

BRAC University



Code Switching In Facebook by Bangladeshi Facebook Users

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This thesis is dedicated to all my educators who enriched my knowledge and motivated me through their teaching.

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Abstract

This research paper aims to find out the motivation behind code switching in Facebook statuses and their replies by Bangladeshi Facebook users. The occurrence of code switching in Facebook is regular. But the type of code switching varies based on social relation. To investigate this statement a number of Facebook status and comments was observed. Also a survey questionnaire was designed and a group of people (with a specific age range, educational background and bilingual characteristic) was selected. After collecting the data it was analyzed through mixed method. And the above statement was proven to be true.

Key words: Code switching (CS), Facebook (fb), bilingual.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In this age of globalization, using two or more languages is not an unexpected phenomenon but a norm. These days, in a bilingual community, people switch codes in daily conversation to achieve interactional goals with other speakers. Developing communicative competence in two or more languages give individuals opportunities to express their feelings and thoughts and shape their identity. Wong (2000) said, bilingual people have the prestige of exploiting their treasure of linguistic knowledge to express meaningful thoughts and ideas (as cited in Iqbal, 2011, p. 189).

In Facebook, one of the most popular asynchronous computer mediated communication on the internet is a place where occurrences of code switching is high. Facebook users have the tendency of switching from one code to another while communicating. Users usually do not stick to a particular language or code, but often mix or switch their languages.

The choice of code is a matter of personal selection. This interlanguage is viewed as an adaptive strategy and according to Slinker (1972) this strategy uses simplification, reduction, overgeneralization, transfer, formulaic language, omissions, substitutions, and restructurings (as cited in Duran, 1994, p.2)

This linguistic behavior depends largely on one common ground, that is: who speaks to whom and when. In Bangladesh, Facebook has gained enormous popularity. A large number of people use Facebook to communicate with friends, families or colleagues. Although all the

instructions and applications are in English, Bangladeshi people tends to use both Bangla and English to correspond in Facebook - in other words most of the Bangladeshi fb (Facebook) users switch from either English to Bangla or Bangla to English.

Bangladeshi students (students of Bangla medium) study English for twelve years from grade one to twelve. As a result, they grow a habit of using both Bangla and English either consciously or unconsciously. This bilingual behavior is further enriched when they enter universities, especially Private universities, where the medium of study is English. On the other hand, professional people who are working in private firms, offices, banks and English medium or English version schools conduct their regular works in English. And then, there is the ever growing influence of media and English channels – that also helps in developing bilingual characteristic.

So it can be seen that, people are using English not only in the educational field but in professional life also. And a huge portion of their entertainment (namely movies, dramas, television programmes etc) is also in English. This kind of large scale input has affected the language choice of our people. Consequently people use another language along with their mother tongue out of habit, sometimes consciously and sometimes when situation calls for it.

While communicating in Facebook, people often switch codes just like they do in regular life. But forms of code switching vary greatly regarding who they are talking to. This reflects how people are actually communicating every day. This paper will focus on the reasons that cause code switching in Facebook.

1.2 Purpose of the study

Facebook users have developed a language of their own, which can be: shortening of texts (u –you, um - I am, den –then, etc), using emoticons (☺-happy, ☹- sad, :/ - unsure) or switching codes. It was observed that people switches from one language to another frequently. Although the persons they are having a conversation with, are all native Bangla speaker. It was also interesting to see how the types of code switching differ based on the relation people have with each other. This new structure of communication is the focus of this study. If it is someone close to them (for example -friends, siblings or cousins) they tend to switch code differently than when they are talking to someone with whom they have a formal relation; for instance: colleagues. The objective of this paper is to find out the causes and patterns of code switching in Facebook statuses and replies to those statuses in Bangladeshi context.

1.3 Significance of the study

Among all the social networking sites, Facebook has been selected for this particular study because this is one of the most popular online communities in Bangladesh. Previously a number of investigations have been carried out to learn more about the grammatical structure of code switching in fb. But this paper examines code switching in Facebook status and wall comments (replies to the status) to reveal the motivation behind switching codes. So the findings of this paper will help researchers to achieve a better understanding of the reasons that govern code-switching in FB and the types of switching (which is based on personal relation) that bilingual's use in an asynchronous setting.

1.4 Research Questions

1. Why do Bangladeshi people switch codes when they are communicating with other native Bangla speaker? What motivates them?
2. What type of code switching (e.g. tag switching, intra-sentential code switching, inter-sentential code switching) occurs most in their fb statuses and the replies?
3. Does the type of code switching in fb vary based on personal relation?

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of literature review is to explore studies previously done on the focus topic. To collect information for this paper I conducted an electronic search. I went through Journal of computer mediated communication, The 4th International Symposium on Bilingualism (online, where 190 papers are saved in PDF form) and Goggle data base. Based on these sources the literature review has been written.

At first this literature review will concentrate on the definition of bilingualism, then the concept, types and factors- of code switching. At the end several findings on code switching in CMC or computer mediated communication will be discussed.

2.1 Definitions of bilingualism

Bilingualism is a concept often associated with code-switching as a speaker must be able to execute more than a language in order to switch code. Frequent efforts have been made by linguists to portray and understand the notion from various aspects such as categories, factors and degree of bilingualism. Poplack's (2000) study showed, among other things, the degree of bilingualism influence the degree of code-switching in conversation among peers (as cited in Tsiplakou, 2009, p.363).

2.2 Concept of code switching

In general term code switching means: to change language form one to another based on interlocutors, situation or topic of conversation. Gumperz (1982) referred it as the "juxtaposition of the same speech exchange" (as cited in Gulzar, 2010, p.26). But traditionally, as Corder mentioned (1981), code-switching was seen and still is seen by many as a random practice that

could be explained by interference. Now-a-days, it is considered as rule-governed performance and as a communication strategy (as cited in Duran, 1994, p.4). Zentella (1981) indentified CS (code switching) as the ability to interchange between the languages in their linguistic inventory (as cited in Gulzar, 2010, p.26). But the occurrence of code switching is not a simple matter in bilingual or multilingual society; rather it illustrates a person's background and cultural identity.

A number of code switching researchers such as Auer (1998); Gumperz (1982); Heller (1988); Li & Milroy (1995); Myers-Scotton (1993) and Shin & Milroy (2000) suggest that code switching is used as an additional source to achieve specific interactional goals with other speakers (as cited in Shin, 2010, p.91). On the other hand, Bollinger (1975) mentioned that bilinguals use code switching as conversational tactics to lessen communication difficulties that may ascend during conversation (as cited in Inuwa, Christopher and Bakrin, 2014, p. 44).

As a research topic, code switching or CS certainly has an enriched literature. Most of the studies that were previously conducted were based on different theoretical models (sociolinguistic theories/ grammatical in nature). The sociolinguistic approach has examined languages in contact in bilingual or migrant communities and concerns itself with the social and political motivations for its use. For instance, Moyer (1998) studied codes switching as a conversational strategy in Gibraltar, where Spanish and English have been in contact for several hundred years; Milroy and Wei (1995) investigated the usage of social networks by bilingual communities in Britain; Yamamoto (2001) researched social networks used by Japanese/English speakers in Los Angeles and MacSwan, (2000) studied Spanish/Neuhuatl speakers in Arizona (as cited in Lowi, 2005, p.1393). Undoubtedly, the study of language alternation has been successful over the decades. But researchers focused more on syntax, morphology or phonology of code switching. Azuma (1991) stated that a structural focus has

been similarly constructive for production models or as syntax, morphology or phonology of code switching. Azuma (1991) stated that a structural focus has been similarly constructive for production models or as evidence for grammatical theory (as cited in Nilep, 2006, p.2). But this structural focus fails to answer the basic question of “why” code switching occurs. So to understand “why” it occurs So to understand “why” it occurs, first we need to focus on the factors that influence code switching.

