

# Code switching at reception classes in Botswana: a strategy to academic excellence

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**Abstract:** This case study responds to a growing concern among educationist of the need for provision of quality education at early childhood level. The focus of this particular study was on code switching at reception classes in Botswana as a strategy for academic excellence. The idea for the study was triggered by the fact that Botswana is a multicultural society. The study was carried out at schools in the Kgalagadi North sub-district among eight (8) schools in the Hukuntsi cluster. Expressly, the study set out to assess teacher educators' perceptions of code switching and to find out their views about the benefits of code switching. Data was collected through interviews and questionnaire. In relation to perceptions about the practice of code switching, a conclusion can be made that teachers differ widely. Findings revealed that majority of teachers view code switching as a feasible strategy at preschool level. This conclusion is made from findings which showed ardently that children learn best when they are taught in their mother tongue. However, a small minority did not agree with the idea and this creates room for further enquiry into the perceptions of teachers about code switching at national level. The study also concludes that code switching has positive and negative educational effects. Positively, facilitates the language learning process, promotes participation among others benefits. The study has on the contrary shown that at code switching has potential to impede the development of English and setswana language proficiency. The study recommends to Ministry of Basic Education to consider engaging in a robust engagement to develop other indigenous languages in Botswana and their eventual elevation to the same status. It is hope such move will contribute to educational gains.

**Keywords:** early childhood education, code switching, language proficiency, teaching strategies.

## Introduction

In public schools in Botswana at all levels learners are taught Setswana and English as subjects and Setswana, the venegular language is only used as a medium of instruction from standard one to three, from standard four students are taught in English as per the recommendation by the National Language Policy. This makes the conditions in the classrooms difficult for students who are non-Setswana and or English speakers as they feel excluded from these schools. This exclusion affects their performance in a negative way as they end up getting lower grades. For example, there is linguistic mismatch as children learn in a language that they do not speak at home (Pansiri, 2011). This scenario is captured by Nyati-Ramahobo (2009) when she says that "ethnic minority children have to go through transitional submersion programs in that they are first of all, submerged into the national language (L2) and later into English (L3)" (p.36). The implication is that children from minority groups are forced to use Setswana in the classroom and learn in Setswana, and later on they are supposed to use English as a language of instruction. This submersion in a way forces these children to forget about their mother tongue language because it is prohibited in schools. They can only speak their languages when they are at home. Most children meet Setswana at the age of five at reception classes and they are supposed to learn the language fast as they are supposed to be taught Setswana as a subject and be taught in Setswana from standard one to three (Botswana Government, 1994).

English as medium of instruction (EMI) was defined by Dearden (2014) as "the use of English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English" Pp4.

In Botswana English is also used as the enabling communication tool in the teaching and learning process. In any teaching and learning situation the language of instruction plays a vivacious role in facilitating learning of subject contents. So it is necessary for the teachers and learners to use the language of instruction appropriately for enhancing effective teaching and learning. In other words, when there is conflict regarding the medium of instruction that is used at early learning stage, the situation may have negative effect on the subsequent educational level of the learners. This research study was conducted to cater for learners who are not familiar with the medium of instruction been English and Setswana in Setswana subject lessons used in schools. Jacobson (2012) argues that, if learners are disabled in the language that is used as a medium of instruction, then the learning process cannot take place effectively. Subsequently, language can be a factor in either providing or withholding access to education. It is therefore important that this particular resource be used so as to achieve effectiveness of communication in the classroom as well as facilitating the teaching and learning process. As such, the main focus of this research was to explore teacher's perception on code switching as a medium of instruction. This paper argues that to better understand the occurrence of code-switching (CS) in Botswana classrooms, an awareness of the language situation in Botswana is imperative. Equally important is an understanding of the role of English in Botswana. According to Batibo and Smieja (2000), research has not yet established the exact number of languages in Botswana owing to the blurred distinction between a language and a dialect. Notwithstanding the above, it is generally agreed that Botswana has at least 26 languages, including English and Setswana (Webb & Kembo-Sure (2000), Molosiwa (2006) and Nyati-Ramahobo (2004).

