

# Literacies in Multiple Languages in Higher Education: A Case Study on How Bi/Multilingual Students Acquire a 'Voice' to Strengthen Their Academic Writing

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**Abstract** Research indicates that regularly bi/multilingual university students lean on their whole language repertoire whilst they may be writing in a language that is not always their home language (L1). Commonly, many university students are writing in a language that is not always their L1 and accordingly they locate methods to express themselves in their second or third language (L2/L3) efficiently. The cognizance of this paper can be at the impact of code-switching on university students at some point of the writing process. This qualitative study was conducted on university students in Switzerland and Brazil, in which they have been requested to finish a written questionnaire in English. The questions addressed in this paper study the variety of students that use their L1 'voice' whilst they may be writing. This paper also looks at the way students use their L1 'voice' when they undertake an extended writing task. An analytical tool regarding andragogy was used to research the facts to recognize the complexities that mature writers go through. Bi/multilingual students believe that once they write in English they think in English, however, the facts advocate this is not always constantly the case. In addition to my findings, it appears that L2 students are continuously borrowing words/phrases from their L1 whilst they may be writing in a language that is not always their L1. The implication of this study is to demonstrate lexical transfer that L2/L3 students make at some stage during their writing and that this should be regarded as the lack of exact

equivalency in their L1 and not a lack of language proficiency. Finally, this study addresses methods whereby bi/multilingual students may want to use their code-switching to help them in their academic writing.

**Keywords** Code-Switching, Multilingualism, Academic Writing, Voice

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## 1. Introduction

Nowadays it has become common at many higher education levels that a student's academic success be determined by their ability to perform well on various academic writing tasks. This determination by the university is due to the fact they want to gauge whether or not scholars can recognize and grasp the route material [1]. Recent studies have centered on second language (L2) writers' use of their home language (L1) for numerous functions, which may include the generation of and organization of ideas for the content and the structuring of the text [2,3]. It has been revealed that L2 writers use their L1 to manipulate the writing process [4,3], as well as allow students to solve linguistic problems such as vocabulary [4]. There are studies that show that less proficient L2 learners may depend more on their L1 than more proficient learners [5,4,3]. Contrary, different

researchers argue that L1 learners' resort to their L1 regardless of their proficiency level, albeit for different reasons [2,6,4,7]. In light of this, I will deal with methods wherein academic writing of multilingual students are affected and the ways that the students' L1 influences their academic writing.

There has been plenty of studies performed at the way that multilingual individuals use their language repertoires when they are engaging in learning tasks [8,9,6] in addition to mechanisms involved in the third language (L3) acquisition [10,8,11,7]. Furthermore, it appears that multilingual students lean on their entire language repertoire when they are writing in a language that is not their L1. Linked to this concept on the usage of language repertoire of multilingual students [12,13] is the perception of language mode. This perception proposes that with the different languages known by the multilingual individual there may be various levels of activation of language repertoire depending on the interlocutor and the context [7].

This study was conducted on university students from Switzerland and Brazil, focusing on the 'language of thought', which refers to the manner students think in one language and write in another. By 'language of thought', I home in on "Cohen's definition of inner speech which is the thinking we do in our minds that is in the form of words rather than images or symbols" [14]. In other words, Cohen's study was based on students' use in their language repertoires in writing. In light of this, studies were carried out on multilingual students and the way they learned English and any other additional languages [7]. In this article, I will look at ways in which 'voice' can be manifested in students writing and the process their ideas revolve around writing [15].

The focal point of this study is on the way code-switching impacts the writing of students when they are writing in a language that is not their L1. Code-switching has been visible as a social, cultural, and linguistic device wherein bilingual students can amalgamate their experiences of "two languages and two cultures into a cohesive whole" [16]. With the usage of code-switching, researchers have been able to decide the complexity and the class of language usage [16]. Code-switching studies has specially centered on conversations in place of writing [17, 18]. In this regard, code-switching will be looked at in ways that consists of use of complete sentences, phrases, and borrowed words from a language" other than the target language [19]. This article will mainly deal with how the students use code-switching in academic writing and the way they use it to bolster their writing to bring their thought process across to the reader.

