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Code-Switching and Social Media in Bangladesh: Emergence of a New English

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Abstract

Using two or more languages in a singular context or conversation is similar to going with the flow these days, specifically on social sites. This is referred to as "code-switching" by sociolinguists. The study aims at finding out the ratio and scenario of code-switching on social media in Bangladesh, and whether a New English has emerged or not for that. The study was conducted on a randomly chosen sample population of 40 participants across the country. It applied a mixed-method approach consisting of both qualitative and quantitative research methods to conduct this study. The study collected data through a close-ended questionnaire sent to the sample population via email, Messenger, WhatsApp, and Google Docs and some relevant data in the form of screenshots from Facebook posts, comments, and messenger chats. The findings of the study show that more than half of the participants in this research does not have the proper knowledge and intention regarding code-switching, and they perform it for sheer convenience in colloquial practice and communication. However, most of the participants do not support code-switching because they are concerned about their English language efficiency. And they also assert that Code-switching does not play a major role in the emergence of new sorts of English language because there are, in truth, other reasons behind this.

Keywords

code-switching, social media, Bangladesh, New English

Introduction

Use of the English language is nothing new in the Bangladeshi context. The preference of code depends on situations, participants, and interactions. Undoubtedly, English as an international language is compulsory for certain factors in Bangladesh. Besides, using it has become our habit, specifically in social media and domestic life. The Bangladeshi people, as non-native speakers, are unable to use or speak English spontaneously all the time. They tend to use the English language on social media mostly as a matter of elegance, smartness, and quicker response. They make an alteration between the Bangla language and the English language within one statement or context. This is how code-switching happens. A useful definition of code-switching for sociocultural linguistic analysis should recognize it as an alternation in the form of communication that signals a context in which the linguistic contribution can be understood (Nilep, 2006). This is an incredibly significant term in the field of bilingualism. The reasons have been explained in the book "Code-switching" by Penelope Gardner-Chloros. According to Gardner-Chloros (2009), it produces crucial material for the process of language comprehension and production. Also, by scanning code-switched speech, we can figure out some convenient combinations of words or morphemes from different languages and some resistant or perhaps impossible words as well. Code-switching on social media is a new phenomenon. This kind of study is very innovative to explore the sociolinguistic aspects and the user's communicative efficiency. Furthermore, it encourages us to open a new door when it comes to the emergence of a New English. This study aims to find out the concept, intention, and ratio regarding switching code among Bangladeshi social media users and the consequences for their English language proficiency. In addition to these, the study evaluates whether code-switching is the sole reason for the emergence of a New English language on social media in Bangladesh.

Code-switching as a term in sociolinguistics has arrested the attention of many scholars and researchers. Specifically, on social media, it has been taking place since the popular social sites expanded. In the past ten years, the research sector has flourished with code-switched data. There are theories regarding code-switching by some linguistic experts. Stand Alone Principle by Shoji Azuma (1998) is mentionable. According to his point of view, people tend to switch any segment which can be "meaningfully stand alone" in speaker's mind. He also mentioned that expressions related to number, time and manner are often switched and can be uttered alone. Another theory is called "The Three Levels of Code Switching by Wei (1994)." He suggests three levels of code-switching. Level A, level B and level C. Level A is mentioned as "Intersentential code switching" when in an organized conversation of two people switches into a different language in turn and being replied by a different language as well. Level B is also like Level A when a speaker uses two or more different languages in one talk or speech. Level C is mentioned as a temporary lexical borrowing when a phrase, word, idiom, or expression is being said in a different language within a sentence. The Markedness model, developed by Carol Myers-Scotton is one of the prominent theories of code-switching. Language users are rational and choose to speak a language that clearly mark their rights and obligations, relative to other speakers, in the conversation and its setting (Myers-Scotton, 1993). Within a conversation or statement, Bangladeshi social media users frequently switch

code (Bangla to English or vice-versa). This study aims to draw a new line in the field of bilingualism. It covers linguistic manners of the people and the effects of code-switching on Bangladeshi social media platforms. There are lots of definitions given by scholars. Likewise, the core information about code-switching is found in Britannica.

