

Code-switching in Intercultural Communication and English Language Teaching

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ABSTRACT

Code-switching is the interplay between two languages. Code-switching happens when the speakers switch between two or more languages or linguistic varieties in the context of a particular discussion or conversation. Many people engage in code-switching or mixing practises by speaking a different language and their mother tongue when talking with other individuals who comprehend various languages. There are multiple reasons why people tend to code-switch during interaction with others. One important reason is that people consciously and unconsciously code-switch because they want to fit in. Code-switching is also implied in the language teaching context, where L2 learners cod switching between their mother tongue and the other language to get involved in the learning process. The practice of code-switching in Foreign language classroom has been examined thoroughly in the literature. This paper will introduce the concept of code-switching, its types and the reasons for code-switching. It will offer some implication of code-switching in English as a second or foreign language (EFL) classroom.

Keywords: code-switching; intercultural Communication; English language teaching; implications

INTRODUCTION

There is an ongoing phenomenon of globalisation in countries that have not already undergone the process, and it will continue into the future. The phenomenon has meant that countries which were conventionally monolingual, such as Korea, China, and Saudi Arabia, are now bilingual as a result of globalisation. It is common for people in these bilingual countries to use mixed language, switching between two different languages in normal speech. It is crucial to examine this phenomenon, known as code-switching, in order to better comprehend this process used in bilingualism. This paper aims to investigate the use of code-switching in a sociocultural setting. The reasons, type, and definition of code-switching will be investigated, to further understand the reasons for code-switching in intercultural communication and in English language teaching (ELT).

THE CONCEPT OF CODE-SWITCHING

In counties and communities that use bilingual speech, code-switching utilises the linguistic codes of both languages. According to this definition (Clyne, 1987), code-switching happens when a speaker or a writer changes from one language to another, an occurrence that is common in interpersonal communication. It can be adapted in many forms, in which one speaker, called the recipient, can reply in a different language to that of the original

communicator. In this instance, the recipient has carried out the code-switching. In another variant, the speaker who involves in the conversation may switch to another language in the middle of the conversation. This can even be carried out mid-sentence. Additionally, code-switching involves the retention of the same topic during code-changing Vogt (1954). Overall, this procedure often signifies solidarity between the speakers, a unison of informality, and is commonly used in bilingual and multilingual communities.

Code-switching has been examined from both a sociolinguistic and structural viewpoint. In a sociolinguistic context, it can be considered a discourse phenomenon. These types of studies have focused on where meaning is created by code-switching and the context of its functions (Poplack, 1980). In contrast, structural studies of code-switching concentrate more on the grammatical issues, such as the morphosyntactic rules of formation (Poplack, 1980). A number of language aspects are concerned with code-mixing, including morphology, grammatical structures, phonology, and lexical items. Code mixing in conversational speech is one of the most commonly noted forms of language change. Code mixing is different from code-switching. Bakamba (1988) makes a clear distinction between them. He defined code-switching as inserting or mixing terms, sentences, and phrases from two languages in the same conversation. In contrast, code mixing is the inserting or mixing of multiple linguistic units, such as phrases, clauses, words and affixes from two different linguistic structures or components in the same phrase and speech situation. Code-mixing explains the situation where lexical elements and grammar characteristics from two languages appear in one sentence (Bakamba, 1988). It can happen in turns of conversation between speakers or in a single turn of the speaker. The following is an example of code mixing between Indonesian and English; it is adapted from Hanafiah, Rantika, Yusuf (2018, p.1)

- S1: I don't *ukmin* with you.
- S2: Why?
- S3: Because you always *kajib* (lie) with me

The example above highlights that in word-level code-mixing occurs in which student 1 (S1) uses the word *Kajib* (lie) in the utterance.

Replacing a word or phrase in another language is merely an act of borrowing. These can be words that have been transposed from one language to another. Therefore, they become part of the speaker's native language. In Arabic, for example, words not otherwise in the vocabulary, called loan words, have been taken directly from English: plastic, tennis, and automatic. Phonetically, loan words can be enunciated in the sound style of the originating language or can be adapted to the sound of the hosting language (Poplack, 1980).

Gumperz (1982) observes that there has been extensive structural and functional-based analysis of code-switching over the past 20 years. This evaluation of code-switching can be considered as the somewhat arbitrary use of two languages within a sentence or discourse (Poplack, 1980). Valdes-Fallis (1978, p.72) describes it as 'the alternation of two languages at the word, phrase, clause, or sentence levels.' This is supported by Gardner-Chloros (2009, p. 4), who cites it as a combination of a number of languages or dialects used in a sentence or conversation by bilingual people. Valdes-Fallis also clarifies it against 'interferences,' or code-mixing, where a transfer is merely made from one language to another, as a linguistic

component, into the grammar or syntax of the other language. Two languages are shifted within a single sentence, speech or constituent is Vogt's (1954) definition of code-switching, where he supposes that it is a common, natural practice. Furthermore, he considers that all languages, but not necessarily all language users, have some form of contact with other languages. Proximity is an important factor affecting this language change.