## 2. Literature Review

Having an English academic voice which has been

described as the 'voice' we discover in writing relying on the "discourse community or preferred research paradigm" that may be linked to two important points [15]. The one being that "(1) multilingual writers have already one writerly voice in their native language" and the alternative being "(2) English academic voice has an extension of their current writing selves" [15]. This study embarks at the process students use their writerly voice and join it to their academic voice in writing.

In an examine performed with the aid of using Elbow [20], where he addresses the 'voice' within the student's writing and refers to it as "a lightning rod that attracts ideological dispute". Elbow makes use of this metaphor to permit writers to set themselves up as having an "authorial presence" or identification in their writing [20]. With this purpose in mind, students are able to establish themselves as writers. When it involves writing, L2/L3 students often have trouble finding their 'voice' in academic writing. The trouble with voice is the reality that L2/L3 student writers ought to learn a way to find a voice in their writing.

Concerning their search for a 'voice' in writing, L2/L3 students are confronted with an undertaking that will become even more daunting whilst English is not always their L1 and that they no longer have the liberty to put in writing the modes operandi they would really like to insert in an educational context. Bi/Multilingual students are conscious that they are expected to write in a certain academic style that is expected of them from their teachers, and this places plenty of strain on them. Educators need to discover a regular technique to educate writing to their L2/L3 students [21]. Grabe & Kaplan [22] observed that for students to find their own 'voice' and for them to develop a 'voice' that is an appropriate academic 'voice' very regularly can be a daunting assignment for the student [22]. In the discussion section of this article, I will showcase the strategies that the students use to carry their 'voice' throughout their writing.

With this purpose in mind, it is believed that once students can develop some 'degree of literacy' in their L2/L3, it is then that they have encounters with 'voice', neither explicitly nor extensively [15]. Tierney [23] factors out that irrespective of 'one's specific theoretical outlook [on voice], the author needs to focus on who will be reading the text. This means that the author needs to focus on the kind of presence that they want with the reader, and it is at this stage that 'voice' plays a huge role [15]. Ivanic [24] provides that there may be a difference between "what the writer is doing" in writing, and "who s/he is being" while writing.

Hence, in academic writing courses, multilingual writers have already gained experience in the process of "being" in writing [5]. However, researchers along with Gale [25] and Shen's [26] with regards to literacy narratives, argue that L2/L3 student's voice can be hindered when they experience complications in the academic voice in English when the teacher is so focused

on surface features in writing.

Cummins [27] described voicing in writing as “a process of continually creating, changing, and understanding the internal and external identities that cast us as writers, within the confines of language, discourse, and culture”. Cummins believes that in this process of ‘voicing in writing’ the student develops their ‘voice’. Implying that once multilingual writers are taught or requested to apply their ‘voice’ they should develop their acquired or established ‘voice’ [15]. Linked to “voicing” is code-switching, and Eldridge [28] argues that “code-switching is a natural and purposeful phenomenon, which enables both communication and learning”.

In addition, Crystal [29] described “code-switching, code-shifting or within-a-language, style-shifting, and code-mixing as “the transfer of linguistic elements from one language into another: a sentence starts in a single language, then makes use of words/phrases or grammatical features belonging to another”. Grosjean [13] argues that code-switching “whether it is a word, phrase, or sentence; is a complete shift to the other language whereas borrowing is a word or a short expression that is tailored phonologically and morphologically to the language being spoken”. Furthermore, Gort [30] defines “code-switching, or the alternation of two languages within a single clause, sentence, or turn” [31], as “a complex, rule-governed use of language” that “offers a unique opportunity for studying some of the more complicated aspects of bilingual speech” [32]. Even though “oral code-switching has been investigated in terms of its linguistic and social dimensions” [33, 34, 35, 36], there is no longer a good deal of research that has been performed within the academic contexts [37]. Ergo, I probe on the modus operandi that the students adopt with code-switching in writing.

