



EFL Teacher Code-Switching in Early Adolescent Vocabulary Learning

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Abstract

One effective method for improving EFL learners' foreign language communication skills is to learn L2 words and use them in speaking. For this reason, researchers aim to assist learners in acquiring vocabulary to the greatest extent possible. The present study investigated the impact of EFL teacher code-switching (CS) and English-only (EO) instructions on vocabulary acquisition in EFL learners aged 10 to 13. Fifty-six early adolescent learners participated in storytelling activities under the CS or EO conditions. The key difference between the two was that, in the CS group, the teacher used the learners' L1 for teaching vocabulary. In contrast, instruction was conducted solely in English in the EO condition. Results indicated that switching to learners' L1 enhanced vocabulary acquisition more effectively than English-only instruction, and this effect persisted in a delayed post-test two weeks later. Therefore, it can be concluded that teaching new vocabulary via teacher's resorting to the learners' L1 through storytelling activities brought about significant gains in remembering the target words in CS condition; hence, for more effective mastery of the new vocabulary among early adolescent learners, it is suggested to present the words in learners' first language instead of presenting them in lengthy English explanations. The study has practical implications not only for early adolescent EFL learners' classrooms but also for other learners of different age groups to maximize their vocabulary learning and performance through teachers' justified amount of L1 use.

Keywords: Code-switching, English-only, Vocabulary, Storytelling, Early adolescent learners

Due to the Internet advancement, nearly all nations are bound together, increasing the demand for learning a Second Language/English as a Foreign Language (L2/EFL) worldwide (Richards, 2015). This constant desire urges researchers and educators to explore effective ways to enhance L2/EFL learning and teaching methods (Lin, 2013). One of the methods that help learners communicate in a foreign language is acquiring L2 words and then using them while speaking. Harmon et al. (2009) and Linse (2005) emphasized that building vocabulary knowledge is a fundamental part of language development, as individuals require words to

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effectively convey their thoughts and engage in communication, whether spoken or written (Diliduzgun, 2014; Kehoe et al., 2021; Kniż & Zawrotna, 2021). In teaching vocabulary, resorting to code-switching, i.e., alternating between the first (L1) and the target language (TL) to convey meaning, can be helpful for language teachers. Learners' L1 may be used positively in the classroom in various ways; teachers can use L1 to communicate meaning, for example, by explaining grammar or checking the meaning of different words or sentences (Kehoe et al., 2021), and for classroom organization purposes, such as maintaining discipline, organizing tasks, and communicating with learners (Khodos et al., 2021). Learners can also use L1 during their pair/group work activities to provide scaffolding for each other (Monsrud et al., 2022).

In English Language Teaching (ELT), language materials should motivate learners intrinsically, engage them, hold their attention, and align with their proficiency level. This ensures that learners are neither bored by overly familiar material nor frustrated by an excess of unfamiliar structures and vocabulary (Caballero & Celaya, 2022); that is, carefully selected vocabulary through vocabulary size tests and stories motivate learners and provide convenient contexts that facilitate learning (Inal & Cakir, 2014; Karami et al., 2020). Teachers can also empower learners by encouraging them to share their ideas and ask questions without fear of making mistakes. Orey (2010) reveals that since teacher questioning is considered an indispensable technique in EFL teaching, efforts to support and assist learners rather than assessing their results can be regarded as a positive approach to teaching. Consequently, L1 should be acknowledged as a useful educational tool rather than overlooked, allowing EFL teachers to support learners' comprehension and stimulate critical and creative thinking through effective questioning techniques (Cook, 2010). Additionally, this technique can help EFL teachers achieve teaching objectives more effectively and identify learners' potential (Mustika et al., 2020).

