

Examining the Impact of Code-Switching on Students' Paragraph Writing in EFL Classrooms

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Abstract

The use of learners' first language (L1) within target language instruction remains a contentious issue in language education. This study investigated the impact of code-switching on students' paragraph writing performance in target Language (L2) classroom. Employing an experimental research design, data were gathered through pre-tests, post-tests, and semi-structured interviews. The participants consisted of second-year university students enrolled in a Sophomore English course, which focuses on foundational writing skills. Based on pre-test results, 68 students majoring in Dawro Doonaa (Dawro language) were systematically divided into two groups: a control group ($n = 33$), where English was used exclusively as the medium of instruction, and an experimental group ($n = 35$), where code-switching to the first language was permitted. Upon completion of the instructional intervention, post-tests were administered, and two instructors were interviewed to provide additional insights into student performance. Statistical analysis conducted using SPSS version 26 revealed no statistically significant difference in overall paragraph writing performance between the two groups ($p = 0.46$). Nevertheless, the experimental group demonstrated marked improvement in specific dimensions of writing, notably explicitness and idea development. These findings underscore the potential pedagogical value of judicious L1 use, suggesting that EFL instructors and policymakers should critically assess its role rather than entirely exclude it from classroom practice.

Keywords

Code-Switching, Dawro Doona, First Language, Paragraph Writing, Writing Performance

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INTRODUCTION

In today's globalised world, nearly every community is either bilingual or interacts with bilingual individuals, making the need to learn a second language increasingly important. People worldwide now frequently study additional languages (L2) as either second or foreign languages. Although Ethiopia is a country rich in linguistic, ethnic, and cultural diversity with over 80 ethnic groups, English remains a dominant language in education, business, and administration. In urban areas, it is common to see business signs, institutional logos, and official documents written in both English and local languages. However, in many parts of Ethiopia, English usage is often limited to classroom instruction. In these areas, students' exposure to English is restricted to hearing their teacher speak it in lessons where English is the medium of instruction (Eshetie, 2013). In contexts where students and teachers share the same first language, the use of L1 for communication inside and outside the classroom is prevalent. In these contexts, using L1 in the L2 classroom can be essential, but the question remains: does L1 use support or hinder L2 learning?

Over time, different methods for teaching L2 have varied in their stance on L1 use. Some methods, like the Grammar Translation Method, advocate for L1 use, while others, like the Direct Method, completely reject it. Both approaches have limitations, leading to methods that suggest a balanced use of L1, such as the Notional Functional, Oral Situational Method, and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). However, debates continue regarding the "optimal extent" of L1 use, the contexts in which it is effective, and how much L1 should be used to assist students struggling with L2 comprehension.

Moreover, teachers face significant challenges when deciding whether and how to use L1 in English classrooms. Some feel guilty or lack confidence when employing CS, fearing criticism from colleagues, parents, or administrators who may view L1 use as a sign of poor English proficiency or a compromise in education quality. Meanwhile, students form varied perceptions of their teachers based on their language use, associating it with traits such as kindness, strictness, or arrogance. These perceptions and judgments often occur without a solid theoretical or empirical basis, leaving both teachers and stakeholders without clear guidance on the most effective practices.

This study focuses on writing skills due to its manageability, as opposed to speaking skills, in exploring the effects of code-switching. Speaking skills require extensive time and resources, making it challenging to control variables such as time of day, presentation order, and peer influence, all of which may impact performance. Additionally, code-switching in speaking can directly influence students' spoken outputs, complicating the evaluation process. In contrast, writing tasks can be conducted simultaneously across groups, minimizing external influences on individual performance. Writing also involves structured stages—pre-writing, drafting, editing, and finalizing—providing ample time for students to gather ideas, revise, and seek support. This extended preparation period allows natural integration of code-switching within the learning process. Furthermore, integrating code-switching from speaking into writing lessons adds a natural dimension

to language instruction, supporting skill integration. Therefore, the study prioritizes writing as the target skill to evaluate the effects of code-switching effectively. This focus aligns with the structured and controllable nature of writing activities, offering reliable insights into the role of code-switching in language learning.