It appears that “there are numerous features of code-switching along with submitting “linguist gaps, expressing ethnic identity, and achieving particular discursive aims” [38]. Linked to those features is the fact that code-switching may “be a sign of cultural solidarity or distance, and code selection is the selection of a particular language” [39]. Three types of code-switching have been identified [40]: (1) “extra-sentential code-switching, where a common feature is to add a tag question like “You will be coming on Thursday, right?”; (2) intersentential code-switching, where the switch occurs at clause/sentence boundaries like “I’ll start a sentence in English and finish it in Spanish” and (3) intrasentential code-switching, which occurs within clauses or words by adding a plural ending to a word that has been code-switched: “How are fishes?”. In this study, I observed that students mainly made use of intersentential code-switching where a student will begin the sentence in English, then either end it in their L1 or include words from their L1 in the sentence.

Research indicates that there exists “written texts which

display multilingualism without being embedded in a monolingual matrix” [41]. Meaning that the referred written texts resemble spoken conversation; for instance, code-switching emails, like those extensively discussed by Hinrichs [42], the bilingual letters analyzed by Graedler [43], or the diasporic web forums studied by Androutsopoulos [44,45]. When thinking about these genres, there have been language-alternation observed that have been mentioned as ‘written code-switching’ and it became additionally observed that during those genres many comparable traits as seen in the spoken code-switching [42]. In light of this, code-switching may thus occur subconsciously when people are writing. Hence, I look at the subconscious use of code-switching that the students use in this study.

In a study conducted by Gort in 2012, it was found that younger children find it easier to code-switch at a lexical level than older children [31]. The cause for this is that older children would be able to “manipulate the linguistic codes for a variety of stylistic purposes and situational demands than younger children” [46,47,37]. The older children would use “code-switching to convey the intended meaning more accurately” [48, 37]. Today, code-switching is referred to as a shifting from side to side among 2nd or 3rd spoken languages, and although it is a sizable phenomenon in bilingual speech; it has grown to be a “hot” subject matter globally [49, 50]. However, in this study I exhibit the process in which the student has a similar back and forth movement between languages in their writing.

It is not clear when precisely code-switching takes place in speaking or writing. The assumption has been made that it happens on the lexical stage whilst the speaker or creator cannot effortlessly consider a phrase in his language and consequently makes use of a lexical object from every other language [51]. Various solutions have been proposed to this query for instance: “Gumperz “says it is a change within a single speech event” and McClure claims that it happens at “the major constituent boundary”; Hymes argues that it occurs “when the situation demands” [51]. When brooding about in this query of when precisely code-switching happens within the writing of L2/L3 student; I intend to unpack this query in more detail in my findings and discussion section in this article.

### 3. This Study

This is a qualitative study that was conducted at four universities in Switzerland and one university in Brazil. The students from these five universities had to complete a questionnaire in writing. In this study, I view my facts as an analytical tool, wherein I attempt to recognize the complexities that mature writers go through when they are faced with difficulties in writing as well as when they

have to transition from their L1 to L2 and from one writing identity to another. With this purpose in mind, I used an andragogy model wherein a “natural maturation within individuals may be viewed in which they move from dependency to ever-increasing self-directedness” [68]. By the usage of this model, the student becomes directed about their lack of proficiency in L2/L3. With this andragogy model, I am willing to trust that it assists an understanding “education as a process of developing increased competencies” [68]. I intend to expose how voice can also additionally be affected in L2/L3 student’s writing and the “struggles of multilingual writers” [16].