In the United States, code-switching was originally studied in the context of second language acquisition as the process whereby native speakers of Spanish shifted from Spanish to English and vice versa. Sociolinguists such as John J. Gumperz were interested more generally in the circumstances that prompted members of a speech community to alternate between their native language and that of the majority population (Morrison, 2017).

Moreover, Britannica includes some background information. Since the 1970s, code-switching among African American pupils has been observed, resulting in a variety of perspectives on the student's home dialect (AAE) and techniques to teach standard English. According to the "correctionist" approach to code-switching, the speaker's home speech is "broken English" or "poor grammar." Correctional officers are also eligible to apply. The study on conventional code-switching reveals the pattern of normal conversation between Spanish-English, Hindi-English, and Slovenian-German speakers. The author made a contrast between passages belonging to two different linguistic patterns or grammatical forms (Morrison, 2017). Gumperz (1997) states that the pattern seems very fluent and normal flow of talking and the purpose is to understand other. Cheshire & Gardner-Chloros (2009) reported finding that women use more standard and fewer nonstandard forms than men in relation to bilingual code-switched data.

Although code-switching is generally considered a nonstandard form of speech, there is no consistent pattern of sex differentiation emerging from the bilingual data. This reinforces our contention that further factors, including the role of nonstandard varieties in particular subgroups and types of discourse, need to be considered in preference to blanket explanations based on gender. (Cheshire & Gardner-Chloros, 2009).

Besides the international studies on code-switching, there is a plethora of code-switched data nationally. From Bangladesh, Hasan & Akhand (2015) observes that some English words are mixed with the Bangla language by some monolinguals. For that reason, the English words seem to be Bangla. This scenario seems similar to the Spanish-English code-switching and mixing. The English words that appear phonologically and morpho-syntactically in the Spanish language are interpreted as part of the Spanish lexicon by the next generation. For higher section of the society, code-switching/mixing is employed as communicative devices as well as for social function, pragmatic function more than these devices are employed by other sections of the society. The higher class of the society bear positive attitude towards code-switching/mixing in greater way and are more motivated using them in conversation than others as the perceived notion of modernization.

The study of Safura & Khadim (2014) on code-switching on the Bangladeshi Facebook platform focuses on the stimulation, regularity, and variation of code-switching on Facebook in Bangladesh.

The way Fb users use languages, they can be identified as a new generation. All the participants studied in Bangla medium up to 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 (Khadim, 2014).

In Bangladesh, code-switching has been reviewed and analyzed from different perspectives for example, code-switching and television media, private universities, public university residential students, four British bilinguals, in advertising, cultural effect etc. The study on television media explores the reasons why they switch codes in their unique way while presenting or interacting in the media. Personalization, clarification, emphasize, messages, substitution, setting, cultural expressiveness, education, professional purpose work as some of the factors behind code switching (Hossain, 2016).

The findings of the present studies on code-switching and social are unique and applicable for multiple purposes. Nonetheless, there is a lack of robust research on emerging a New English for code-switching. The study will find how the Bangladeshi social media users behold the concept and how they justify their linguistic pattern on social media.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study encompass:

- Finding out the extent of code-switching among Bangladeshi people on social media
- Tracing people's intention behind switching code on social media
- Evaluating the emergence of a new kind of English language through codes being switched on social media in Bangladesh
- Weighing if code-switching helps or hinders English language learning

Research Hypothesis

The possible outcome of the research could be,

- Maximum social media users switch and mix codes the most in Bangladesh and use English alphabets to write Bangla language.
- Most of them switch codes only for sheer trend or convenience, not consciously.
- They justify code-switching as a matter of better and quicker communication.
- Code switching between Bangla and English languages helps create a new sort of English.

Method

For conducting this research, mix-method (qualitative and quantitative) is used for observing the real scenario of switching code on social media in Bangladesh. Qualitative method refers to the ideology and perspective of targeted audiences. It provides the textual data. It helps to realize the psychological point of view. However, the analytical section may have some difficulties, as it does not provide the graphical picture or calculative information. In this study we needed to observe the language pattern and choice of code on social media of some Bangladeshi users. That is why it requires their Facebook posts and comments. In terms of textual analysis, the qualitative method has been convenient.