Literature Review

Teaching L2 to Early Adolescent Learners through Storytelling

The issue of teaching English to adolescent learners (TEAL) has become an increasingly important topic worldwide. As more children take English in early education environments like preschools, primary schools, and language centers, they show independence through spontaneous remarks, curiosity-driven questions, and topic choices. For this reason, group activities are highly encouraged with young learners (Pinter & Zandian, 2014). Adolescent language acquisition often occurs unconsciously, and carefully designed classroom activities can facilitate this process. Stories, in particular, are an essential resource, immersing children in meaningful contexts through activities in the four language skills (Slatterly & Willis, 2003).

The use of storytelling in EFL instruction is supported by influential theories like Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982) and Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory (1978), both of which highlight the importance of comprehensible input and meaningful interaction in helping students build vocabulary and develop language skills. According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982),

effective language acquisition occurs when learners encounter comprehensible input that is just a bit more advanced than their current proficiency level. Storytelling closely reflects this idea by offering comprehensible input through repetition, visual aids, and contextual clues, making the language easier to understand and more engaging for learners. Stories provide learners with meaningful and rich language input that supports the development of fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar naturally and enjoyably (Indramawan & Akhyak, 2013). Additionally, Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory (1978) highlights the importance of social interaction in language development. Storytelling aligns with this framework by fostering meaningful communication, involving learners in speaking activities, and encouraging them to co-construct meaning and engage in discussion on given topics (Ourania, 2021).

Moreover, stories can create a happy and fun environment, motivate learners to speak, and offer early adolescent learners an excellent opportunity to master a foreign language (Mart, 2012). Inal and Cakir (2014) researched story-based vocabulary teaching and concluded that stories can create an enjoyable learning experience, motivating learners and helping them remember new vocabulary more effectively. Cortazzi and Jin (2007) monitored the learning process of a group of adolescent EFL learners in telling and retelling simple stories in both their L1 and English, using keywords and maps. The result indicated that EFL learners using L1 benefited from telling their personal stories in English. Therefore, it is believed that using folktales in interactive storytelling strategies for speaking benefits EFL learners' speaking ability and classroom activities. Arcila et al. (2016) also used storytelling as a technique to stimulate English vocabulary learning in early childhood education. Based on their study, applying storytelling to stimulate English vocabulary learning is very useful as children need to be exposed, implicitly, to the learning of a foreign language. Additionally, Gao et al. (2023) examined how three storytelling methods—storytelling alone (S), storytelling with word focus (S+W), and storytelling with activities (S+A)—impacted vocabulary learning and response tendencies in third-grade EFL learners. Findings revealed that students exposed to storytelling alone achieved the best results, with vocabulary retention from word-focused or activity-based storytelling proving short-lived. Hearing more stories assisted two groups (S and S+W) in using their background knowledge to generate more responses than the third group, who used more supplementary activities (S+A).

Effect of Vocabulary on L2 Learning

Vocabulary can be described as “the words necessary for clear communication, including those used in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and in listening (receptive vocabulary)” (Neuman & Dwyer, 2009). Vocabulary is a vital element in voicing meaning and expressing ideas across both receptive and productive skills in second and foreign language learning (Sitompul, 2013; Monsrud et al., 2022) and is vital to language mastery (Patahuddin et al., 2017). Therefore, developing vocabulary is key to enhancing the four main language skills — listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In other words, vocabulary knowledge is a key factor

in EFL learner's success (Baker et al., 2021; McWhorter, 2016). The importance of vocabulary in language use is undeniable, as it is an essential component of every language (Astika, 2016). Learners with limited vocabulary struggle to communicate effectively and face difficulty conveying meaning during conversations. To understand and exchange meaning properly, learners must grasp both vocabulary and sentence structure; without sufficient vocabulary, they cannot fully comprehend texts or engage in meaningful dialogue (Hemmati & Asmawi, 2015).