According to some scholars of linguistics, as quoted in Ayeomoni (2006), the factors of code switching are: intra-group identity, poetic creativity and the expression of modernization (as cited in Bista, 2010, p.4). Previous researchers such as: Castells et al. (2006); Sue (2003); Myer-Scotton (1993) had named common factors that affect an individual’s reasoning for code-switching (as cited in Khatib and Sabbah , 2008, p.39). Benitze (2008) mentioned these factors as 1) environmental settings, 2) audience, 3) conversations with embarrassing or uncomfortable topics, and 4) picking up “cues” from others that serve as an invitation to speak both languages (as cited in Khatib and Sabbah , 2008, p.40). Gumperz,(2004) states that some research findings have indicated that one of the major factors of code switching is that elements of the other language convey the meaning of the intended idea more accurately (as cited in Bista, 2010, p.4). Another important factor for code switching is the desire to emphasis on something. Zentella (1997) claimed that code-switching is used to emphasize important details of a conversation. Switches between two codes are also used to check, especially when a speaker wants the listener’s opinion or approval. The role of switching for checking usually occurs in the form of a tag question (as cited in Halim and Meros, 2014, p.128).

P. Auer (1998) identified eight conversational loci in which code switching are frequent: a) reported speech, b) change of participant constellation (address selection and the use of code switching to include/exclude/marginalize participants or bystanders), c) Parentheses or side comments, d) reiterations (quasi-translations into the other language for the purpose of putting emphasis on demands, requests, for clarification, attracting attention and the regulation of turn taking), e) change of activity type (also referred to as mode shift or role shift), f) topic shift, g) puns, language play and shift of key, h) topicalization and topic/comment structure (as cited in Lowi, 2005, p. 1394). Based on previous research, all these factors influence bilinguals to switch codes. But it does not necessarily means that each and every one of these factors will be active during code switching. Rather different factors will be influencing bilinguals in different times. Now, it should be mentioned that code switching can be of three types. Each type occur in divers situation which sometimes even help us to identify whether a bilingual is “balanced” or “non balanced”. Poplack’ (2000) stated “balanced bilingual” will display a noticeable preference for what she calls the “more complex or ‘intimate’” type of code-switching. Non-balanced bilinguals (e.g. speakers who have acquired the second language later in life) supposedly prefer what Poplack terms “emblematic” code-switching, i.e. tag switches and single-noun switches (which are often hard to distinguish from lexical borrowings) (as cited in Tsiplakou, 2009, p.363).

It can occur within sentences (intra-sentential); between sentences (inter-sentential) or on extra-sentential level that indicates an occurrence in which a bilingual may attach a tag from one language code into a statement in another code, alternatively known as tag switching (as cited in Inuwa, Christopher and Barkin, 2014, p.44).

2.3 Types of Code Switching

a. Tag switching

Tag-switching is basically the inclusion of a tag in one language in an utterance which is completely in the other language, e.g. *you know, I mean, right?* Due to the syntactic character of tags, they can be inserted in various places in an utterance without disturbing the syntactic order. According to Kanakri and Ionescu (2010), in tag switching, the tag and certain set of phrases in one language is added with another language (p.183).

A clear example will be: “Just because you did not win the match does not mean it is the end of the world, *tai na?*” (*tai na means – right ?*)

b. Inter-sentential

This switching occurs between sentences. It switches at a clause or sentence level. In which each clause or sentence is in different language. Inter-sentential switching requires more fluency in both languages than tag switching because the portions have to follow the rules of both languages. For example: “Ami jete chain na. What about you?” (Ami jete chain na meaning : I do not want to go).

c. Intra-sentential

Intra-sentential switching is a type of code switching that occurs within a clause or sentence boundary. It occurs in the middle of a sentence. For example: “ami eto tired chalam j I had to take a rickshaw” (meaning: I was so tired I had to take a rickshaw). The complexity of this type of switching is explained by the high probability of violation of syntactic rules, as well as the requirement of a great knowledge of both grammars and how they map onto each other (Jalil, 2009, p.4).

2.4 Code switching in Computer mediated communication (CMC)

Facebook, the world's largest social network website that allows users to connect with other people, share information and communicate online, is an electronic media where code-switching occurs often. Non-verbal communication provides bilinguals with different conditions for code switching. The hybridizing feature of the CMC motivates the creativity in the language online, particularly in a bilingual speech community due to the availability of an additional language or communication. So it is natural that code-switching behavior would be incorporated into their interaction in cyberspace. Among the bilingual communications worldwide, English is the lingua franca across different contexts; such as: politics and academics and most of the English-educated bilinguals often code-mix English and their native language in online communications.

UNESCO suggests that 'new media, including broadcast media and the Internet, usually serve only to expand the scope and power of the dominant language at the expense of endangered languages' (UNESCO, 2003, p. 11). Although Bangla language is not endangered, the influence of social networks has affected our language greatly. Morris (2007); O' Riaga'in et al. (2008) and Wei (2000) thinks, social networks are accepted as an important site for the development of language practice and of language norms, particularly in opposition to the standard norms (as cited in Cunliffe, Morris & Prys, 2013, p.339).

While extensive studies have been done to explain the linguistic phenomenon in verbal communication, the area of code-switching in computer-mediated communication has not been clearly defined especially in social networking website that has only become popular in the recent few years. But many linguists have studied code switching in CMC or Computer Mediated Communication environment, which can be related to this study.

Communication through internet is known as computer-mediated communication. As Herring (1996) said, CMC is defined as communication that takes place between human beings via the instrumentality of computers (as cited in Huang, 2009, p. 12.3). Hine (2000) and Murray (1995) mentioned CMC can be divided into text-based, audio-visual, and mixed forms (as cited in Huang, 2009, p. 123). According to Herring (2004) discourse in CMC was researched and now is recognized as exhibiting unique manner of communication, representing the term computer-mediated discourse, encompassing all kinds of interpersonal communication carried out on the internet, e.g., by email, instant messaging, web discussion boards, and chat channels (as cited in Huang, 2009, p. 12.4).

Boyd & Ellison (2007) define social network sites as web-based services that allow users to construct a public or private profile within a system, a list of users' friends and a view of their list of connections and those made by others within that system (as cited in Shafie and Nayan, 2013, p.188). Electronic media are informal, or at best semi-formal in their nature that encourage the use of English, firstly, due to this sense of safety and acceptance, and secondly, because this is a space where people interact with friends as well as strangers from other countries (Dabrowska, 2013, p.64). Baron (2008), Seidlhofer (2006) Trousdale (2010) thinks social media, such as Facebook, Google+ or Youtube, where making new friends is not too hard, particularly for someone who knows English comparatively well, English has become one of the markers of Computer Mediated Discourse – a marker of the CMC community of practice, especially in some types of CMC registers (Dabrowska, 2013, p.64). Gumperz (1982) says, to express social meanings in response to the situation and other social variables motivate bilinguals to switch codes. On the whole, certain linguistic restriction and social features are

usually the motivating factors in the bilingual acts of selecting a particular language variety hence code switching (as cited in Inuwa, Christopher and Bakrin, 2014, p.44). Linguistic features refer to the grammatical structure and constraint of the languages that generally decide on the patterns of code-switching.

Warschauer, El Said & Zohry (2002) studied English and Arabic language use in email communication by a group of young professionals. In that study it was found that a Romanized version of Egyptian Arabic was most frequently used in informal email messages and in online chats but English for formal emails. It also showed how situational code switching functions in CMC (as cited in Glodberg, 2009, p.3)

Goldberg studied Spanish-English code switching in email exchange of five Latin American participants and found out English was used for professional and work related matter and minority language for situations (Goldberg, 2009, p.3).

