FUNCTIONS OF CODE-SWITCHING FROM ARABIC INTO ENGLISH AMONG THE RESIDENTS OF AMMAN, JORDAN

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ABSTRACT

In multilingual communities, there are many language choices available to its members. Speakers choose appropriate codes according to a suitable social context. While Arabic-English code-switching (CS) has received much attention, there is still a dearth of studies dealing with this phenomenon among the dwellers of Amman in every day interactions. This study seeks to explore the domains and reasons for CS between Arabic and English. Copies of a sociolinguistic questionnaire were delivered by hand to 199 respondents. The results show that the residents of Amman use codes-witching from Arabic into English in several domains including at home with family members, at school or university with friends, at malls while shopping, at work with colleagues, and while talking with foreigners. The results also indicate that the social reasons for CS include travelling abroad, having privacy, adding connectors while speaking, to fill a gap in Arabic or English, or due to the lack of competence in them.

Keywords: Code switching, Arabic/English, domains, functions

INTRODUCTION

Language is a social phenomenon which gains some kind of independence and special interest by sociolinguists who have designated different names for this field such as the sociology of language, sociolinguistics, or linguistic anthropology, though the terms diverge in their content. Sociolinguists have covered the most important language issues that are related to society such as ethnicity, social networks, language change, gender, and language variation, language planning, linguistic varieties in multilingual nations, language maintenance, language choice and code-switching in multilingual communities.

In multilingual communities, there are many language choices available to its members. Speakers choose appropriate codes according to a suitable social context. It is expected that bilingual and multilingual-speakers will control their speech by shifting from one language to another. As Romaine (1995, p. 59) points out, "such linguistic behavior is used in societies". She also explained that "not only it refers to bilingual individuals but also the term 'code' refers to different languages as well as to distinct varieties of the same language."

The Language Situation in Jordan

According to the Jordanian constitution, standard Arabic is the official language of the country. It is used in formal situations such as courts, mosques, scientific seminars, conferences, and all official institutions. In daily conversations, spoken Arabic differs from the standard at the regional, social, or ethnic levels. They also differ in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. This situation has allowed people in Jordan to switch among various languages.

English is the main foreign language that is taught in schools and universities. Private schools in Jordan offer national and international programs in which the latter is based on teaching all

subjects in English and this is why English is widely spoken in Jordan. Drbseh (2013), reports that English has received a high attention from the community overtime. There is a big number of educational centers that are concerned with teaching it at different levels. Learning English facilitates communication with tourists who visit the historical attractions in the country. It is not only used in touristic atmospheres, but also in business and private sectors. Most companies today require excellent command in the English language (Drbseh, 2013).

The use of the beautiful mix of English and Arabic in the media i.e. music, art, and television is the most effective way for spreading English in Jordan, for example, most TV's are now equipped with English programming and subtitles and this is taken as the easiest way to acquire this foreign language. (Drbseh, 2013)

Giving English the same attention that Arabic is having not only in education, but also in media, arts, and business, has raised up the level of fluency in English among Jordanians. This can be achieved if business owners, government, and mass media institutions require English to be used by their employees at work.

Statement of the Problem

It is known that language has a close relationship with its society. Even if the standard Arabic is the official language in Jordan, there are many other languages and varieties of Arabic which are used in daily conversations among Jordanians in Amman. It is of interest to find out how the residents of Amman city communicate among themselves in their daily life, why they code switch in the middle of their conversation and explore the situations where they resort to code-switching.

Significance of the Study

Code-switching in society has been viewed by scholars in two opposite ways. Some of them support code-switching while others oppose this phenomenon.

Not only scholars have different opinions but also regular people differ in their views. It is interesting to investigate how the residents of Amman city view code-switching and why they resort to it. Actually, very few studies have been conducted in this area whether in Jordan or in other Arab countries. This study will, hopefully, fill a gap in the empirical literature. It may also benefit students, teachers, researchers, and others who are interested in sociolinguistic studies.

Objectives and Questions of the Study

This study aims to achieve the following goals:

1. Figuring out the social domains where the Ammani people use code-switching between Arabic and English.
2. Finding out the reasons that trigger members of the Ammani society to use code-switching.
3. To achieve these objectives, the study seeks to answer the following questions:
4. In what social domains do the Ammani people code-switch between Arabic and English?
5. What are the reasons that make members of the Ammani society code switch between Arabic and English?

