An analysis of the use of code-switching as a teaching strategy in the L2 Spanish classroom
Un análisis del uso de la alternancia de código como estrategia de enseñanza en la clase de español como lengua extranjera

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Abstract

This study focuses on the practical effects of the use of code-switching as a teaching strategy in the L2 classroom. Specifically, it investigates the attitudes of language educators and students toward its use in the L2 classroom and it verifies its effectiveness as a teaching strategy. Linguistic attitudes were tested through an anonymous online survey, while the effectiveness of code-switching was tested during two practice-oriented assessments. According to previous studies, code-switching is beneficial to L2 learners because it enhances the learning experience by making it less of a cognitive burden. The findings of this study, namely ambivalent attitudes toward code-switching and improved final scores after its strategic use during assessments, contribute to the larger pool of studies confirming the positive effects of strategic use of L1 in the L2 classroom.
Keywords: pedagogy, second language acquisition, teaching strategies.

Resumen

Este artículo se enfoca en los efectos del uso de la alternancia de código como técnica de enseñanza en clases de español como lengua extranjera. En concreto, se evalúan las actitudes lingüísticas de estudiantes y profesores hacia el uso de la alternancia de código y se verifica su eficacia como técnica de enseñanza. Los profesores y los estudiantes fueron evaluados a través de cuestionarios anónimos en línea, y la eficacia de la alternancia de código en la clase fue comprobada mediante dos pruebas prácticas. De acuerdo con estudios previos, la alternancia de código tiene efectos positivos en el aprendizaje de lenguas porque reduce el esfuerzo cognitivo relacionado a él. Los resultados (actitudes lingüísticas ambivalentes hacia la alternancia de código y mejores calificaciones en las

pruebas donde se usó dicha estrategia) confirman los efectos positivos derivados del uso estratégico de la lengua materna en la clase de español como lengua extranjera.
Palabras clave: *adquisición de segunda lengua, estrategias de enseñanza, pedagogía.*

Introduction

Educators on all levels of instruction who are concerned with providing the best instruction possible to their students are also in constant search for the most appropriate strategies that would enable them to achieve this goal. In the specific case of foreign language (FL) educators, the topic of methodologies or teaching strategies that should be used in order to provide quality education has always been at the core of a controversial debate. In this project, I examine one of the many strategies that can be used in the second language classroom, known as code-switching (hereafter CS). The use of CS purposely adopted as a teaching strategy in the L2 classroom started to be analyzed in the last two decades and, since then, there has been an intense debate around the topic. For the purposes of this study, I will use the term second language (L2) classroom (and not foreign language classroom) as an umbrella term to include the various types of language acquisition processes that were taking place in the classroom where data collection was carried out. In fact, the class included monolingual native speakers of English and heritage speakers of Spanish or other languages in the process of learning Spanish.

The idea at the basis of this project came out of a personal long-term interest in bilingual practices and multilingual utterances, i.e., traditionally referred to as code-switching and code-mixing (Wei, 2007). Specifically, I am interested in the practical results of such linguistic practices, e.g., their role as contributing factors in the improvement of L2 teaching strategies. In fact, in this study, I explore the pedagogical value of CS as well as its practical effects in the L2 classroom. The specific goals that this study aims to achieve are, on the one hand, testing the attitudes of language teachers and students toward the strategic use of this practice in the L2 classroom and, on the other, verifying the effectiveness of the use of CS as a teaching strategy.

Theoretical framework

The discourse about CS as a pedagogical strategy exists within the bigger branch of second language acquisition (SLA) literature that deals with L1 influence on L2/FL acquisition (Di Camilla and Antón, 2012; Gass and Selinker, 2008; Leeming, 2011), which contributes to the overall refinement of L2 teaching strategies. The exclusive L2 use in the L2/FL class seems to be an old approach that has

remained untouched throughout the Western language pedagogy revolution of the 20th century. This approach is now being questioned since the strategic use of L1 in the L2 classroom is gaining ground thanks to newly-produced evidence that supports the treatment of L2 students as "bilinguals in-progress" (Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain, 2005). The two main justifications that motivate an exclusive L2 use approach were "duplicating native language acquisition as closely as possible" and "compartmentalizing languages in learners' minds in a kind of coordinate bilingualism" (Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain, 2005, p. 235). However, we now know that duplicating L1 acquisition is almost impossible because of several reasons, i.e., the institutional setting in which L2 acquisition usually occurs, which translates into smaller L2 input quantity than the one provided during L1 acquisition, and different learning abilities connected to the age of learning and, consequently, a different sequence of language development (Macaro, 2001).

According to Antón and Di Camilla (1998), L1 use deployed by L2 learners has proved to be a beneficial resource since it enables learners to externalize their inner speech during a writing task, thus facilitating the internalization process. Di Camilla and Antón (2012) have also noted that L2 students in their first year of language study rely heavily on their L1 to mediate their performance of the assigned task. This provides evidence in support of the value of L1 as an indispensable semiotic device that mediates the learning process and is in line with the main claim of the Sociocultural Theory, according to which language is the principal semiotic system for mediating human activity and learning at both its social and psychological levels (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). Swain and Lapkin (2005) present additional evidence of the pivotal role of the L1 by identifying the main L1 functions in the L2 classroom, such as (1) developing strategies to manage the task; (2) helping learners to scaffold each other; (3) maintaining intersubjectivity, i.e., negotiating one's way through the task; (4) externalizing inner speech during cognitively demanding activities; (5) releasing tension/socializing (p. 182). Despite this theoretical basis, there is still a lack of quantitative evidence in support of the use of L1 in the L2 classroom.