Besides, quantitative method is used for numerical data. The key features of quantitative method are reliable outcome, measurable variant, systematic survey, and precision. It is quite easy to predict the hypothesis in this method. Measurable relationship with the variant. It provides the graphical pictures and calculative equation. It is quite common in quantitative method that it needs the survey through the questionnaire or interview. This study has collected data from Goggle Docs questionnaire which was provided to randomly selected participants

Data collection and analysis

The survey method and observation method have been adapted to collect data from the participants of this study. We made a questionnaire on Google Docs and provided the link via messenger to the targeted audience. Though the researchers sent questionnaire to 60 people, 40 of them responded.

Another method that has been used here is the observation method. The observation method refers to observing the specific characteristics of a group of individuals. Especially for the qualitative research method, this is quite common. Some relevant screen shots of Facebook posts and comments were also collected to analyze them properly and reach a precise prediction. The purpose of the observation method was to see how frequently they switch code, naturally from Bangla to English or vice versa, and how they use English as a language.

Participants

We preferred a simple random sampling technique in this study. From Facebook, we chose 60 Bangladeshi people to fill out the questionnaire form. In Bangladesh, Facebook as a social site is immensely popular and everyone can easily get access to it. As the topic is related to code- switching and the emergence of New English, Facebook is the best option to evaluate these terms for Bangladeshi users.

Results

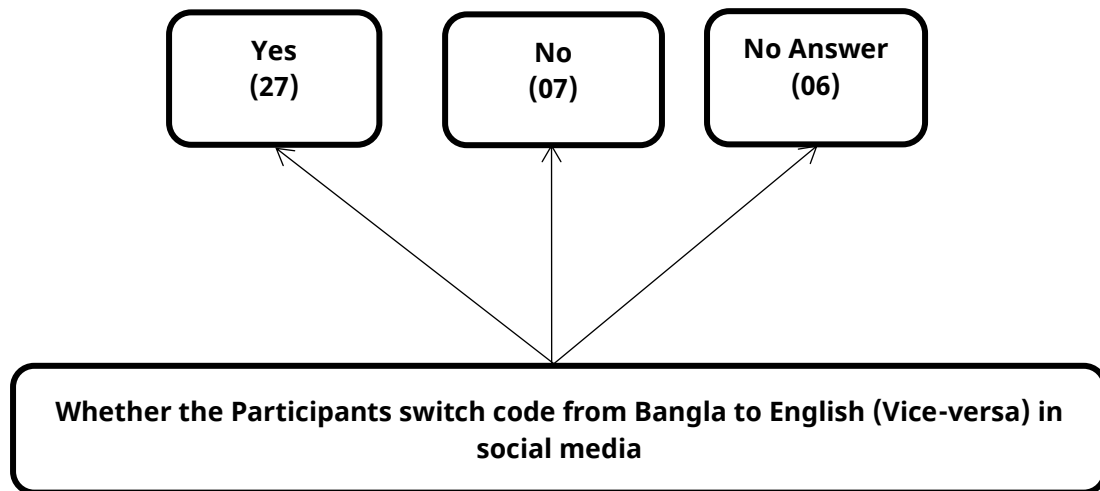


Figure 1. Whether the Participants switch code from Bangla to English (Vice-versa) in Social media

The 40 participants responded to the open-ended and closed-ended survey admit a clear distinction regarding the question of whether the participants switch code from Bangla to English (Vice-versa) in social media, for almost two-thirds of the them (67%) assert that they frequently switch codes from Bangla to English (Vice-versa) when they send messages and make various types of comment and statement on social media while about 17% of them state that they don't switch code from Bangla to English (Vice-versa) in social media. And 06 of the 40 participants leave the question answered.