Previous studies on L1 use in L2 classrooms have explored various areas, including the role of L1 (Nation, 2003; Simasiku et al., 2015), the implications of code-switching (Lee, 2012), and L1's effect on supporting students' learning (Al-Adnani & Elyas, 2016; Allen, 2015; Lee, 2010; Spice, 2018). These studies differ from the present research as they focus on different settings, subjects, and designs. In Ethiopia, studies by (Beressa, 2003; Habtamu, 2013; Teklesellassie & Boersma, 2018) have investigated attitudes towards code-switching and L1 use in English classrooms, but they have not addressed whether code-switching has a beneficial or harmful impact on L2 learning, particularly in areas like paragraph writing. Therefore, the primary goal of this research is to provide empirical evidence by assessing the impact of code-switching on students' paragraph writing performance. It focuses on comparing the outcomes of code-switching (CS) and English-only (EO) instruction to determine which approach yields better performance. Additionally, the study seeks to identify which specific aspects of writing—language, structure, idea development, and explicitness—are most influenced by code-switching.

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were tested: the null hypothesis (H_0) stated that there is no difference in paragraph writing performance between students in classes where code-switching (CS) is used and those where only English is used. In contrast, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) proposed that students in classes where code-switching is employed perform better in paragraph writing than those in classes where only English is used.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing is a dynamic and multifaceted process that requires interaction among the text, the writer, and the reader. This interplay demands that writers carefully consider these elements to construct coherent and meaningful texts (Silva & Matsuda, 2002). Recent research highlights the interactive and iterative nature of writing, wherein meaning is co-constructed by the writer's intent and the reader's interpretation, shaped by their prior knowledge (Jiang & Hyland, 2022). In contemporary contexts, the proliferation of digital platforms has further complicated the nature of written communication, requiring adaptability to diverse genres and audience expectations (Zhang & Liao, 2020). Writing is deeply embedded in sociocultural and institutional norms, making it inherently contextual. As Kern (2000) and Hyland (2002) argued, written communication is inseparable from the social, academic, or professional environments in which it is produced. More recent studies affirm that cultural and institutional contexts significantly influence writing conventions and learner outcomes (Guo & Lin, 2021). Moreover, writing is collaborative, often shaped by interactions such as peer reviews, teacher feedback, and group activities, which facilitate knowledge

construction and idea refinement (Storch, 2019). Collaborative writing practices remain a cornerstone of effective pedagogy, enabling learners to co-construct meaning and enhance their writing skills (Ellis, 2019). Despite its importance, writing remains one of the most challenging language skills to master (Alsamadani, 2010). This complexity is compounded in second or foreign language (L2) contexts, where learners must navigate linguistic, cognitive, and cultural barriers. Studies have shown that L2 learners often struggle with grammar, vocabulary, coherence, and idea development, which can impede their ability to produce well-structured texts (Yu & Zhang, 2023; Sahib et al., 2021). Targeted instructional interventions, such as explicit feedback and scaffolding, are critical in addressing these challenges and improving learners' writing proficiency (Andrade, 2019).

2.1 Integrating Language Skills

Language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—are intrinsically linked, with no single skill functioning in isolation. Modern pedagogical approaches advocate for the integration of these skills to create meaningful and authentic learning experiences (Hinkel, 2021). For instance, pre-writing activities, such as brainstorming and group discussions, can help students articulate their ideas orally before translating them into written form (Arficho, 2013). Similarly, exposure to authentic input through listening and reading can enhance learners' understanding of linguistic structures, vocabulary, and text organization, which are critical for developing writing proficiency (Nation, 2020). Studies emphasize the benefits of integrating language skills for writing development. For example, listening to lectures or podcasts can provide models for structuring arguments, while reading diverse texts can familiarize learners with genre-specific conventions (Graham & Perin, 2019). Group work and collaborative discussions, in particular, have been shown to improve writing fluency and coherence by promoting idea generation and reducing cognitive load (Ellis, 2019).