Code-switching not only occurs between two languages, but also between two varieties of a language. Footing, as Erving Goffman (1979) describes, is as a process similar to some aspects of code-switching. Goffman maintains that his definition compared to that of Gumperz and others has a formal difference. Footing can be carried out in a variety of manners, whereas code-shifting, according to Goffman, involves a shift from one language to another. Additionally, 'diglossia' is a term generally referring to language sorting, in which the common language has a 'high' and a 'low' (colloquial) variety, such as Arabic. For instance, Shaaban (1978) observes that research has been conducted on the switch between formal Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, and vernacular varieties of the language. In this situation, social prestige is a factor for consideration in the form and style used (Abd-el-Jawad, 1987).

Overall, Bloom and Gumperz (1972) have identified two types of code-switching. Conversational (metaphorical) code-switching occurs when a speaker's attitude towards a particular subject of conversation is influenced. This depends on the varieties of the two languages used in a particular social environment. For example, when an English language teacher discusses and explains religious topics to Arabic learners whose first language is Arabic, she switches to Arabic to explain and clarify the subject, as Arabic is more suitable in this situation. The setting (classroom), the social group (Arabic learners) and the topic (religion) influence the teacher to switch to another language (Arabic) in this situation.

Situational code-switching occurs when a speaker expresses their consideration towards the recipient. The situation is determined by the recipients, their setting, and the subject, which may restrict the verbal choices in the structure or meaning. Situational code-switching can occur in a community administration office, where initial greetings are spoken in a local dialect, after which speakers switch to standard language for further discussion.

Another instance of situational code-switching is exemplified by my son. He speaks both Saudi and Egyptian Arabic, as well as English. Most of his schoolmates are Egyptian, although there are a few Saudi Arabians. When he communicates with the main group, he shifts to the Egyptian variety to show solidarity, which makes him able to communicate effectively. However, when he talks with his Saudi friends, he changes to the Saudi Arabian variety. The difference between Saudi and Egyptian culture, coupled with the lack of linguistic resources, force him to switch from Arabic to English.

In particular social situations, a choice of linguistic forms may be better suited to the occasion, resulting in situational code-switching. For example, people working together in workshops in a coffee shop communicate in one manner, whereas teachers in a public school use an entirely different language form. In contrast, different social events may result in participants being subjected to a shift of subject, although the settings remain unaltered. For instance, Norwegian teachers have reported that they treat lectures and discussions within the same class setting as separate events. They will deliver lectures in the standard Bokmål, but later shift to the regional

Ranamāl to encourage students to participate in debates. According to Bloom and Gumperz (p. 424), this form of code-switching is also situational switching, where a changed social setting leads to a change in linguistic form.

In general, code-switching is defined as an occurrence involving two or more languages. Nevertheless, Gumperz's application of situational and metaphorical code-switching lacks distinction, according to Auer (1984). He argues this application is less clearly defined than some scholars have accepted, and he has disagreed with the distinction. A study of Italian migrant children in Germany, conducted by Auer, found little connection between the language used and the topic. From this, he deduced that code-switching was 'embedded in the sequential development of the conversation' and was neither semantic nor resulting from the meaning of the languages used (1984, p. 93).

REASONS AND MOTIVATION FOR CODE-SWITCHING

The general public typically considered that code-switching signifies a lack of language knowledge among bilingual speakers. However, according to Shin (2010), an alternative line of research argues that bilingual speakers utilise code-switching to achieve specific communication objectives. His process can be summarised as social, linguistic, and psychological motivations. Of these social motivations are the priority for code-switching. This arises when the speaker senses a social difference between themselves and the audience which leads to certain language being used in some circumstances (Shin,2010).

Speakers employ and use communicative codes with other language users to affect linguistic or paralinguistic connections. Therefore, listeners employ their own codes to comprehend the communication they receive. At times, this necessitates a consideration change to achieve a practical understanding of the speaker's intention. This consideration change is a two-way adaption, in which the speaker may need to change the style of their presentation to give notice of a situational change. This could be a difference in the suitability of the social roles or an alternative system to understand the content of a conversation. Code-switching allows interconnectivity for the users to appraise the communication by language users.