The linguistic significance of CS together with its value as a social and identity marker is amply documented in the sociolinguistic literature. It is usually defined as "the use of two or more linguistic varieties [i.e., dialects or styles of the same language] in the same conversation, without prominent phonological assimilation of one variety to the other" and can be intra-sentential (i.e., the switch occurs within a sentence) or inter-sentential (i.e., entire sentences are switched) (Gumperz, 1978; Myers-Scotton, 1988, p. 155). In this study, I will consider a definition of CS that

encompasses all CS occurrences, thus conceiving the phenomenon as "a continuum ranging from whole sentences, clauses, and other chunks of discourse to single words" (Romaine, 1995, p. 124 in Majer, 2009, p. 32). However, a specific focus will be placed on intra-sentential CS uses in instructional settings, which are commonly confused with a lack of preparation. It is by now well established that this type of CS is both rule-governed and systematic since it reflects the operation of underlying grammatical restrictions (Toribio, 2004).

Regarding the pedagogical ramifications of strategic CS use as a teaching technique, many scholars in the field of SLA have recently started to work in that direction (Ferguson, 2003; Macaro and Lee, 2013; Majer, 2009). According to Macaro (2005), one of the first researchers to assess the benefits of CS use in the L2 classroom, its main advantage is that it facilitates the comprehension of procedural instructions, thus lessening the cognitive burden and enhancing L2 students' learning experience (p. 77). As important as it is to reflect on the fact that CS use is not detrimental to the learning process itself, it is equally important to point out that avoidance of CS will not be detrimental. However, it will certainly deprive both students and teachers of key learning strategies that have proved to be helpful in their L2 learning process (e.g., teachers will not be using discourse control features anymore) (p. 74). However, in order to achieve its goals, it is essential that CS be used meaningfully and strategically in the classroom. In fact, the teacher has to aim at meaningful strategic interactions with students so that the latter can benefit from them (Di Pietro, 1978, p. 123). In Table 1, I provide an overview of the functions of CS in the L2 classroom as reported in several studies on the topic.

Table 1. Functions of CS in the L2 classroom
(from Auer, 1984; Ferguson, 2003; Gumperz, 1982; Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain, 2005; Macaro, 2005; Majer, 2009; Sampson, 2012; Atkinson, 1993 in Üstünel and Seedhouse, 2005)

1. Participant-related functions:	2. Discourse-related functions:
A. Overriding communicative stumbling blocks by falling back on the L1.	A. Class management (giving procedural instructions, floor holding, reiteration, clarifying).
B. Expressing certain nuances of communication that would otherwise be impossible to communicate.	B. Motivating, disciplining, and praising students.
C. Lightening cognitive load problems in working memory.	C. Signaling a change of footing (i.e., 'contextualization cue').
D. Fostering positive interpersonal relations in the classroom.	D. Arousing the degree of attention in order to elicit the L2 from the student.
E. Filling lexical gaps (untranslatable elements).	E. Moving in and out of the teaching/learning context.
F. Facilitating transversion from L1 to L2.	F. Checking comprehension.

Some of the functions listed in Table 1 overlap with the L1 functions outlined by Swain and Lapkin (2005). For instance, L1 can be used in the L2 classroom to "develop strategies to manage the task" or to "negotiating one's way through the task" (Swain and Lapkin, 2005, p. 182) as well as to "maintain intersubjectivity" (see 1A, 1B, and 1F). The strategic uses of CS in the L2 classroom used in this study will be based on the CS functions listed in Table 1. More concretely, this study focuses on two of the discourse-related functions that CS serves in the L2 classroom, namely class management (2A) and arousing the degree of attention in order to elicit an answer in the L2 from the student (2D). In fact, research evidence shows that CS often occurs in the management of the task itself (e.g., when discussing unknown words or for clarification purposes) but not when dealing with the content of the task, which will be elicited in the L2 given the importance of receiving L2 input (Macaro, 2005, p. 67). In order for it to be effective, teacher-induced CS needs to be planned in advance (Mazur *et al.*, 2016). Using CS "at will" and without following a specific plan or without serving a specific purpose is in fact not acceptable, because it will not lead to the expected results (Macaro, 2005, p. 81). The central idea is using CS as a strategy to enhance L2 comprehension in the classroom and to facilitate the acquisition process. Importantly, using CS as a classroom strategy does not mean that the emphasis on L2 should be diminished. In fact, according to Atkinson (1993, in Üstünel and Seedhouse, 2005), CS is unnecessary at the listening stage because this is when the semantic assimilation of the L2 item takes place. Ideally, CS use will decrease progressively as the L2 proficiency increases and surpasses the initial stages of learning at the novice and intermediate levels.