2.2 The Role of Code-Switching in Language Learning

Code-switching (CS) has been a subject of considerable debate in L2 classrooms. Macaro (1997) described the foreign language classroom as a unique environment where learners and teachers often operate in an unfamiliar linguistic and cultural space. This unfamiliarity can create challenges, particularly when teachers adopt an English-only (EO) approach, which may limit students' ability to draw on their L1 as a resource for learning. Recent research has highlighted the potential benefits of CS in supporting language acquisition and classroom management. Spice (2018) found that strategic L1 use, particularly in the early stages of L2 learning, can help clarify complex concepts and reduce learner anxiety. Similarly, Elia et al. (2023) argued that occasional L1 use can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment, especially for learners with limited L2 exposure outside the classroom.

In writing instruction, L1 plays a significant role in facilitating task comprehension and idea development. Nation (2003) noted that allowing learners to discuss tasks in their

L1 before completing them in L2 can enhance their understanding of the content and improve their written output. This is particularly relevant in writing lessons, where students often struggle to organize and articulate their thoughts in a second language. By discussing tasks in their L1, learners can better grasp the task requirements, generate ideas, and familiarize themselves with relevant L2 vocabulary.

2.3 Code-Switching and Writing Performance

Studies examining the impact of CS on writing performance have yielded mixed results. Bakhtiari (2014) found that while CS did not significantly enhance overall learning outcomes, it did facilitate task comprehension and vocabulary retention. In contrast, Garza and Nava (2005) reported that students who employed CS were more successful in bilingual settings, particularly in tasks requiring higher-order cognitive skills, such as writing.

In the Korean context, Lee (2010) found that CS was particularly effective for younger learners, who demonstrated improved vocabulary retention and writing fluency when allowed to switch between L1 and L2. However, the effectiveness of CS tends to diminish as learners become more proficient in L2, suggesting that its utility is context-dependent and may vary based on learners' proficiency levels and task complexity (Spice, 2018). More recent studies have also explored the role of CS in specific aspects of writing, such as coherence, explicitness, and idea development. For example, Sahib et al. (2021) found that students who used CS in pre-writing discussions produced more coherent and well-structured essays compared to those in EO classrooms. Similarly, Yu and Zhang (2023) reported that L1 use during brainstorming sessions helped learners generate more ideas and organize their thoughts more effectively.

2.4 Academic Writing and Code-Switching

Academic writing is characterized by several core features, including structure, coherence, critical engagement, and explicit use of sources (Greetham, 2001; WDC, 2009). These features require learners to not only present their ideas clearly but also support them with evidence and logical reasoning. The integration of CS in writing instruction can support these objectives by allowing learners to scaffold their understanding and focus on higher-order writing skills.

For instance, pre-writing activities conducted in L1 can help learners develop their arguments more thoroughly, while L2 writing tasks can refine their ability to articulate those arguments in the target language. This dual approach enables learners to bridge the gap between their cognitive understanding and linguistic expression, ultimately enhancing the quality of their academic writing (Nation, 2003).

2.5 Implications for Pedagogy

The findings from recent studies underscore the need for a balanced approach to L1 use in L2 classrooms. While excessive reliance on L1 can hinder L2 immersion, strategic and judicious use of CS can provide significant pedagogical benefits, particularly in writing instruction. Teachers should consider incorporating L1 in pre-writing activities,

brainstorming sessions, and task discussions to facilitate comprehension and idea generation. Additionally, CS can be used to provide targeted feedback on writing tasks, helping learners address specific linguistic or conceptual challenges. Generally, code-switching represents a valuable pedagogical tool that, when used strategically, can enhance learners' writing performance and overall language proficiency. As writing continues to be a challenging skill for L2 learners, integrating CS into writing instruction can provide a supportive framework for developing coherence, explicitness, and critical engagement in learners' written work. Future research should further explore the nuanced role of CS across different contexts, proficiency levels, and writing genres to optimize its application in language classrooms.

