CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Basics

3.1.1 Problem Statement

Language Setting: Odia-English

Problem: “The analysis of formal and functional features of Odia-English codeswitching”

Problem Statement: “The Odia-English codeswitching has regular formal features and can be explained using a set of functional factors.”

Many Odia scholars have discussed and debated the influence of English on the Odia language. Some of them have acknowledged the inevitability of codeswitching. Others show far less enthusiasm. The fact still remains that the heavy influx of English words, especially in the capacity of content words has given rise to a new pattern.

The presence of English at word, phrase and clause levels needs a formal analysis to study if the pattern was a random, unguided phenomenon or constraint-bound conscious strategy. The research is thus fuelled by the need for a clear picture on the possibilities and impossibilities of construction or insertion of particular English grammatical structures into Odia.

Additionally, the reasons that explain Hindi-English codeswitching may or may not apply to Odia-English codeswitching. To ascertain, which theories succeed in explaining this language pair’s activity, the study became necessary. It took a leading prediction model
to prove the formal structure rules and a set of explanatory features to verify the reasons behind the switches. The problem was thus addressed in a two-pronged approach.

3.1.2 Need of Research

A lot of work on codeswitching or code-mixing has been done by many scholars. We can find a lot of research papers dealing with the basic nature of codeswitching, patterns, analysis of motivations, morphological implications etc. of codeswitching. But in Odia, a lot of work needs to be done to understand the nuances of codeswitching in it.

How do native speakers of Odia switch codes? No suitable answer has been found to this question. In the present study, it has been attempted to analyse and understand on the basis of data collected from speech samples of those who are native speakers of Odia. English in the practical sense is the second language for them.

3.1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives are now restated to complete the context. Primarily the research study strived to understand the facets of the ideas given below, but not limiting to:

1. To analyse forms of mixed utterances in codeswitching with English in Odia language
2. To determine the reasons behind the phenomenon of codeswitching in Odia-English bilinguals
3. To investigate the popular perception and attitude towards the concept of codeswitching
On a secondary level, the following objectives were pursued to support and append the primary objectives:

4. To chart a brief history of the research trends in codeswitching across the globe

5. To investigate the various models used to understand codeswitching and select one for the research

3.1.4 Research Questions

As a refresher, the research questions are tabled again, here:

A. How Codeswitching from English to Odia and vice versa affect the sentence structure of Odia?

B. Does it really give rise to a new grammatical code?

C. Are there certain rules that can predict forms of codeswitched speech and prohibit other forms?

D. Do the native speakers consciously and deliberately switch codes? Why?

E. Is this type of code-switching automatic or practised?

3.1.5 Research Approach

This study adopted a mixed model (combining both qualitative and quantitative) approach. The qualitative research approach helped break down the recordings transcript into intelligible units which helped explain the various forms created by codeswitching. It was the major chunk of research and thus substantially supports the structural models that have tested the validity of acceptable codeswitching.

The quantitative approach was employed in the survey section to test the theoretical relevance of the Explanation model for the functional features of codeswitching. It helped
in ensuring the predictive generalizations drawn from similar studies holds true for this language pair too.

3.1.6 Research Models

We analysed the linguistic data in purview of the MLF model. We restate the basic arguments:

(i) The MLF model sees codeswitching utterances emerging in two ways:

A: ‘For ML + EL constituents, codeswitching configurations arise through an insertion process.

B: EL islands arise when there is a switching of procedures from those of ML to those of EL.’

(ii) ‘Just as other naturally occurring linguistic data, codeswitching is governed by structural principles of well-formedness; that is, possible combinations can be predicted.’


To analyse the survey and questionnaire data, we used the simplest statistical tools. Since the questionnaire data was qualitative in nature and the objective was to create the conducive background for the survey responses to make sense, it was not analysed per se. rather we kept it as the conditioning agent for the simpler sampling of codeswitching reasons and at best as a reference for any untoward and odd reading that might be observed in the survey responses.
3.1.7 Research Methods

Many socio-linguistic studies originate from a point of spontaneous examination of the language employed in everyday conversation. In fact “it can also be used to complement customary sociolinguistic interviews”. (Labov, 1972, p. 43) In case of the analysis of codeswitching too, the language of the “layman” plays a pivotal role in providing the basic framework of the study. Language interchange or alteration is quintessentially an involuntary linguistic activity. Thus, codeswitching analysis starts with recording the participants in situations where they carry out usual, everyday conversations.