Durham (2003) examined a corpus of 996 emails collected from 1999 to 2000 to find out the language choice of medical students in Switzerland. The instructions were given in German but students started to use English. Because it worked as a non-native means of communication for all of them (as cited in Cárdenas-Claros and Isharyanti, p.72).

Huang (2004) investigated language choice and use in the emails used for interpersonal communication written by 8 Chinese-English bilinguals in Taiwan. And found out, just like Goldberg, that Chinese is used to express their personal ideas and thoughts and English for internet and international identity (as cited in Cárdenas-Claros and Isharyanti, p.72).

Ho (2006) studied the code switching of 21 tertiary students in Hong Kong while using ICQ (an instant messaging computer program). The result is similar to that of Goldberg and Huang's.

English was used for technology and academic matters and Chinese in traditional context. But Ho mentioned something very important that is also applicable in Bangladeshi context. She said usage of two languages illustrate the identity of the new generation of Hong Kong (as cited in Cárdenas-Claros and Isharyanti, p.73). The Facebook users selected for this paper are young people, whose code switching does give them a separate identity.

Among many linguists, David Crystal has shed some light on this matter. According to him, the Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) have influenced the writing and speaking form (as cited in Cárdenas-Claros and Isharyanti, p.72). Herring (2001) suggests that CMC environments give vague impression regarding the distinction between spoken and written form (as cited in Cárdenas-Claros and Isharyanti, p.72). As a result people use colloquial features of regional accent, reaction signals (you know, you see) and phrasal repetition etc. So communication done in CMC environment resembles face-face communication. In Bangladesh today, people have grown a habit of switching codes which is also reflected in their written text in Facebook. Here David Crystal's viewpoint would be appropriate to mention. He said users simplify their language to meet the goal of interactive communication (as cited in Cárdenas-Claros and Isharyanti, p.72).

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

For this study, mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) has been selected. And in this chapter, the description of the participants, data collection process and analysis procedures will be explained.

3.1 Research Methodology

In qualitative research, researchers conduct the research in the natural settings where they inquire about answers in the real world. Data is collected through careful observation and in depth personal interviews and also based on based what they observe, hear, comprehend from various events. The purpose is to learn some aspect of social world and at the same time get some new understanding which can be used.

I have selected Qualitative research approach because in this approach data is subjective; it is derived from individuals' interpretation of events and is collected through careful observation. Quantitative research refers to the systematic empirical investigation of social phenomena via statistical, mathematical or numerical data or computational techniques (Quantitative research, 2014, para 1). This method was also followed to present the data. To preserve accuracy of the collected data, numbers were shown in percentage.

3.2 Data collection

3.2.1 Instruments

To collect data, observation and questionnaire methods were followed for this investigation.

I observed FB statuses and replies for those statuses. Only statuses and replies where code switching occurred were collected to study. In this method, 120 wall posts were observed. 4

statuses from each participant were recorded. Among those 4, 2 were with either a family member (cousin or sibling) or a friend and the other two with colleagues.

On the other hand, the questionnaire consists of two parts: first part was the survey questions and the second one was open-ended questions. To gain an insight regarding the reasons for code switching, a carefully structured survey questionnaire was designed. It had had eight multiple choice questions. Questions that were relevant to the concept of code switching and might elicit answers from the participant's reasons for code switching were included in the survey questionnaire. Also, an open ended question was designed to obtain a deeper knowledge regarding the research topic. The reason I have selected open ended-question is because participants can respond in detail rather than answering using plain "agreed" or "disagree".

3.2.2 Participants

For this study 30 active Facebook users were selected. Every one of them is Bangladeshi citizen and native Bangla speaker. All of them agreed to participate in this research. The real names of the interlocutors were replaced by another name in order to protect the subject's privacy. Ensuring participants' privacy and confidentiality is very important. I have also taken consent from each and every respondent and explained the purpose of my research before collecting data. They were also told that they can withdraw at any moment they want.

Table 1 below shows the background information of the participants. This table only contains the name of the participants not the people who replied back or made comments to the status.

Name	Age	Gender	School (medium of study)	University Private/Public	Works at / Profession
Faria,	29	F	Bangla	Private	Admin officer
Noreen	29	F	Bangla	Private	Graphic designer

Zara	30	F	Bangla	Private	Computer engineer
Fahad	30	M	Bangla	Private	Businessman (Owner of a restaurant)
Marufa	28	F	Bangla	Private	Junior officer of a foreign NGO
Abir	27	M	Bangla	Private	English medium teacher
Nafisa	25	F	Bangla	Private	Intern of a bank
Jenny	30	F	Bangla	Private	O'level teacher
Asad	26	M	Bangla	Private	Intern of a bank
Taohid	29	M	Bangla	Private	Journalist
Ahad	28	M	Bangla	Private	H.R assistant
Hasna	26	F	Bangla	Private	Eng. Teacher
Neha	30	F	Bangla	Private	English medium teacher (elementary)
Sohel	27	M	Bangla	Private	Engineer
Farhana	30	M	Bangla	Private	Assistant project coordinator (NGO)
Tania	25	F	Bangla	Private	Graphic designer
Mahin	26	M	Bangla	Private	English medium teacher
Rashed	30	M	Bangla	Private	Admin officer
Didarul	28	M	Bangla	Private	H.R assistant
Zafrin	29	F	Bangla	Private	Market researcher
Sara	30	F	Bangla	Private	Medical officer
Fareen	25	F	Bangla	Private	Junio officer(bank)
Adiba	28	F	Bangla	Private	Graphic designer

Shatu	29	F	Bangla	Private	Engineer
Mushfique	30	M	Bangla	Private	Engineer
Fairuz	27	M	Bangla	Private	Software engineer
Roni	26	M	Bangla	Private	Bank intern
Nirob	28	M	Bangla	Private	Market researcher
Shanto	30	M	Bangla	Private	Assistant sales manager
Fahmi	29	M	Bangla	Private	Designer

Table 1: The demographic table of participants

.2.3 Procedure

Only statuses where actual code-switching occurred within the same posts were considered as data. These data were collected from 10th July, 2013 – 20th July 2014. A total of 120 status updates containing language switching codes were recorded. Four statuses per participants were collected for this paper along with the replies for those statuses by participant's friends, cousins, siblings and colleagues. In order to avoid uncertainty, the corpus was presented in its original form with all its flaws such as misspellings, shortened forms of texts, smiley, emoticons or incorrect grammar. No changes were made in the statuses or wall comments in case it alters the real meaning. To distinguish between the base language and code-switching discourse, all Bangla words were italicized and they were also translated into English which were put in first bracket.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the procedure of organizing and bringing structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is time consuming, creative, and fascinating (Rossman & Rallies, 2007). In qualitative research collecting data and interpretation comes concurrently. For this research, first I gathered all the statuses and replies where code switching occurred. I studied the survey questionnaire and open ended questions where participants shared their opinion. Also data were analyzed in percentage. After that I tried to relate it with the literature review and investigated whether it answered my research questions.

3.3.1 Analysis of Facebook status and replies

After analyzing the data it was found out that in Facebook intra-sentential code switching, tag switching and intra-word switching occurs most in conversation with friends and family. Their discourse in Facebook illustrates a verbal form of conversation than a written one. Conversations between friends or family members are very informal since they have a close relation with each other. The participants writing demonstrate shortening of texts, usage of a large number of emoticons and verbal expressions such as “ufff” (annoyed), “aaaa” (wondering), “PLLLS” (begging), “HAH” (mocking). And sometimes switches occur for the purposes of emphasis.

