CODE-SWITCHING AMONG UZBEK-ENGLISH BILINGUAL STUDENTS: A STUDY OF LINGUISTIC AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract: *The study of code-switching among Uzbek-English bilingual students is truly essential linguistic research topic that explores the relationship between language, culture, and education in multilingual contexts. In Uzbekistan, the increasing use of English in both formal and informal settings has influenced the speech behavior of students, who frequently switch between Uzbek and English in academic situations and communication. The main objective of this research is to examine the types, frequency and functions of code-switching and identify the advantages and disadvantages sides. As a part of this study, the opinions of linguists who contributed to identify the phenomenon of code-switching are considered. On top of that, the aims of this research include determining the dominant types of code-switching, analyzing communicative and pedagogical functions of language alteration, and exploring the social and psychological factors influencing this process. To achieve these aims, several methods were applied such as descriptive analysis, discourse observation, functional-semantic interpretation, and interview-based analysis.*

Keywords: *Code-switching, bilingualism, pedagogy, Uzbek-English students, sociolinguistics, language learning, discourse, semantic.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, English has become one of the most popular languages in the educational system in Uzbekistan and it is used on a broad scale, giving rise to widespread bilingual interaction. As learners continue to develop proficiency in English while preserving their native Uzbek, they frequently alternate between the two languages in everyday and academic discourse. This linguistic behavior, called code-switching, includes deliberate and spontaneous shifts from one language to another within conversation (Poplack, 1980). This is not only a linguistic phenomenon, it also plays a significant role in social and pedagogical contexts. Therefore, in this research, we will analyze the functions of code-switching and explorer from both social and linguistic sides.

Literature review

Code-switching has been a phenomenon widely studied in the field of sociolinguistics, particularly in multilingual situations involving alternation among different languages for communicative, cognitive or social purposes. On the one hand, many researchers have identified code-switching and given its full definition, as well as types of code-switching. For example, Poplack (1980) was among the first researchers to classify this linguistic behavior, and she distinguished three main types: inter-sentential switches, intra-sentential switches, and tag-switching. We agree with this classification and we conduct our research according to these three types.

Building upon this theme, Gumperz (1982) also stressed the functional importance of codeswitching as a resource for identity construction and conversational coherence.

Similarly, Myers-Scotton (1993) have successfully explained that code switching signifies social roles, relationships, and context appropriateness by alternating languages spoken. Furthermore, tag-switching is the switching of either a tag phrase or word, or both from one language and another. Intra-sentential code-switching is switching occur within a sentence or a clause. Inter-sentential switching occurs outside a sentence or a clause level (Wei,2000). In our research, we try to identify types of code-switching among Uzbek-English university students with the help of Wei's definition of code- switching types.

On the other hand, several researchers have identified the factors of code-switching For example, the use of code-switching serves better in English immersion setting where they provide clarification when a word or a phrase is not known (Mujiono et al., 2013).We agree with this idea, because code-switching is seen among Uzbek-English students because of this factor. On top of that, Auer (1998) stated that factors such as extra linguistic features like topic, setting, relationship between participants, community norms and values, as well as societal, political and ideological developments, influence speakers' choice of language in conversation (Halim & Maros, 2014).

As for pedagogical benefits of code-switching, Puspawatti (2018) and Munaworoh observed that normal use of code-switching in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom can enhance learners' comprehension and boost greater engagement. Similarly, findings by Tahang (2013) revealed that students are more likely to switch between languages to compensate for lexical limitations and convey emotions or focus more effectively. Despite these deep research works, there remains a noticeable lack of studies focusing on English-Uzbek bilinguals. As a result, this research intends to fill this gap by investigating the types, and communicative purposes of code-switching among university students in Uzbekistan's English learning environment.

Methodology

This study involves a qualitative research design aimed at exploring the use and functions of code-switching among Uzbek-English bilingual students in university classrooms. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for in-depth analysis and understanding of natural language behavior in authentic learning situations. Research included many steps: 30 students who are studying in foreign language and English philology faculties were selected. All participants were fluent in Uzbek and had intermediate to advanced proficiency in English. Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews conducted over a two-week period. During this observation, classroom discussions were audio-recorded to capture instances of language alternation.

The collected data were transcribed and analyzed using Poplack's(1980) typological code-switching, which distinguishes three types:

Inter-sentential

Intra-sentential

Tag-switching

Each instance of code-switching was categorized according to her theory.

Results

We analyzed the results of our study and compared them possible results presented the previous researchers. It is clear that all types of code switching are common among Uzbek-English university students.

Types of Code-switching	Description	Example (Uzbek-English)	Percentage (%)
Intra - sentential	Switching within a single sentence	" Men assignmentni ertaga topshiraman "	48%
Inter - sentential	Switching between sentences	" Bugun juda charchadim. And I didn't finidh mu homework"	22%
Tag- switching	Adding single English words/tags	"Ha, It was interesting, actually"	30%

It is clear that the most common type of code switching are intra-sentential, when students switch within a single sentence, while the least popular type is inter – sentential, when they switch between sentences.

In addition, we analyzed the reasons for this phenomenon among Uzbek-English students. The next table shows all reasons fully.

Reasons	Explanation	Percentage (%)
Lexical gap	Students cannot recall Uzbek/English equivalent	45%
Clarity or emphasis	Code-switching helps express idea clearly	28%
Social/peer influence	English seen as modern/prestigious	18%
Habit or bilingual mode	Natural mixing from bilingual environment	12%

It is noticeable that most students tend to forget alternatives for Uzbek/English vocabularies, and then they easily switch them to make their sentences clearer

Discussion

Based on our research and data we have studied, we will discuss the positive and negative aspects of cod-switching, summarize the results, list the issues and obstacles encountered in this research, suggest directions for future research, and briefly and clearly state the main idea and goals.

We must emphasize that the purpose of our research is to explain the code-switching phenomenon among Uzbek-English students, the reasons and discuss its positive results and negative consequences and appropriate advice on how to eliminate these shortcomings in the future.

According to results of our research, the positive sides of using code-switching in conversation and academic setting outweigh its drawbacks. The main benefit of this phenomenon is that it helps to facilitates comprehension and difficult concepts, when students do not understand a complex English term. Secondly, students take part in more actively when they can switch languages.

This is because communication becomes more natural and less stressful. The next benefit is that code-switching acts as a learning strategy similar to scaffolding. It allows

students to connect new English vocabulary or grammar to their Uzbek knowledge, creating stronger understanding. Finally, switching words or sentences from Uzbek to English or English to Uzbek helps students to build confidence. This is because they feel more secure and less anxious when allowed to use both languages instead of forcing themselves to speak only English.

As for negative sides, one of the biggest drawbacks is that frequent code-switching reduces English immersion. Instead of practicing complete sentences, they switch easily to Uzbek whenever a difficulty appears. In addition, it can lead to over-reliance on L1, the mother tongue (Uzbek).

Although using code-switching is indeed useful for students, balance must be maintained to eliminate negative consequences.

Conclusion

In conclusion, code-switching is a widespread linguistic practice among Uzbek-English university students. It reflects their bilingual competence, social identity and learning strategy. While it provides significant benefits, such as facilitating comprehension, reducing anxiety and supporting students' engagement, it also presents some challenges, including reduced English immersion and over-reliance on mother tongue. To eliminate negative sides, it is essential to maintain a balanced approach.

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