Methodology

The purpose of the present study is twofold, i.e., testing the attitudes of language educators and students toward the strategic use of CS in the L2 classroom and verifying the effectiveness of CS as a teaching strategy. Because data were collected through three different qualitative methods as well as with two different sets of participants and took place at various time points during one semester, in this section, I will describe the specifics of the data collection process and any other relevant details.

The advantage of qualitative methods was that they were useful for eliciting attitudes and judgments on teaching strategies (Schilling, 2014), thereby enabling the researcher to identify patterns. First, in order to verify the attitudes of both language educators and students toward the strategic use of CS in the L2

classroom, two online surveys were circulated (see A1 and A2 in the appendix). I expected both surveys to result in overall negative attitudes toward CS use, especially from the L2 educators, in line with Macaro's findings (2005). These negative stereotypes have already been documented in the literature; in fact, it has been shown that negative attitudes tend to prevail even when positive results are attested, especially in the case of intra-sentential CS (Macaro, 2005). Assessing linguistic attitudes toward the use of CS as a teaching strategy is an essential part of the overall goal of this study, as those same attitudes directly influence educators' productivity in the L2 classroom and may undermine their ultimate goal, i.e., providing excellent L2 education to their students.

Subsequently, I verified the positive effects of strategic CS use in the L2 classroom after implementing teacher-induced CS use during two assessments. The instructor, who was also the researcher, elicited students' feedback right after the assessments through a semi-structured interview. I anticipated overall positive results from the in-class test of the strategic CS use as well as subsequent positive feedback from students. The expected positive feedback would then be used to contrast and provide evidence against the negative attitudes toward CS use in the L2 classroom that seem to be deeply rooted in educators' personal beliefs (Macaro, 2001).

Online survey
Language educators
The participants in the one-page anonymous online survey (see A1 in the appendix) were 25 foreign language educators (i.e., instructors, teachers, and professors), mainly professionally trained in the US, but the sample also included other educators trained outside of the country (i.e., in Europe or South America). Overall, the majority worked in higher education institutions. Participants were both male (20 %) and female (80 %) and age groups were almost equally represented in the cohort of participants; in fact, 28 % were aged 26-30 years, 24 % were aged 31-40 years, 24 % were aged 41-59, and 24 % were aged 18-25 years. It is important to note that all of them were at least bilingual as shown in Table 2.

This is important in light of the fact that the literature on CS has highlighted that previous experiences with bilingualism might have created positive or negative preconceptions about the use of CS in daily life (Myers-Scotton, 1988). Zentella (1997) demonstrated that the practice of CS is generally stigmatized as interlocutors assume that it is indicative of poor language skills and of a rejection of the environment in which speakers live. The features above signal the

Table 2. Language educators by language(s) spoken

	N	%
Bilingual	10	45
Trilingual	5	23
Quadrilingual	3	14
Multilingual	4	18
Total	22*	100

heterogeneity of this participant sample as well as their commonalities, which were one of the reasons why they were targeted as potential participants.

The survey targeting language educators was designed by the researcher and contained a few open-ended questions and several multiple-choice questions; in the latter case, participants could indicate their answer in the "other" section, if different from the options offered. After some initial demographic questions, participants were given a short but accurate definition of CS with an example. Afterward, they were asked to express their general opinion about CS; specifically, whether switching languages was appropriate or not and whether it indicated high or low L2 language proficiency. Subsequently, participants were asked to identify the triggering factors of CS among several options (i.e., bi/multilingualism, asserting social status, social inclusion, identity marker) or to suggest one in a blank space if need be. The second part of the survey was aimed at eliciting participants' preference regarding the strategic use of CS after being presented with two practical examples:

Code switching Excerpt 7
Teacher: Right. Can I have silence now. (learners quiet down) **irridkom toqoghdu attenti hafna. Ghal-lesson Ok ghaliex hija. Sa nibdew unit gdid. Xi ftit mill-a arijet li. Sa naghmlu. F'dan it-unit as jkolkom *zgur fl-ezami* allure tridu to-qughdu attenti iktar**. *(I want you to give your full attention to the lesson […]. We are going to start a new unit. Some of the things that we are going to do in this unit are definitely going to come out in the exam and therefore you must pay more attention.)*

Code switching Excerpt 9
Teacher: What is a flood plain?
Pupil A: A flood plain is a heap of soil or sand, which is deposited on banks of a river or a stream when the river or a stream has been in flood.

* Note that only 22 participants out of 25 provided a response for this question on the survey.

Teacher: (confirming the answer with raised volume): Very good, **Siggemezana, uyasehensake silwane.** *(Siggemezana, you are really working very hard.)*

The two examples above (adapted from Ferguson, 2003) were an essential part of this survey since they provided a clear technical demonstration of how CS could be used strategically to achieve a specific, previously planned and teacher-designed goal in the L2 classroom.