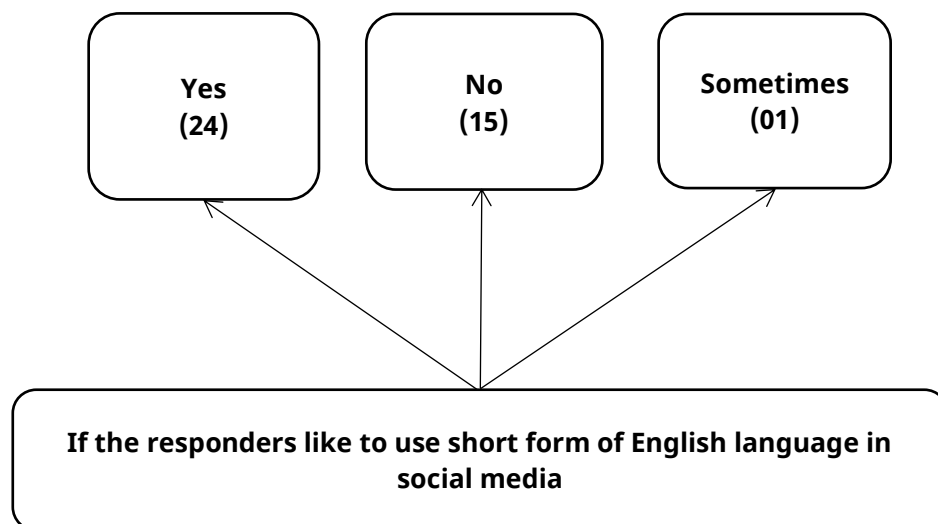


Figure 2. If the participants like to use short form of English language on social media

More than half of the responders (60%) as shown in the pie chart mention that they like to use short form of English language in social media whereas 23% of them ensure that they dislike to use short form of English language on social media. And 01 of the 40

participants states that he sometimes use short form of English language on social media.

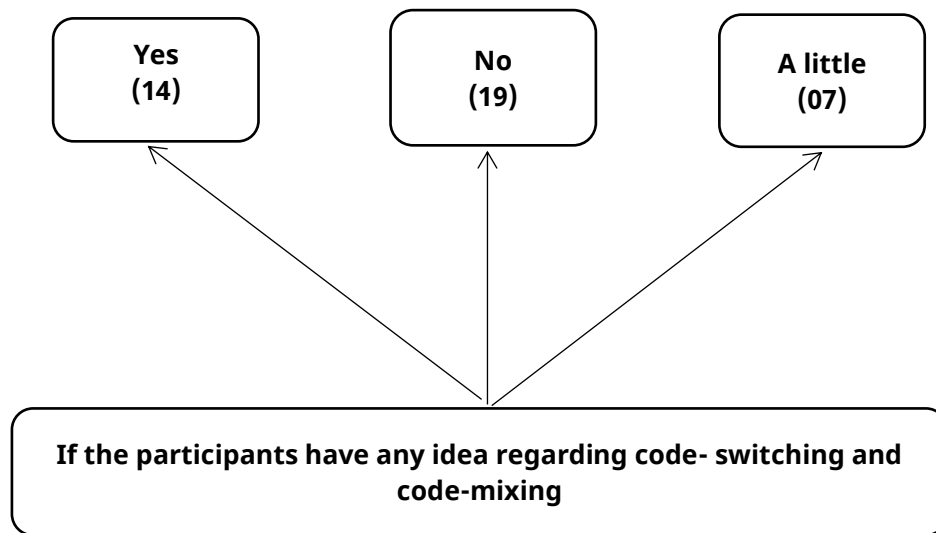


Figure 3. *If the participants have any idea regarding code-switching and code-mixing*

About half of participants (47%) have no idea concerning code-switching and code-mixing while 35% of the participants know the concept of code-switching and code-mixing. The rest of the participants (17 %) have a little knowledge about code-switching and code-mixing.

