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Code-switching among Bilingual Cairene University Students about Personal Relations: A Sociolinguistic Approach

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التنابؤ اللغوى لدى طلاب الجامعة القاهرىين ثنائى اللغة حول العلاقات الشخصية: نهج لغوى اجتماعى

المستخلص: تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف ظاهرة التنابؤ اللغوى بين طلاب الجامعة ثنائى اللغة فيما يتعلق بالعلاقات الشخصية. الهدف الرئيسى للدراسة هو التحقيق في الأسباب وراء تبديل اللغة أثناء التحدث عن العلاقات الشخصية، وأكثر الكلمات أو التعبير المشتركة المستخدمة في تبديل اللغة. تعتمد الدراسة على أسباب تبديل اللغة التى طرحتها مالك (1994). تم جمع البيانات لهذه الدراسة عن طريق استبيان تم توزيعه على 77 طالبًا ثنائى اللغة في الجامعة. أظهرت نتائج البحث أن الطلاب يشعرون بالراحة أكثر عند مناقشة العلاقات الشخصية باللغة الإنجليزية بدلاً من اللغة العربية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العربية القاهرية، علم اللغة الاجتماعى، التنابؤ اللغوى، والطلاب ثنائى اللغة

Abstract: The present study attempts to examine the phenomenon of code-switching among bilingual university students concerning personal relationships. The primary objective of the study is to examine the reasons underlying the phenomenon of code-switching when discussing personal relationships, as well as identify the most prevalent words or expressions employed during code-switching. The study adopts Malik (1994) reasons for code-switching. The data for this study was gathered through the distribution of a questionnaire to a sample of 77 bilingual university students. The research findings indicate that students feel more comfortable discussing personal relationships in English than Arabic. The study also identifies the reasons behind code-switching in this context and highlights the most frequently used words or expressions during code-switching. This study contributes to the understanding of code-switching among bilingual university students, specifically in the context of personal relationships. The findings provide insights into the reasons behind code-switching and the common linguistic elements employed in this phenomenon.

key words: Cairene Arabic, Sociolinguistics, Code-switching, Bilingual students

Introduction:

Different definitions of language exist. In each definition, a certain aspect of language is highlighted. The definitions that explain the connection between language and society are the main emphasis of this article because it is the subject matter of the present research.

In Sociolinguistics, language is conceptualized as a multifaceted entity that encompasses social, functional, and behavioural dimensions, all of which are intricately connected with social and behavioural structures. Language serves as a medium through which social meanings are conveyed; the existing social hierarchy is mirrored, and the individual identities of its users are expressed (Carranza, 2017). Research on code-switching has primarily focused on social and pragmatic factors, linguistic constraints, and psycholinguistic processes involved in comprehension and production of code switches. In the context of Arabic and English, code-switching is particularly prevalent due to the widespread use of both languages across various domains. This study aims to explore code-switching between Arabic and English, examining the reasons behind code-switching.

Problem Statement

Although much earlier research dealt with it, code-switching is a very intriguing phenomenon; several linguists dealt with code-switching from different perspectives. Grosjean and Miller's (1994) research at the phonetic level suggests that bilinguals may switch languages to explore variations in voice onset time during language switches, further highlighting the role of linguistic factors in code-switching. De Fina (2007) suggests how code-switching might help speakers build their ideas within a sociolinguistic setting. Thus, as one can see, the functions and purposes of code-switching are not agreed upon. The present study aims to delve into the underlying factors that contribute to code-switching in order to enhance comprehension of this linguistic phenomenon.

Significance of the study

The importance of this study lies in, to the best knowledge of the researcher, the absence of previous studies exploring the connection between personal

relationships and code-switching. By contributing to the existing body of literature on code-switching, this study aims to enhance our understanding of how personal relationships influence language usage. The findings obtained from this study offer new perspectives and deeper insights into the phenomenon of code-switching.

Research Questions

The present study focuses on addressing the following questions:

1. Why do Arabic-English bilingual students switch while discussing personal relationships?
2. What are the most frequent words or expressions used while talking about personal relationships?

Literature Review

What is a code?

Several linguists coined different definitions for what a code is? Ronald Wardaugh posited that a code, in its broadest sense, is fundamentally "a method of communication utilized by two or more entities at any given time" (Wardaugh, 1986 p.101). Similarly defined by Stockwell (2007), a code as "an inexpressible manner of speech encompassing both specific languages and distinct language variants," (p.40). Holmes (2013) referred to code as not just signs but unique sets of symbols with special meanings recognized within particular groups or communities. Obviously, a code can be defined as a language or a type of linguistic variation that individuals use to make affective communication, either in the form of a single code or a group of mixed codes.