The authors of this paper maintain that the phenomenon of switching from one language to another should be seen as a new method of explaining things in the classroom. This is because teachers face a lot of challenges when teaching lessons in a class where pupils are not familiar with official language used in a class. Considering the level of understanding of the learners it becomes very difficult to explain some topics in the language of instruction for easy understanding. This matter without doubt calls for alternation between languages in a form of code switching to aid the flow of ideas among teachers and learners.

### **Conceptual framework**

Conceptual framework adopted by this study is, *Mother tongue as a medium of instruction*. The most important issue is to understand what mother tongue is and its relationship to teaching and learning. Defining mother tongue Nigel and Ansaldo (2010) posit that "mother tongue is part of the personal social and cultural identity" (p. 63). It is the language that brings the reflection and learning of social patterns of acting and speaking (Terry, 2010). Mother tongue is viewed as important for the academic performance of the learners. Further, Nkosana (2014) maintains that the mother tongue equips the child with the foundation for the ability to learn. The child finds it easier to learn their second language and other school subjects. It has also been debated that children should be taught mainly through their mother tongue in schools for the first 6-8 years (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009). Stegen (2011) asserts that children can be able to speak confidently with their own accent, and they know the simple grammar and many existing words. It is for this reason that this study wants to explore teachers perceptions about code switching with a view to recommend the recognition of code switching as a medium of instruction technique in our schools especially at lower pre and lower primary school level.

### **Statement of the problem**

Communicative competence in any given language or code is very important especially in a school context as learners are able to comprehend concepts when they are presented in a code that is more familiar to them. Both English and Setswana are taught as compulsory and examined in primary education in Botswana. The selected languages may facilitate or impede the quality of education. The language of instruction can be a problem if the content taught is not in the learner's first language. Children in Kgalagadi North area where this study was conducted speak Sengologa/Sekgalagadi, or Sesarwa as their first language. Most of these learners are not exposed to Setswana and English as such when they start preschool, they encounter communication problems. Therefore, supplementing Setswana/English with another language which the learner is acquainted

with can lead to a better understanding of the content being taught. When children have difficulty in conceptualising concepts and content been taught, it is not surprising that psychosocial and emotional adjustment problems supervene.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to examine code-switching in connection to teachers perception when teaching in ECD classrooms with a view to deduce the profits of code switching as a medium of instruction strategy.

This study was informed by the following objectives:

1. To find out the perceptions of teachers on using first language in second language teaching.
2. To determine the profits and constrains of code switching as a medium of instruction technique.

### **Literature review**

#### **Botswana language of instruction policy**

Language educational policy can be defined as “mechanism that impacts the structure, functions, use, or acquisition of language” (Shohamy, 2012). It is these policies, especially in a centralized system, that represent a language manipulation of the what kind of language or languages should be used as a medium of instruction and to what degree that usage is acceptable. In most cases, educational staff of a given institute work, according to Shohamy (2012), as agents of implementing these policies without questioning its quality, appropriateness and relevance to the successful learning for learners.

Scholars, educators, politicians and pundits are among those who have significantly influenced language education worldwide, though ultimately language education policies are formulated based on political considerations. This might explain the reason why Botswana, at independence, retained English as its official language and adopted Setswana as its national language. Prior to the inception of any language in education policy in the country, the practice was to instruct primary school pupils in Setswana for the first two/three years and thereafter change to English. In 1977, a decisive step was taken to formulate a Language policy, Education for Kagisano (Education for social harmony) which stipulates the use of English as medium of instruction from standard 3 (Government of Botswana 1977). It was noted, however, that the policy decision to use English as the medium of instruction from standard 3 was discriminatory against Setswana, the national language. In 1992, another National Commission on Education was constituted to address new challenges in the educational system. Although The Report of the National Commission on Education (1993) recommended that the use of English for instruction should be deferred till standard 5, the Revised National Policy on Education (1994) prescribed English as the medium of instruction from standard 2. This change resulted in the submission of a minority report, was premised on the belief that introducing English to the learners, who apparently were performing poorly in the language, much earlier would improve their performance. In some areas where children are not familiar with the official languages used in schools, some teachers tend to code switch so that learners can understand better (Banks and Banks, 2013).