Researchers such as Baker et al. (2021), Butler (2019), Monsrud et al. (2022), and Song and Lee (2018) claimed that vocabulary acquisition is necessary for effective second language use and contributes significantly to constructing comprehensive spoken and written texts. Highlighting the role of vocabulary knowledge as an unavoidable element for adolescent L2/EFL learners, Butler (2019) summarized the recent findings in the field as they were all reported on different scholarship platforms, such as child development, first language acquisition, and child education. Butler provided a few theoretical accounts of teaching vocabulary for adolescent learners: i) expose learners with frequent and repeated target input, ii) definitions of vocabulary should be clearly provided, iii) provide adequate opportunities for learners' interaction, and iv) multimodal is a good choice for teaching vocabulary.

Regular use of input-based tasks—those that do not involve speaking or writing— can be a useful approach to enhance adolescent learners' knowledge in the classroom. This method also benefits children with limited exposure to the target language outside the classroom. Additionally, questioning children about target vocabulary and meanings can aid in developing both receptive and productive vocabulary, though the way adults ask these questions and engage with children is important (Goto, 2019). Another strategy for vocabulary instruction is to introduce new vocabulary within context rather than in isolation. Davies and Pears (2003) emphasize the importance of contextualization, claiming that the context should be rich enough to provide clues to meaning, and learners should be exposed to words intensively. However, a child's vocabulary acquisition is influenced by various factors, such as whether the child is monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual, the age at which they start learning the target language(s), how frequently they are exposed to it, the type of input (whether in natural or classroom-based), the instructional style, socioeconomic status, and individual characteristics like motivation and memory capacity (Fennell & Lew-Williams, 2018; Marchman et al., 2017; Takanashi & Menestrel, 2017).

Code-Switching and L1 Use in L2 Instruction and Vocabulary Learning

For a long time, the choice of language as the instructional medium in EFL classrooms has been a topic of ongoing debate; on the one hand, some researchers and teachers support English-only classes to encourage authentic language use, and on the other hand, other researchers support code-switching classes, where both learners' first language (L1) and English can be used alternately to scaffold bilingual and multilingual learners (Rahayu & Margana, 2018). According to Kuo et al. (2021), code-switching refers to shifting between languages face-to-

face or online. As Yacovone et al. (2021) explain, speakers often engage in code-switching in bilingual communities, which involves switching between languages during a conversation without prior notice. Code-switching in foreign language classrooms refers to teachers using both L1 and the target language interchangeably for communication when necessary (Cook, 2001). According to Cook (2010), teaching a new language is most effective when bilingualism is acknowledged and incorporated in the classroom, as the use of the first language and translation is integral to language learning, and both have advantages for teachers and learners.

Code-switching can be examined through structural, psycholinguistic, and sociolinguistic perspectives; the structural approach explores the grammatical principles that determine how and when languages can be combined during code-switching. Psycholinguistic theories also investigate the mental processes involved when speakers combine or switch between two languages. Sociolinguistic theories focus on understanding the social factors influencing speakers to shift from one language to another. However, it should be noted that these theories may overlap in certain studies, making it difficult for researchers to find clear boundaries between them (Panhwar & Buriro, 2020). Moreover, regarding the use of L1 in target language (TL) classrooms, Macaro (2014) proposed three theoretical views, namely virtual position, maximal position, and optimal position. According to the virtual position, TL classrooms should simulate environments of TL-speaking communities, thereby excluding any use of L1. The maximal position also discourages L1 use but acknowledges that practical classroom limitations may lead to occasional L1 use by both students and teachers. Contrary to these two monolingual perspectives, the optimal ideology suggests that incorporating students' L1 can support TL learning. According to this view, the TL should be the primary language in the classroom to develop students' communicative competence, but limited and purposeful use of the L1—referred to as classroom code-switching—can also play a beneficial role.