What is Code-switching (CS)?

Code-switching is a predominant phenomenon observed among all bilingual and multilingual societies. Several researchers have delved into the world of Bilingualism and Code-switching (Blom & Gumperz, 1972). The study of code-switching can be traced back at least to the 1950's when researchers tried to define code-switching from different perspectives. Poplack (1980) and Gumperz (1977) are considered the pioneers of code-switching research,

since they were the first to study the linguistic and extra-linguistic features of code-switching.

Vogt (1954) assumed that code-switching could be defined as a psychological phenomenon with extra-linguistic causes. Auer (1995) stated that both terms code-switching and code-alternating are used to serve the same sense of linguistic varieties within the same conversation. Hymes (1974) underlined that code-switching is a form of incompetence in one language.

Scotton and Ury (1977) proposed that "CS is the use of two or more linguistic varieties in the same conversation or interaction." Likewise, Gumperz (1982, p. 59) defined code-switching as " the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages that belong to different grammatical systems or sub systems. Gumperz conducted an experiment on code - switching within the framework of social contexts, emphasizing the communicative functions of the codes employed in bilingual settings. He posited that each code fulfills a distinct communicative purpose within a given society, and that community members maintain these codes independently. To illustrate this phenomenon, Gumperz drew upon the case of the two dialects, Bokmal and Ranamal, in Norway.

According to Milroy and Muysken (1995, p. 7), code-switching can be defined as" the alternative use by bilinguals of two or more languages in the same conversation" and they perceive code-switching as a reflection to various manifestations of bilingual behaviors. (Febrianti et al., 2022& Mauliddiyah et al., 2020).

The study of code-switching by Janet Holmes (1992) sheds light on the intricate phenomenon of language use in multilingual and multicultural settings. Her work shed light on the numerous aspects of code-switching, including social identity, dynamics of power, and communicative objectives.

Types of Code-switching

In literature a number of researchers tried to categorize code-switching according to their functions for example; Gumperz (1982) proposed two patterns of code-switching: Situational and Metaphorical switching. The

difference between them is that situational code-switching involved change in situational factors such as participants, setting and topic.,. etc., while metaphorical code-switching occurred to convey social meaning.

According to Myers-Scotton (1993), the phenomenon of code-switching can be classified into two distinctive categories: intersentential code-switching and intrasentential code-switching. Intersentential code-switching relates to the act of switching between languages across different sentences, whereas intrasentential code-switching occurs within the confines of a single sentence, ranging from the level of a single morpheme to an entire clause. Myers-Scotton further introduced the notion of matrix language and embedded language, whereby the matrix language represents the dominant language employed, while the embedded language assumes a subordinate role.

Appel and Muysken (2005) distinguished between three types: tag switching, intersentential and intrasentential code-switching.

Theoretical Background

Several researchers have tackled the concept of code-switching from various angles, particularly when applied to the classroom environment whether between teacher-students or between students themselves. (Martin- Jones, 1995; Eldridge, 1996; Amorim, 2012; & Herawati& Fitriani, 2021). Sundas et al. (2022) who conducted a study at the University of Lahore Sargodha on a campus involving undergraduate students, and data was collected through a questionnaire. The results revealed a significant relationship between students' attitudes towards code-switching and learning language in an English language classroom.

Code-switching from Arabic to English

Code-switching from Arabic to English is a phenomenon that occurs in various contexts. Several studies tackled the concept of code-switching between Arabic and English from different viewpoints.

Youssef's (1996) study centered on studying code-switching within the framework of Cairene Arabic-English bilinguals within university classrooms, specifically at the faculty of Al-Alsun of Ain Shams University

in Cairo. The data for this research was gathered through systematic observations conducted during classes taught by bilingual Egyptian professors in a program where English is used as the medium of instruction. The main contention of Youssef's paper was that code-switching serves as an inherent linguistic tactic employed by bilingual individuals to enhance communication, particularly within the academic environment.