Limitations and Limits of the Study

Results of the study may not be generalized to all residents of Amman. The findings are only limited to the specific sample and the instrument used in this study. This study is conducted in Amman during the Academic year 2019-2020.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of Theoretical Literature and Empirical Studies Related to the Functions of Code-Switching

Hymes (1974, p. 105) views code-switching as "a term which is used to indicate an exchange of two or more languages, varieties of languages and also an exchange in style". Myers-Scotton (1993, p. 3) defines it as "the selection by bilinguals or multilinguals of forms from an embedded variety (or varieties) in utterances of a matrix variety during the same conversation." Similarly, Ayeomoni (2006, p. 90) also describes CS as "a common term for alternative use of two or more languages, varieties of a language or even speech styles." Fromkin, Rodman and Hymes (2002, p. 577) state that CS is "the movement back and forth between two languages or dialects within the same sentences or discourse."

Myers-Scotton (1993) presents four reasons for CS. Firstly, the speaker may switch to fill a gap in the first or second language or due to the lack of competence or knowledge in one language. Secondly, users resort to CS to exclude some listeners from the conversation by switching for the unknown language or to include persons to the conversation to clarify something for them. Thirdly, CS is used as a stylistic device to introduce a specific point in more or less formal setting than what had been under discussion. Lastly, CS is considered as an attempt to impress others by showing the diversity of languages, in other words, it may be used as a kind of prestige.

Holmes (2001) believes that CS is influenced by the topic of interaction, the situation and the addressee. Speakers who share a common ethnic background may switch to their mother tongue in order to show their ethnic identity or express solidarity towards their partner. Additionally, she adds that the participants' linguistic behavior depends on relation among each other. Holmes (2001, p.34) posits that" the speaker may use a various code when communicating with close friends or strangers, family or relatives, colleagues or professors, mother-in-law or mother … etc."

Holmes (2013, p.35) elucidates the social factors affecting the code choices which lead also for CS. People may prefer using one variety than another because it is easier to emphasize one's point, or topic, regardless of the setting of conversation". The social factors that have a great impact on the interaction from Holmes viewpoints are setting, topic, participants and the functions or the purposes of the interaction. She illustrates that the social dimensions such as; status, social distance and formality affect the conversations and lead to code switching. For example, any clear change in the social situation as the arrival of new person may cause change in the interaction due to excluding this new one from the conversation to gain more privacy. Otherwise, code switching is used in this situation for only greeting to express solidarity.

Additionally, Holmes (2013) states that the topic of interaction is the main reason for CS among linguistic styles. It is considered easy to discuss a specific topic by using X code and when the topic is changed the speaker may use Y code. For more clarification, talking about economic and financial issues requires linguistic forms that are totally different from the forms that are used at a religious topic. She adds that CS can appear unconsciously during the happiness, sadness or nervous moments.

Similarly, David (2006) and Fasold (1990) think that language choice is affected by social functions and dimensions such as the status of participants which is divided into classes; high, upper middle, middle, and low whereby speakers of high-class may use X language while speakers of low-class may use Y language. The participants' categories influence language choice for example; gender, age, origin, education level, occupation and not only these issues but ethnicity also plays the main role in choosing among varieties. This matches Holmes (2008) who believes that speakers use a dominant language to create social distance among each other when they share the less dominant language to show and express solidarity in the speech communication.

However, Managan (2004) asserts that any person who belongs to any social network will be a member of a certain language group in case of developing a sense of identity. He adds that using the dominant language gains its speakers more prestige, chance to expand their social networks, a kind of authority or power, and better economic situations.

Crystal (1997) illustrates that CS is sometimes considered as a tool to express the speaker's relation towards the listener. In one word, it determines the social relations for examples; close-friends, family members, relatives, strangers, boss and others. He adds that the main aims for CS are to express solidarity or distance with participants as include or exclude some from the speech. Moreover, Milroy and Muysken (1995) assume that CS is not only a result of the lack of knowledge or competence in one language for the speaker or to fill any linguistic gap, but is a result from complex bilingual skills appointed for enhancing the communication among the society members.

Baker (2006) has proposed main purposes of CS, which are nearly relevant to bilinguals' interactions. He mentioned that CS can be used to clarify a specific point, to fill a gap in the mother tongue or in the embedded language, to illustrate cultural words that may have no equivalent in one of the two languages, to express solidarity or identity among groups, to make jokes, to attract attention, to reduce tension and request. Finally, he believes that CS appears in bilingual situations according to the topics. CS has many different functions which are governed by the topic, participants, context and setting.