Students

The second short anonymous survey (A2 in the appendix) was also designed by the researcher. Before being asked to express their opinion on the general L1 and L2 use in the classroom, participants were provided the same definition and an example of CS that was used in A1. However, in this case, the questions were more explicit and less complex than the ones in A1. To determine whether students actually agreed with the negative attitudes toward the use of CS in the L2 classroom that has been amply documented in the literature (Macaro, 2001), they were asked directly whether or not they considered the use of L1 (English) during the Spanish L2 class to be helpful. They were also asked to share their general experience in the L2 classroom. The survey was circulated in two different sections of an intensive low-intermediate L2 Spanish class offered at a university in the Northeast region of the United States, which was taught by a non-native speaker of the L2 who was also the researcher for this study. The 36 student participants were native English speakers, although some of them were also heritage speakers (HS) of Spanish and others spoke heritage languages other than Spanish (e.g., Chinese, Korean) as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3. Students by heritage language

	N	%
No heritage language	30	83
HS of Spanish	4	11
HS of another language	2	6
Total	36	100

Most participants were 1st and 2nd year students, therefore 94 % of them were aged between 18 and 21. Participants were selected based on their enthusiasm and willingness to participate in the subsequent interview stage, their native English proficiency, and their L2 Spanish proficiency.

Reading and listening assessments

I verified the effectiveness of CS use in the L2 classroom with a smaller set of participants. Specifically, I administered two assessments to 20 L2 Spanish students at a Northeastern university in the United States, who were both English native speakers and heritage speakers of Spanish (those were 20 % of the total or 4 out of 20). These were the same students enrolled in one of the two L2 Spanish class sections mentioned above. The first assessment (see B1 in the appendix) a reading comprehension of an authentic text in the target language (hereafter TL) followed by five comprehension exercises. The L1[1] was not used and no glosses were provided due to the specific assessment format; in fact, both the assessment and the verbal instructions provided by the instructor were entirely in the TL (i.e., Spanish). The second assessment (see B2 in the appendix) was a listening comprehension of a video in the TL followed by six comprehension exercises mirroring the first assessment.

The two assessments were selected despite the fact that they tested different communicative abilities (i.e., reading and listening comprehension). In fact, the researcher considered of pivotal importance the fact that students' comprehension was evaluated using the same inherent assessment structure (i.e., the Integrated Performance Assessment, hereafter IPA) implying that they were asked to develop the same comprehension skill when presented with two real TL instances (i.e., written and then spoken language) used in an authentic cultural context. IPA is a classroom-based performance assessment model developed by ACTFL and generally used for evaluating students' communication skills in the three modes of communication (interpretive, presentational, and interpersonal) (Adair-Hauck *et al.*, 2013). Employing IPAs –in this case, Interpretive IPAs– facilitated the researcher's task of understanding whether or not CS had had a positive impact on students' comprehension of the overall assessment. In fact, this could be directly measured through both the results attained by students in the assessments and the feedback elicited during the follow up interviews.

Following Macaro (2005), the instructor delivered some verbal instructions regarding the second assessment in the TL and others in the L1, thereby implementing the strategic use of CS. This was aimed at enhancing the discourse in

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[1]   Here the label L1 refers to English even though it has been specified earlier in this article that the sample included heritage speakers of the TL as well as heritage speakers of languages other than Spanish, who might also be considered multi- or bilingual in those languages.

the classroom and in particular at fulfilling functions 2A, D, and F (see Table 1). In fact, the instructor did not simply provide the glosses for what could have been potentially problematic words but instead provided an oral explanation in the L1 (i.e., inter-sentential CS) of various instructions on the assessment (indicated in bold in B2 in the appendix). This approach was adopted to carry out the instructor's intent, i.e., strategically using CS in order to fulfill two specific functions: class management (specifically, clarification and giving procedural instructions) and arousing the degree of attention in order to elicit an answer in the L2 from the student (Macaro, 2005; Üstünel and Seedhouse, 2005). This semi-structured CS use also proves the fact that only certain CS functions are actively used during L2 classroom interaction (Majer, 2009, p. 39). It is important to note that in this study, CS was always "teacher-initiated" and "teacher-induced" (Üstünel and Seedhouse, 2005). Moreover, the instructor used only "uncontaminated" lexical material, i.e., loanwords that did not show any signs of morphological integration (Majer, 2009, p. 35), as it may occasionally happen during other communicative interactions. The instructor used mainly inter-sentential CS, but there were also some instances of intra-sentential CS (see appendix, ex. I to VI in B2 for specific examples). As I show in Table 4, in most instances CS was strategically used to either clarify a point and give procedural instructions on how to complete the different sections of the assessment (function 2A) or to facilitate the passage from L1 to L2 (function 1F).

TABLE 4. INSTANCES OF CS USED DURING IPA (B2)

Instance of CS	Function
1. This is the "key word recognition" section.	2A – 1F
2. Write the Spanish word/expression that better explains the meaning of the following words/ expressions in English, based on the information in the video.	2A
3. This is the "main idea" section.	2A – 1F
4. This is the "supporting details" section.	2A – 1F
5. Circle every detail that is mentioned in the video.	2A
6. After every detail that is mentioned in the video, describe the part that contains it.	2A
7. This is the "guessing word meaning from context" section.	2A – 1F

Table 4 shows some of the instances of CS used during the second IPA (B2) and the related function the instructor aimed at fulfilling by using CS in that specific instance. Because the instructor recorded in writing the instances of CS used during the second assessment, the content of Table 4 is accurate and as similar as possible to the reality of the interactions.