For example:

i) A conversation between two friends

- Noreen: *Rojae office korata disguuuuusting!* (emphasis)
- Rohan: office rule is totally *FALTU!* School e job *korle* at least1 month vacation *katate partam!!*

- Noreen: boss *der kaji amder pain dae:p*
- Rohan : that's y THEY r the boss, *tai na?* :p

It can be seen in this example that the respondent, Noreen wrote in an informal way. Both her and Rohan's code switching occurs in intra-sentential level. Their writing portray a form of verbal communication more than a written one. Noreen wrote her first sentence in Bangla but switched to English by adding the word "disguuuuusting". Also, Rohan in his first sentence, while writing in English, suddenly switched code and wrote "*FALTU*" (Bogus). To emphasis on these two words they not only switched codes but also extended the word disgusting to "disguuuuusting" and "faltu" to "*FALTU*". In the last sentence Rohan used tag switching "that's y they r the boss,*tai na?*" It shows that Rohan is asking for Noreen's opinion.

ii) A conversation between Marufa and her cousin :

- Lira: today's ma birthday ☺ ☺ ☺
- Marufa: happy bday *prio sis!!!!* :D ☺
- Lira: thank u:) *amk Ita notun mobile gift korna* :D :D !!!
- Marufa:*ja bhag!*
- Lira: *appi PLLLLLS! Tui na onek BEAUTIFUL* :D
- Marufa: OH GOD *tel marish na!* I dnt like *tel mara!*
- Lira: *uffff !!Bhabs !*

In the first sentence it can be seen that she wrote the whole sentence in English and added a Bangla word “prio” which made it is an intra-sentential code switching. Lira stressed the word please into “PLLLLLS” to show Marufa how desperately she wants the gift. She stated the next sentence in Bangla and switched to English. She also added “s” suffix with the Bangla word Bhab (meaning: being moody. Here she meant “you are being full of yourself”) which turned into intra -word switching. To emphasis on her word Marufa started her third sentence in English, writing, “OH GOD” but continued it in Bangla. In Lira’s third sentence intra-sentential code switching can be noticed. She began her sentence in Bangla but added the English word beautiful in capital letters.

iii) A conversation between Faria and her friend Rimi:

- Neha: can anyone tell me *bhalo lawn kothae paoa jae?*
- Rimi: aaaaaaaaa ...Fb *tei to ase !!!!*
- Neha: ☹*koi?SHOBBAI pae* but not me..! :’(
- Rimi: *chinta maatkor yaar....* Im sendin u a link *okhane dekh.*
- Neha: thank u<3

This conversation shows intra-sentential code switching in sentence 1, 2 and 3. In the third sentence we can see Faria wrote in Hindi first and continued it in both English to Bangla.

iv) Conversation between sisters:

- Jenny :how could brazil do this to US?????? :’(
- Linda :☺☺☺ :D *ami happy* :D
- Jenny : I will pray *jeno tor Germany hare* :p
- Linda: no way :D I think *ora jitbe..tui dekhis*

- Jenny: *dekha jak u idiot* :P :p

Jenny updated her status in English with a sad emoticon but without switching codes. Her sister Linda used emoticon (happy) and said “*ami* happy” which is intra-sentential switching.

After her sister’s response, Jenny continued the conversation informally in intra-sentential code switching.

v) **Conversation between cousins:**

- Hasna: Shopping *dhamaka* b4 eid day — feeling :D awesome
- Sohani: Uffff damn tired ..*pura perafied hoe* gesilam but *mojja hoise* :p
- Hasna: *eto koshto* was worth it, ryt ;) ?
- Sohani: I luv my new *lal dress* ☺ ☺
- Hasna: *ami bhabsilm otabeshi boro*...but then I saw it was ok.
- Sohani: :D *cholna*.. lets do this again!!
- Hasna: wait *kor*, *ei month ersalary ta pai* then we will go

Hasna wrote her status in English but added a Hindi word “*Dhamaka*”. This whole conversation was carried out in intra-sentential code switching. Here again another intra word switching can be seen, which is “*perafied*”. The word “*pera*” is a slang meaning pain. And “*fied*” suffix was added to make it a mixture of both language.

On the other hand, from the collected data I have found out the participants either uses inter-sentential code switching or no code switching at all when they are communicating with their colleagues. For example:

vi) A conversation between colleagues:

- Faria: what a day!
- Adnan: yeah! tell me about it!
- Faria :*rojar time ta emoni.*
- Adnan: *kobe j eid ashbe!!*
- Faria: that's the only thing we can look forward to, ryt ?
- Adnan: yes :D

In this conversation, code switching occurred only in the third sentence where “Faria” added the English word “time” in a Bangla sentence. It is also noticeable that when Faria started writing in English Adnan responded in English. But when she wrote in Bangla Adnan replied in Bangla. Faria only wrote the English word “time” in her second sentence. But the rest of the sentence was written in Bangla. Only in this sentence intra-sentential code switching occurred.

vii) A conversation between colleagues:

- Farhana: Hi Abir, did u get the mail I sent you?
- Abir: yes, thanks.
- Farhana: Don't mention it. *Kal iftar e ashchona ?*
- Abir: No, sorry. *Bashae ektukaj ache.*
- Farhana: *ashle bhalo hoto.* Oh well, there is always a next time for these things, tc.

Abir and his colleague Farhana did not use any code switching like Noreen did with Rohan or Marufa did with Lira. Rather both Abir and Farhana finished one sentence in Bangla and then

started another one in English. Their code switching is inter-sentential code switching. Their language is very formal too.

viii) A conversation between colleagues:

- Tania: *shono, goto kal tomar kaj ta korte parini*☺
- Nafisa: *ami kore felechi*☺
- Tania: Sorry☺ I will help u next time.
- Nafisa: no worries: D
- Tania : I hope u did not mind
- Nafisa:I didn't. *achcha, ka lektu age ashte parba?*
- Tania: sure.
- Nafisa: ok, see u.
- Tania :bye:D

In this conversation no intra-sentential code switching took place. Another important thing is, when Tania wrote in Bangla and English Nafisa answered accordingly. Only in the 7th sentence she used inter-sentential code switching. And this is also situational code switching.

ix) Shanto's conversation with her co-workers (Nafis and Kamal) and her friend Mithila.

- Shanto: whn brazil lost,felt ashamed,bt today its upsetting. Honestly wishd 4u argentina...wishd 2c a winning smile on messi
- Mithila: yayyyyyyyyyyyyyy!!!!!!!!!! Grmny way 2go.... *tora haru patti!!!*
- Shanto : @Mithila *dur ho ...gt lost !* :p:p:p:p
- Nafis: Nope show no mercy!!! Hitler's country it is!!!!

- Shanto : @ Nafis right you are!
- Kamal: *Har-jit onekta bhagyer bapar, kitchukorernei, jaMessi-erhasitepariskar*
- Shanto: *asholei dada*

This example clearly shows how personal relation affects code switching. Shanto updated his status in English but responded differently to each people. His friend Mithila wrote in both Bangla and English which was intra –sentential code switching and Shanto also used intra –sentential code switching with additional emoticon and shortening of texts (for instance gt – get; Mithila used Grmny - Germany, 2go – to go). But while replying to a colleague, he did not use any short version of texts. Nafis wrote in English and Kamla in Bangla. But Shanto did not switch code with either of them and followed their language pattern.

x) Mushfique’s conversation with his co-worker Nasrin and his friend Reza.