Local and International Studies Related to Code-Switching

Mustafa (2010) investigated the phenomenon of SMS code-switching among teenagers in Jordan. The study aimed to discover the phrases of foreign language that are used by the teenagers in writing SMS, the reasons behind spreading this process either from English into Arabic and vice versa, and the attitudes towards this phenomenon. The sample of this study consisted of 150 males and females selected from five schools either private or public and a group of 1500 text messages was collected to accomplish the goals of this study. The instruments that were used to fulfill the objectives of the study were a questionnaire and interviews. The study showed that five factors have led for the spread of code-switching SMS. The researcher confirmed that teenagers mixed between the two languages and caused the phenomenon called Arabizi and clarified the reasons beyond switching to Arabizi rather than Arabic or English.

Albirini (2011) explored the social functions of CS between standard Arabic and Arabic dialect. The data were collected by using thirty-five audio and video recordings in the domains of religious lectures, political debates, and soccer commentaries. The results showed that speakers might use the two varieties to serve different language functions. He confirmed that the CS process reproduced the unequal social values and distribution of standard Arabic and Arabic dialect. The paper discussed other functions of CS such as indicating the speakers' attitudes or Muslim identities.

Yankova (2013) examined the functions and the mechanisms of CS among Bulgarian and Canadian immigrants. This study aimed to reveal the factors that affect CS by focusing on the linguistic behavior of immigrants. This study also investigated the contexts at which the speakers can change their codes. The data were collected by recorded interviews, questionnaires and direct observation. The study found that the reasons towards CS are referential, affective, phatic, metalinguistic and poetic. Finally, the results confirmed that when the speakers wanted to express their emotions, ideas, phenomena, interactions and status they tend to use the target language.

Inuwa, Christopher and Bakrin (2014) explored the factors that motivate code-switching within the social contact of Hausa bilingual speakers at the Utara University Malaysia. The aim of this study was to examine the social factors and dimensions that lead to the code-switching phenomenon. The data were collected by distributing questionnaires among 80 bilingual students. The results proved that code-switching and code-mixing are a matter of speech strategy used by bilinguals for achieving effective communication which is influenced by social factors. Linguistic and social factors that motivate CS between Hausa bilingual speakers include the formality of social setting, the distances among the participants, the speakers' status, the aim of the conversation and the function of language used in the interaction.

Dweik and Qawar (2015) examined language choice and language attitudes in a multilingual Arab Canadian community: Quebec-Canada. The purpose of this study was to discover language choice among Arabs of Quebec-Canada and to find out Arab's attitudes towards three languages which are: Arabic, French and English, and to clarify the reasons behind the using of any variety. The researchers conducted this study by using a sociolinguistic questionnaire. The sample of this study was selected from different categories of Arabs residing in Quebec. The study showed that the Arabs in Quebec utilized Arabic in specific situations or domains such as: at home, mosques and radio stations while they used French or English at official and formal situations, for example: in governmental offices, educational purposes and filling formal applications. The main results of the study showed that the Arabs of Quebec mix these three languages in the neighborhood, with friends and in the media.

Ben Nafa (2015) examined the phenomenon of code-switching and social identity construction among Arabic-English bilinguals. This researcher explored the indirect relationship between different CS patterns which speakers use to show their identities. He analyzed the audio-recorded interactions of a small group of adult females, Arabic-English bilingual friends, who are part of the Arabic-speaking minority in Manchester, UK. The paper has shown that CS was a linguistic device whereby speakers performed multiple aspects of their social identities that were not tied to inherent associations with their languages. He also concluded that Arabic speakers switch to their language to show their solidarity and identity.

Alheeti and Al Abdely (2016) explored the types and functions of CS in the English language used by Iraqi doctors in formal settings. The purposes of this study were exploring the formal settings that led Iraqi doctors to switching, analyzing the types of CS from their speech. It also aimed to show the doctors' perception of English language. The data were collected by recordings and by using direct observations. The result of data analysis revealed that Iraqi doctors used the intra-sentential type of CS more frequently than the tag or inter-sentential types and it showed that they used English for communicative functions.

METHODOLOGY

Sample of the Study

The sample comprised 199 participants. This sample was chosen purposively from the residents of Amman. In choosing the participants, two sampling methods were used. First, the "snowball" sampling method: Brewerton and Millward (2001) define snowball sampling as a purposive sampling method that asks the recent participants to name new participants to take part in the study. They add that this method is considered applicable especially with those participants who have a closed-nature or it is difficult to access them without assistance. The participants were asked to name other members they knew who shared the same background and agree to participate in this study. The second method is "the third party" or "social network" model which is recommended by Milroy and Milroy (1985) which proved to be of high benefit in previous research (e.g., Dweik, Nofal, & Al-Obaidi, 2019). The third party could be choosing friends of friends or relatives of relatives, people who work at the same place or share the same activities, etc.