Student interview

After each assessment, students were asked to participate in a follow-up interview aimed at eliciting participants' feedback on the teaching strategy that was used during the two assessments. For the sake of clarity, it is necessary to point out that the set of participants that took the two assessments and were interviewed are different from the ones that have voluntarily taken the online survey. This explains the difference in numbers between the set of student participants involved in the online survey stage of the study (i.e., 36) and the one employed in the second part of the study (i.e., 20).

The researcher used a short semi-structured interview (see B3 in the appendix) that included open-ended questions. The semi-structured approach was chosen because typically it allows participants to articulate their opinion more freely therefore, in this case, allows a deeper insight into their understanding of the learning process. In this study, collecting students' opinions was essential for the formulation of an exhaustive picture of the perception that all individuals directly involved with foreign language teaching or learning have about CS.

Results and analysis

Language educators

I analyzed the answers provided in the survey circulated among language educators and, subsequently, I isolated the most significant and recurrent trends that emerged. Overall, the data show that language educators do not consider CS to be a stigmatized linguistic practice that has to be avoided, and in doing so they seem to be discontinuing the old stereotype that attributed a negative connotation to CS in its entirety. Nevertheless, when asked directly if CS was an appropriate teaching strategy, a certain degree of indecision was observed. In order to understand the origin of such ambivalence, a particular focus was placed on the arguments against using CS as a teaching strategy; hence, I developed a taxonomy of the most frequently occurring arguments that I present in Table 5.

TABLE 5. ARGUMENTS AGAINST USING CS AS A TEACHING STRATEGY

1. In the long run it could lead to the exclusive use of CS in communication
2. It does not lead to a better L2 proficiency
3. It is not an appropriate communication tool
4. It is only effective in facilitating the initial transition into the TL

Based on the content of Table 5, when observed, the hesitation about using CS as a teaching strategy appears to be closely related to a lack of preparation regarding the basic notions of bi/multilingual communication. In contrast, L2 educators recognized that "if sticking to the FL would create an impasse in communication, then [using] CS [makes] sense" and that CS is useful "when having to go over complex grammar structures" thereby acknowledging the strategic use of CS as a discourse function. Using CS to motivate, discipline, and praise students (Ferguson, 2003; Macaro, 2005) was also acknowledged. In fact, one participant said:

> If I sense a high discomfort in the group, I might switch to English to explain why we use a given grammatical form instead of another one, or to explain the logic behind our linguistic choices. Sometimes the nuances are too subtle and hard for [students] to get.

Interestingly, participants report favoring a potential strategic use of CS in the L2 classroom. However, one concern expressed regarded the true benefits resulting from using this teaching strategy (cf. Table 5), hence the margin of contradictory answers shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6. BELIEFS ABOUT THE APPROPRIATENESS OF USING CS IN AN L2 CLASS

	N
Yes, it should be used	19
In certain situations, it might be necessary	2
Yes, but minimally	1
Depends on the level and purpose of instruction	1
As rarely as possible	1
No, it should not be used	1
Total	25

After a closer examination of the data, a more precise picture emerges. As shown in Table 6, the majority of the participants indicated that it is appropriate to use CS in the L2 classroom, and sometimes it may also be necessary given the specific topic of the class. As reported in the subsequent survey sections, in terms of reasons for using CS 72 % of the participants indicated that using CS indicates high proficiency and 68 % indicated that bi/multilingualism is the main factor causing CS. In terms of the appropriateness of CS as a teaching strategy, 64 % of the participants considered that it is indeed appropriate to use CS in the L2

classroom; moreover, 52 % reported that it is actually helpful to do so and 60 % that it could be beneficial to students. Additional strong evidence of this positive attitude was demonstrated by the fact that 60 % of the participants reported that using CS in class is not equivalent to interrupting the lesson and 72 % thought that the exclusive use of the L2 would not be a better strategy than using CS.

As for the two examples of strategic CS provided in the survey, in the first case, 60 % of the participants expressed a favorable opinion, while in the second case 48 % were not pleased with that specific use of CS to praise and encourage students. The language educators' ambivalence might reflect a general lack of pedagogical training on this topic; in fact, from the survey, it emerged that 84 % of them have not received explicit pedagogical instruction on the use of CS as a teaching strategy in the L2 classroom. Some participants also admitted that their negative attitude toward CS derives from having been expressly taught that "full immersion is the best strategy!" while others have reconsidered their position after pedagogical training:

> Before my pedagogical training, I would have said 'No'. However, now I understand how beneficial the L1 can be as a support for the L2, because L2 learners will be able to make connections to their L1, and, as a result understand better the L2.

This last excerpt is representative of the fact that there is an absolute need for more technical training regarding CS as a whole and about the benefits, it can produce in the L2 classroom. Ultimately, based on the findings resulting from this portion of the study, the initial expectation to find mostly negative attitudes toward CS has been only partially corroborated.

Students

The survey circulated among students was analyzed as the one circulated among language educators. Contrary to the researcher's initial expectations, students' attitudes toward CS were extremely positive and overall showed that when the L2 teacher code switches, students feel more comfortable and are encouraged to speak in the class, thus confirming functions 1D and 2B and D (see Table 1). This is demonstrated by the fact that 92 % of the participants indicated that it helps when teachers use English when teaching Spanish and by the fact that 91.7 % reported feeling confused when Spanish is spoken for a long time in class. At the same time, participants reported using CS themselves (61 %) from one to five times in one class period. They usually use it mainly to "clarify unfamiliar words" (83.3 %) and

to "avoid misunderstandings" (72.2 %) thus confirming the fulfillment of functions 1A and F, and 2A and F in Table 1. Being aware of students' attitudes toward CS is as important as being informed about educators' attitudes. This enables the researcher to draw conclusions concerning the impact that the strategies used in the L2 classroom have on students thereby working to improve them.