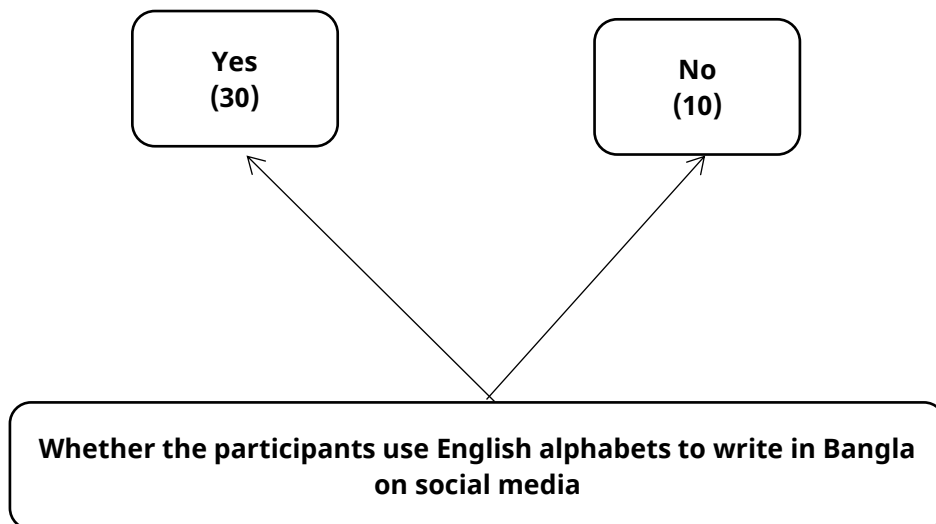


Figure 4. *Whether the participants use English alphabets to write in Bangla on social media.*

More than two-third of the participants (77%) as shown in the pie chart use English alphabets for writing Bangla language on social media. And 23% of them ensure that they don't use English alphabets to write Bangla on social media.

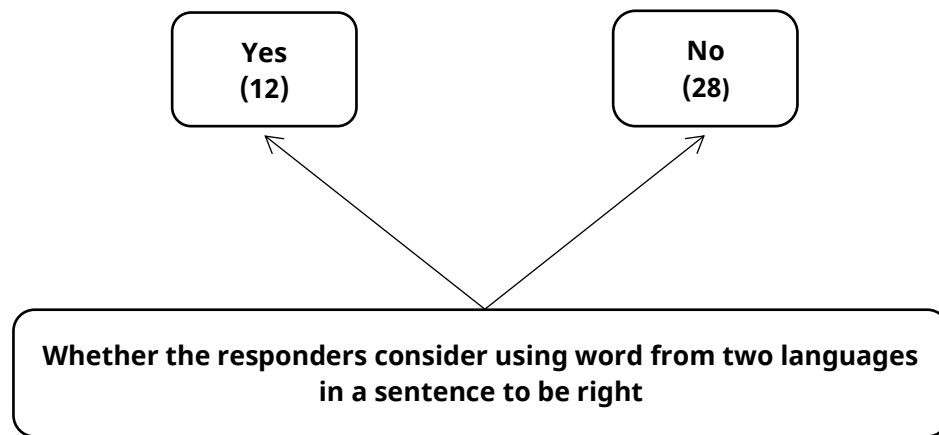


Figure 5. Whether the responders consider using word from two languages in a sentence

Nearly two-third of the participants (69%) do not think using word from two languages in a sentences to be right whereas around 31% of the responders consider code switching to be right. The participants who do not consider it to be fair provide some reason why they acknowledge it as wrong. According to their feedback on this, it makes the sentence short and also is harmful. And it is, in fact, an obstacle to learn language.

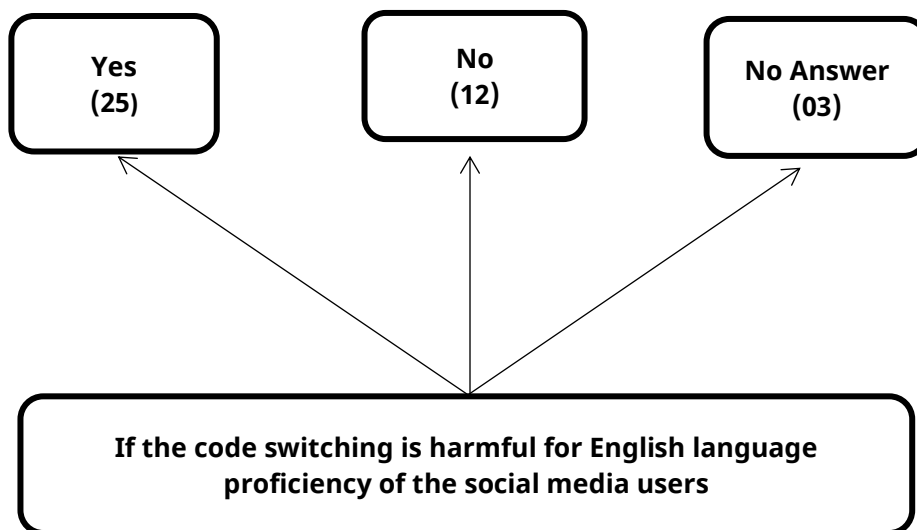


Figure 6. If the code switching is harmful for English language proficiency of the social media users