Code-switching in Arabic cartoons has been the subject of investigation within the specific context of the television cartoon series *Dora the Explorer*. In a recent study conducted by Alaiyed (2020), it was observed that code-switching from Standard Arabic to English is employed in the show as a means to facilitate the learning of English among children. The study revealed three kinds of code-switching: code-switching without translation, code-switching with translation, and meta-discursive code-switching. Throughout each episode, English lexical items are introduced through the utilization of code-switching, with the most prevalent form being the incorporation of English words without translation. The functions of code-switching within the show encompass greetings, expressions of appreciation, and evaluations.

Alsalamy (2021) conducted a study on Arabic English Code-switching among Saudi Speakers. He explored the reasons behind code-switching among Bilingual Saudi speakers. The study reveals interesting insights on the significant differences in code-switching based on gender, age, qualification, and level of English proficiency. The study identifies five functions of code-switching: message specification, message reinforcement, message qualification, message repetition, and classification of switches. The study also discusses the distinction of personalization vs. objectification in code-switching.

Salah (2023) investigated the use of code mixing among English-language students at Al alBayt University in Jordan. The study is divided into three parts: demographic and personal information, factors influencing the use of English, and situations in which English is used. The data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation, and an evaluation score was calculated to determine the level of mixing English within Arabic speech among the

participants. The study found that code mixing is prevalent among the participants, with academic and social factors being the most influential. The study has implications for language teaching and learning in the Jordanian context.

Reasons for Code-Switching

Holmes (2013, pp. 35-44) highlighted several reasons behind code-switching. Code-switching served various purposes in communication, including excluding or including someone in the conversation, showing solidarity, making a change in the social situation, acknowledging the presence of a new participant, identifying group membership, constructing ethnic identity, indicating status relations between people, showing the formality of interactions, expressing emotions and feelings, reflecting lexical borrowing when vocabulary is lacking, and persuading the audience. Additionally, bilingual individuals may switch languages for convenience based on topic-related vocabulary availability, which highlights the influence of domain differences on vocabulary development.

In the same vein Spolsky (1998, pp. 49-50) outlined a few reasons as to why a speaker might switch between languages. Shifting for convenience, or selecting a term or phrase based on its ease of availability, is frequently a feature of a bilingual speaker. Again, difference in domains will affect the code-switching. Consequently, speakers who have an advanced level of education in a second language are typically unable to utilize the terminology in their mother tongue.

In her study, Malik (1994) developed 10 communicative functions of code-switching. In the present study these functions serve as a framework of reasons for code-switching among Cairene bilingual students. These reasons include:

1. Lack of Facility: When bilingual or multilingual speakers encounter concepts that are not present in one language but exist in the other, they switch between languages to effectively communicate their thoughts and prevent any potential confusion or loss of intended meaning. This code-

switching allows them to express themselves more accurately and ensure that their message is understood without unnecessary misunderstandings.

2. Lack of Register: Bilingual individuals may find difficulties in selecting appropriate words in the target language for specific topics, especially when they are not equally proficient in both languages. As a result, they may opt to code-switch, or switch between languages, as a strategy to compensate for their linguistic competence gap and effectively convey their intended meaning. This code-switching behavior helps them navigate communication difficulties and ensure effective expression in situations where their proficiency may be limited.

3. Mood of Speaker: Code-switching occurs when bilingual speakers switch between languages based on their mood. For example, when bilingual individuals are angry, anxious, or nervous, they may choose to switch languages as the words in the other language seem easier or more efficient to express their emotions at that particular moment. This demonstrates how code-switching can be influenced by the speaker's emotional state.

4. To Emphasize a Point: Bilingual individuals may engage in code-switching during specific parts of a speech to guide listeners' attention and emphasize certain aspects, particularly in situations like arguments. By switching languages, they can effectively convey their intended message and ensure that listeners understand what to focus on. This code-switching behavior serves as a strategic communication tool to enhance clarity and emphasize important points in discourse.

5. Habitual Experience: Code-switching is frequently observed in fixed phrases like greetings, commands, requests, apologies, and discourse markers. This linguistic phenomenon can convey a sense of strength to speech, implying warnings or threats. By employing code-switching in these specific contexts, bilingual speakers emphasize certain aspects of their communication and may signal their intentions more effectively.

6. Semantic Significance: Code-switching can convey linguistic and social information about attitudes, intentions, and emotions between bilingual speakers.

7. To Show Identity with Group: It is used by individuals within the same group or culture to demonstrate a shared sense of identity, values, and experiences. Code-switching serves as a way to express belonging and familiarity to the group by preserving words and phrases in their original languages.