The selected sample in this study comprised males and females, different ages, different levels of education, different religious backgrounds, different marital status, and different occupations as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage for categorical demographic variables

Variable	*Classification*	*No*	*%*
Gender	Female	100	50.3
	Male	99	49.7
Age	16 – 19	30	15
	20 – 29	85	43
	30 – 39	45	23
	40 – 49	25	13
	Above 50	13	6
Marital Status	Single	99	50
	Married	94	47
	Other	6	3.0
Education Level	High school	48	24
	BA	74	38
	MA	26	13
	Other	49	25
Professional Background	Student	36	18
	Education	26	13
	Business	46	24
	No occupation	22	11
	Civil service (governmental job)	23	12
	Technical field (engineering, medical).	22	11
	Other	21	11
Religious Background	Islam	156	80
	Christianity	34	17
	Other	9	3

Instrument of the Study

The study used a quantitative design research represented by a sociolinguistic questionnaire. In order to conduct the current study, copies of the sociolinguistic questionnaire were delivered by hand to 199 respondents.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first section included questions related to social background of the respondents such as gender, age, level of education, marital status, occupation, and religion. The second section included the domains or situations where the participants code-switch between Arabic and English. This section included the language situations such as home, social occasions, work, school and religious places. The third part of the questionnaire aimed to find out the causes of CS. This section contained statements related to the reasons for code-switching among Jordanian or others in Amman such as; to illustrate intention, to tell joke, to have privacy, to show identity, to include participants, to exclude others, etc. The choice of the questions relied on a three-point scale. The participants were asked to check one answer from the following choices: **Agree, Neutral,** and **Disagree**.

Validity of the Questionnaire

To confirm the validity of the questionnaire, a jury of university professors who are linguists were asked to provide their suggestions and comments on the questions of the questionnaire. They recommended some modifications on the questionnaire. Their comments and suggestions were taken into consideration in the final version of the questionnaire. Then, the supervisor rechecked the questionnaire after the changes had been done to ensure the suitability of the content of the questionnaire.

RESULTS

This study sought to answer the following two research questions:

1. In what social domains do the Ammani people code-switch between Arabic and English?

2. What are the reasons that make members of the Ammani society code switch between Arabic and English?

Results Related to the First Question

Table 2 shows the domains of language use where the respondents use code- switching from Arabic to English.

Table 2. Domains of Code-Switching from Arabic into English

No.	*In what social domains do you CS from Arabic into English?*	*Yes percentage*	*No percentage*
1	While talking with non-natives	79.9	20.1
2	With friends in school or university	78.4	21.6
3	At home with my family	75.4	24.6
4	While expressing emotions	67.8	32.2
5	In the mall while shopping	61.8	38.2
6	At work with my colleagues	61.3	38.7
7	While traveling outside Jordan	57.8	42.2
8	While listening or watching T. V	57.8	42.2
9	While writing	43.7	56.3
10	With relatives at different places	40.7	59.3
11	In social occasions	38.2	61.8

Table 2 shows that the highest percentage of CS from Arabic into English as indicated by (yes) is question 1 with a percentage of (79.9%), question 2 with a percentage of (78.4%), question 3 by a percentage of (75.4%), question 4 with a percentage of (67.8%), and question 5 with a percentage of (61.8%), while, the lowest percentages are in question 6 with a percentage of (61.3%), questions 7 and 8 with a percentage of (57.8%), and question 9 with a percentage of (43.7%). It is clearly shown in table 2 that the highest percentages as indicated by (no) are in question 11 with a percentage of (61.8%), question 10 with a percentage of (59.3%), and question 9 with a percentage (56.3%). Similarly, the lowest percentages in question 1 with a percentage of (20.1%), question 2 with a percentage of (21.6%), and question 3 with a percentage of (24.6%).

Results displayed in Table 2 show that the residents of Amman switch into English while talking with foreigners, and use it with friends in school and university, they also prefer to speak English at home with their families, they utilize English at malls while shopping, and they usually speak English at work with colleagues. The findings also show the domains that the residents of Amman do not prefer to switch to English as in social occasions, with relatives, and while writing. English is used with the family members to practice it as a second language that the students learn in their international schools and to express their needs by using it. These results agree with Skiba's theory (1997) which suggests that CS is utilized in different domains where people feel incapable of expressing themselves or thoughts clearly in the second or foreign language. In this case, when the residents of Amman find themselves incapable of delivering a thought fully in Arabic or English they switch in order to be fully understood. This also agrees with Dweik and Qawar (2015) who report that the Arabs of Quebec mix Arabic, English and French in the neighborhood, the media, and with friends.