In Switzerland, the students were from various faculties e.g. engineering, science, education, law, and in Brazil, the students were studying to become English teachers from the education faculty. I paraphrased the direct wording (verbatim) of the students from Brazil and Switzerland. In both countries, the students had to write their responses in English. In Brazil, there were 60 participants and in Switzerland, there were 60 participants. The participants from Switzerland had various home languages consisting of Swiss German, French, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Estonian, Serbian, Vietnamese, German, Urdu, Turkish, Laos, Luxembourg, Dutch. In Brazil, the home language of the students were Brazilian Portuguese. For this study, I embarked on the following aspects which was the way that the home language affected the writing of L1 students as well as the challenges that L1 students face when they are writing in a language that is not their L1. Finally, I looked at the code-switching patterns that were identified in their writing.

Ethical clearance to conduct this study was not necessary during the collection of data, however, permission was given from all the universities. Trustworthiness was in place as I never mentioned the names of the participants. An open-ended questionnaire was developed and used with the intended dual purpose of extracting information about participants’ language backgrounds. In this case study, I mention the language that was the student’s home language and how they used their L1 when writing. The questionnaire was also used to establish what they regarded as good writing and why it was important to write well. All the students were given oral information before the completion of the questionnaire. I acknowledge that not all the students understood the questionnaire given to them as some of them could not comprehend the question about the way they use their L1 when they are writing. Below I insert the questionnaire that was handed to the students. For this study, I do not focus on all the questions in the questionnaire, but mainly on questions 1 and 5. My reasoning for only choosing those two questions for this article was because of the answers that I needed where I could best demonstrate code-switching. I also had to consider the word count in this article and thus could not

include too much data, but rather focus on bringing my findings across.

**Table 1.** Questionnaire that was given to the students.

Question number	Questions	Answers
	How do you use your home language when you write?	
	What is good writing?	
	Why is it important to develop that ability?	
	When does writing in English or any other language that is not your home language become a challenge?	
	When does writing become challenging for you in your home language?	

Even though the use of a questionnaire may provide the collection of relatively large amounts of data, there is a drawback of questionnaires in that it provides self-reported information only [52]. It was not always clear to me when the student’s questionnaire responses coincided with the actual use of their L1. In addition, students may have provided answers that they believed were the responses that I was expecting, or they lazily completed the questionnaire, meaning that some of the students were not very motivated to complete the questionnaire. Furthermore, the questions used in the questionnaire affect participants’ answers [7]. This will be demonstrated in the findings and discussion section. Some students were eager to participate in the study and found the questions challenging because this was the first time someone had asked them questions about the way they use their home language when they are writing.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

As mentioned in my introduction section, I will now focus on my findings in which I will deal with methods wherein the academic writing of multilingual students are affected and the way that the student’s L1 influenced their academic writing. In addition, this study focuses on the usage of language repertoire of multilingual students’ [12,13] “notion of language mode” where the different languages that the multilingual individual knew were used at “different levels of activation depending on the interlocutor and the context” [7]. In addition, I will deal with the way the student used code-switching in academic writing and the manner they used code-switching to bolster their writing to carry their thought process across to the reader.

I agree with Johansson [41] when she states that “when learning a language, it is important not only to learn isolated areas of a second language (L2) but to be able to use those areas simultaneously when talking, reading, writing, or listening in your second language” [53].

One of the questions in my questionnaire was whether the student used their home language when they were writing in a language that is not their home language.