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Study Design

This research sought to investigate the effect of classroom code-switching (CS) on students' paragraph writing performance through the application of an experimental research design. The independent variable was the instructional method—either English-only (EO) or code-switching (CS)—while the dependent variable was the students' performance in paragraph writing. Given its reliance on numerical data subjected to statistical analysis, the study adopted a predominantly quantitative approach.

3.2 Study Setting

The research was conducted at Wolayta Sodo University, specifically at the Dawro Tercha Campus, situated in the Dawro Zone of the South West Ethiopian Region (SWER). The campus hosts a department dedicated to Dawro Doona (Dawro language), which admits students after their completion of freshman-level courses to pursue specialization in the language. Dawro Doona, also referred to as Dawroothuwa, serves as the principal medium of communication in the local community. It functions as the instructional language for grades one to four and is taught as a subject through grade ten. Moreover, it is employed as the language of instruction in teacher training colleges for first-cycle educators and is studied at the university level, where students can earn a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree (Gabayyo, 1998; FDRE, 1994).

For this study, the "Sophomore English (EnLa 2043)" course, which emphasizes foundational writing skills, was purposefully selected as the focus. This choice allowed the researcher to examine the impact of code-switching on students' paragraph writing performance in an academic context.

3.3 Participants

The study's participants comprised two groups: students specializing in Dawro Doona at Wolayta Sodo University's Dawro Tercha Campus and instructors teaching Writing Skills courses. The Department of English Language and Literature at the campus employed four English language lecturers—two male and two female. Among them, three held Master of Arts (MA) degrees in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), while one had an MA in Linguistics. All four were proficient in Dawro Doona. For the

purposes of this study, the department designated a female lecturer with a TEFL MA degree and a decade of teaching experience to lead both the experimental and control groups. Her selection aimed to minimize potential bias arising from teacher variability, as she was able to manage both groups with consistency aside from the instructional differences.

The student participants included all 68 second-year Dawro Doona students enrolled in the "Sophomore English" course, as no other cohort was undertaking Writing Skills courses during the data collection period. These students had completed their freshman courses within the same section. Following consultations with the campus dean, the academic affairs office, department heads, and the course instructor, the students were divided into two groups for the study. To ensure comparable proficiency levels, a pretest was administered, and the participants were grouped based on their pretest performance.

3.4 Data Collection

Three tools were employed to gather data: a pretest, a posttest, and semi-structured interviews. The pretest assessed the students' initial writing proficiency to establish baseline equivalence between the two groups, eliminating potential pre-existing disparities. A holistic scoring method was used to evaluate the pretest compositions, and the results were organized in Microsoft Excel. Students were then sorted by their pretest scores, with even-numbered students assigned to one group and odd-numbered students to the other. The determination of the experimental and control groups was carried out using a lottery method conducted by the researcher and course instructor. The experimental group received instruction incorporating code-switching, while the control group adhered strictly to English-only instruction.

The posttest was administered after the intervention to evaluate students' progress. Both groups received identical lessons for an academic semester. An analytic scoring method was employed to assess the posttest compositions, using a checklist of 15 criteria: five for paragraph structure, three for idea development, three for clarity, and four for language use. Each criterion was rated on a scale ranging from No Error (4) to Frequent Errors (1). The compositions were scored independently by the researcher and the instructor, and the average scores were used for analysis.

Additionally, interviews were conducted with two selected instructors to gather qualitative data on their perceptions of students' writing performance and the influence of integrating L1 into classroom instruction. These interviews explored the instructors' views on the role of L1 in facilitating student learning and their rationale for incorporating code-switching as part of their pedagogical approach.

3.5 Data Analysis

The study primarily utilized quantitative data, which was analyzed using SPSS version 26. An independent samples t-test was performed to compare the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on the posttest. Further analysis involved comparing mean scores across different writing features to evaluate the relationships between

instructional methods and specific aspects of writing performance. Qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed thematically to provide supplementary insights into the quantitative findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

As the study was of an experimental nature, the participants were divided into two groups: the control group and the experimental group. To determine the composition of these groups and to ensure an equitable baseline, a pre-test was administered, and participants were allocated to the groups according to the pre-test results.