Results Related to the Second Question

Table 3 shows the reasons for CS from Arabic into English and its classification as high, medium, and low.

Table 3. Means and percentages for the causes of code-switching from Arabic into English

No.	Statement	Mean	%	Range	Importance
1	To use it while travelling abroad	2.41	80%	1	High
2	To add connectors while speaking	2.41	80%	2	High
3	To have privacy	2.35	78%	3	High
4	To use it with foreigners	2.3	77%	5	High
5	To use it in teaching	2.27	76%	6	Medium
6	To include non-Arabic speakers	2.26	75%	7	Medium
7	To show respect for non-Arab audience	2.25	75%	8	Medium
8	To conduct business with non-Arabs	2.24	75%	9	Medium
9	To use it in mixed marriages	2.06	69%	10	Medium
10	To participate in scientific meetings	2.04	68%	11	Medium
11	For lack of Arabic technical words	2.02	67%	12	Medium
12	To show that I am bilingual	1.87	62%	13	Medium
13	To express myself clearly	1.87	62%	14	Medium
14	To use it in writing messages in the net	1.81	60%	15	Medium
15	To exclude others	1.81	60%	16	Medium
16	To illustrate my intention	1.74	58%	17	Medium
17	To shift from one topic to another	1.73	58%	18	Medium
18	To distinguish myself from the non-educated	1.67	56%	20	Medium
19	To show off	1.63	54%	21	Low
20	To impress listeners	1.6	53%	22	Low
21	To attract attention	1.59	53%	23	Low

The criteria listed below indicate the following three ranges:

> high (from 2.34 – into 3)
> medium (from 1.67 – into 2.33)
> low (from 1.00 – into 1.66)

Results displayed in Table 3 explain the reasons for CS from Arabic into English among the residents of Amman. These reasons are expressed in items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 where around 80% of the participants switch into English while travelling abroad, communicating with foreigners, utilizing English for privacy, and adding connectors while speaking.

It is noticed that the participants add connectors while switching into English as a show off, to show that they are bilinguals, to achieve a high social class or prestige, to indicate their level of education, and to show that they have a living experience in a foreign country. These results support the findings of Milory and Muysken (1995), Hoffman (1991), Hymes (1962), and Myers-Scotton (1993) who report that CS is a process of complex bilingual skills used to enhance the communication among members of community, to add connectors among sentences, to have privacy.

The second group of reasons for CS, indicated by the participants, was of medium importance as shown in Table 3. These reasons included instrumental reasons such as teaching English at schools and universities (76%), participating in business and scientific meetings (75% and 68% respectively), and writing messages in the net (60%).

In addition to that, the participants indicated that they used CS as an act of language. That is, the participants reported that they used CS to include and exclude others from the interaction (75% and 50% respectively). They also reported using CS to show respect for non-Arabic speaking audience, and to distinguish themselves from the non-educated. These results agree with those of Baker (2006) and Crystal (1997). Baker (2006) suggests that CS can be used to express solidarity and identity among group members. Additionally, it is suggested by Crystal (1997) that is a way to express solidarity or distance with others.

However, based on the low percentage of statements 20 and 21, it is clear that the participants are fully aware that English is not simply used to show off, neither it is used to impress listeners or to attract attention. These results contradict Baker's study (2006) who reports that CS can be used to express solidarity or identity among groups, to attract attention, to reduce tension and to request. Yet, these results resonate Holmes' (2001, & 2013) suggestion that social factors including the addressee, situation as well as the topic could influence CS.

CONCLUSIONS

The current study explored the domains and reasons for code-switching among the residents of Amman. The study focused on different areas of Amman and used a sample of 199 participants in the questionnaire.

The overall analysis of the questionnaire indicates that the residents of Amman use the phenomenon of code switching in their speech in most social contexts such as in the following domains:

> While talking with foreigners   While shopping in the mall
> At home with family   At work with colleagues
> At school or university with friends

Additionally, the study highlights a variety of social factors that lead to switching from Arabic into English, which are:

1. To use English while travelling abroad.
2. To clarify some concepts and to make these concepts easier to understand.
3. To gain high status and prestige.
4. To use it with foreigners and tourists in Jordan.
5. To fill a gap in the mother tongue due to the lack of some technical terms.
6. To switch from one topic to another one.
7. To show their level of education and to show that they are bilinguals.
8. To play a main role in adopting English instead of the mother tongue especially in international schools, social media, addressee, the specialized, and topic.

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