#### **Remunerations of code switching as a strategy**

According to Metila (2009) code switching helps to improve class participation by inducing a relaxed class atmosphere that allows students to perform much better. Along the same vien, Abad (2009) maintains that code switching manages to lower the effective filter and this consequently establishes rapport and creates an atmosphere of informality in the classroom between

the teachers and students aiding in a more democratic and critical learning environment for the students. More so, Lee (2011) in his research affirms that the discourse (code switching) used by the students outside the classroom should be allowed inside the classroom discussion processes because it helps the students contribute in the discussions process and bridges any social and cultural gap. Jacobson (2012) argues that socio-psychological factors play a significant role in code switching in a bilingual classroom. He further argues that code switching helps the speakers to express themselves and present pragmatic meanings.

Further, code-switching is described as a positive phenomenon that is advantageous for both teachers and students, for students' language acquisition, and for bridging a gap in the knowledge. First, it can be more convenient for teachers and students to alternate between languages if they have one language in common (Hall & Cook, 2012; Tabaku, 2014). This means code-switching serves a multiple functions in terms that teachers can use code-switching for instructional purposes, such as classroom management, explanation of new information, etc. Second, Baeoueb and Toumi (2012) and Lopez and Gonzalez-Davies (2015) identified code-switching as an approach, which is beneficial for target language acquisition. In this paper we argue that when a speaker is not fluent in the target language, it is code-switching that can help to further communication and make it meaningful.

Lin (2013) suggested that both teachers and students code-switched to a larger extent in informal situations whereas the target language dominated in formal ones. Students find classroom interaction more natural and easy when code switching is taking place. This conducive atmosphere that code-switching can contribute to is important in the teacher-student relationship since it gives them an opportunity to communicate in a more informal way where the risk of misunderstandings can be avoided. In formal situations, code-switching can be used to make the teaching more effective. This can be made possible when a teacher finds it important to explain what is in the curriculum or another academic text in a language or languages that a student can understand.

In essence, using code switching in the classroom fosters a positive ambience according to Metila (2009). Bautista (2009) concurs with Metila (2009) that code switching can transform the atmosphere of a classroom from being too formal to informal thereby allowing collaborations among the learners in group works and also aids in the interactions and discussions in the classroom. According to Bautista (2009) code switching is the simplified strategy that students with poor English language proficiency use. In the case of Botswana, we also include learners with poor Botswana proficiency. Whilst, Metila (2009), argues that the use of code switching in a bilingual classroom fulfills a pedagogical function when it makes a challenging subject matter comprehensible to students. In other words, the use of code switching in a bilingual classroom seems beneficial because it helps in explaining abstract concepts and in defining difficult terms to students.

Wright (2010) emphasised that pupils' native language should not be ignored; instead schools should respect their pupils' mother tongue. Moreover, the author defined and discussed primary language support, which is used to support pupils' L2 learning. The purpose of primary language support is to instruct pupil in the target language and to make it as comprehensible as possible in order for the pupils to acquire the L2 better. The concept of primary language support was further developed by describing that primary language support makes it easier for teachers to acknowledge if the pupils understand the concept of what was being taught, but could not answer in the target language, or if the pupils did not understand at all and as a result the teacher needed to re-teach the concept (Wright, 2010).

This phenomenon of switching from one language to another should be seen as a new method of explaining things in the classroom. This is because teachers face a lot of challenges when teaching lessons in a class where pupils are not familiar with official language used in a class. Considering the level of understanding of the learners it becomes very difficult to explain some topics in the medium of instruction for easy understanding. The matter calls for alternation between languages in a form of code switching to aid the flow of ideas among teachers and learners.

### **Methodological orientation**

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed. As such, quantitative and qualitative methods were used alongside each other, with each type of data contributing to answering the same or different research questions. Data for this study was obtained from teachers and school management staff through the administration of questionnaire and interviews. The use of various instruments aided in triangulation and therefore bringing to the fore a better understanding of the code switching practices as a medium of instruction. In the identification of schools, purposive sampling was applied to select all schools in the Hukuntsi cluster. This move was triggered by the fact that there are only 8 schools in the cluster. As a matter of fact to avoid a small number of participants all schools had to be selected.