More than half of the participants (64%) in the question of whether the code switching is harmful for English language proficiency of the social media users affirm that code switching is harmful for English language proficiency of the social media users while 30% of the responders consider code switching not to be harmful. And 03 of the 40 participants leave the question unanswered.

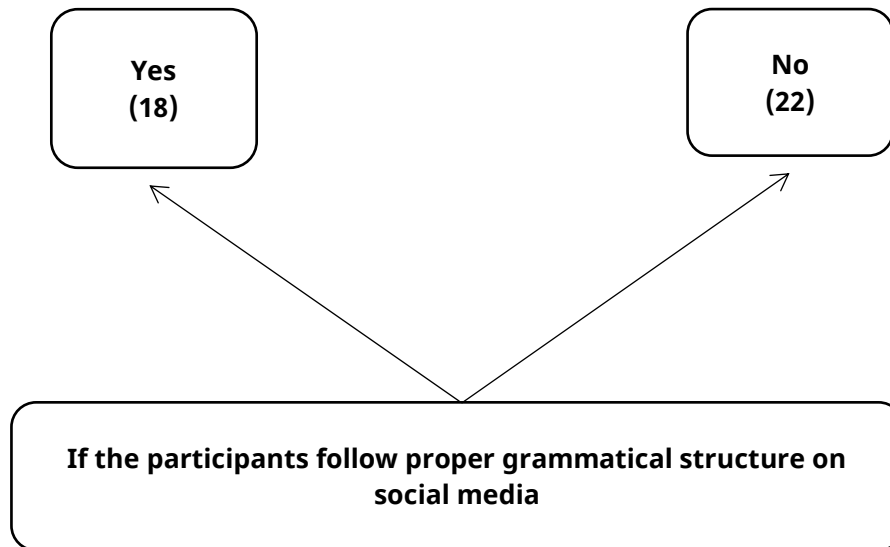


Figure 7. *If the participants follow proper grammatical structure on social media*

About more than half of the participants (55%) state that they do not follow the proper grammatical structure on social media while writing. And less than half (45%) of them follow the proper grammatical structure on social media.