Using L1 in an L2 classroom and its effect on learners' language learning process have recently attracted researchers' attention, who claim that teachers and learners use learners' L1 for multiple functions in the classroom (Baker et al., 2021; Caballero & Celaya, 2022; Khodos et al., 2021; Kniż & Zawrotna, 2021). Teachers can, and indeed should, use learners' L1 as a tool to convey meaning, manage classroom activities, reduce anxiety, aid communication, explain complex concepts, and maximize comprehension (Authors, 2015, 2020; Hafid & Margana, 2022; Hamdan, 2023; Shinga & Pillay, 2021). According to Le (2022), code-switching facilitates more natural and efficient communication in the classroom, allowing teachers to clarify and explain new vocabulary and complex grammar points effectively, thus saving time for other classroom activities. As Subon and Tarmin (2021) explained, code-switching during oral participation is favored in the classroom as it encourages more interaction and engagement, particularly among learners who struggle with English. This claim is also supported by Muthusamy (2020), Nasution and Siregar (2021), and Vo and Cao (2022), who asserted that L2 learners switch between languages for various reasons, such as difficulty in conveying ideas in English, lack of vocabulary, and anxiety, and using code-switching is a

strategy for L2 learners express their thought more effectively and improve in their speaking confidence. This claim is also corroborated by Villanueva and Gamiao (2022), who state that code-switching is a valuable technique for improving both teaching and learning; it is commonly used as a communication strategy by language users who face difficulty expressing themselves in a specific language. In addition, Mekheimr (2022) concluded that code-switching is a common sociolinguistic phenomenon that takes place in EFL classrooms and is regarded as an incredibly efficient method of communication that allows L2 learners to use their language repertoire to facilitate and foster their communication and comprehension of spoken English. Code-switching can also positively impact L2 learners' confidence and participation in language classrooms (Olivera, 2021). However, since excessive L1 use in language classrooms can make learners overly dependent and hinder their L2/EFL learning, it should be balanced to support the construction of L2/EFL knowledge (Macaro et al., 2018). This is also approved by Candilas et al. (2023), who suggested that although teachers should support incorporating code-switching during oral participation, they need to allow its use in moderation because excessive use of code-switching strategy may hinder learners' English learning.

A number of studies have compared the effect of code-switching against L2-only explanations on vocabulary learning, all of which found a comparative advantage in providing L1 vocabulary equivalents over L2-only strategies, especially for short-term learning (e.g. Hennebry et al. 2013; Macaro & Lee, 2013; Tian & Macaro, 2012; Zhao & Macaro, 2014). Song and Lee (2018) measured the impact of teacher code-switching (CS) and English-only (EO) instructional approaches on EFL learners' vocabulary learning and indicated that incorporating L1 vocabulary instruction during storytelling led to notable improvements in vocabulary acquisition and retention of target words; learners expressed a preference for some L1 use when learning English and held negative attitudes toward the English-only (EO) class. A study by Al Tale and Al Qahtani (2022) also indicates that learners benefit from a code-switching strategy, which offers essential support in the classroom and helps them comprehend new vocabulary and challenging concepts in the target language. Moreover, Zhao & Macaro (2014) claimed that teaching L1 equivalents after reading comprehension activities is far superior to L2-only explanations, regardless of word type (i.e. concrete or abstract).

Purpose of the Study

According to the information discussed, it can be concluded that although the literature reviewed above indicates that code-switching in language classrooms is beneficial in learning a second/foreign language, the impact of code-switching on early adolescent EFL learners' vocabulary learning through storytelling, which can be a beneficial tool for effective language instruction, has not been widely investigated. More research needs to be done in this field. Therefore, the following study explores the effectiveness of teacher code-switching in teaching new vocabulary to early adolescent EFL learners through storytelling activities. In doing so, the following research question is raised:

What are the effects of EFL teacher code-switching and English-only instruction on early adolescent EFL learners' vocabulary learning through storytelling activities?

Method

Research Design

The present quantitative research follows a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test, a post-test, and a delayed post-test. Price et al. (2015) explained that quasi-experimental studies have no random selection of participants. Therefore, the participants in the current research were chosen purposefully from a language institute in Iran and assigned to an experimental and a control group.