The second part of the data collection consisted of two assessments and follow-up interviews with students. Assessment results were evaluated through IPA rubrics, whose main criteria were main idea detection, word recognition, inferences, and cultural perspectives (Adair-Hauck *et al.*, 2013, p. 127). Specifically, students achieved better results in the assessment where CS was used (class average = A) than on the one where CS was not used (class average = B). The researcher acknowledges that the difference between written and video input could have affected the overall comprehension rate. In particular, students could have been less receptive to the video input rather than the written one because of the volatile nature of the former. In fact, as per IPA guidelines students were shown the video twice during the second assessment and were invited to take notes; on the other hand, they were able to consult the written input for the whole duration of the first assessment. However, the multimodal nature of the video input provided richer cues than those available for the written input. In order to compensate for this situation, the use of CS was strategically implemented during the second assessment (i.e., video).

Interview results were interpreted based on recurrent themes. A common view amongst participants was that both clarifications and procedural instructions (function 2A) carried out through the strategic use of CS in the second assessment facilitated the completion of assessments. They also reported feeling encouraged when providing an answer in the L2 in their assessment (function 2D). These results confirm that using CS as a strategy in the L2 classroom actually leads to positive practical outcomes. Specifically, it helps students to unpack the task before starting to work on it and to have a clear idea of what is being asked of them. In other words, it helps them to focus directly on the task without having to employ useful time in activities such as translating and trying to understand the instructions. In all cases, participants (i.e., twenty out of twenty) were unanimous in the view that they were able to achieve better results thanks to a pool of factors. For instance, many had the impression that the second assessment was "definitely better than the last one" and several of them mentioned that "[they] knew what the exercise was asking [of them]" therefore they moved from section to section with ease, and in fact "[they] could do the exercises faster

because [they] knew what to do". It is also worth noting that during the first assessment, students repeatedly asked for clarifications about the instructions, a clear instance of their struggle, and of the need of using CS. These overall positive results confirm the claims found in the literature, such as the effectiveness of the CS as a meticulously planned teaching strategy (Macaro, 2001).

Conclusions and pedagogical implications

In this study, I have analyzed the strategic use of CS as a teaching strategy in the L2 classroom. First, I investigated the linguistic attitudes of both L2 educators and students toward CS and toward its specific use in the classroom. Secondly, I verified the effectiveness of this strategy in the L2 Spanish classroom during two assessments and gathered students' feedback through the subsequent interview sessions. In drawing the following conclusions, we should bear in mind that although the size of the sample analyzed was limited, some consistent trends were delineated. Namely, the ambivalent attitudes of L2 educators as well as their lack of pedagogical training about CS, hence a general lack of understanding of its practical aims, but also the underestimation of the proven overall benefits resulting from its use in the L2 classroom and of the extremely positive attitudes that L2 students showed. The results reached after the analysis of this data sample only partially corroborated the initial hypothesis that attitudes toward CS use would be mostly negative. In fact, while language educators initially appeared to be dubious about the advantages of using CS in the L2 classroom, when concrete classroom routine examples were provided, they reported being in favor of using CS as a teaching strategy.

The fact that the initial expectations have been only partially corroborated leads to the formulation of two hypotheses. On the one hand, L2 educators might not have felt completely free to express a truthful opinion in this survey, thus providing the most accepted answer according to social expectations. Alternatively, it may also be possible that L2 educators refrained from giving their approval of the use of CS because they feared professional repercussions caused by the common misconception according to which CS is associated with illiteracy or lack of education. This evidence suggests that there is the need to provide L2 instructors with well-rounded pedagogical training on the use of strategical CS in the L2 classroom and on CS in general so that they can adopt research-based parameters of L1 and L2 use in their L2 classroom. In turn, this will reshape their common beliefs on CS as a linguistic phenomenon, which have been shown to influence their attitudes toward this phenomenon, hence promoting linguistic-

awareness and improving teaching strategies. As for students, they showed overall positive attitudes toward CS, contrary to the researcher's initial expectations. This could mean that, unlike language educators, students do not have social pressures and therefore do not feel compelled to express a socially accepted opinion on CS, hence their positive attitude. Another possibility is that it is easier and more convenient for students to attend an L2 class in which CS is used, rather than a full immersion class. Being aware of students' and educators' attitudes toward CS enables the researcher to draw specific conclusions concerning the impact that the strategies used in the L2 classroom have on students, thereby improving them. The results of the second part of the study confirmed the researcher's initial positive expectations. In fact, the numeric results of the assessments taken by the students improved when the instructor used CS. After comparing the results obtained in the first assessment (without the use of CS) with the second assessment ones (with CS), the researcher confirmed a consistent overall improvement in the average final score of the class. These results are in line with the current literature on the topic of L1 use in the form of CS in the L2 classroom and confirm the importance of the strategic use of CS as a refined teaching strategy. Finally, and importantly, these results reassert the assumption that excluding the L1 when explaining a given task in the L2 classroom results in a longer processing time for the students, who are forced to spend additional time translating instructions before being able to start completing the task.