When it comes to the identification of participants, purposive sampling was again used to select two (2) preschool teachers from all the 8 schools. Purposeful sampling was used to make certain that those participants handpicked are familiar with ECD practices and principles. Patton (1990) concurs that purposeful sampling is a non-random method of sampling where the researcher selects "information-rich" cases for in-depth study. This means that information-rich teachers in this case are those who are teaching reception classes. Like indicated above, each of the four (8) schools, has a teacher and teacher aid. This was to make a sample size of 16 participants but one school was found to be having 2 teacher aids and they were all included in the study hence we ended up with 17 teacher participants and 8 Heads of Department making a total of 25 participants. In this research, a set of questionnaire was distributed to preschool teachers. Questionnaires are perhaps the most common and popular way of gathering data in research. They are used to obtain the opinions, beliefs and experiences of research participants.

According to Cohen et al., (2006) an interview is a two way conversation or oral questionnaire initiated to provide valid data and to learn about ideas, beliefs, views, perceptions and experiences about a phenomenon under study. In-depth interviews were also used to collect primary data. In this interview, the collection data was through direct contact between the interviewer and respondents presumed to have certain experiences that enhance understanding of the problem under investigations (Denscombe, 2001). In-depth interviews is preferred for this study because unlike questionnaires, the researcher can immediately validate the data when sensing that the respondent is giving false information through non-verbal cues, including facial expressions and tones of voice (Modesto & Tichapondwa, 2013). The in-depth interviews were semi structured and as such had open ended questions with a view to allow alteration to the sequence of the questions at any time hence probing for more information. They match the researchers' strategy of inquiry because they will enable the researcher to probe further into issues.

The use of various data collection techniques by itself went a long way in increasing the validity of the data collected. Triangulation of data as explained by Olsen (2004) involves mixing data collection methods and it is believed to help in validating data. Also the data collection instruments were given to experts in research at the University of Botswana and Bai sago University to establish their face and content validity. To ensure reliability the instruments were piloted on teachers at two (2) schools in the Kgalagadi South Region with similar characteristics as those in the Kgalagadi North. The test-retest form of reliability checking was used where teachers were given the instrument to complete and after a week it was administered again to the same teachers. This was done to determine whether the instrument will yield the same results on the two occasions. Bell (2012) cautioned that all questionnaires used in research need to be piloted to establish as to whether all the questions and instructions are clear and to enable the researcher to eliminate any questions that do not answer to any of the research questions.

### **Ethical protocol for data collection**

In Botswana it is required that before pursuing any research in the country, permission should be sought from the permanent secretary of the concerned ministry. Therefore, researchers sought for permission to conduct the study and followed all protocol of data collection such permission seeking from schools and participants. Participants were assured to confidentiality and anonymity.

**PRESENTATION AND INTERPRESTATION OF FINDINGS**

The purpose of this study was to examine code-switching in connection to teachers perception when teaching in ECD classrooms with a view to deduce the profits and constrains of code switching as a medium of instruction strategy. The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To find out the perceptions of teachers on using first language in second language teaching.
2. To determine the profits and constrains of code switching as a medium of instruction technique.

Data for the entire study is analysed by means of descriptive statistics using frequencies and percentages to determine responses from respondents. For the questionnaire, a Likert scale was used to show responses from different respondents. The results obtained where presented in line with each objective under the following headings:

1. Perceptions of teachers on using first language in second language teaching.
2. Benefits of code switching

This section presents respondents closed-ended questions and semi-structured interview items. The items are grouped according to research objectives and interpreted under them using frequencies, tables and percentages. For open ended interview items narrative approach to analysis of data was used.

**Note: SA-strongly agree, A-agree, SD-strong disagree, D-disagree**

**Codes for HoD,s (HoD, 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 &8)**

**Objective 1: To find out the perceptions of teachers on using first language in second language teaching.**

This objective is addressed by items 3-4,6,7,10 and 11 of section 2 closed ended items of teachers and item 1 and 2 from school management interview.