Participants

This study involved 56 early adolescent Iranian EFL learners enrolled in English classes across four groups at a language institute in Iran. These participants had experienced two years of English learning and were, based on the institute's proficiency scale, at a lower-intermediate level, which corresponds to an IELTS level of 3.5. All the learners were female, whose ages ranged from 10 to 13 years old. They attended three-hour English lessons twice per week, one and a half hours each session. The instruction was always given in English, and the learners were encouraged to use English for communication with the teacher and classmates, as the classroom was the only environment they had the opportunity to use the language. The participants were selected purposefully and assigned to an experimental and a control group. The control group consisted of 27 learners and was taught in the English-only condition. The experimental group, which included 29 learners, was also taught in English except for vocabulary teaching when the teacher switched to learners' first language.

The teacher, also one of the researchers in the study, was 36 years old. She had a Master's degree in English language teaching and about 15 years of teaching experience. She taught both the experimental and the control groups herself so that the teacher variable did not affect the two groups' performance.

Instruments

The researchers selected four lessons and corresponding images from "English Time 4" by Rivers and Toyama (2011). The selected lessons and images were assigned as the target material for storytelling lessons. The lessons, which were in accord with learners' proficiency level, did not include written stories but contained pictures of people and different items in the surrounding area that could tell a story, as well as some written words or phrases related to the images. The teacher used the words and phrases to make up stories about the images and then asked a professional native speaker to check and correct the sentences of the stories. Next, she typed the four stories under the related images, took colored copies of them, and distributed

them among learners. The new words and phrases were underlined to call learners' attention. Table 1 demonstrates each story's title, the target words, and phrases.

Similar to a study by Song and Lee (2018), to assess learners' vocabulary learning development, a target word was provided to learners along with four images, with one image correctly illustrating the target word. The same format was used for the vocabulary pre-test, post-tests, and delayed post-tests, with the order of questions and options randomized in each test to minimize the practice effect. In the first week, participants completed a vocabulary pre-test containing 20 questions drawn from 20 target words. As noted earlier, each question presented a target word and four images, with one image accurately representing the word. From week two to week five, learners were taught four stories, each taught in two 30-minute sessions per week. After teaching the first and second stories, learners took an initial vocabulary post-test featuring ten target words drawn from the stories covered earlier. The first post-test followed the same format as the pre-test. After teaching the third and fourth stories, learners took a second vocabulary post-test that included ten target words from those stories. Following the pre- and initial post-test's structure, this test maintained the same format. Two weeks after the second post-test, the delayed vocabulary test was given without any prior notice. This test, with the same format as the pre-test and the two post-tests, included 20 target words from four stories. Table 1 provides information about the selected stories.

Table 1

Details of the Chosen Stories

Story Title	Target Words and Phrases
Around the House	bathroom, bedroom, dining room, kitchen, laundry room, making the bed, sink, towel, toilet, mopping the floor, taking out the garbage, putting away the groceries, a laundry basket, washing machine, doing the laundry, setting the table, flower pot, feeding the pet.
At the Campsite	sunrise, campfire, Frisbee, climbing a mountain, tent, stump, dustpan, dusting, a bowl of cereal, garbage can, chess, picnic table, torch, pots and pans.
During the Year	season, spring, summer, fall, winter, plant flowers, beach, leaves, snowman, sweater, glasses, climbing a ladder, picking apples, making a hole, shovel, put in, cotton candy, broom, bucket.
Hobbies	polka dot, camera, making a movie, triplets, collecting stickers, making a model airplane, curly, paintbrush, painting, canvas, sweatshirt, helmet, cycling outdoors, sofa, taking a nap, comic book.

