and not in the mood of working</li> <li>• i relate to both of y'all <b>ne3ya</b>, no motivation no time</li> <li>• depressed but having a tasty tacos in our mouths</li> <li>• Same , sometimes i do live the moments , i cry laugh ... just as if I'm watching</li> <li>• Je suis toujours attiré par tout ce qui est vintage 🥰</li> <li>• Croyez-moi <b>ar tura ihemlagh atas</b> les dessins animés que <b>ziik nii</b></li> <li>• We're tired all the time 24/7 🤔🤔</li> <li>• Je les trouve très nocifs</li> <li>• i happen to love both actually so</li> <li>• I haaate <b>remdhan</b> in summer</li> <li>• I really like that color it gives me happy vibes.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Tamazight</b></p> <p><b>French</b></p> <p><b>Arabic</b></p> <p>English (no color)</p> |

➤ Phatic Function

|                 | The Expressions   | The languages   |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Phatic Function | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meriem <b>wesh</b> ça va hhh</li> <li>• <b>Azul</b> les filles, how are you guys in this <b>ramadhan</b></li> <li>• <b>Dessah</b> i agree</li> <li>• hey everyone j'espère que vous allez toutes bien</li> <li>• hey everyone i hope you are all doing well</li> <li>• Guys lets all try to be comfortable and talk freely here ..if anyone has any topic they wanna talk about <b>mrahba</b> <b>bih</b></li> <li>• <b>Non</b> <b>fihel</b></li> </ul> | <p><b>Tamazight</b></p> <p><b>French</b></p> <p><b>Arabic</b></p> <p>English (no color)</p> |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Merci je l'ai vu c bon</li> <li>• Ah sorry about that my friend</li> <li>• Bon courage à vous</li> <li>• Thank youuuuu</li> <li>• Okay take turns koul yiweth adini rray iss</li> <li>• I wanna say both but i'll go with painting too just like you</li> <li>• Saha aidkoun</li> <li>• Saha shourkoun</li> <li>• Saha ftourkoun</li> <li>• Bonsoir à tous j'espere vous allez bien saha remdhankoun</li> <li>• Thanks that's helpful</li> </ul> |  |
|--|---|--|

➤ **Metalinguistic Function**

|                                | The Expressions   | The languages  |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Metalinguistic Function</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halliday spoke about Igge and semiotic circle. Sydney extended the idea to other semiotic resources (images sounds...) Pas seulement Igge</li> <li>• To a linguist a text is an actual use of language, either written or spoken</li> <li>• I wrote discourse is the use of lgge in a specific context</li> <li>• A given context puts a relation between text and discourse</li> <li>• Coherence is related to the semantic relationships between parts of the same text</li> </ul> | <p>Tamazight</p> <p>French</p> <p>Arabic</p> <p>English (no color)</p> |

➤ Poetic Function

|                 | The Expressions  | The languages  |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Poetic Function | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matoub yes3a lhaq mis yenna aqvayli d wa3rav machi d athmathen</li> <li>• Hhhhhhhhhh 🤔 I love الأجواء الرمضانية agui graaavve moi</li> <li>• "women are not born, they're made"</li> <li>• The picture tenghayi lol</li> <li>• Baraka f leqlil akken iqqaren</li> <li>• Athan nekfa leqraya a tharwa</li> <li>• Je comprends ce moment de curiosité imbattable 😂</li> <li>• نصومو بصحة و لهنا انشاء الله</li> <li>• أعاده الله علينا بالصحة و البركة</li> <li>• أمين</li> <li>• و في الصحور بركة</li> <li>• اعتزل ما يؤذيك</li> <li>• 🤔🤔🤔 و ابتعدو عن الشر جزاكم الله خيرا</li> <li>• I choose the future, my past was سلسلة من الاحداث المرعبة 😂</li> <li>• He would be 50 years old but still 😂 احمق</li> <li>• To me el 3andalib baqraj ta3 attey lmaooo</li> <li>• Teffi dhow b moukhek mdrrr</li> <li>• أمنيات انسان فقير اك شايف ههههه</li> <li>• شكرا يا العندليب hhhhhhhhhhh</li> </ul> | <p>Tamazight</p> <p>French</p> <p>Arabic</p> <p>English (no color)</p> |