A spontaneous and natural speech sample is almost impossible to acquire if the participant is conscious of being recorded. We rarely can cite a research work where the researcher is not directly involved in the process of obtaining recorded data.

Conversational codeswitching is a natural bilingual phenomenon. It is observed even in monolinguals who are forced to use borrowings to express themselves better. For this research two means of data collection were adopted:

a. Recordings  b. Surveys

3.2 Recordings

Recordings were made of conversations taking place between bilinguals for the language pair Odia-English. This section had two major input sources:

1. Real-life daily conversations

2. Non-simulated talk shows and interviews on local television channels.
3.2.1 Real life daily conversations

These were recorded at many places, ranging from classroom to staffrooms and offices to streets. The situations thus ranged from formal and official to casual and social. The participants in these settings would be picked at random, but preference was given to educated people to elicit as much switches without conscious prompting. The choice of educated people as a speaker group is not against the spirit of research. The reason is that this study was not undertaken to find if Odia speakers codeswitched or not or how much did they do it. Rather, the focus was, what the features of language contact are when they interact in conversational mode. These recordings were made using mid-level smartphones with decent audio quality.

3.2.2 Non-simulated Talk

Talk shows and interviews that had been broadcast on popular local channels were downloaded from their YouTube accounts. Thus the quality loss in external audio recording was easily avoided. The audio obtained was higher than average in its standard. Recordings were also made in the other format (i.e. direct recording) which was carried out in an environment free of distracting noises. Thus, the aggregate of the quality of the raw data is still above the minimum required intelligibility of the voice of the participant.

The programs considered for recording were chosen on the basis of the structure of the program. Scripted and controlled conversations would lack the spontaneity required to analyse natural codeswitching. Hence, free-flowing discussions in the form of panel discussions and interviews were selected to provide stretches of English-mixed Odia. In
such exercises, a moderator apparently regulates the panel discussion or the interview by assigning turns to the speakers.

Though the talk is regulated, there is nothing to hinder free expression of thoughts. The flow is maintained as the participant in the panel follows the cue of wither the host’s question or the other speaker whom s/he wants to support or counter. Programmes such as Janamancha (Public Platform) and Khola Katha (Open Talk) were selected on account of its educated participants and discussion mode and Odisha Political Comedy Circus and News Fuse were discarded due to its mostly scripted nature. However short interviews and bytes were accepted from many other sources like news bulletins and clips in the above discarded programmes.

Myer-Scotton’s Rights and Obligations may not find a perfect match here; yet the degree of freedom in the speech act warrants the validity of the speech sample here. The role of the regulator is more facilitative than restrictive to enable an evenly spread discussion among the enthusiastic members. He also interrupts them and asks them rebutting questions on the statements they make. The whole exercise is not considered free-wheeling but it doesn’t impede the though process of the speakers more than other modes of interaction.

The participants were all Odia-English bilinguals. Their comfort with the EL (English) was commensurate with the background and professional profile. The common feature of the panel’s composition across the episodes was to have a mix of representatives from bureaucracy, politics, specialists in the topics of discussion which could be on legal, administrative, financial, economic or entertainment lines. The common masses who sat
in the audience were given a few opportunities to discuss or ask questions. These also contained samples of codeswitching.

The recordings were played at 4x slower speed to make the phonemes prominent. This helped in avoiding morpheme clusters that sounded similar in normal playback. Having set the audio input in order, the second step involved transcribing them in roman script as a common medium for both languages. Thus, thirty pages of transcript containing more than 9000 words of both codes were obtained after a rigorous process. This bulk of matter was then sifted to extract whole utterances that had even a single non-Odia word.

3.2.3 Recording Settings

Majority of the recordings of the live conversations for this research took place in places the participants found to be comfortable and known. The researcher met them either at their respective home or in restaurants. Sometimes the conversation took place over lunch or dinner. On other occasions they were simply talking to friends at home.