Data Collection Procedure

Before the study began, learners and the principal of the language institute approved the consent forms to participate in and support this study. To have a homogenous group of participants, four classes at the lower-intermediate level (N = 56) were selected purposefully according to the learners' language proficiency level and their age. Then, the participants were

assigned to four groups: two to English-only (EO) and the other two to code-switching (CS) conditions. The English-only classes included 27 learners and were taught by the teacher in an EO condition, in which the teacher only used English for vocabulary teaching, while the code-switching classes, consisting of 29 learners, were instructed in a CS condition, in which the teacher switched to Persian while teaching vocabulary. Table 2 illustrates the composition of the four classes involved in the present study.

Table 2

The Composition of the Classes

Condition	Class
English-only (EO)	Class A, n =13
	Class B, n =14
Code-switching (CS)	Class C, n =12
	Class D, n =17

Learners participated in the study for 14 sessions, each lasting about 30 minutes. Six of these 14 sessions were allotted to the pre-test, post-tests, and delayed post-tests, and eight were assigned to instruction. During the first two sessions, a vocabulary pre-test, including 20 target words, was administered to the learners. From the third to the tenth session, learners were instructed on four stories, each of which was taught during two sessions per week.

The teacher instructed the participants in both groups. In general, eight sessions were allotted to the vocabulary instruction - two sessions for each story. English was generally used for instructions in both conditions, except that in the code-switching (CS) condition, the teacher resorted to learners' L1 while teaching new vocabulary.

During the first instruction session, the teacher took the learners' attendance to make sure that everyone was present. Then, before teaching the first story, the teacher presented the topic of the first story and encouraged learners to brainstorm it to activate students' background knowledge regarding the story's topic. After brainstorming, the teacher read the story to the learners twice. During the first time, the teacher read it aloud and showed the pictures to learners while they were not allowed to look at the texts. For the second time, learners were allowed to look at the texts and the images as the teacher read the story. Meanwhile, the teacher checked their comprehension of the storylines and directed their focus on the target words and phrases. In the English-only (EO) condition, the teacher used English to clarify the meaning of the target words, while in the CS condition, she switched to the learners' mother tongue to explain the new vocabulary and switched back to English afterwards. After reading the story for the second time, the teacher and learners discussed the storylines and details. Whenever learners had problems figuring out the storylines or new vocabulary, they were encouraged to construct their own referential questions with the help of the teacher or the other learners to comprehend the story better.

During the second session, the early adolescent learners read the same story in chorus, discussed it, and reviewed the target words and phrases from the earlier session. Similar to the

first session, the teacher exclusively used English for vocabulary review in the EO condition but switched to Persian in the CS condition. Following the review of new vocabulary, the teacher asked both groups' learners some questions in English. Subsequently, some post-reading activities were carried out in English in both conditions. For example, during the "Hobbies" story, learners were asked to talk about their favorite hobbies. During the final stage of instruction, the learners and teacher read the story in chorus once more. The teacher communicated and instructed learners solely in English, except when teaching vocabulary in the CS condition. It is worth mentioning that the teacher sometimes used learners' first language to clarify certain grammatical aspects. The above procedure in teaching the first story was applied to the three remaining stories, too.

In this study, two post-tests were given to the participants. The first post-test contained ten target words drawn from the initial two stories (Around the House and At the Campsite) and was given after the stories were taught completely. The second post-test was given after teaching the third and fourth stories (During the Year and Hobbies), testing learners' vocabulary knowledge of these two stories. Two weeks following the second post-test, learners were given a delayed vocabulary test that included 20 target words from all four stories. The learners were not aware of this test in advance.

Data Analysis

To compare the performance of the CS and EO groups, independent samples *t*-tests were conducted for the pre-test, two post-tests, and the delayed post-tests at different points in time. Pseudonyms were made for the data analysis.