**Table 2.** How do you use your home language when you write?

Switzerland		Brazil	
Yes	No	Yes	No
54	6	54	6

When searching through the responses of the students in table 2 above, we note that 90% of the students of both countries acknowledged saying that they do use their L1 when they are writing and only 10% of the students believe that they are not using their L1 when they are writing. It is at this juncture concerning the 10% of students who believe that they are not using their L1 when they are writing in a language that is not their L1, I am inclined to believe that these 6 students are using their L1 subconsciously. My findings advocate that the identical student who wrote that they are not using their L1 when they are writing in English would then write how they used their L1 when they are writing in English. The examples I have decided on to illustrate my inclination are as follows. The first instance is from a student in Brazil in which the student mentions that they do not usually use their home language when they write in English. This same student also wrote, that when they use their home language, they do it to organize their thoughts and think clearly about the topic. Another example of this is seen in an excerpt from a Swiss student who mentions that English and German are very similar and that sometimes the words are pretty much the same or they sound similar. We know that this assumption of the student is not a reality and that there is a difference between written English and German. For example, there is a difference in grammar, spelling, and syntax (etc) in the two languages. Another example from a Swiss student who claimed that when they write in English they think in English. As such, the student claims that they usually think in English when they write a text and include the missing words in German and then search for the German word (dictionary) later. There is some kind of contradiction on the part of the student in that this same student mentions that they fill in the missing words in German and then searches for the English word in the dictionary. It is at this juncture that code-switching is taking place and the student is not aware of this. Meaning that the student thinks it is 'normal' to write an academic text in English and include their L1. Here we see a clear demonstration of how the student used code-switching when they include a German word while writing in English and later looked up the German word in English. From my data, students who made similar claims that they think in English when they write in English also mentioned that they would write the word in their L1, then look up the word in the dictionary/google translate.

My observation from my data was that regularly

students might “code-switching purposefully and responsibly” for a selected cause on the way to help them in growing information in their L2/L3 [54]. Hence, what they already recognise and experienced in their L2/L3 formal and casual methods of speaking and meaning making permits the student to express themselves better in academic writing.

Gort [31] argues that “code-switching is simply a sign of communicative incompetence or lack of proficiency in one or both languages” [55, 37]. Contrary to what Gort claims, code-switching is a method for the student to realise what they need to carry throughout their writing to the reader and that accordingly they need to employ their previous information and studies to make sense officially or informally.

Students “use multiple types of code-switching to express themselves in writing concerning phonics, syntax, concepts, rhetorical structures, and lexical items” [56]. When using these multiple strategies, students’ may be viewed as lacking proficiency in writing (particularly in English) [56]. During the process of code-switching, the student is concurrently residing and negotiating worlds that are represented with the aid of distinct languages [56]. In light of this, the student will make use of multiple cross-language strategies to express themselves in writing. I only chose a few examples of how the student demonstrates code-switching in writing from the two countries. The quotations to bring my points across have been written in statement form from the students.

The first excerpt is from a student in Brazil where they mention that sometimes they write some ideas in Brazilian Portuguese before writing them in another language. They also mention that they will start to think of the entire text in their home language (Brazilian Portuguese) and then they will make the translation in their mind (from Brazilian Portuguese to English).

In this example, we see how a student demonstrates cross-language, linked to code-switching. Very often this is the case when students are writing in a language that is not their L1, where they need to make a connection that makes sense to them. What this implies is that they are trying to grasp what they want to say in a language that is not their L1. Thus, they will first write the text in their L1, then translate it into the L2/L3. Even though this is a time-consuming process the student does not mind. This process posits that the student feels comfortable writing in their L1 first and then translates their writing to their L2/L3.

The second excerpt is another example of code-switching in an answer given by a student in Brazil where they tend to use academic language when writing. What you cannot see is that the student wrote a poorly structured sentence in English, but a better-structured sentence in English would have read: “I tend to use academic language when writing”. The student used the word “academia” instead of the word “academic” without

being aware that they wrote the word in Portuguese. This is often the case that a student is not even aware that they might be writing a word in their L1 as there are similarities in the spelling of the word. This excerpt reveals that there is a connection between word meanings in two different languages. This excerpt additionally demonstrates that definitely, the student had a concept of the spelling of the word in English or that they knew that there has been a comparable spelling of the word in Brazilian Portuguese, accordingly, simply blanketed their L1 spelling of the word. During code-switching in writing, this would often occur in a student's writing and may be linked to their academic voice coming through. Meaning that the student does not bother to look up the correct spelling of the word and just include the word the best way they know how to spell it in their L1.