8. To Address Different Audience: Similar to Gumperz's (1982) concept of addressee specification, code-switching occurs when different languages are used to communicate with specific listeners or recipients. This means that individuals may switch languages based on the intended audience in order to effectively convey their messages.

9. Pragmatic reasons: Code-switching is influenced by a number of factors such as the contextual setting, formality, participants, and location of the conversation. Depending on these factors, code-switching can reflect the level of engagement or involvement of the speakers, showing different degrees of linguistic adaptation and cultural identity expression.

10. To attract attention: When media or advertisements utilize multiple languages, the audience tends to be drawn to the language they are already familiar with. This is because familiarity with a language increases the audience's attention and engagement, making them more likely to pay attention to the message being conveyed.

Methodology

This research can be characterized as sociolinguistic research since it is concerned in identifying the phenomenon of code-switching and analyzing the reasons that are associated with the speakers' choices of language use. The present study primary goal is to investigate the causes of code-switching among bilingual university students.

The sample is for the year 2022. In the present study, a total of 77 students of various academic levels-from first to fourth year were chosen to participate. Participants were required to complete a nine-item questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of both closed and open ended questions. Out of the total 77 participants, 21 were males, while the remaining 56 were females, with an age range of 18 to 23 years. The participants were not

provided with any details by the researcher, who aimed to create an environment where they could spontaneously express their thoughts. Consequently, their responses were categorized based on Malik's (1994) classification of code-switching reasons.

Table 1: Participants of the study

Items	Males	Females	Total
No. of students	21	56	77
Percentages	28.9%	71.1%	100%

Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is composed of nine questions. The first four questions are about the personal information of the participants. The questions are about gender, age and educational background.

The fourth question is a yes-no question. It aims to find whether participants code switch in their conversation or not. The fifth question is a yes-no question, and it aims to elicit whether participants code switch while talking about personal relationships giving them examples such as "crush". Participants were questioned in questions seven and eight about the expressions they used to describe their personal relations and the reasons behind employing those terms.

The participants have the opportunity to add something or make suggestions in the final question.

Analysis and Results

By analyzing students' questionnaire, the researchers find the following:

Questions 5: Do you code switch in your everyday conversation?

The results revealed that 71 participants code switch while 6 participants didn't switch.

Question 6: Do you ever use any of the expressions we use to describe personal relationships, such as "toxic relationship," "crush," "friend zone," and others?

The results showed that 65 participants said " yes" 85.5% and 11 participants answered " No" 14.5%

Question 6: Could you provide me with some expressions you use while discussing personal relationships, along with their definitions?

This question showed a number of expressions used to describe personal relationships. The most frequently used expressions mentioned by the participants are displayed in the table below in descending order.

Table 2: Commonly used expressions

Expressions	No. of occurrences
Toxic	15
Crush	15
Red Flag	9
Green Flag	5
Friend zone	4
Ex	4
Best friends	4
trauma/traumatized	3
Toxic relationship	3
nice	3
girlfriend	3
Flirt	3
Couple	3
Boyfriend	3
Bestie	3
Toxic person	2
Soulmate	2
Emotions	2
long-term relation	2

The table above shows us that participants use the word "toxic" to describe either a person or a relationship, or both a person and a relationship, in genera

In addition to "toxic" the word "Trauma" can also be used to describe a general concept or a particular person's experience.

The participants also used other terms among the ones mentioned earlier, and the researcher categorised them in accordance with how the relationship was described.

Not in a relationship

- Single
- Just friends
- Best friends
- Bestie

At the beginning of a relationship

- To be into someone
- Mental attraction
- Physical attraction
- Touches my heart
- So into you
- Love you to the next galaxy and back
- Care
- Out of no where
- Peace
- feelings

The relationship

- Date/ Dating
- Toxic
- couple
- Got engaged
- Partners
- Engagement
- Soulmate
- Long-term relation
- Love

- Mixed signs
- Blow me down
- Trust issues
- Need a space
- ghosting

The end of the relation

- Break up with someone
- Divorced
- Got depressed
- Move on
- Let's take a break

To describe a person

- toxic
- Cute
- Sweet talker
- Gentleman
- Playboy
- Dream boy
- Dream girl
- Nice
- Drama queen
- So needy
- Weird person
- Attention whore (derogatory expression)
- Kind
- loyal

To describe either a person or a relation

- Traumatic experience
- Unique
- Complicated
- Naughty

Question 8: Why do you use English words while discussing feelings and personal relationships?