Results

The current research investigated the relative effects of teacher code-switching and English-only instruction on vocabulary acquisition and retention among early adolescent EFL learners through storytelling activities. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for the performances of the EO and CS groups across three-time points. The result of the pre-test analysis for EO ($M = 51.11$, $SD = 14.69$) and CS ($M = 63.62$, $SD = 17.77$) conditions showed no significant difference in the vocabulary knowledge of these two groups ($p = .06$). This implies that the two groups did not differ significantly in their pre-test (see Table 4). As shown in Table 3, there was a significant difference between the EO ($M = 43.89$, $SD = 6.40$) and CS ($M = 46.72$, $SD = 6.44$) groups in the first post-test. Similarly, in the second post-test, as can be seen, a significant difference existed between the EO ($M = 30.07$, $SD = 7.84$) and CS ($M = 45.00$, $SD = 4.62$) groups. According to the delayed post-test in Table 3, a significant difference was observed between the EO ($M = 81.67$, $SD = 14.47$) and CS ($M = 94.48$, $SD = 6.59$) conditions.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of Vocabulary Test

	Group	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	English-only	27	51.11	14.69
	Code-switching	29	63.62	17.77
Post-test 1	English-only	27	43.89	6.40
	Code-switching	29	46.72	6.44
Post-test 2	English-only	27	39.07	7.84
	Code-switching	29	45.00	4.62
Delayed	English-only	27	81.67	14.47
	Code-switching	29	94.48	6.59

As Table 4 demonstrates, independent samples *t*-test results revealed a significant difference between pre-test and delayed post-test scores ($t(27) = -4.21, p < .00$). The pertaining effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.13$) between the pre-test and post-tests comparison is reasonably large (Larson-Hall, 2010). This finding suggests that using code-switching significantly affected EFL learners' vocabulary learning. In general, learners remembered more target words when they received vocabulary instruction during storytelling.

Table 4
Inferential Statistics

Vocabulary Test	Pre-test	Post-test 1	Post-test 2	Delayed Post-test
P-value	.06	.105	.001	.00
T-value	2.85	1.65	-3.41	-4.21
Effect Size	.76	.44	.82	1.13
Cohen's <i>d</i>				
df	54	54	41.52	35.77

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to examine the effects of teacher code-switching (CS) on early adolescent EFL learners' vocabulary learning using storytelling activities. The results revealed that switching to learners' L1 in the CS condition was more effective in learning new vocabulary compared to the EO condition. Building on Macaro's (2014) optimal theoretical view, which suggested that incorporating students' L1—also known as classroom code-switching—can be beneficial in supporting target language learning, the present study's findings recommend that teachers use L1 equivalents to introduce new English vocabulary to young learners, especially very young ones, rather than relying on lengthy explanations in the EO mode. Additionally, according to Fachriyah (2017), code-switching to learners' L1 can serve different functions, such as clarification, repetition, translation, class management, and general communication. The researchers of the current study also resorted to learners' L1 to clarify some new vocabulary items in the CS condition; the use of code-switching in presenting new vocabulary was of great help for EFL learners to figure out the new vocabulary and

therefore, the stories better than the learners in the EO condition. The result of the current research is accorded with previous studies, such as Song and Lee (2018), who asserted that using learners' L1 yields better results in vocabulary acquisition than English-only instruction. This finding was also supported by Al Tale and Al Qahtani (2022), who argue that employing the code-switching strategy allows learners to better grasp the new vocabulary and challenging concepts in the target language. The study results also align with Macaro and Lee (2013), who believe that the impact of teacher code-switching is essential to younger EFL learners. Moreover, the findings of the present research accord with Macaro et al. (2018), who believed that L2 learners should be permitted to use their first language for peer-assisted learning and scaffolding.