In excerpt three the Brazilian student wrote that they always try to write in their target language, but when they want to explain a very specific thing, they revert to expressions in their L1. They then search for the words in their target language to see if there are any corresponding expressions. In this excerpt the student attempts to write in the target language, however, they are aware that they will lean on their L1 because they feel they can express themselves better in their L1. While writing down their answer the student includes a Brazilian Portuguese word as they did not know the English word for "will go to" not knowing that this phrase is quite similar to "search". Meaning that the student wrote the Brazilian Portuguese word for "will go to" and wrote the word "search" next to it. It is good that the student is trying to link the Brazilian Portuguese phrase to see if it makes sense or exists in English. When the student does this, their academic 'voice' comes through in that the student assumed that the teacher would understand what they are trying to say and thus inserted a Brazilian Portuguese word. In addition, the student did not even bother looking up the word in the English/Brazilian Portuguese dictionary. As teachers we observe that students would paraphrase a word because they know that in English there are quite a lot of synonyms of a word. It is when the student is pressed for time, and they do not know the proper English word that they resort to paraphrasing a word in their L2/L3. This one often sees during exams when the student must complete the exam paper in a given amount of time.

In an excerpt from a Swiss student, the student mentions that it is challenging to write in their L2 because it is a long process and that it can be frustrating. In addition, the student mentions that they took their time to develop this skill of writing and that they are anxious that what they have written in English is not good enough. Furthermore, the student compares their written texts with their L1 and L2 level and realizes that they do not have the same level/proficiency in their L1. This student intended to say that they find writing in English challenging and thus expresses frustration when

translating words. The student goes to the extreme to make sure that their L1 is on the same level as their L2. With practice, an L2/L3 speaker may be able to write on the level of an L1. It occurs regularly among students where they put pressure on themselves to make sure that their writing is on par with their L1 in academic writing and this may cause frustration when they are writing in their L2/L3. In addition, at times an L1 student will develop a dislike towards L2/L3 because they have put so much pressure on themselves to make sure that their L2/L3 writing is on par as their L1.

In the second excerpt from a Swiss student, the student describes the content in English as being complex and that good writing does not necessarily mean that the use of various foreign words will make the sentence good. The student believes that there needs to be a formal structure and a thread connecting ideas to be justified as good writing. The Swiss student makes use of German words in their answer. The student did not even bother writing the translation of the word. This is another example of code-switching taking place in writing. The student knew that the teacher understood German, thus never bothered looking up the meaning of the word in English. However, the student got their points across, which was that there needs to be a formal structure and a thread connecting ideas in writing. Indeed, what the student must bring across to the reader in writing needs to make sense.

In the third excerpt from a Swiss student, the student mentions that Swiss German is not a written language, and that no emphasis is placed on spelling or orthography in Swiss German. The student had demonstrated that code-switching occurred in their response to the question. To some extent, the student showed some sense of relief that they could include words from their L1 when answering the questionnaire. Swiss German is not a written language, but rather a spoken language and thus the student referred to Swiss German as having no grammar or punctuation, and as educators, we need to take recognition of the reality that there are a few languages like Swiss German that is specially a spoken language and not a written language. Thus, we need to develop some sensitivity towards students whose L1 is a language that is not written and mainly a spoken language.

I noticed that from the Swiss students' their 'voice' came through strongly in their writing. Implying that if the student never knew the word in English, they would write the word in German assuming the teacher will understand. There is a sturdy feel of identification in their writing in that the student refers back to the manner they write in Swiss German. In a language such as Swiss German that is mainly a spoken language and not a formal written language, writing in a language that is not their L1 may present itself as more challenging. Some Swiss students will have to make sense of what they are reading in Swiss German, then translate it to German, then try to make a connection in English. The Brazilian students do

not have such a complex route to take. They just translate the words/sentences from Brazilian Portuguese to English.