Table 1: The pretest results between groups

Group										
	N	M	SD	SEM	F	Sig	t	df	sig. (2-tailed)	d
English only	33	5.12	1.45	0.25						
					0.012	0.914	-0.065	66	0.948	0.02
Code-Switching	35	5.14	1.29	0.22						

Table 1 presents the mean results of the pre-test scores for the control and experimental groups. The data indicate that the mean scores of both groups were nearly equivalent, suggesting that the pre-test was effective in establishing a baseline of comparability between the two groups prior to the intervention. The slight variations observed in the scores, while minimal, are not unexpected and may result from inherent differences in individual student performance. Such discrepancies are commonplace in experimental research, particularly when participants are randomly assigned to groups. To further enhance the validity of the grouping, the pre-test scores were meticulously arranged in descending order. This systematic approach ensured that students with the highest scores were paired with those with the lowest scores, thereby minimising potential biases that could affect the outcomes of the study. By categorising students based on odd and even numbering, the researchers aimed to achieve a more balanced distribution of abilities across the two groups. Overall, the data depicted in Table 1 support the conclusion that the grouping method employed was effective in establishing a controlled environment for the subsequent phases of the study, thereby contributing to the reliability of the findings.

Table 2: Comparison of PWP on features of writing between groups

Feature of writing	Group										
		N	M	SD	SEM	F	Sig	t	df	sig. (2-tailed)	d
Language	English only	31	2.68	0.67	0.12						
						0.120	0.731	-1.876	62	0.065	0.47

Structure	Code - switching	33	2.98	0.61	0.10						
	English only	31	2.71	.74	.13						
						.201	.655	-.955	62	.343	0.48
Idea Development	Code - switching	33	2.88	.73	.13						
	English only	31	2.49	.53	.09						
						1.229	.272	-2.161	62	.035	0.56
Explicitness	Code switching	33	2.82	.66	.11						
	English only	31	2.54	.60	.11						
						.174	.678	-2.131	62	.037	0.53
	Code-switching	33	2.87	.64	.11						

Table 2 presents a comparison of paragraph writing performance (PWP) between two groups—students taught using English-only instruction and those taught using code-switching. The analysis focuses on four key features of writing: language, structure, idea development, and explicitness. For each feature, the table provides statistical indicators, which assess whether the differences in writing performance between the two groups are statistically significant and meaningful.

The first feature analyzed is *language*, which pertains to students' mastery of vocabulary, grammar, and sentence construction. The English-only group consisted of 31 participants with a mean score of 2.68, a standard deviation (SD) of 0.67, and a standard error of the mean (SEM) of 0.12. Meanwhile, the code-switching group included 33 participants, who achieved a higher mean score of 2.98 with a smaller standard deviation of 0.61 and an SEM of 0.10. Despite the apparent difference in mean scores, statistical analysis reveals that this difference is not statistically significant. The F-value of 0.120 and its associated significance level ($p = 0.731$) indicate that there is no substantial variance between the groups. The independent samples t-test further supports this conclusion, as the t-value (-1.876) is not significant at the conventional threshold ($p = 0.065$, two-tailed). However, the effect size ($d = 0.47$) suggests a medium effect, indicating that the observed difference might have some practical significance even though it lacks statistical significance.

The second feature, *structure*, refers to the organization and coherence of paragraphs, including topic sentences, transitions, and logical flow. The English-only group achieved a mean score of 2.71 (SD = 0.74, SEM = 0.13), while the code-switching group had a slightly higher mean of 2.88 (SD = 0.73, SEM = 0.13). The F-value for variance equality is 0.201 ($p = 0.655$), indicating homogeneity of variances between the groups. The t-test result (-0.955) shows that the difference in mean scores is not statistically significant ($p = 0.343$). Although the effect size ($d = 0.48$) suggests a medium effect, the lack of statistical significance implies that the observed difference may not

necessarily reflect a true effect of instructional method on students' performance in paragraph structure.

