

Types of Code-switching Between Yemeni Dialect and English Language among Yemeni Undergraduate Students at University of Sheba Region

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Abstract

Code Switching, a widely discussed phenomenon in the sociolinguistics, involves the alteration of linguistic elements so as to contextualize talk in interaction. This study aims at examining the code-switching between Yemeni Dialect and English among the undergraduate Yemeni Arab students. The study also aims at recognizing the different types of code switching as well as the reasons for this code switching. This is a qualitative study dealing with the twenty undergraduate students from different faculties of the University Sheba Region. Semi-structured interviews are the main method of data collection for this study. The intra-sentential code switching is analyzed in more specific categories. Consequently, the findings of this paper show that most Yemeni students tend to switch to English language in smaller constituents (intra-lexical which is within word boundary). Furthermore, the results from the interviews found out that the reasons for the occurrence of code-switching were due to the lack of proficiency in L1, impact of technological devices and the linguistic factor.

Keywords: Yemeni Dialect, English Language, Code Switching, Intra-sentential Code Switching, Sociolinguistics.

1. Introduction

Language is a social phenomenon which considers the most significant tool for determining society and culture. Contact between languages gives rise to variations and changes in the languages. Therefore, different language varieties convey different social meanings. A single speaker uses different varieties of different situations for different purposes. Because of contact between languages, the communications are essentially bilingual or multilingual. Winford (2003: 2) states that “such contact can have a wide variety of linguistic outcomes”. As a result of this communication and contact between languages, there are many linguistics operations happen such as borrowing of vocabulary and this contact leads to the creation of entirely new languages.

The linguists consider the phenomena of language contact are code-switching (CS) and code-mixing (CM). They define the code-switching uses two or more languages in the same conversation bilinguals. Milroy and Muysken (1995) claim that switching occurs between the turns of different speakers in the conversation, sometimes between utterances within a single turn, and sometimes even within a single utterance. Eldridge (1996) proposes that code-switching (CS) happens when the speaker switch to L1 to fill the gap with an appropriate word not known in L2 and vice versa. Myers-Scotton (1993) defines the CS as either inter-sentential switching or intra-sentential switching. Furthermore, Poplack (1980) divides the code-switching into three types namely tag-switching, inter-sentential switching and intra-sentential switching.

2. Literature Review

This section focuses on previous studies that have been conducted on code-switching. Few decades ago, the principle of code switching became an interesting subject in sociolinguistics. Several studies have been conducted in this field. Bloom and Gumperz, (1972) established two models; 'we code' and 'they code', which are typically used to mention to group identity. Generally, It accepts that 'we code' refers to one's ethnic language or a minority group in a society, and 'they code' indicate to the language of that society. However, this model has some restrictions as the 'we/they' distinction does not always have clear cut boundaries. Myers-Scotton (1993) develops the 'markedness model' of code switching, which became very influential at that time, and is still widely used as a tool to explain the social motivation of code switching.

Abalhasan and Al-shalawi (2000) conducted a study of Arabic speaker in United States. They observed that all students switch bilingually from Arabic to the English, but in varying degrees. "There appears to be a correlation between the level of complexity of the bilingual code-switches and the respondent's level of proficiency in English" (Abalhasan and Al-shalawi 2000: 185). Moreover, they point out that the reasons behind switching from Arabic to English language are due to the lack of knowing or forgetting the term in Arabic and the ease to say it in English. Zain and Koo (2009) conducted a study on the Malaysian perspective of communicative functions and reasons for code switching during social interactions among ten Tamil speaking undergraduate students of the University Putra Malaysia, Malaysia. They found that the main reason for code switching is because of habitual expression which is pertaining to the psychological aspect of behavior.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The participants of this study are twenty undergraduate students from different faculties of the University Sheba Region. The participants were selected on the basis of purposive sampling. As reported by Creswell (2012) in purposive sampling, the researchers intentionally choose the

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 18:12 December 2018

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participants who are expected to provide the required data for a particular study. In this study, the central issue is that the behavior of the code-switching among the participants. The number of informants in this study is twenty Yemeni undergraduate students who are male and female participants aged from 20 to 23. The study aims to examine the use of code-switching (CS) from Arabic to the English language among Yemeni students who use Informal Yemeni Dialect in their communication with others.