The researcher was present all the time but didn’t participate in the conversation all the time. The recordings were done by the researcher on all occasions. It was relatively easy to arrange such sessions to gather data. The participants eagerly cooperated as the setting and company were known to them. In fact, as per some participants, they didn’t feel being part of a research work but rather being a part of some social gathering. There were a total of 10 hours of recording done.

Participants were encouraged to speak normally and spontaneously as they would do on any social occasion. The researcher always made sure to take detailed notes of the time, place and other such data on all occasions. The researcher used the Nokia E-63 cell-
phone as a sound recorder. The quality of the sound obtained through this recorder was acceptable for this purpose as the phonological analyses did not form a part of the research.

3.2.4 Recording Processing

The transcription of the entire recorded data was a long and punctilious process. In most recordings, there was no interruption from any background noise and the participants spoke in a loud and clear voice. The machines used for recording and processing this corpus of data is not suitable for analysis on a phonological level, it was seen that the speakers stayed faithful to their natural English pronunciation when switching codes.

The sentences and utterances thus obtained, with at least a single foreign element were listed separately in the file. They have been attached here in Appendix. The ensuing method involved selecting the codeswitched elements on the basis of their length and category and putting them under various heads. These heads were created on the basis of grammatical labels. Now, the behaviour of the grammar items was observed in the proximity of the other language. The next step was to find out if there were any impossible switches. This was found out by applying the appropriate linguistic theory to practice.

When the sentences displayed incongruences in the formation or order, the acceptable utterance was suggested keeping the meaning intact. When we had correct sentences, options were explored as to where violations can enter the dictum. These actions were carried out and contained in the section “Possible and Impossible switches”. This analysis may pave the way for a deeper research, in event of a need for a mixed language for
pedagogical or strategic purposes as in Inter-language. The section also shed light on the grammatical restrictions guiding the interaction between English and other languages of the Indo-Aryan group of languages which share a closer association in terms of syntax.

An elaborate discussion of the participants’ attitude towards English pronunciation is presented in the next chapter. Also included is their perception and prediction for such phenomenon in the linguistic landscape of the state. The interviews yielded a huge cache of information which helped with the sociocultural analysis of codeswitching.

3.3 Surveys

The aim of this research is to understand the reasons for codeswitching as a linguistic tool and its perception with the Odia speakers. The study required examining the speech pattern of bilingual native speakers of Odia. The speakers have to be fluent in two languages \textit{i.e.} Odia and English. To meet these goals, in-depth exploratory sociolinguistic interviews with four groups of participants were conducted. The aims were:

- Collection of oral data regarding codeswitching from Odia to English and vice versa

- To examine the participants’ linguistic patterns and language skills with relation to the usage of English

To meet these aims, the researcher carried out a qualitative method of data collection from a research population of forty men and women.

Chilisa and Preece (2005) argue that qualitative research as methodology refers to the type of inquiry in which the researcher carries out research about people’s experiences, in
natural settings, using a variety of techniques such as interviews and observations, and reports’ findings mainly in words rather than statistics. (Di Costa, 2010, p.47)

Richards (2003: 9) presents four reasons for using qualitative methodology as data collecting instruments:

- It gets the researcher closer to the practice, to getting a first hand-sense of what actually goes on in the community;
- It is above all else a person-centred enterprise;
- It has transformative potential for researcher; and
- Analysis is based on a wide range of features. (Di Costa, 2010, p.48)

Hence, this approach was decided as the most appropriate method for this research. Many factors were responsible for this. As the researcher wanted to understand the linguistic behaviour of the participants, personal contact paved way for better comfort and trust level and hence subjective analysis became possible. According to Patton (1987) qualitative methods typically can produce a wealth of detailed data about a much smaller number of people.