The third feature analyzed is *idea development*, which evaluates the depth, clarity, and relevance of ideas expressed in students' paragraphs. The English-only group recorded a mean score of 2.49 (SD = 0.53, SEM = 0.09), while the code-switching group achieved a higher mean score of 2.82 (SD = 0.66, SEM = 0.11). The statistical analysis indicates that this difference is significant. The F-value is 1.229 ($p = 0.272$), suggesting no significant variance in standard deviations between the groups. However, the t-value (-2.161) is statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p = 0.035$, two-tailed), indicating that the code-switching group outperformed the English-only group in idea development. Furthermore, the effect size ($d = 0.56$) reflects a medium to large effect, reinforcing the practical significance of this finding. These results suggest that integrating students' first language through code-switching may have a meaningful positive impact on their ability to generate and develop ideas in their writing.

The final feature, *explicitness*, assesses the clarity and precision of students' writing, particularly in conveying meaning without ambiguity. The English-only group scored an average of 2.54 (SD = 0.60, SEM = 0.11), while the code-switching group performed better, with a mean score of 2.87 (SD = 0.64, SEM = 0.11). The F-value for variance equality is 0.174 ($p = 0.678$), confirming that the variances between the two groups are similar. The t-test result (-2.131) is statistically significant ($p = 0.037$, two-tailed), indicating that the code-switching group significantly outperformed the English-only group in terms of explicitness. The effect size ($d = 0.53$) also demonstrates a medium effect, suggesting that the use of code-switching may facilitate greater precision and clarity in students' writing.

Table 3: Differences in overall PWP between groups

Group	N	M	SD	SEM	F	sig	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)	d
English only	31	2.63	.57	.10						
					.137	.713	-1.791	62	.078	0.46
Code switching	33	2.89	.62	.11						

Table 3 encompasses the computed mean value of all fifteen items which are categorised under features of writing (language, structure, idea development and explicitness) to assess the PWP. It presents a comparison of the overall paragraph writing performance (PWP) between the English-only group and the code-switching group. The English-only group ($N = 31$) had a mean (M) score of 2.63, with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.57 and a standard error of the mean (SEM) of 0.10. The code-switching group ($N = 33$) achieved a higher mean score of 2.89, with an SD of 0.62 and an SEM of 0.11. The F-value of 0.137 and significance level (sig) of 0.713 indicate no significant difference in the variances between the groups. Although the t-test result ($t = -1.791$, $df =$

62) shows a higher mean score for the code-switching group, the two-tailed significance value of 0.078 suggests that the difference in overall PWP between the groups is not statistically significant. The effect size ($d = 0.46$) suggests a small to moderate practical significance, indicating that code-switching had a noticeable but not statistically significant effect on overall writing performance compared to using English only.

As the results from the interview shows, it can be learned that L1 use of the teachers increases classroom participation rate of students, helps teachers know how much the students understand the lesson and make the classroom more convenient to students. Interviewee 1 believed that students generally benefit from L1 use, but how much they benefit depends on the students' learning ability. He claimed that high achievers gain more benefit from code-switching as it increases their understanding on the lesson. The slow learners are also benefited because L1 use at least helps them understand the lesson content.

... it depends on students themselves. For some students especially for high and middle achievers, when you use Dawrotsuwa words for the terms they may not easily understand if not said in their mother tongue, that accelerates their learning. In turn that helps them achieve better. But for shy and slow learners, that may encourage them to expect everything in Dawrotswa. But still at least they understand the lesson when their first language is used (interviewee 1).

Interviewee 2 also shared the same view, but pointed that too much use of L1 should be warned.

From my experience, students perform better when their first language is used in the classroom because they understand the content of the lesson very well when their mother tongue is used. But overuse of the mother tongue makes the classroom Dawro Doona class. So the extent of mother tongue the teacher uses should be noted (interviewee 2).

Interviewee 1 further explained how comfortable the students become when their L1 is used in the classroom and how much that supports students learning saying:

... they are very happy when some concepts are expressed in their first language. You can see this from their face. They also feel confident to ask questions when they don't understand. If you use only English, you see students with dark face may be struggling to understand the lesson, but they don't ask questions, even they don't answer your questions if you don't allow them to use their first language.