3.2 Instruments

Observation and Semi-structured interviews are used for conducting this study. The participants of this study were informed of the instruments used for data collection. The participants were also instructed the procedures i.e. the observation sessions will be followed by the interview sessions. This study used two instruments for data collections. Firstly, an Audio Recording Instrument was used for recording conversation of twenty male and female Yemeni informants in this research. The researchers recorded all the conversations carried out by the twenty participants. From the conversations, the researchers collected data and input to achieve the aims of this study. One of the items that the researchers elicit from this instrument was the types of code-switching used by the twenty participants. The period allocates for the fulfillment of this instrument was one week. Second instrument was the interview session. The researchers achieved to collect descriptive data expressed by the participants during the interview sessions. The data collection reveals that the participants' views about the use of CS as well as the provision of new input to the researchers in their quest to obtain the required data.

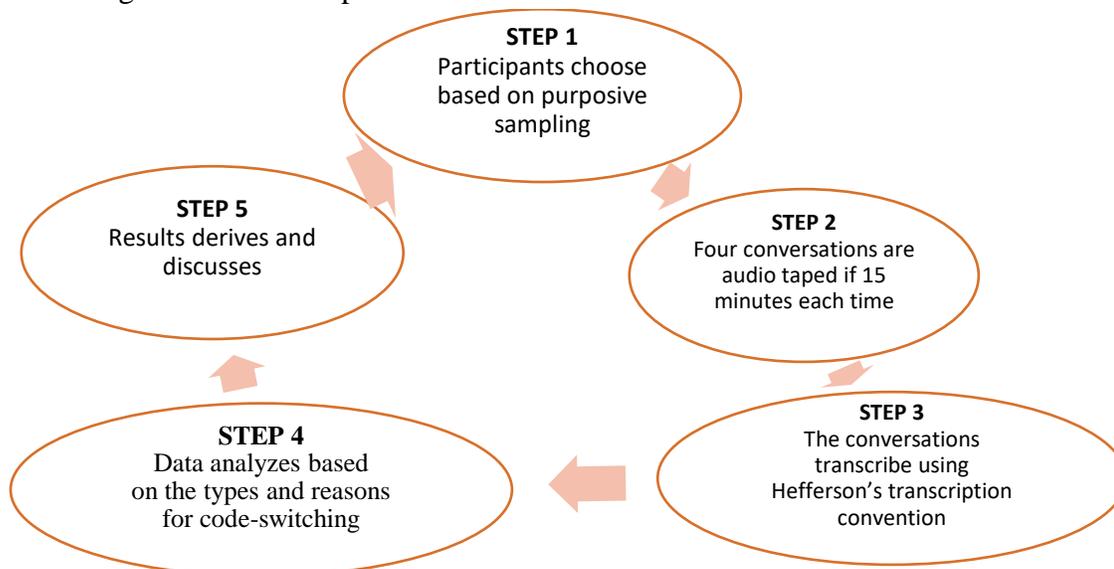
4. Data Collection

Two main instruments were employed for data collection. Firstly, the data collect through an audio recording instrument which is an audio recorder. All the participants are informed of the data collection process. They summarized on the context of this study, which requires conversations with regard to issues and matters in the domain of university. However, the research questions or objectives were kept confidential to avoid cases such as self-initiated code switching in their conversations. Secondly, the data was collected through semi-structured interview. It is achieved by the participants during the interview sessions and later used the data to explore the reasons for code switching.

4.1 Process for Data Analysis

The qualitative data was obtained from the audio-taped conversations of the participants in University of Sheba Region during leisure time. The time of recording for each conversation was 15 minutes. Altogether, 4 audio-taped conversations were used for this study. Then the data collection arranged the analysis process. Firstly, the recorded conversations of the participants were transcribed using the Jefferson's transcription conventions. Secondly, the

occurrences of code switching in all the conversations were highlighted. Thirdly, all the highlighted occurrences of code switching were classified into the respective types. After the completion of the analyzing process, the final stage is the description of the findings and discussion. Figure 1 shows the procedures for the data collection.