Believing vocabulary to be a crucial component of foreign language learning, the researchers implemented an effective method to help learners easily acquire vocabulary, i.e., teaching vocabulary through storytelling activities along with pictures. This approach aligns with the studies of some researchers such as Baker et al. (2021), Butler (2019), Monsrud et al. (2022), and Song and Lee (2018), who have claimed that vocabulary acquisition is essential for effective use of second language and plays a critical role in forming complete written and spoken output. As the findings revealed, introducing new vocabulary through stories and pictures not only helped learners stay focused and enhanced vocabulary retention but also increased their classroom participation and made learning more enjoyable. As a result, they were more willing to listen and share the stories, showing enthusiasm to learn even more. Combining storytelling with pictures supports Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982), as it provides learners with comprehensible input, which facilitates vocabulary learning in an engaging and natural manner. The result of the present study also accords with research done by Ahmad and Yamat (2020), who asserted that learners found learning through storytelling activities to be more enjoyable, fun, and attractive, and since these activities changed learners' learning attitudes and helped them stay more focused in the classroom, learners showed greater interest in language learning. Inal and Cakir (2014) also explored vocabulary instruction through story-based methods and concluded that stories are fun and entertaining for learners, motivate them to be active in class, and help them learn new vocabulary better and more effectively.

Moreover, the findings showed that storytelling allowed learners to practice participation and cooperation activities in language learning in the classroom as it involved all of them in listening and speaking activities; they had to listen to other learners' stories to comprehend them and even helped their classmates narrate the story and, of course, endeavoured to create their own stories. These results support Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory (1978), emphasizing the role of story-telling in providing learners opportunities to engage with their peers and teachers, negotiate meaning, and expand their linguistic repertoire. The findings of the study also align with the results of Ourania (2021) and Indramawan and Akhyak (2013), who concluded that storytelling is a good strategy for improving learners' fluency, grammar,

pronunciation, and vocabulary as it engages them in speaking activities and building conversations based on a given topic.

This study also supported the question-and-answer for stories; the teachers walked around the class and helped learners construct their questions when they encountered difficulties while completing their activities. This method proved highly beneficial in improving learners' engagement in the classroom. Orey (2010) also supported this method, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and indicating that teachers' efforts to support and assist learners rather than assessing their results can be viewed as a positive approach to teaching. Moreover, the teachers' questions helped learners understand the stories more efficiently. This result also accords with Mustika et al. (2020), who argued that questions that involve basic reasoning centered on recalling facts or comprehending factual details help learners understand concepts better.

Conclusion

The present study investigated the effect of teacher code-switching (CS) on early adolescent EFL learners' vocabulary learning through storytelling activities. The findings offered important insights into the role of teacher CS in EFL classrooms; the results revealed that teaching new vocabulary via teachers resorting to learners' L1 through storytelling activities significantly improved remembering the target words in the CS condition. Moreover, findings demonstrated that using stories and pictures to present new vocabulary can improve learners' classroom engagement, making the learning process more fun, enjoyable, and collaborative. Storytelling can also be beneficial for improving learners' speaking, listening, pronunciation, and vocabulary as it engages them in cooperative activities during EFL classrooms.

Future studies can be conducted with learners of both genders and different proficiency levels or through using a mixed approach to gain more insight into learners' attitudes toward teacher code-switching and storytelling activities in the classroom. Additionally, to increase generalizability, it would be beneficial to gather the data over a more extended period in a longitudinal manner. Another research worth pursuing is to analyze how code-switching affects learners' vocabulary learning when integrated with other activities. While this level of control may not entirely reflect a natural classroom setting, the results of this research offer valuable perspectives into the role of EFL teacher code-switching in English classes; the findings suggest EFL teachers use L1 equivalents to introduce new English vocabulary to young learners instead of depending on lengthy explanations in the EO mode. The findings of this study represent a meaningful advancement in endorsing the use of teacher CS within the storytelling classroom for early adolescent learners; the results can be implemented in L2/EFL classrooms to maximize learners' performance through teachers' justified amount of L1 use in the classroom. However, L2/EFL teachers should keep in mind that too much L1 use would encourage learners to take up the habit of using L1, which debilitates the process of learning a foreign language.

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