Examination of the reasons for code-switching, conducted by Grosjean (1982), indicates that it is used when bilinguals are unable to find the appropriate word or expression when mixing two languages. Superimposed upon this are the effects of the situation—the message, attitudes, emotions, and interlocutors, all of which add to its usage. In addition, Grosjean (1982) observes that code-switching can be used in quoting someone else's words. In Arabic, speakers tend to code-switch to quote someone else's speech and when citing a proverb, according to a study conducted by Alhourani (2018,p.14). An example of a switch from Arabic to English, adapted from this study, would be 'Sultan: *Almoshrefhkali* (my doctor told me)' (*I have to search for an academic reason for the companies which do not have any relationship*). Another example of code-switching with a proverb would be 'some people used to postpone doing their work and they ended up wasting their time without achieving anything. The Arabic proverb is لا تؤجل عملك الى الغد (do not postpone today's work to tomorrow)'.

Furthermore, conversation subject matter leads to code-switching. According to Grosjean (1982), in certain circumstances, discussing a particular topic in a community will lead to its members code-switch automatically. For example, Koreans who are bilingual in English, will

revert to Korean when they are speaking of their homeland experiences or discussing Korean society. There may be an occasion when one particular language is chosen for a specific topic. That is certain subjects are best handled in a language that encompasses specific terms, or where it would seem unsuitable to speak of the subject in a language other than the one chosen. The supposition is that some subjects, more so than others, lead bilinguals to code-switch. A Kurdish-Arabic bilingual speaker, in a discussion on code-switching with Grosjean (1982), reflected that he mixed languages when discussing certain specialised subjects, such as science and politics, particularly when using nouns.

In group discussions, code-switching may be used to address a person, changing to the natural language of the recipient, in order to emphasise to whom a comment is being addressed. It can also be used when speaking of past events, or when emphasising or qualifying a point that has been mentioned already. The language chosen can depend on a number of factors, such as the participants, their background, and the relationship between them and the speaker. As Bhatia and Ritchie (2004) observe, the topic, its content, and the location where the dialogue is taking place all contribute to the language choice.

Code-switching may play a part in certain circumstances where there is a need to alleviate refusals. It may also be a preferred means to restore or emphasise unwelcome answers. For instance, using different language to show refusal or criticize someone is sometimes considered an appropriate way. Moreover, Li Wei (1998) conducted empirical studies on code-switching's effect on the ensuing conversation, in terms of speaker identity, the situation, and background considerations. He reveals that speakers show positive attitude when they code switch between L1 and L2. Moreover, Abdelbadie (2003) conducted a study on the effects of code-switching among groups of different Arabic speakers. The respondents had all lived in the United States and spoke English, but their Arabic was varied, as they were from various countries: Egypt, Sudan, Morocco, and Jordan. In conversation, it was noted that they code-switched depending on the subjects under discussion and the context of the situation. It is evident that code-switching occurs consciously when people are in a particular situation, and it depends on with whom they are conversing and regarding which specific subjects.

CODE-SWITCHING IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

The second part of this paper examines the teaching aspects and the implications of code-switching in a classroom setting, with English as a second or foreign language. The ever-increasing requirement for English to be learnt as a language of communication has increased the number of bilingual learners. The expansion of mixed languages in the learning environment is now a common occurrence and has led to increased examination of bilingualism. Consequently, learners use a combination of at least two linguistic types in bilingual classrooms which has resulted in increased code-switching. Lin (2008) defines classroom code-switching as teachers or students utilising one or more language codes. Reverting to Gumperz (1982) and his concept of conversational or situational switching, classroom code-switching would be related to situational code-switching.

Unlike code-switching in normal conversation, the type of school activity students and teachers are working on influences their application of classroom code-switching. The education environment is where students and teachers undertake different roles in language training, the one to learn, the other to teach. Therefore, according to Simon (2001, p. 316), studying English

as a second or foreign language adopts a different perspective in the form of the communication involved and the employment of the first language (L1).

In the language classroom, code-switching occurs for several reasons, including social and educational (Wigglesworth, 2003). Students may seek to learn as a group to advancing the social application. Utilising L1 as a catalyst in learning the second language is a natural process, whereby the shared language can be used to ameliorate the learning process of L2. Otherwise, using only L2 might restrict the learning process and development. Learners will endeavour to assist one another in the L2 learning process and are likely to use L1 as a means of understanding and convenience. When learners alternate between languages, the objective in learning process will achieve such as solving problems, providing mutual support.

Researchers and scholars disagree as to the value of code-switching in the English language classroom. A study conducted among Arab learners established that code-switching is used during lessons in second language classrooms at both the beginner and intermediate stages (Larbah, 2013). These findings also showed a strong endorsement for its use among Arab students, stating that students realised code-switching greatly enhanced their English studies and had a very positive effect on their language studies. They considered it a good strategy for enhancing their understanding of leaning the second language, thereby leading to greater improvement in learning the second language. For example, students are encouraging to speak when they allow to use their desirable language so they can switch between languages where is necessary to keep them engage in the leaning process. Moreover, a study conducted by Clapham (2016), highlighted some added appreciation of the interplay between code-switching and learning as an approved means of supporting students using and sharing languages. Research into English as a lingua franca (ELF, where English is used for speakers who speak different languages), a concept supported by Jenkins (2012), has concentrated on code-switching, asserting it is used predominantly when there is a lack in lexical knowledge. Yet, this can result in what Shin describes as when 'bilinguals may feel embarrassed about their code-switching and attribute it to careless language habits' (2005, p. 18).