- Mushfique: Awesome *ekta din katalam* simple awesome.
- Reza: n all credits go to me, *tai na?*
- Mushfique: thnks dost☺
- Reza: *amar mone hoe* next tym I will reserve the place b4 we go, *ki bolish?*
- Mushfique: hmmm kora jae
- Nasrin: *eto khshi keno ?*
- Mushfique: *Apu onek din por moja korlam bondhuder shathe.*
- Nasrin: Good to hear. *Ashole bastota eto bereche karo jonnoi time dea jae.*
- Mushfique: *thik bolechen.*

This conversation portrays the different language use with friends and colleagues. Mushfique in his first and second sentence used intra-sentential code switching. Reza in his first sentence used

tag switching and in second sentence he used intra-sentential switching. It is clear that Mushfiqu's co-worker is older than him because he called her apu (an honorific term Bangla speaker use to address older women). Nasrin used inter-sentential code switching in her first sentence and wrote the next in plain Bangla without switching codes. Mushifiqu in both case replied in Bangla without switching codes.

3.3.2 Analysis of questionnaires

In the questionnaire section first the personal data (name, age, education etc) of the respondents were collected. There were seven survey questions(multiple choice, where they could select more than one answer if they wanted to) and three open-ended questions.

The survey question and their responses:

1. With whom do you talk to most in Facebook? (you can choose more than one option)

a) Friends, b) family members, c) colleagues.

- 30 out of 30 answered : a)friends and c) colleagues

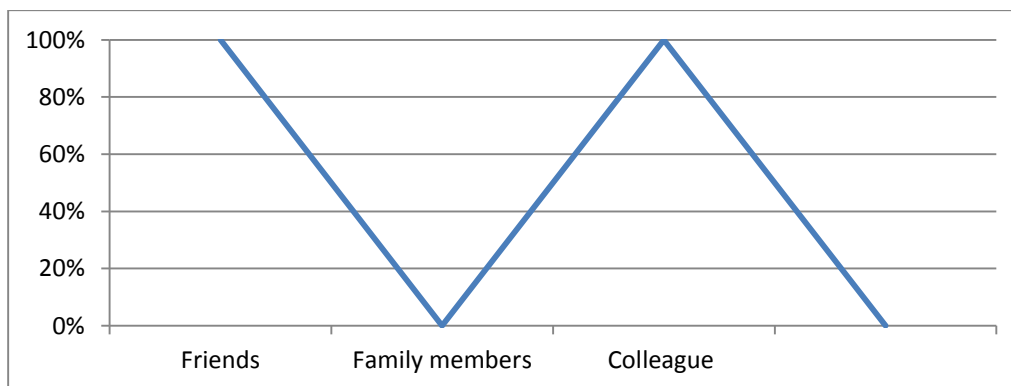


Figure 1: People the respondents communicate with most.

2. Which language do you use more in Facebook?

a) Bangle, b) English, c) both

- All of the participants answered: c) both.

3. Do you switch languages outside Facebook?

- a) Yes, b) no

Everyone answered: a) Yes

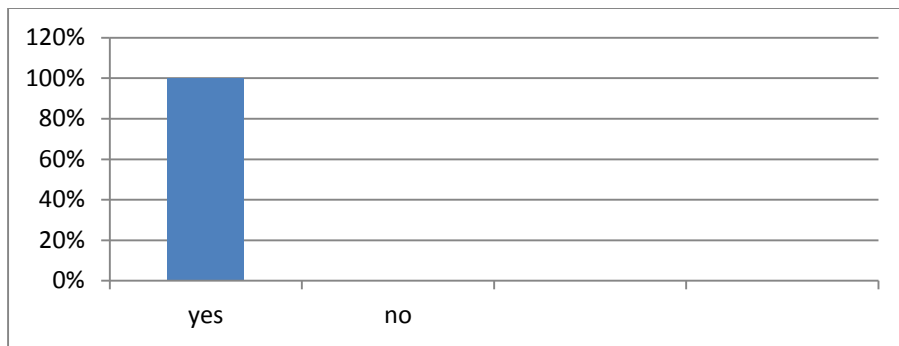


Figure 2: People who switch code outside Facebook

4. You switch codes because (you can choose more than one option if you want to)

a) It is easy to communicate that way, b) I am used it c) I feel comfortable

- 25 out of 30 participants answered: a) It is easy to communicate that way
- 5 out of 30 answered : b)I am used it

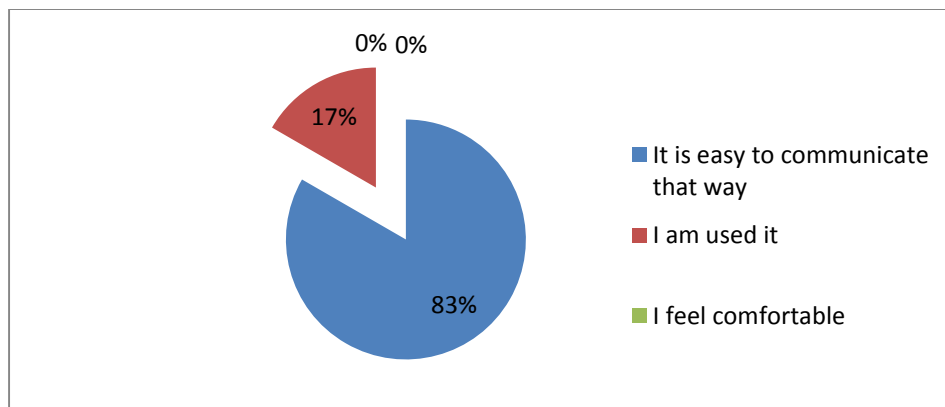


Figure 3: Reason for switching code

5. "It's hard to find an equivalent for both Bangla and English words" do you-

a) Agree b) disagree c) none

- Everyone answered : a) Agree

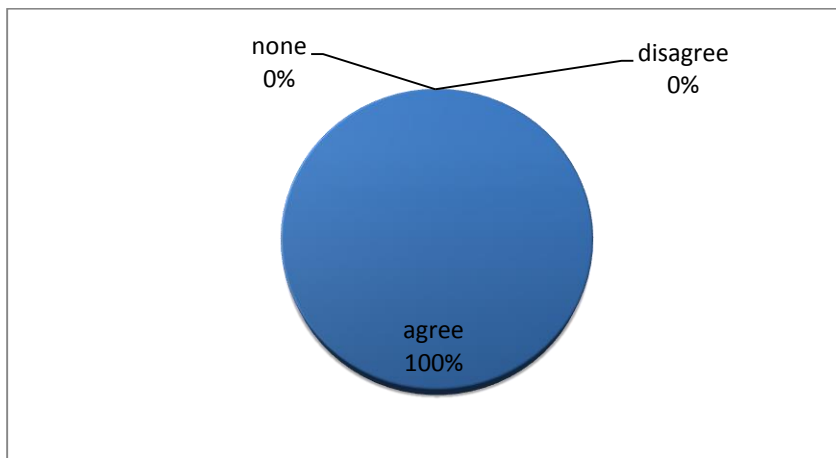


Figure 4: Switching for equivalent word

6. Do you think that code switching has negative impact on your mother tongue?

a) Yes, b) no c) maybe

- 27 participants answered : b) no
- 3 answered c) maybe

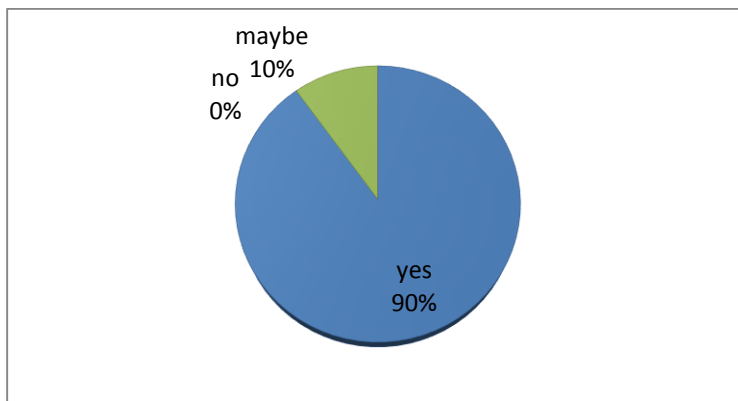


Figure 5: People who think Facebook has a negative impact on language.