5. Results

Code-switching is “the alternative use of two or more linguistic varieties within the same utterance or during the same conversation” (Myers, 1990; Wardhaugh, 2010). Poplack (1980) classifies code-switching into three types namely tag-switching, inter sentential-switching and intra-sentential switching. The occurrences of code-switching in all the four conversations of the participants of this research study are analyzed based on the types and reasons for code-switching.

5.1 Results Gained from Audio Recording Instrument

The data taken from the audio recording instrument shows that the Yemeni undergraduate students of University of Sheba Region code-switched from Yemeni dialect to the English language. Among the twenty Yemeni undergraduate students who participated in this research, the most recurring type of CS employed by them is intra-sentential CS. The data analyzed the intra-sentential CS in more specific categories. Generally, the two types of intra-sentential CS contain intra-lexical CS whereby the switching of one language to another takes place within word boundary, and intra-phrasal CS whereby the switching occurs within the phrasal boundary. Abdul Hakim (2001) and Dayang Hajjah Fatimah (2007) claim that the two types of intra-sentential CS are intra-lexical that take place within word boundary, and intra-phrasal that occurs within phrasal boundary. The table below demonstrates sentences in the complete formula with elements of intra-sentential. These

sentences are used by Yemeni undergraduate students when they communicate with others in Informal Yemeni Dialect (YD).

Table 1: English and Arabic Code-switching

No	Arabic Sentences in (Yemeni Dialect)	English Sentences in English Language
1	al-abni yafti <i>bike</i>	The boy wants <i>bike</i>
2	ʔftarait <i>tire</i> dzadeed li seiyarah lanah <i>tire</i> kadeem buh <i>puncture</i>	because the old <i>tire</i> has <i>puncture</i> I bought new <i>tire</i>
3	ʔams Messi sajal <i>goal</i>	Yesterday, Messi scored <i>goal</i>
4	ʔfti ʔyir <i>battery</i> lee <i>mobile</i>	I want to change the <i>battery</i> of my <i>mobile</i>
5	ʔaʔfi al ma'a bil <i>kettle</i>	I boil the water by <i>kettle</i>
6	lu-samaħat hat al- <i>remote</i>	Excuse me, can you please pass me the <i>remote control</i>
7	qarit ʔamas <i>chapter</i>	I read one <i>chapter</i> yesterday
8	momkin toʔayil <i>radio</i>	can you please switch on the <i>radio</i>
9	ana kul yaum indi nafis <i>routine</i> aruħ ila maktaba	I have the same <i>routine</i> every day that I come to library
10	kul yaum ana athab ila <i>cafeteria</i> li akul nafis akil	Every day, I go to <i>cafeteria</i> to eat the same food

Table 2: English and Arabic Code-switching

NO	Arabic Sentences in (Yemeni dialect)	English Sentences
1	ʔnteeni <i>al-wire</i> minfadlak	Give me the <i>wire</i> please.
2	efiti ʔftari <i>makeup</i>	I need to buy <i>makeup</i> .
3	ʔʃħan li <i>balance</i>	Could you recharge <i>balance</i> ?
4	ʔukti <i>design</i> hulu	My apartment has nice <i>design</i> .
5	hal sawiti al <i>assignment</i>	Have you written the <i>assignment</i> ?

6	Jaʕmal samak bil <i>oven</i>	I will grill the fish by <i>oven</i> .
7	<i>Gear</i> il-a'adi afdhal min <i>automatic</i>	Manual <i>gear</i> is better than <i>automatic</i> one.
8	momkin taquli aina <i>toilet</i> min fadhlak	Could you please guide the <i>toilet</i> ?
9	ʕayil al <i>air-conditioner</i>	Switch on the <i>air-conditioner</i> please.
10	?ba aysil malabsi fi <i>washing-machine</i>	I want to wash my clothes in <i>washing-machine</i> .