Table 3: Reasons of code- switching based on Malik’s (1994) framework.

No	Reasons of code-switching	Percentage
1	Lack of facility	67.6%
2	lack of register	0%
3	Mood of the speaker	15.4%
4	To Emphasize a Point	6.15%
5	Habitual Experience	0%
6	Semantic Significance	1.53%
7	To Show Identity with Group	3.08%
8	To Address Different Audience	0%
9	Pragmatic reasons	1.53%
10	To attract attention	4.71%
	Total	100%

Adopting Malik's (1994) ten reasons for code-switching—lack of facility and mood of the speaker—are the two top reasons why participants code switch from English to Arabic. Participants asserted that they cannot find an appropriate term in Arabic to explain their feelings and that it is more straightforward to express themselves in English since they will be archaic if they use Arabic. Mood of speaker is the second reason for code-switching among study participants. Participants mentioned that they code switch when talking about their personal relationships because they want to express themselves spontaneously when they are satisfied at the beginning of the relationship or when they are frustrated at the end of the relationship, and it is easiest for them to describe their feelings.

The third reason is to emphasize a point. Participants stated that if they need to highlight a point or give their conversation more power, they should use the code-switching technique. The fourth reason is to attract attention. Participants stated that when they code switch in this manner, they feel stylish and trendy, which draws attention to them. The fifth reason is to show identity with a group. Participants said that when they code switch in this

manner while discussing their personal relationships, they feel as though their friends understand them and have the same background, thoughts, and experiences.

The percentages for the sixth and seventh reasons, semantic significance and pragmatic reasons, are the same. In terms of the semantic significance of one of the participants, stated that he utilized code-switching as a warning to the other party. As for the pragmatic reasons, one of the participants stated that she code switches according to the context and the interlocutors. The remaining categories had no answers.

The researcher chose university students as a sample for the study because students of that age are more likely to communicate their feelings easily. The findings revealed that university students find it easier to express their feelings or discuss personal relations in English than in Arabic language. Additionally, it has become common for both students and users of social media to use these vocabulary words, which have no equivalent in the Arabic. The findings of the present study suggest that the participants engaged in code-switching not only to convey concepts that were challenging to translate into Arabic, but also because such expressions became integrated into the linguistic repertoire of the younger generation and gained popularity. The usage of terms like "Saam or Habibi" is infrequent, as they are replaced by phrases such as "toxic" or "crush."

Conclusion

The current study investigated the concept of code-switching and offered a theoretical background of this language phenomenon. The primary objectives were to examine the underlying reasons for code-switching when discussing personal relations and to identify the most frequently used words or expressions. The study adopted Malik's (1994) framework for reasons behind code-switching and collected data through a questionnaire administered to a sample of 77 bilingual university students. The findings revealed a preference among students for discussing personal relationships in English rather than Arabic.

The results of this study offer valuable insights into the motivations and patterns of code-switching among bilingual university students when engaging in conversations about personal relationships. The findings contribute to the existing body of literature on code-switching and provide illumination on the specific context of personal relationships.

Firstly, the study revealed that bilingual students often switch to English when discussing personal relationships due to their increased confidence and fluency in expressing their thoughts and emotions in this language. English, being the language of instruction in many universities, has become associated with higher status and prestige, thus students may perceive it as a more appropriate and effective language for discussing personal matters.

Moreover, the study identified several common words and expressions used in code-switching when discussing personal relationships. These included terms of endearment, emotional expressions, and cultural references. Bilingual students strategically employed these words and expressions to establish rapport, convey emotions, and maintain cultural connections. The use of code-switching in personal relationships serves as a means to negotiate and navigate between different linguistic and cultural contexts.

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The sample size of 77 bilingual university students may not be representative of the entire population, and the findings may not be generalizable to other contexts or languages. Additionally, the study relied solely on self-reported data through a questionnaire, which may be subject to biases and limitations in participants' responses. Future research could employ a larger and more diverse sample, as well as utilize multiple data collection methods such as interviews or observations to gain a more comprehensive understanding of code-switching in personal relationships.

The implications of this study extend to language education and intercultural communication, emphasizing the importance of understanding and developing intercultural competence in today's globalized world. Future research should aim to address the limitations of this study and further explore code-switching in different contexts and languages.

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