**Table 1: the perceptions of teachers**

<b>Item no:</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>
3.Children learn best when they are taught in their mother tongue	2 ( 12)	11( 65)	1 (6)	3( 18)
4. The use of other languages in the classroom will result in a decline of results.	1 (6)	9 ( 53)	2 (12)	5 (29)
6. I code switch while giving instructions	2 (12)	12 (71)	0	3 (18)
7. The policy requires that, code switch during teaching and learning.	4 (24)	3 (18)	0	10 (59)
10.I think learners understand concepts better when I code-switch	4 (24)	7 (41)	1 (6)	5 (29)

In response to objective 1 on the item on whether children learn best when they are taught in their mother tongue, 11 respondents representing 65% indicated that they agree with the statement. This was followed by 3 respondents who indicated that they disagree with the statement. Two (2) others representing 12% and one (6) indicated the strongly agree and strongly

disagreement options respectively. On item 4-the use of other languages in the classroom will result in a decline of results. Findings show that a majority of 9 out of 17 respondents indicated that they agree with the statement, 5 (29%) were for disagree, 2 chose strongly disagree while 1 respondent choose the option strongly agree.

On the question of code switch while giving instructions, a huge majority of respondents indicated that they agree with the statement meaning that they code switch while giving instructions. This was followed by 3 who choose the option disagree and 2 who were for the option strongly agree. When asked to show whether the policy requires code switch during teaching and learning, 10 respondents representing 59 %, 3 (18%) and 4 representing 24% indicated the disagree, agree and strongly agree options respectively. None of the respondents' strongly disagreed with the statement.

Respondents were asked to state whether in their view learners understand concepts better when they code-switch. Responses revealed that was distributed responses. For instance the table above shows that 7/17 indicated that they agree, followed by 5 (29%) who disagreed, 4 representing 24% strongly agreed and only one (1) representing 6 % strongly disagree. Along with this question was a question on whether or not code switching will make it difficult for learners to understand second language (L2). In response to this question or item, majority of 12 out of 17 respondents indicated that they disagree with statement. This was followed by 3 respondents who opted for the strongly agree while 1 went for the agree and another 1 (6%) chose the strongly disagree option.

School management in the form of Heads of Departments (lower) also took part in the study. When asked to share their views on the use of first language in second language teaching they provided mixed opinions. Some were of the view that the use of first language in second language teaching was good while others felt it was not. One participant (HoD,3) had this to say, ' *In my opinion, the use of first language helps children to understand concepts much better*'.

Another participants (HoD, 8) said,

*'for our pupils in remote areas who are familiar with none other but their indigenous languages code switching who help to allow them to follow classroom discussion. Otherwise without the use of first language these little lads would be lost'*

The statement above was also shared by participants (HoD,2) who argued that the use of first language in second language teaching is a good initiative which should be adopted by the ministry of basic education as a strategies especially among schools based in rural areas.

Like indicated above, other participants were of the opinion that the use of first language is not good. One participants (HoD, 5) said, '*use of first language in teaching second language is a complete waste of time because examinations are not conducted in first language so basically you are miseducationg and misdirecting poor little children*'.

*Participants (HoD, 7) along the same indicated thus, ' use of first language is not profitable because it creates confusion for little children, imagine you say something in English today and say the same in local language such as sekgalagadi'.*

**Objective 2:** To determine the profits and constrains of code switching as a medium of instruction technique.

The objective was addressed by items 1-2, 5, 8, 9 and 12 from section 2 of the questionnaire.

Table 2; Profits of code switching

Item no:	SA	A	SD	D
1. Code switching will facilitate the language learning process	14 (82)	2 (12)	0	1 (6)
2. code switching is an efficient, time saving technique	12 (71)	4 (24)	0	1 (6)
5. Code switching helps to improve class participation by including a relaxed class atmosphere	12 (71)	4 (24)	0	1 (6)
8. It is effective to use learner’s first language than to teach purely in target language	3 (18)	10 (59)	1 (6)	3 (18)
9.Code switching makes it easy for me to give instructions to pupils	11 (65)	5 (29)	0	1 (6)

Table 7 reveals that the majority of sampled respondents are on ‘strongly agree’ side to item 1 which wanted to find out whether code switching will facilitate the language learning process. This was evidenced by 14 out of 17 respondents who indicated the option strongly agree. This was followed by 2 or 12% who additionally chose the option ‘agree’ and only 1 or 6% indicated that they disagree. None of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. On a closer item on- *code switching is an efficient, time saving technique*, a majority of 12 out of 17 respondents were for the strongly agree option, followed by 4 who agreed, 1 or 6% disagreed and none opted for the strongly disagree.