7. Other than writing on Facebook, where else do you switch codes?

a) sms b) on line chatting c) informal email

Everyone chose both: a) sms b) on line chatting

8. Which language do you mostly use when you are writing status?

a) English b) Bangla c) mixed (using both language together)

- 13 answered a) English
- 17 answered c) mixed

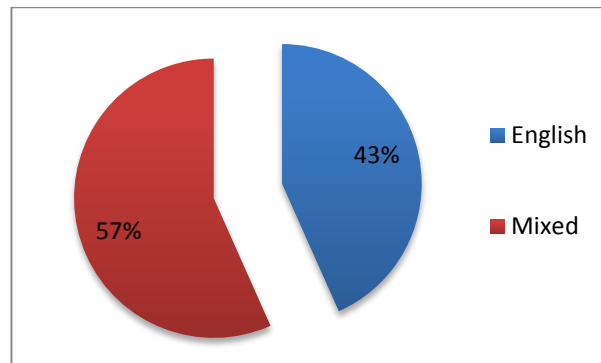


Figure 6: People who use English and mixed language in status

8. Do you think using two languages together has created a new way of communication?

a) Yes, b) no, c) maybe

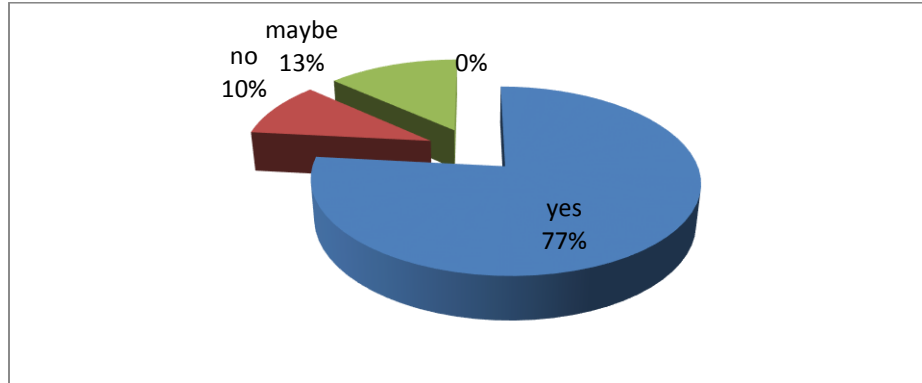


Figure 7: People who think code switching creates a new language

The survey shows 100% people communicate with their friends and colleagues in fb. All of them use of English and Bangla when they write status or comments. 100% switch codes outside fb. 83% switch because it is easy to communicate using two languages and 17% does it because they are use it. 100% people switch because they cannot find equivalent word in one language. 90% users think using two language concurrently have no negative impact on any language but 10% believes the impact is harmful. 43% people said they use English to write status And 57% says they mix both language. 77% respondents think using both languages have created a new way of communication, 10% disagreed and 13% replied maybe.

From the collected data it's clear that all the participants switch code outside Facebook. Mostly because they are used to it or feel comfortable to communicate using two languages. And one of the most contributing factors for switching codes is – when they cannot remember a word in either Bangla or English they switch code. But when they write an email, whether formal or informal, none of the respondents switch codes.

Open-ended questions:

These open-ended questions were emailed to the respondents. The questions were:

1. *Why do you switch codes in Facebook even when you are talking to a native Bangla speaker?*

Out of 30, 23 respondents said switching codes have become quite spontaneous. Since they are used to it and they communicate outside Facebook the same way, they do not hold back in online either. This way they can express themselves better. Asad states *“I have studied in Bangla medium until high school. When I got admitted in North South University all the courses were in English. Most of the teachers spoke in English and few of them used both Bangla and English in their lectures. So....it just happens you know. Using Bangla at home and in the streets but English in the class, with teachers, students and now in office I use both Bangla and English. Now this way of communicating seems natural to me. That’s why I use both Bangla and English in Facebook because it is spontaneous”*.

Ahad wrote *“I can’t use Bengali with a native English or Hindi speaker, can I? All the Bengali FB users know both Bengali and English. By mixing two languages we can express more. And I switch back to English especially when I cannot remember Bengali word”* Mahin said, *“sometime English can convey my msg better than Bangla. Like the word “awesome” it does have any suitable Bangla equivalent.”*

Like Ahad and Mahin 25 other participants also mentioned they switch to English when they cannot find a suitable Bangla word.

Noreen mentioned, *“In Facebook, when I am writing something I want to sound like I am “talking”!And when I talk I mix both Bangla and English ..I want to sound natural. Facebook is more like a home, where I can be who I am!”*

From Noreen’s point of view it can be said that in Facebook people want to be themselves. They do not want be formal. As a result, they use informal words and expressions and write in a way as if they are talking.

According to Faria, *“Facebook is my own space and I have added people I like so that I do not have to act like someone I am not. Usually I mix a lot of English words in Bangla..and I like to talk that way.”*

From Faria’s answer I think it is safe to assume that people feel free and feel like they can be who they are when they are using Facebook. It includes the use of language too. In verbal conversation Noreen and Faria switch from Bangla to English or English to Bangla. As they believe FB to be their own personal space their writing illustrates an informal form rather than a formal one. 15 other participants answered shared Noreen and Faria’s view.

Only Nafisa, Marufa and Taohid mentioned this way of communication is “accepted by all” which means this is how people around them communicate. So they feel like they should not do anything different.

Farhana said, *“In face to face communication we don’t use only Bangla or English. We start talking in Bangla but change it in the conversational flow..it’s a habit”.*

Among 30 respondents 25 of them wrote, they change their language from Bangla to English so show importance of a word or a feeling. For instance, Zara wrote in the open ended question,

“Actually it has become spontaneous ...I think.. I mean, when I feel strongly about something I tend to change that language. It feels like I am translating, like: “*ami kokhnnoi jabo na ..Never*” or “Keno hobe na... why?” I just quoted a line from my Fb wall, because this is how I write in my wall and in others”.

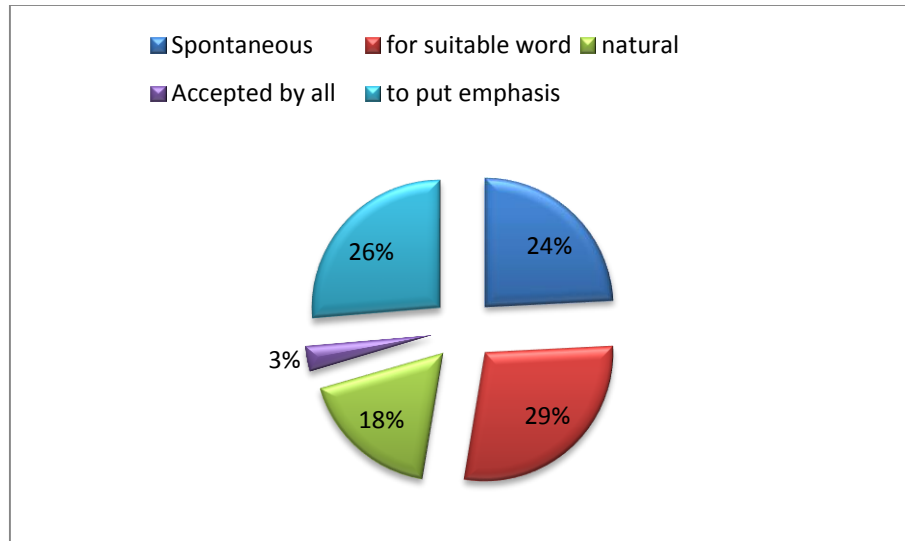


Figure 8: Reasons for switching code

Among all the respondents 26% switch code to put emphasis, 24% because it is spontaneous, 29% for equivalent word, 18% because the occurrence is natural and only 3% switch because it is an accepted norm.