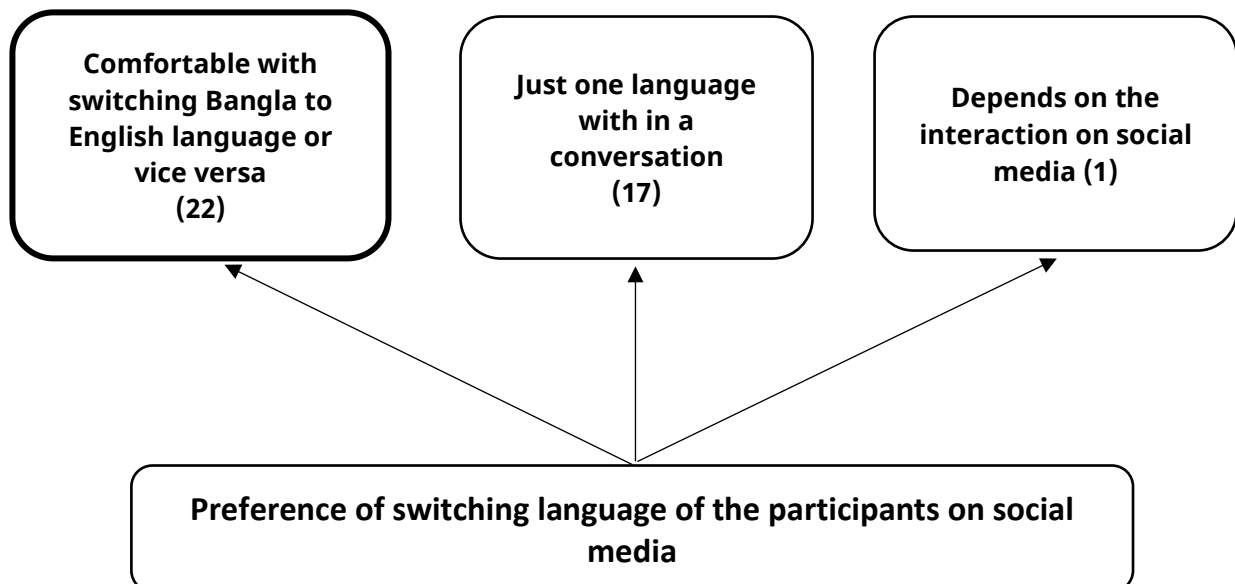


Figure 8. *Preference of switching language of the participants on social media*

About 55% of the participants are comfortable with code-switching on social media while 43% of them assure that they prefer monolingualism on social media. Around 2% of them state that it depends on who they are talking to on social media.

The participants are asked to write their feedback regarding the modification of English language usage by the Bangladeshi social media users. This question gets various types

of responses. More than half of the responders (53%) agree with the following statement. According to them, social media users modify English language on social media. A little percentage (8%) of them do not have any idea about it. About 15% of them disagree on the modification of English language on social media. About 15% of the participants give detailed responses. According to them, using slang, short form of words and informal words of English language are common phenomenon. Bangladeshi social media users use slang, short form of words and informal words of English language in such a manner that at one stage they seem correct to them. Some users do not know how the grammatically errors informal words are used frequently. According to one participant, Bangladeshi social media users confidently use a combination of Bangla and English languages. It decreases the beauty of a language. One of them states that English language is being modified for globalization and it is alright. Also, it happens in all regions. Native speakers have this habit. And around 9% of them leave the question unanswered.

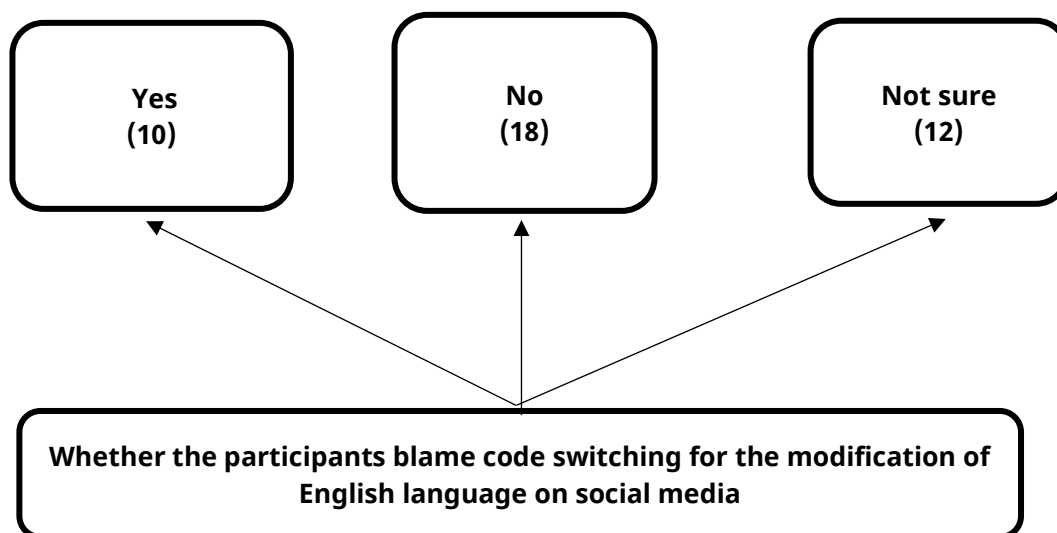


Figure 9. Whether the participants blame code switching for the modification of English language on social media

Around 46% of the participants do not blame code-switching for the emergence of a New English. According to 26% of the participants, code-switching is the reason for the modification of English language. And about 28% of the responders are not sure about this.

Qualitative Data

This study observes some random Facebook posts from individual Facebook account and Facebook page to analyze the linguistic style critically. For the convenience of the reader, the Facebook posts are translated. Also, the alternated code is highlighted.