What we see taking place regularly in code-switching are loanwords and according to Montes-Alcala [57], “many examples were found when code-switching was employed due to the so-called lexical need”. My understanding is that there is a constant borrowing of words from their L1 that students endeavour to use when they are writing in a language that is not their L1. We have seen this taking place in the excerpts provided above when both the Brazilian and Swiss students inserted either a Brazilian Portuguese word or a German word to bring their point across. In light of this, it appears that every lexical switch fulfils a need that a student may require when they are writing in an L2/L3. I surmise that we should not view this as a “lack of language proficiency”, but rather view this lexical switch “as the lack of an exact equivalent in the other language” [57]. We noticed from the one Swiss student’s response, they intended to make sure that their L2 was on par with their L1, which realistically is possible with practice. In addition, Montes-Alcala [57] found that “other explanations in the literature include a momentary gap in the lexicon of the individual, a matter of language choice due to the association of an item to a particular language or culture, or simply a higher frequency of exposure to an item in a specific language”. This implies that depending on the exposure that a student has to their L2/L3 there is the possibility there is not a huge lexicon gap for the individual. We notice this when the Brazilian student included the word “academia” instead of writing “academic” in the sentence. These two words are very closely linked and allow the student to develop their academic voice. Closing of the lexicon gap is possible, depending on the amount of effort and work the student invests to close that gap in the lexicon between the (L1 and L2) languages. From a pedagogical perspective, as educators, we need to allow students to include words that are spelled similarly to the L2/L3 and not deduct marks when they do not spell a word correctly.

## 5. Conclusions

Nowadays, spoken code-switching is used as part of a real coaching method. When code-switching is used in the classroom the teacher is aware of the language of the student and the capacity of using code-switching whether in writing or speaking. I argue that “code-switching is vital for the classroom if the teacher and the student have the identical language and should be regarded as a natural part of bi/multilingual behavior” [39]. As referred to earlier, we have to permit students to insert a word/phrase from their L1 when the lexical gap is not that huge compared to that of the L2/L3 word.

Regarding my first research question which deals with

the manner that the student’s L1 impacts their writing in L2/L3. Code-switching is very common among English L2 speakers, whether it is “one word, one phrase, or even one sentence” [39]. As referred to within the literature review, code-switching has two functions of a language that is “to construct or affirm one’s identity position and to make sense of the world” [9, 58, 59]. These two functions are seen within the excerpts from both the Brazilian and Swiss students. One student mentioned that in Swiss German there are no rules in the language and that makes learning another language a challenge. Which supposed that they find their language easier to comprehend unlike, English that has many grammatical or punctuation rules to the language. The Brazilian student additionally desired to ensure that the terms that they recognize or use in Brazilian Portuguese corresponds with terms in English. This might be interpreted as the student’s academic voice in that they wanted to make sure that what they wrote in English made sense in Brazilian Portuguese.

When considering my second research question which refers to the challenges of writing. Code-switching plays a vital role and teachers should be more lenient when students code-switch in their writing. Challenges of writing for L2/L3 students at times will be when they have to translate what they want to write from their L1 to their L2/L3. Gort [31] advises that is probably useful to have a “writing-related talk as a method of communicating ideas, a vital supply of language and literacy studying and an enactment of cognitive activity” [60]. Writing-related talk is associated with young children when they talk to themselves or others as they attempt to understand the language [31]. In this context “writing-related talk serves an executive function through which children can formulate a plan for what they might write next, rehearse ideas for writing [61], and evaluate what they have written” [62]. In this article, we see that even though Gort’s study 2012 was conducted on children, the same applies to adult students during code-switching. Implying that, the student would say that they would plan what they need to put in writing, then they would rehearse their ideas in their minds before they start writing and eventually, they will evaluate what they have written. In addition, it is at this juncture as Hymes argues, code-switching occurs when the situation demands it. This was seen with the student from Brazil would go through the above-referred to process Gort refers to when he states: *At first, I start thinking the entire text in my home language, then I try to make a translation in my mind. We note a technique that the student use to ensure that their wording comes out efficiently on paper.*