2. *Which languages do you mostly use? Why? Please explain.*

Every one said: Bangla and English. But Hasna said she also like to use Hindi (but rarely).

20 participants mentioned use of language depends on the topic. For example, Sohel said, “when I am writing a status or comment about movie, music or about a hangout with my friends I switch from Bangla to English a lot. Because that’s how I usually talk. But if I am talking a political issue or something serious in FB I generally use English.”

10 participants said they use English mostly. But it basically depends on how other people are responding. Neha said, “I update my status in English mostly and sometimes Bangla. The way I answer depend on how I am responded. If my friends reply in English I simply answer in plain English and if they use both languages I answer like them. It depends.”

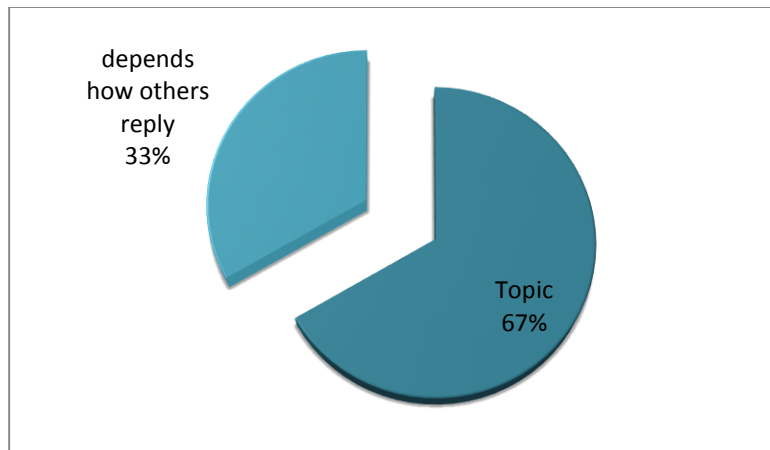


Figure 9: Use of language depends on these two factors

While answering for the second question 33% replied their choice of code depends on interlocutor. If the other person is switching code they will switch if not they will write in one language. On the other hand, 67% participants said it depends on the topic they are writing about.

3. Your use of code switching with colleagues is different than the one you use with your friends and family members. Can explain why?

All the participants explained that, they cannot talk to their colleagues the way they talk to their friends and family. And intra-sentential code switching is a very informal means of communication. Noreen mentioned, “Many senior colleagues find it improper to switch from Bangla to English within one sentence. What I have experienced is that they expect us to finish a sentence in one language. You can start the next one in another.. they do not mind that.”

Tania mentioned the term “*Language etiquette*” in her email. That means when we are communicating with our colleagues we need to follow certain rules. In a conversation jumping from one language to another within one sentence is not very formal. We talk differently with different persons depending on our relationship. Fahad stated, “when you are talking to a senior co-worker your language should be formal and proper. And formal and proper stands for either using “fluent English” or “clear Bangla”. All 30 participants agree that when they are talking to a senior co-worker, they use their language carefully and properly. They finish their sentence in one language and start the next one in another.

10 respondents said, they switch from Bangla to English but not as frequently as they do with their friends. Zafrin mentioned, “When I am talking to a friend I really don’t pay attention to my language ..whether I am talking Bangla or English ..to be frank I don’t even notice when I am switching! But with my coworkers, I am careful like anyone else”.

25 participants out of 30 stated if the colleague they are writing to is someone close to their age or have a friendly relation with they will switch code within a sentence. For instance, Raihan mentioned, “there are few of my co-workers with whom I am friendly, not as close as my friends from school, but fairly friendly. With them I change language within one sentence. For example : *bhai kaj ta kintu valo korlen na* ..it was really mean (a sentence I write last night in FB comment).”

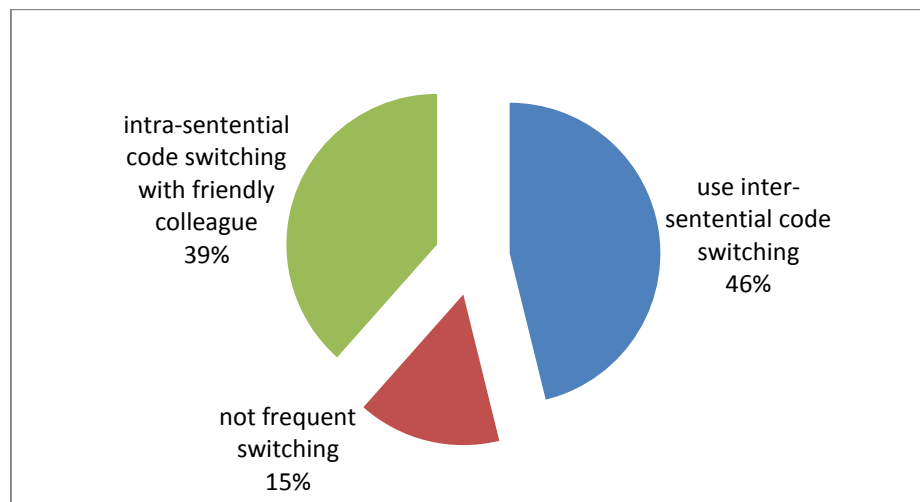


Figure 10: Types of code switching with colleagues

Although most the participants (45%) agreed their language is very formal with their colleague but the ratio shows and interesting fact.38% use intra-sentential code switching with colleagues they are friendly with. That means intra-sentential switch occurs only when people have a close relation. 15% said they do not switch code often with colleague.

4. Do you ever use intra-word switching (like perafied, bhabs) with your colleague?

“It entirely depends on the relation I have with my colleague” said Mushfique. And the other 29 participants answer was the same.

16 participants stated specifically that although it depends on the relation with their co-worker, they might make an exception for the people who are close to their age. Hasna mentioned, “I use these expressions with co-workers who are of my age or is younger/older by 2/3 years. Because these words are of our generation. They will understand it better than others. But I would never dream of using such mixture of language with my senior colleagues.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

The purpose of my study was to identify the reasons that encourage Bangladeshi FB users to switch code. In this section the findings are presented and demonstrated on the basis of the analyzed data I have gathered from FB conversations, survey questionnaire and open ended questions. I have *tried to present the data rationally in order to answer my research questions.*

Research Question 1. Why do Bangladeshi people switch codes when they are communicating with other native Bangla speaker? What motivates them?

- The data reveals the fact that most of the Bangladeshi FB users switch code because it has become spontaneous. The participants selected for this study have developed a bilingual characteristic due to their educational background and professional environment. They not only switch code in cyber space but also in verbal discourse.
- According to the majority of the participants (26 out of 30) switching codes help them to convey their message in a better way. Especially when they cannot find a word in one language they switch to another to keep the flow of the conversation.
- Most of them consider FB to be their own personal place. As a result they write statuses or comment using the language they apply in everyday life. Since they want to sound natural they also use colloquial forms of language.
- Another reason for code switching is the feeling of solidarity. Three of the respondents mentioned they use English with Bangla because most of the FB users communicate that way.
- Switching code also occur based on topic. When people write about entertainment (movie, music, time they spent with friends) they switch code. But when they are writing regarding something serious they usually do not switch.

- A mean of emphasizing on a specific word or feeling is one of the major contributing factors for code switching. Many participants answered that when they want to highlight a feeling or topic they switch from one language to another.
- When participants cannot find a word in one language they switch to another. And it is also an easier way of communication for them since all of them are bilinguals. Most of them think it has created a new way of communication where they can express themselves better.

Research Question 2. What type of code switching (e.g. tag switching, intra-sentential code switching, inter-sentential code switching) occurs most in their FB statuses and the replies they get?