1. Pic select korte korte tired hoye gechi.. Caption likhte gele r post korai hobena..... Best picnic ever! Anyone who says otherwise I BEG TO DIFFER!

#Department_of_English #picnic2022 (Islam,2022).

Translation: Have been tired of selecting pictures. If I write the caption, it will be impossible to post them. Best picnic ever! Anyone who says otherwise I BEG TO DIFFER!

#Department_of_English #picnic2022

This participant uses English Alphabet to type in Bangla and the word '**Pic**' is the short form of the word **Picture**. After that the remaining part of the post is in English language. This post indicates switching Bangla to English. Also, the use of short form of words happens.

2. আমরা যারা স্টোরি লাভার বা স্টোরি দেখতে পছন্দ করি। তাদের একটাই সমস্যা, না দেখে love react দিয়ে দেই 😊 হোক সেটা দুঃখ জনক বা হাস্যকর 😊👉।

#chill (Talha,2022).

Translation: We the people who love to see story, have one problem. That is, we frequently hit love react without seeing that it is a sad post or happy post.

This participant switches code. The words **story**, **lover**, **love react**, **chill** are the alternated code here.

3. চাকরি করা মেয়েদেরও ততোটা Attitude নেই;

যতটা attitude চুল straight করা মেয়েদের আছে! 😊 (Ahmed,2021)

Translation: Girls who have jobs do not have that much attitude of the girls who have artificially straight hair.

In this post, participant uses one English word, **Attitude** in Bangla sentence. The participant switches Bangla language to English language in this post.

4. 'Face doesn't matter' etar moto boro mithha kotha ar ektaw nai. (Das,2022)

Translation: The term 'Face doesn't matter' is the most hypocrite statement ever.

The user uses English Alphabet to type in Bangla. Also, this user switches English to Bangla language.

Discussion

After going through the finding and analysis, it is precise that the first hypothesis of the study is correct. Maximum social media users switch and mix code in Bangladesh and they use English alphabets to write in Bangla. Also, the second hypothesis is correct. Most of the participants of this research switch code subconsciously only for sheer trend or convenience. They do not have the actual concept and intention of switching code on social media. The analysis indicates that, the third hypothesis is correct. Participants justify code-switching as an easy way of better and quicker communication. Most of them are quite comfortable with this. The last hypothesis is not correct. Code-switching does not play a major role in the emergence of a New English language. There are other reasons behind that such as informal words, short form words, slang, globalization, and

lack of grammatical knowledge etc. The person who switches code can be skilled in English language and he or she may not modify English language. The social media users do it for fun, to communicate quickly and easily, especially the younger generation.

From the research findings, it is obvious that code-switching happens very often on social media in Bangladesh. Maximum responders do not have the idea of code-switching, especially on social media. More than half of them do not follow the grammatical structure on social media. However, maximum participants admit that code-switching can affect their English language efficiency. Approximately half of them think that, people should not switch code within one statement. Using short form, slang, informal words and poor linguistic usages are the reasons for the emergence of new sorts of English language. Participants do not blame the code-switching for that.

Limitation

We could not provide the questionnaire to a large number of people and it was not possible to conduct face to face interview because of lockdown. Also, we could not provide the conversational data on social media because of their privacy.

Conclusion

There is indeed a strong connection between code-switching and social media. Globalization and bilingualism are widely acknowledged as the causes of language modification and code-switching. On social media, linguistic style changes on a daily basis. Switching code makes the conversation easy and quick, but that does not mean that it would reform or modify English grammatical or linguistic structure. There are so many reasons behind the emergence of New English. According to the social media users, code-switching as a regular habit can affect English speaking skills and efficacy. People should have knowledge about situational code-switching. It is not a violation because social media is mostly used for entertainment. They use it as a comfort issue. Learning a second or foreign language can be challenging and appreciable at the same time. The participants do not employ proper grammatical structure on social media, yet they must certainly follow all rules and frameworks in a formal context or taking a test. Code-switching is a common occurrence in Bangladesh. The Emergence of New English means the modern English language or reformed English language. It is understandable that language patterns can be changed because of globalization and media expansion. Besides, it is used in non-native countries where it is not mandatory to communicate in English.

Acknowledgments

N/A

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