To conclude, the ultimate goal of this paper was to promote awareness and research evidence for the usefulness of the use of L1 in the L2 classroom. Undoubtedly, future developments of this study that analyze larger data samples should aim at verifying the initial claims made throughout this work and at further exploring the above-mentioned trends. The hope is that the strategic use of CS in the L2 classroom will continue to be investigated thoroughly so that a more comprehensive understanding of its functions and practical consequences in the field of second language acquisition can be reached. It is hoped that the foregoing discussion may be interpreted as an exhortation to language educators to become familiar with the research literature on CS and its practical benefits in terms of overall educational achievements.

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Appendix

(A1) Survey for L2 language educators: CS in the Foreign Language Classroom

This survey is about code switching, which occurs when a speaker alternates effortlessly between two or more languages in the context of a single conversation. An example of English-Spanish code switching: "Sometimes I'll start a sentence in English *y termino en español*" (title of Poplack, 1980). Your anonymous responses may be used for research purposes, but no identifying information will be used. Click "next" to give consent or exit the window to end the survey.

1   Gender: ❑female ❑male ❑other (please specify)
2   Age: ❑18-25 ❑26-30 ❑31-40 ❑41-50 ❑51 or older

3   What language(s) do you speak? (please list in the order in which you learned them)

4   What language(s) do you teach?

5   What do you think switching or mixing languages indicates about your language proficiency? ❏High proficiency ❏Low proficiency

6   In your opinion, what are the factors causing code switching? ❏Bi/multilingualism ❏Asserting social status ❏Social inclusion ❏Identity marker ❏Other (please specify)

7   In your opinion, is it appropriate to code switch in the foreign language (FL) classroom? ❏Yes ❏No ❏ Other (please specify)

8   Imagine you are teaching Spanish as a FL to English speakers. In your opinion, is it appropriate to use some English in this context? ❏Yes ❏No ❏Other (please specify)

9   From the viewpoint of fluency, do you think code switching in the FL classroom is equivalent to interrupting the classroom? ❏Yes ❏No ❏Other (please specify)

10   From the viewpoint of accuracy, do you think code switching is helpful in the FL classroom? ❏Yes ❏No ❏Other (please specify)

11   Have you ever received explicit pedagogical training on how to use code switching as a teaching strategy in the FL classroom? ❏Yes ❏No ❏Other (please specify)

12   Do you think that code switching could be beneficial for your FL students? If yes, how? ❏Yes ❏No ❏Other (please specify)

13   Do you think that using only the FL in the classroom would be a better strategy instead? ❏Yes ❏No ❏Other (please specify)

14   Would you use code switching in your FL classroom in a case such as the one depicted below? **Code Switching Excerpt 7 (Camilleri, 1996, p. 101)**
<u>Teacher:</u> Right. Can I have silence now. (learners quiet down) **irridkom toqoghdu attenti hafna. Ghal-lesson Ok ghaliex hija. Sa nibdew unit gdid. Xi ftit mill-a arijet li. Sa naghmlu. F'dan it-unit as jkolkom** *zgur fl-ezami* **allure tridu toqughdu attenti iktar**. *(I want you to give your full attention to the lesson ok because it is. We are going to start a new unit. Some of the things that we are going to do in this unit are definitely going to come out in the exam and therefore you must pay more attention.)* ❏Yes ❏No ❏Other (please specify)

15   Would you use code switching in your FL classroom in a case such as the one depicted below?
Code Switching Extract 9 (Adendorff, 1993, p. 150) A secondary school geography lesson:
<u>Teacher:</u> What is a flood plain?
<u>Pupil A:</u> A flood plain is a heap of soil or sand which is deposited on banks of a river or a stream when the river or a stream has been in flood.
<u>Teacher:</u> (confirming the answer with raised volume): Very good, **Siggemezana, uyasehensake silwane.** *(Siggemezana, you are really working very hard.)* ❏Yes ❏No ❏Other (please specify)

16   Do you have any other general comments about code switching?

(A2) Survey for L2 students: CS in the Foreign Language Classroom
This survey is about code switching, which occurs when a speaker alternates effortlessly between two or more languages in the context of a single conversation. An example of English-Spanish code switching: "Sometimes I'll start a sentence in English *y termino en español*" (title of Poplack, 1980). Your anonymous responses may be used for research purposes, but no identifying information will be used. Click "next" to give consent or exit the window to end the survey.