However, as Interviewee 2 stated, the extent of L1 use should be seriously tested out in order to avoid the total shift of medium of instruction into L1.

Concerning the effects of code-switching on students' writing performance, Interviewee 2 claimed that code-switching could help students for free writing tasks than for controlled ones.

I think it (code-switching) helps for all, but it may help more for free writing because for controlled writing the words or expressions they supply are more limited, but during free writing, if the students are allowed to gather as much information as possible from the teacher and their peer students and if they ask English words they don't know, I think

they can write better. Generally, even though teachers believed that students would generally benefit from code-switching, the result shows that CS has no statistically significant effect on students' writing performance.

Discussion

This study examined the effect of CS on students' PWP in an English language classroom. A total of 68 students were divided into two groups: one that adhered strictly to EO instruction and another that allowed students to switch to L1 during writing tasks. The findings revealed no statistically significant difference in overall PWP between the two groups. However, the CS group achieved a slightly higher mean score ($M = 2.89$) compared to the EO group ($M = 2.63$), with the difference approaching but not reaching statistical significance ($p = 0.078$). The effect size ($d = 0.46$) indicated a small to moderate practical significance, suggesting that CS may exert a meaningful influence on writing performance despite the lack of statistical significance.

The results demonstrate a consistent trend: the CS group outperformed the EO group across all four features of writing. However, the statistical significance of these differences varied. While the CS group showed statistically significant improvements in Idea Development and Explicitness, the differences in Language and Structure were not significant. Nevertheless, the effect sizes for all features (ranging from 0.47 to 0.56) indicate small to moderate practical significance, suggesting that code-switching holds promise as an instructional strategy for enhancing writing performance. The findings suggest that code-switching may be particularly beneficial for complex cognitive processes like Idea Development and Explicitness, where students must synthesize, organize, and clearly express their thoughts. By allowing students to draw on their first language, code-switching potentially reduces cognitive load and fosters deeper engagement with the writing task. This advantage may explain the significant improvements observed in these features. On the other hand, the lack of significant differences in Language and Structure may reflect the need for a longer intervention period to observe measurable changes. Alternatively, these aspects of writing may rely more heavily on explicit instruction and practice in English, which may not be fully addressed by code-switching alone. The findings are consistent with previous studies (Sahib et al., 2021; Yu and Zhang, 2023) that have explored that CS has a constructive role in specific aspects of writing, such as coherence, explicitness, and idea development.

In conclusion, while CS did not significantly enhance overall PWP, it had a demonstrable positive impact on specific writing elements, particularly idea development and explicitness. These results suggest that CS can serve as a useful strategy for improving certain aspects of writing performance. Nevertheless, its use should be carefully moderated to promote the development of comprehensive writing skills in English. Future research could investigate optimal strategies for incorporating L1 into writing instruction in ways that support, rather than undermine, L2 proficiency.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the data provides valuable insights into the impact of code-switching on students' paragraph writing performance. The results suggest that code-switching can enhance certain features of writing, particularly Idea Development and Explicitness, where statistically significant differences and moderate practical significance were observed. While the differences in Language and Structure were not statistically significant, the moderate effect sizes highlight the potential benefits of code-switching as a complementary instructional approach. These findings have important implications for second-language writing pedagogy. They suggest that incorporating code-switching into classroom instruction can provide linguistic and cognitive support to students, enabling them to perform better in specific areas of writing.

Therefore, educators should consider integrating code-switching into their writing instruction as a strategy to enhance specific writing features, such as explicitness and idea development. Allowing students to draw on their first language may facilitate clearer expression of complex ideas and improve overall writing quality. In addition, instructors should consider a balance between using L1 and promoting English proficiency to ensure that students continue to develop their skills in the target language. Furthermore, future research is encouraged to explore the optimal conditions and contexts in which code-switching can be most beneficial for students' writing performance, as well as its impact on other aspects of language acquisition.

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