In contrast, code-switching in English language teaching and learning in Nigeria can send the wrong message. Modupeola (2013) notes that when a teacher tends to alternate between L1 and L2 during lessons, it indicates a lack of ability to express themselves in one language. Students may see this as a linguistic deficiency on the part of the teacher, leading students to believe that the teachers have inferior English. The teacher is expected to be able to use Standard English throughout a lecture to teach the same standard to a class. Code-switching undermines this policy, added to which, teachers may often insist students use the target language and avoid code-switching themselves (Shin, 2005). Moreover, teachers may also be reluctant to overuse L1 in the foreign language classroom, or in classrooms where the medium of instruction is English, as a standard language policy in most education institutes Modupeola (2013).

Some researchers now discourage using students' native language (L1) in foreign language classes, in favour of only using L2. The counterargument asserts that many foreign language teachers use L1 to no harm, as long as they code-switch correctly. For instance, Harry Meyer (2008) provides good reasons for using L1 in the language classroom, noting that when the students use L1, it will help make the classroom more accessible and lower the anxiety level for

the students . It also helps them explore their own thoughts more freely, as they can easily use their mother tongue to code-switch to express their ideas.

According to Meyer (2008), there are more distinct benefits for L2 students and for teachers employing code-switching. Primarily, it allows the students to fully understand a particular subject in L1 before they undertake the same exercise in English. This is evident in meaning-focused exercises, in which L2 students must understand pronunciation in both listening and speaking activities, as well as in vocabulary and grammar comprehension. It also helps the students to communicate easily by finding an equivalent word in another language to explain an unknown expression in the speaker's L1, to compensate for a language deficiency in L2. Both teachers and students can employ this technique. This is best exemplified when a teacher is explaining a traditional national subject to students, and there is no precise equivalent in L2. For example, when speaking about traditional Saudi Arabian food, often there is no equivalent term nor description in any language other than Arabic. Reverting to L1 in the classroom in this instance allows students to understand complicated subjects and fosters interaction between students. Ferguson calls this code-switching as 'CS for curriculum accesses' (2003, p. 39).

Likewise, code-switching may promote relationships between members of different language groups in terms of social interaction. However, Skiba (1997) observes that the equivalent words in the different languages may have different emphasis, values, and ramifications. The employment of more than one language in a learning environment (using both L1 and L2), encourage students to be flexible in their learning and in establishing their identity when they employ L1 (Moore, 2002). Students should realise that the classroom is the environment ideally suited for the practice of code-switching (Baker, 2011, p. 15). Once this is understood, it becomes the centre for this shared acceptable activity. Additionally, code-switching allows language practice, idea sharing, and the implementation and enhancement of the classroom's social climate.

Therefore, it is essential for English-speaking school administrators and teachers to recognise that using the target language in the classroom alone is not as successful as assumed. When learning a new language, beginners to intermediate learners should feel comfortable utilising that new language, not seeing it as ambiguous and difficult to learn. EFL and second language (ESL) teachers should use common language structures between the two languages (native (L1) and target language (L2)) to facilitate understanding of the structure of the target language, which happens by code-switching between L1 and L2 (Moore,2002).

CONCLUSION

The emphasis throughout this paper has been to explain the importance of code-switching as a part of bilingualism, and to show that it is perfectly acceptable when two or more bilingual speakers are in conversation. In the setting of a foreign language teaching environment, studies support the function and advantages of code-switching. The advantages and disadvantages of its use, by both teachers and students, have been presented to explain the phenomenon in different situations and learning environments. Policy dictates that English language schools require English teachers to abide by the traditional standard rule of using only English in their teaching. However, in practice, and particularly in the case of Saudi Arabia, teachers may code-switch to other languages for a number of reasons and functions. These are mostly associated with clarifying in the communication between teachers and student and facilitating easier

learning which leads to better learning. This paper has endeavoured to show that code-switching in language classrooms is beneficial, especially in promoting interaction. It should not be considered a failure in the language teaching process. Overall, code-switching used to clarify meaning or enable students to achieve greater efficiency. However, when the student will have to interact with native speakers of the target language, code-switching could become a distinct disadvantages and lead to a certain level of incomprehension. Thus, in the learning process, the teacher has an important role to ensure students are aware of this possibility in the future and consider code-switching as a means to an end.

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