This question inquires about the type of code switching that occurs most in FB.

- It was revealed from the conversation and open-ended question that switching codes depends entirely on personal relation. When friends are replying to their friend's status, they use intra-sentential code switching to express their feeling.
- Although FB users use intra-sentential code switching with colleagues they have a friendly relation with.
- Sometimes tag switching occurs to clarify something or to get an opinion.
- With colleagues, especially with senior colleagues, FB users apply inter-sentential code switching.
- Co-workers of almost same age tend to use intra-word switching as they would understand the reference better than others.

Research Question 3. Does the type of code switching in FB vary based on personal relation?

The way people switch code in Facebook depends completely on personal relation. Fb users write their status either in English or use both languages together. But when they are writing replying someone it depends on the relation they have with that person. When the user is replying to a friend he chooses intra-sentential code switching. Since the relation is informal.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

This chapter portrays a brief review of the findings of this research paper along with the reference from literature review. Examples of code switching described in the literature were found in the conversations among the participants.

In an earlier time, code switching was seen as interference (as cited in Duran, 1994, p.4). But from the collected data of this study it is clear that code switching is a communicative strategy which is neither a corruption of language nor interference. Rather it keeps the continuity and fluency of communication. Because of educational background and workplace, using two languages concurrently has become spontaneous for the selected bilinguals. Participants regard them as natural occurrence. But they apply different types of switching with different people. The participants are all aware of who they are communicating with. As a result they use the informal way or intra-sentential code switching with friends and families and inter-sentential code switching in formal situation i.e. colleagues. And they are maintaining this rule of using different codes with different people successfully. So it can be said, code switching is not a random practice but a rule-governed communication strategy.

Bangladeshi Facebook users employ code-switching as a tool to enhance their interaction in cyber space. According to the findings and literature review, the way Fb users use languages, they can be identified as a new generation. All the participants studied in Bangla medium upto grade 12 and later entered private universities where all the courses were taught in English. As professional, they use English for all written work. As a result they have acquired bilingual distinctiveness. The users' manipulation of both English and Bangla helps them to accomplish their communicative intentions.

As CMC environments give vague impression regarding the distinction between spoken and written form the language Facebook users use in their status and comment is colloquial. Rather than following a written form they express their feeling in a more verbal way. People think Fb is their own space. It is because electronic media itself is informal in nature. And code switching is encouraged there because of the feeling of acceptance and safety where people communicate with friends, family and even strangers (Dabrowska, 2013, p.64).

Zentella (1997) claimed that code-switching is used to emphasize important details of a conversation. Switches between two codes are also used to check, especially when a speaker wants the listener's opinion or approval. The role of switching for checking usually occurs in the form of a tag question.

Participants sometimes face difficulty when they cannot remember a word while writing a status or commenting on something. It is said that bilinguals use code switching as conversational tactics to lessen communication difficulties (Inuwa, Christopher and Bakrin, 2014, p. 44). From the information that was collected from the participants it was seen that to keep the flow of the conversation they use the synonym of that word in another language. We can relate this to code switching theory - when people switch code for linguistic competence to make up for the linguistic gap.

Among the four factors Benitze (2008) stated (environmental setting, audience, topic, picking up cues) it is evident from the findings that two factors are very influential for Bangladeshi Facebook users; those are: topic and cues. People tend to use a more relaxed way of language (intra-sentential code switching) when they write about entertainment, media or leisure time activities. Some participants respond the way they are responded. When someone writes in

Bangla/English they switch codes accordingly. On the other hand, they do not mix languages when they are writing about serious matters. Their writing on Facebook becomes formal.

In this study it was found that Facebook users write differently to their senior colleagues. As these people find intra-sentential code switching improper, the participants employ a different type of code switching (inter-sentential code switching) with them. And sometimes do not switch at all but answer in the code the seniors are using. So it can be said that one of the intriguing factor of code switching, as Benitze (2008) stated, depends on who the audience is.

Using Bangla and English at the same time in cyber space which strictly depends on human relation has indeed developed a new communicative strategy. It also gives these people a separate identity. As Chen (2006) stated, when someone selects one or more languages a person reveal his or her social relation with others and establish individual identity (p.17). According to Like Chen, Kroskrity (1993), Nishimura (1995) and Woolard (1989) stated, code switching in a particular language in bilingual discourse signals ethnic identity (as cited in Shin, 2010, p.91)..

It was also mentioned before that balance bilinguals choose more complex code switching and non balance bilingual prefer “emblematic” code-switching, for instance – tag switching. But from the findings of this paper, it was seen participants who used are tag switching are not non balanced. Rather they have a very good command in their second language (English). They are producing the whole sentence in English and adding Bangla tag switching at the end of sentence.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

Code switching and Facebook is closely related. People tend to switch code in Facebook for many reasons. But the main reason of code switching to occur, I think is, because of the bilingual characteristic we have acquired. Among the 30 participant half studied in Bangla medium till 12th grade. But after entering private university for higher degree, they were exposed to English language more. Their current job also demands the use of English language more than Bangla. As a result they have acquired bilingual behavior. Participants who studied in English medium until high school (12th grade) also obtain bilingual characteristic because of their education and current job. Whether it is for the professional reason or the impact of media and foreign entertainments -we have become bilinguals. And there is also the case of maintaining solidarity – that means the feeling of belonging together as a group. So we have started to switch code both in both oral and cyber communication. This study has proved that we use different forms of code switching based on the social relationship we have with people. And this relation is also reflected in our use of language in Facebook.

6.2 Limitation

This study was conducted with a small sample (participants). As a result the data I collected is not sufficient to make any claims which I can apply to a large amount of people. For future study more data should be collected with a number of participants.

6.3 Recommendations:

- Bangladeshi fb users use of code switching in Facebook is unique and very interesting . If more research is conducted regarding this topic we might gain new knowledge about the motivating of code switching.

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*Appendix (i)***Survey questionnaire**

Dear respondent,

Please fill in the questionnaire carefully and don't leave any question answered. I assure you that all the data will be kept confidential and will be used in research work only.

Your cooperation in this regard shall be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in anticipation

The purpose of this survey is to find out “why do Bangladeshi people *switch codes* in Facebook?” To switch code or code switching means – when we use both Bangla and English in a conversation. For better understanding examples are given here:

1. “Etobiroktolagebhireboshethakte! *I just hate it!*”
2. “Linda, cholnashopping e jai! Oneknotun *dressesheche.*”
3. “The movie was really nice, *tai na?*”

Please write your information below:

a)Name:

b)Age: years

c) Gender: Male/Female

d)Educational background:

e)Level of study:

f)Profession:

g)Mother language:.....

h)Second language:

1. With whom do you talk to most in Facebook? (you can choose more than one option)

a) Friends, b) family members, c) colleagues.

2. Which language do you use more in Facebook?

a) Bangle, b) English , c) both

3. Do you switch languages outside Facebook ?

a) Yes, b) no

4. You switch codes because (you can choose more than one option if you want to)

a) It is easy to communicate that way, b) I am used it c) I feel comfortable

5. "It's hard to find an equivalent for both Bangla and English words" do you-

a) Agree b) disagree c) none

6. Do you think that code switching has negative impact on your mother tongue?

a) Yes, b) no c) maybe

7. Other than writing on Facebook, where else do you switch codes?

a) sms b) on line chatting, c)informal email

Everyone chose both :a) sms b) on line chatting

8. Do you think using two languages together has created a new way of communication?

a) Yes, b) no, c) maybe

Appendix (ii)
Open-ended questions

1. Why do you switch codes?

2. Which lanaguge do you mostly use together? Why?

3. Why does your code switching vary depending on the relationship with whom you are communicating?