Respondents were asked to share their views on whether code switching helps to improve class participation by including a relaxed class atmosphere. Their responses indicated that majority were on the agree side. This is evidenced in the table above which shows that to item 5, 12 or 71 % strongly agreed and 4 or 24 % agreed. Only 1 or 6% disagreed while none chose the option strong disagree. When asked on the effectiveness of using learner’s first language than to teach purely in target language, responses were distributed across all 4 areas of the likert scale. However, majority were on the agree side as it can be seen that 10 or 59 were for agree and 3 or 18 % were for strongly agree. On the side of disagree, 3 were for disagree while 1 or 6% strongly disagreed.

Like their teachers, Heads of Departments also differed with respect to profits of code switching as a medium of instruction technique. When asked to share the benefitd sof code switching, one participants (HoD,3) SAID, ‘ *In my experience, it makes communication easier with almost everyone. I remember when I was at primary we were in class with pupils who were not familiar with English nor Setswana and teachers used to emphasise some points in their vernacular languages and they would seem to follow*’. Another participant (HoD, 8) along the same vein said, ‘ *code switching makes all pupils free and recognised in the classroom and in some way improves their confidence and willingness to learn*’.

*Findings show that other participants who saw the benefits of code switching indicating that its benefit is that ppils will feel accommodated in school and instructional activities and that it will help them to understand concepts much better.*

Other participants (HoD, 1, 5,6,7,4) felt there are no benefits of code switching. These participants only see constrains and disadvantages of code switching. One participant (HoD, 6) said, ‘ *code switching does not help serve a full purpose of the course and as such I can say it is profitable*’. Another participant (HoD, 4) closer in opinion to HOD 6 indicated that *code switching is a temporary strategy that can be used to emphases a point but does not have long lasting profits to pupils.*

## Discussions

It was found that teachers have diverse views about code switching as a teaching strategy. Findings revealed that majority of teachers view code switch as a viable strategy for preschool level. This conclusion is made from findings which showed that majority of 65% of respondents indicating that children learn best when they are taught in their mother tongue. However, a small minority did not agree with the statement and this creates room for further enquiry into the perceptions of teachers about code switching. Along the same teachers differed on the item which wanted to find out whether *the use of other languages in the classroom will result in a decline of results*.

While majority agreed with the statement but also a good number disagreed with the statement. It can be argued that teachers are divided in their perceptions of code switching. While majority support the idea as a viable strategy but those who disagree cannot be ignored. The findings are in agreement to Kieswetter (2017) who specified that code-switching is a method of conversation that depends on people or situations, in which it occurs. The author is understood to say to be saying that code switching is context laden. This means it will all depend on the context. Simply put, there are preschools learners for whom code switching can work and those for whom it cannot work. For teachers to make good decisions when faced with diverse daily issues in their classrooms, Bansal (2009) advises that they must be aware of numerous ways in which learning can unfold in the contexts of development, learning disparities, language and cultural influences and individual temperament, interests and approaches to learning.

With regard to whether in their view the policy requires code switch during teaching and learning, 10 respondents representing 59 %, 3 (18%) and 4 representing 24% indicated the disagree, agree and strongly agree options respectively. None of the respondents' strongly disagreed with the statement. This was found to be a positive outcome which shows that teachers are aware of the policy.

Findings show that teachers view code switch as a strategy to unpack concepts. This was revealed when respondents were asked to indicate their views on the item which wanted to find out whether in their view learners understand concepts better when they code-switch.

To this item mixed views were recorded. That is to say some respondents agreed with the statement while others were on the 'disagree' side. Along with this question was a question on whether or not code switching will make it difficult for learners to understand second language (L2). The findings revealed that code switch by no means will make it difficult to understand second language. It implies that if well done for a particular purpose code switch can function without interfering with the learning of second language. Speakers switch codes to negotiate a change in social distance between themselves and the other participants in the conversation through the choice of different codes (Myers-Scotton, 2009).