My third research question which deals with the code-switching patterns in writing. We observed that some of the students mention their cognitive techniques that they might use once they write their ideas in their L1 or they might attempt to write it in their target language

then revert to their L1. What students need to understand is that code-switching is a vital device for second or third-language speakers of the language [53]. Code-switching can help L2/L3 students in making sense of the work in front of them. They will now no longer have a lot of strain on them in the event that they permit themselves to apply their L1 to help them with their writing. Students should permit themselves time to perfect the art of writing in a language that is not their L1. What bi/multilingual student no longer comprehend is that having an L1 which is not the medium of practice is to their advantage and that they have this possibility to first consider the way they will say or write something in their L1 and then translate it in their L2/L3. Monolingual students do not have the luxury of leaning on another language when they do not know how best to express themselves in academic writing. I agree with Cook [53] when she states that “letting students use their L1 allows them to say what they genuinely wish to say”. My understanding is that students’ L1 should be regarded as a resource rather than a barrier. When students use their L1 as a resource they will find themselves having a more “authentic way” of the usage of their target language [53]. We need to preserve in thoughts that the English language is continuously being advanced and new words are continuously being introduced and as educators perhaps we have to allow students to apply phrases from their L1 that is comparable or related to the English word. We have become so strict in wanting the students to write the “proper” English word that we do not make room for mistakes, yet as teachers, we need to allow students to make room for mistakes (writing of words in their L1). By doing this, the student might no longer place a lot of strain on themselves to be perfect in the written instructional English as demonstrated by the Swiss student when they state that: *It takes time to develop this skill (academic writing) and I'm very anxious*. What we can do is maybe consider writing the best spelling of the word when we give the student feedback, and no longer mark them down for the incorrect spelling of the word.

For teachers to accept such practices (marking a student down for spelling) can be visible as a vital evil and a deviation from a monolingual ideal and a source of conflict and tension” [63, 64, 65]. Contrary to this view, Sobahle [52] argues that “it has also been established that students have both social and linguistic reasons for code-switching”. Furthermore, it appears that when two languages come into contact with one another, there is bound to be some kind of change occurring in both languages [52]. However, a good deal of studies on classroom code-switching [66] has concluded that code-switching “practices, although largely unplanned, are highly functional in supporting epistemic access for classroom management and affective purposes, including reducing the tensions and alienation of learning through the medium of a strange language” [67].

When pondering on my findings, I argue that code-switching is “a legitimate strategy amongst knowledgeable bi/multilinguals to communicate in writing” [59]. In addition, I argue that “those individuals who normally code-switch when speaking will do so when writing” [59]. This in turn is how the students ‘voice’ will come across in their academic writing. Implying that the ‘voice’ of the student will come through when they will either write the phrase/word in their L1, then revert to L2/L3 after completing the task. At instances, the student may even write the word/phrase in their L1 since they recognise that the word in the L2/L3 is spelled the same way and this process also leaves room for ‘voice’ in academic writing. The intention here is that the student brings their point across so that it makes sense to the teacher.

From my findings, I advocate that there should be more research conducted on code-switching in academic writing at the higher education level. Furthermore, I additionally advocate that during our language teaching classrooms teachers should focus more on assisting the students to make sure the student’s sentences make sense and provide room for code-switching especially if the teacher has the same/similar L1 as the student. My final thoughts are that regardless of a student’s L1, teachers should focus on providing all students with “knowledge and skills to contribute to the global society” [40]. In addition, the teacher should not only “identify and develop mastery of certain instructional strategies and behaviours accepted as effective practices, but also develop the ability to effectively match these strategies and behaviours, at the appropriate time, to individual students and student groups, in specific teaching situations as these relate to the teacher’s desired student learning outcomes” [69]. When the teacher permits this, the student will no longer increase tension in the direction of writing in a language that is not their L1.

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