It is clear that table 1 shows examples of intra-sentential code-switching. Though there are intra-lexical and intra-phrasal CS, the results of the present study refer that all the sentences are intra-lexical which is within word boundary. Consequently, the findings of this research show that most Yemeni students tend to switch to English language in smaller constituents rather than in major ones. Moreover, the findings show that participants use many words that are technology based. For example, *WhatsApp, Email, internet, Yahoo, sign in, sign out, and log in, log out, hard, soft copy, keyboard, memory, mouse*. Furthermore, the data of the audio recordings show that the participants use English language in most of the social expressions (to greet, apologize, thanks). The most widely used social expressions in their daily communications with others are such as “*please, thanks, thank you, okay, alright, sorry*”.

4.2 Results Obtained from the Interviews

The researchers selected six participants for the interview session from the total number of participants. Most the students show their prestige when they talk in interview. It is noticed that the females used more English vocabularies. It is clear that they are affected by watching some foreign movies. Besides that, the interviewees reveal that they were interested in using English language in their daily communication. But they feel shy, lack confidence and are worried of being embarrassed in front of others and may affect negatively L1.

5. Findings and Discussion

According to data that was collected from the instruments (audio recording instrument and semi-structural interviews) four reasons have been attributed to the use of code-switching. The current study finds that Yemeni students have the tendency to employ CS in intra-sentential context. The methods of code-switching applied by participants permit the others to understand their speech. Therefore, code-switching takes place to help the participants achieve their conversational goal.

The first reason for the use of code-switching is compensation for lack in L1 proficiency. Obviously, the speakers may not be able to express the intended meaning in L1. Therefore, they switch to other languages to compensate for the lack in L1 proficiency. Some of the participants switch because they do not know the words in Arabic. As a result, they use words in English to fill in the gap in their utterance or exchange. Intra-sentential code-switching refers to the change in the speaker's language choice when the situation remains the same. Intra-sentential switches occur in the middle of a sentence, for example saying half the sentence in Arabic and continuing another half in English language. For instance, *'ʔiti ʔsftari CD yadan'* I will buy a CD tomorrow. The participant began speaking in Arabic, then shift to English language and finally went back to Arabic. In this case, participant filled the gap in their utterances as a communicative intent.

The second reason for the use of code-switching is the impact of technology and media. The range of technologies existing for use in language learning and teaching is simply endless. There are various and diverse technological applications for use in the teaching and learning processes in classrooms all over the world. Some of these applications have become integral to language practice in a world where laptops, tablets, computer and mobile phones have become part and parcel of everyday life.

The third reason for the use of code-switching is affected by foreign movies and social media. This has caused huge impact to the Yemeni Dialect language. For instance, celebrities, Hero, the victim... etc.

The fourth reason for the use of code-switching is the linguistic factor. This factor is another reason for code-switching in Yemen. According to Cook (2013), linguistic factor deals with 'nature referential', which means the speakers switch because the speakers are unable to locate words or terms for the description of certain things in a particular language. Generally, this reason is more linguistically in nature. In addition, David (2003) states the same reason as to why speakers switch code in their speeches when they could not find the equivalent meaning or word in the particular language.

6. Conclusion

This study aims to investigate the different types of code switching as well as the reasons for this code switching. This study does not have a large number of samples, but it can be considered a valuable contribution. The data of this study was collected by audio recorder and interview. The findings of this study were not sufficient to make any generalizations on the nature of code-switching among Yemeni undergraduates, hence cannot represent the whole population of Yemeni students. The participants of this study were 20 students, female and male.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 18:12 December 2018

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Furthermore, the present study points out that there are three types of code-switching namely tag-switching, inter-sentential switching and intra-sentential switching. The findings also reveal that advancement in technology has caused more Yemeni Students use English language rather than Arabic to describe terms, concepts or items that are related to technology it means that students affected by the technological terms. It found that the students used code switching to show their prestige.

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