**Appendix 02: The Students' Questionnaire**

Dear Student,

The following questionnaire is a tool to gather data for our investigation, which aims to explore the way Masters Two EFL students of the department of English use Code Switching as communicative strategy on virtual scenes. Code Switching is the ability to switch from one language to another or between a variety and another, either in the same conversation or according to the situation. Please put a cross (X) on the box of your choice and provide an answer where needed, thank you.

**I. Section one: Participant's Linguistic Practices**

1. What is your native language?  
Tamazight   
Arabic   
French
  
2. How many languages do you speak and what are they?  
.....
  
3. What are the languages do you use the most in informal conversations?  
Tamazight   
Arabic   
French   
English
  
4. How often do you use Tamazight in your online conversations?  
a) Always                       c) Rarely   
b) Often                               d) Never
  
5. How often do you use Arabic in your online conversations?

- a) Always                       c) Rarely   
b) Often                               d) Never
6. How often do you use French in your online conversations?  
a) Always                       c) Rarely   
b) Often                               d) Never
7. How often do you use English in your online conversations?  
a) Always                       c) Rarely   
b) Often                               d) Never
8. Do you switch between these languages in your online conversations?  
YES                               NO
9. If yes, what are the languages do you switch between the most? Why?  
.....  
.....  
.....
10. You switch from a language to another in your online conversations:  
a) Consciously   
b) Unconsciously

**II. Section Two: Functions of Code Switching**

11. How often are these functions present when you switch codes?  
i. Provide information about something or a certain context.  
a) Always                       c) Rarely   
b) Often                               d) Never
- ii. Influence the behavior or the attitudes of other people.  
a) Always                       c) Rarely   
b) Often                               d) Never

iii. Reveal my feelings and emotions.

- a) Always
- b) Often
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

iv. Start, stop or maintain a conversation.

- a) Always
- b) Often
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

v. Describe or comment on a language.

- a) Always
- b) Often
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

vi. Make jokes, puns, riddles, tongue twisters and other wordplay.

- a) Always
- b) Often
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

Other:.....  
.....  
.....

**III. Section Three: Reasons of Code Switching**

12. How often are these reasons present when you shift codes?

A. A term or an expression that exists in one language is not available in another language.

- a) Always
- b) Often
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

B. I am not equally fluent in the languages that I speak.

- a) Always
- b) Often
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

C. When I am angry, exhausted, confused or anxious.

- a) Always
- c) Rarely

b) Often  d) Never

D. I am trying to emphasize and highlight an important idea.

a) Always  c) Rarely

b) Often  d) Never

E. I am used to expressing something in a given language by force of habit.

a) Always  c) Rarely

b) Often  d) Never

F. I am transmitting significant linguistic and social messages.

a) Always  c) Rarely

b) Often  d) Never

G. I am showing my identity, cultural values, relations and belonging to a group.

a) Always  c) Rarely

b) Often  d) Never

H. I am addressing different people from different linguistic backgrounds.

a) Always  c) Rarely

b) Often  d) Never

I. It depends on the setting (when, where, who) and how much I am involved in the conversation.

a) Always  c) Rarely

b) Often  d) Never

J. I want to attract attention.

a) Always  c) Rarely

b) Often  d) Never

Other:.....

.....

**IV. Section Four: Student’s opinions about Code Switching in Virtual Contexts**

13. What do you think about the use of Code switching in virtual scenes (online)?

.....  
.....  
.....

14. Can you describe how Code Switching affects your linguistic abilities?

.....  
.....  
.....

Thank You.