Generally with respect to objective 1 on opinions on code switching, management staff who supervise teachers and teacher Aids differed. Some felt it is a viable strategy especially for pupils who are not familiar with the language of instruction. They argued that code switching would enable pupils to understand concepts better. On the other hand those were against the use of code switching claimed that code switching has no permanent benefit. They thus indicated that yes a pupil may grasp the concept at that point in time but such doing has no profit as examination and test will not use mother tongue. Simply put for these participants code switching will only confuse little children and virtually waste their time of learning second language.

**Objective 2:** To determine the profits of code switching as a medium of instruction technique.

This objective wanted to find out the views of teachers regarding the profits of code switching. A general finding from various items which supported the above objective is that code switch is seen by teachers having huge benefits. Majority of people in the world are monolingual and monocultural, incapable of effectively bridging any gaps between the world's diverse set of countries and ethnic groups. A code-switcher can help these disparate groups communicate and reach a mutual understanding (Lee-Wickner, 2016). Expressly, findings show that teachers feel that code switching facilitates the language learning process. A huge majority of respondents of 14 out of 17 representing 82% strongly agreed to the statement that code switching facilitate language learning process. Findings therefore show that code switching is an efficient, time saving technique. A majority of 12 out of 17 respondents were for the strongly agree option, followed by 4 who agreed, 1 or 6% disagreed and none opted for the strongly disagree. Along the same vein, findings show that code switching helps to improve class participation by including a relaxed class atmosphere. This means when a teacher switches to vernacular student participation increase. This may be understood from two side though. In my view from one side this is positive as it shows learners follow and take part in learning after code switching. From a different lens this can be seen as disadvantage since doing so may hinder students from learning and understanding concepts, facts and principles in the language of instruction. In my view code switching has benefits, it is vital for learners to understand concepts, facts and generalisations in the language of instruction. Mind you the language of instruction is also the very same language of assessment. There will be no code switching in examinations rooms. This point was also emphasised by heads of departments who were on the sample. They argued that it is waste of time to teach in one language and assess students in the other. My argument is supported by Mokgwathi & Webb (2018) who posit that code switching does not contribute to developing the learners' proficiency and confidence in speaking English. It is therefore surprising that majority of teachers are so much for code switching. However, it must be understood that teachers in the sample were responding to a study on code switching at preschool level, hence most responses are in favour of code switching. It may therefore be interesting to find out views of teachers on code switching at upper primary school and secondary school level.

## Conclusions

In relation to perceptions about code switching, a conclusion can be made that teachers differ widely. Findings revealed that majority of teachers view code switch as a viable strategy for preschool level. This conclusion is made from findings which showed that children learn best when they are taught in their mother tongue. However, a small minority did not agree with the statement and this creates room for further enquiry into the perceptions of teachers about code switching. While majority support the idea as a viable strategy but those who disagree cannot be ignored. The findings are in agreement to Kieswetter (2017) who specified that code-switching is a method of conversation that depends on people or situations, in which it occurs. The author is understood to say to be saying that code switching is context laden.

The study has shown that teachers at the sampled schools engage in Code switching for various reasons and perceive code switching differently. However, code switching is not without a basis; but it is largely used to accommodate the learners' restricted linguistic skills in the language of instruction with a view to assist pupils overcome communication problems caused by their lack of the necessary proficiency in the language used as medium of instruction. The study also concludes that code switching has positive and negative educational effects. Positively, facilitates the language learning process, promotes participation among others benefits. This supported by Canagarajah (2009) who posit that code switching as a teaching strategy enables the use of the learners' home language in a bilingual setting like the classroom.

Findings show that by code-switching to a language spoken by the majority of the learners, the teachers improve the learners' comprehension of the subject content. The study has also shown that at these schools, code switch has potential to impede the development of English language proficiency or Setswana language proficiency. Simply put, teachers of the sampled schools are teaching pupils majority of which are from the sekgalagadi tribes and mostly speak sekgalagadi from home. As a

matter of fact when teacher code switch as often as findings revealed in the process proficiency in the Setswana language can be affected.

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