1   Gender: ❏female ❏male ❏Other (please specify)
2   Age: ❏18-21 ❏22-25 ❏Other (please specify)
3   What language(s) do you speak? (please list in the order in which you learned them)
4   In your opinion, is it appropriate to code switch in a foreign language (FL) class?
5   Does it help you if your teacher uses some English when teaching Spanish? ❏Yes ❏No ❏Other
6   How many times do you feel confused when your teacher speaks Spanish for a long time in class? ❏frequently ❏sometimes ❏never
7   How many times do you believe your teacher actually engages in code switching in class? ❏1-5 times ❏5-10 times ❏10-15 times ❏15-20 times
8   What language(s) do you normally use to communicate with your classmates in your Spanish class? ❏English ❏Spanish ❏Both languages
9   How often do you switch/change your language from one to another during one class period? ❏1-5 times ❏5-10 times ❏10-15 times ❏15-20 times
10   Do you use words in your own language even while speaking in a foreign language? (Choose all that apply) ❏To have privacy ❏To express unfamiliar words ❏To convey intimacy ❏Because it's easier to speak in my native language ❏To add emphasis ❏To avoid misunderstandings ❏Other
11   On a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is the least positive answer and 5 is the most positive answer possible, how would you rate a teacher that uses code switching in the classroom?
12   Do you think your FL class would be easier if your teacher code switched frequently? ❏Yes ❏No

(B1) Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) sample without CS
Interpretive Task: Reading 'Aunque La Catrina es la muerte, es una tradición viva'

I. Ideas Principales. Usando información del texto, apunta la(s) idea(s) principal(es) del texto.
II. Detalles de Apoyo. Haz un círculo alrededor de cada detalle que se menciona en el texto (¡no todos se mencionan!). Al lado de cada detalle abajo, escribe la información del texto que contiene el detalle.

1. La historia del nombre de "La Catrina" 2. El origen socio-histórico de "La Catrina"

III. Adivinar el Significado de Palabras Usando el Contexto. Usando el texto, escribe lo que probablemente significan estas palabras (en inglés o español):

1. la palabra *engrudo* en contexto 2. la frase *la asocian con algo oscuro* en contexto 3. la frase *fortalezcan su sentido de pertenencia cultural* en contexto

IV. Inferencias. Lee "entre las líneas" para indicar si las siguientes aseveraciones son ciertas o falsas, usando información del texto para apoyar tus respuestas.

1. La cartonería ayuda a mejorar la calidad de vida de los inmigrantes mexicanos en los EEUU 2. El origen de la Catrina fue como una obra de arte de crítica social. 3. Las culturas mayas y aztecas hacían altares para realzar la importancia de la vida.

V. Comparación de Perspectivas Culturales. Contesta las siguientes preguntas en español: ¿Cómo se ve la muerte en tu cultura? ¿Cómo compara la visión de la muerte de la cultura mexicana con la tuya?

(B2) Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) sample with CS

Interpretive Task: Listening 'La gastronomía dominicana: una fusión cultural'

I. Reconocimiento de Palabras Clave. **I. Key word recognition.** Basándote en el video, escribe la palabra/frase en español del video que mejor expresa el significado de las siguientes palabras/frases en inglés: **Write the Spanish word/expression that better explains the meaning of the following words/expressions in English, on the basis of the information in the video.**

1. rice soup 2. fried chicken 3. top chef of typical Dominican food

II. Ideas Principales. **Main Ideas.** Usando información del texto, apunta la(s) idea(s) principal(es) del video. **Write down the main idea(s) of the video, basing on the information that you'll hear**

III. Detalles de Apoyo. **Supporting Details.** Haz un círculo alrededor de cada detalle que se menciona en el video Circle every detail that is mentioned in the video (¡no todos se mencionan!) **(not all of them are mentioned!).** Después de cada detalle abajo que sí ocurre, describe la parte del video que contiene el detalle **Explain the context in which any of the following details were mentioned.**

A.   Los platos típicos de cada región de la República Dominicana B. El origen de la comida típica dominicana C. Recetas para crear los platos típicos dominicanos

IV. Adivinar el Significado de Palabras Usando el Contexto. **Guessing word meaning from context.** Usando el video como referencia, escribe lo que probablemente significan estas palabras (en inglés o español). **Using the video as reference, write the meaning of these words (in English or Spanish):**

1. la palabra **the word** *repostería* en contexto **in context** 2. la frase **the expression** *paraíso para el paladar* en contexto **in context** 3. la frase **the expression** *vistosas comidas* en contexto **in context**

V. Inferencias. **Inferences.** Lee "entre las líneas" **Read between the lines** para indicar si las siguientes aseveraciones son ciertas o falsas, usando información del texto para apoyar tus respuestas **indicate if the following statements are true or false. Use supporting information from the video.**

1. ¿A qué se refiere la Sra. Lithgow cuando dice que la comida dominicana "quizás no sea muy dietética pero sí gustosa"? 2. ¿Por qué se le llama al plato típico "la bandera dominicana"? ¿Cuáles son los ingredientes?

VI. Comparación de Perspectivas Culturales. **Cultural Perspectives Comparison.**
Contesta las siguientes preguntas en español. **Answer the following questions in Spanish**. ¿Qué nos enseña el video sobre la cultura dominicana? ¿Cómo compara o se diferencia con tu cultura?

(B3) Semi-structured follow-up interview with students

1. How did you find this IPA? Overall, was it difficult, easy, or a bit of both?
2. Which exercise do you think was the most difficult and which was the easiest? Why?
3. Did you encounter any specific difficulty when taking the assessments?
4. Was it difficult to take the assessments when the instructor did not provide any explanation in English? Why?
5. Did it help that the instructor used English to explain/clarify the instructions? Why?
6. Which assessment was the most difficult to take? Was it the 1st one or the 2nd one?