The population size of this research required such a method. In addition, qualitative data is the primary focus in naturalistic inquiry, in other words inductive analysis with which the researcher “attempts to make sense of the situation without imposing pre-existing expectations on the program setting” (Patton:1987). In collecting qualitative data the researcher seeks to capture the richness of people’s experiences in their own terms. (Di Costa, 2010, p.48)
Hymes (1967, 1972) and Friedrich (1972) cited in Saville-Troike (1989) describe eleven components which are expected to be salient in a communicative event:

- “The genre or type of event (e.g. joke, story, lecture, greeting, conversation).
- The topic or referential focus.
- The purpose or function, both of the events in general and in terms of the interaction goals of individual participants.
- The setting, including location, time of day, season of year, and physical aspects of the situation (e.g. size of the room, arrangement of furniture).
- The key or emotional tone of the event (e.g. serious, sarcastic, jocular).
- The participants, including their age, sex, ethnicity, social status, or other relevant categories, and their relationship to one another.
- The message form, including both vocal and non-vocal channels, and the nature of the code which is used (e.g. which language and which variety).
- The message content or surface level denotative references; what is communicated about.
- The act sequence, or ordering of communicative / speech acts, including turn taking and overlap phenomena.
- The rules of interaction, or what proprieties should be observed.
➢ The norms of interpretations, including the common knowledge, the relevant cultural presuppositions, or shared understanding, which allow particular inferences to be drawn about what is to be taken literally, what discounted, etc.”(p. 138-139)

3.3.1 The Participants

This research was aimed at a sample of linguistically, culturally and socially homogeneous group of participants. All of them were native speakers of Odia with fluency in Hindi and English. They had all learnt Hindi before they could speak English. Hence, Hindi, for all practical purposes, was their second language. English was, in turn, their third language. The participants were chosen carefully. The target age group of this study was 15-30.

The age group is significant as this study tries to understand the impact of English on Odia language within the context of codeswitching. There was scope to choose participants from a wider age range. But as the study focuses mainly on the future of Odia language, youth was chosen as the appropriate group to analyse the research question. A group of 40 participants was chosen for this purpose. Data was collected from them. They were divided into 4 groups. Each group comprised ten participants. The four groups were:

➢ Group A (School students from Std. IX to Std. XII within age group 15-17)

➢ Group B (College students, both under-graduate and post-graduate students within the age group 18-23)
➢ Group C (Working professionals with less than 3 years of work experience within age group 24-27)

➢ Group D (Working professionals with more than 3 years of work experience within age group 25-30)

There were 20 female and 20 male participants in the sample. This was done to eliminate any gender bias in the research work. Attempt was made not to have any gaps in the chronological grouping of the participants.

The participants of the first two groups were born in the 1990s, the era of the internet revolution. The other participants were born in the 1980s, the transitional age of the Indian society in terms of their exposure to technology. Technological revolution, here, plays a pivotal role in advancing the usage of English not only as an academic language but also a language of everyday usage.

All the participants have been raised and educated in a globalized setting permeated with western television and print media, mobile phones and the internet. Hence, these respondents will help us in understanding the users’ attitude towards the mother tongue (Odia) and the “other tongue” (English).

These participants belong to diverse cultural and educational background. But they are all native residents of Odisha. The researcher has tried to keep a balance between the number of rural natives and urbanites. Despite these differences, they all share one common bond i.e. they all speak Odia as their native tongue. The participants are all from an English medium background.
This was done to make sure that they all learned English from a young age. In addition, they all were chosen after carefully analysing their proficiency in English language. After the evaluation, only those participants were chosen who had good command over the English lexicon and syntax.

The school going students attend different English medium schools. The school students were in Std. IX, X, XI and XII. The college students belonged to various streams. Students from science, commerce, humanities participated in the study. This was done to avoid the monopolisation of one type of educational background or subject. Students from offbeat subjects like law were also chosen. The working professionals were chosen from various areas. The software professionals are always exposed to a multi-linguistic environment.

Hence, they received primary focus of the study. Then, there were teachers, medical professionals, marketing professionals, counsellors and human resource professionals who were chosen to participate in the study. The participants were chosen very carefully. Most of them didn’t know one another. The participants were not informed of the participation of their acquaintances in the process. This was done to eliminate any kind of bias or prejudice.

Each participant was interviewed and examined in an isolated manner. All the interviews were conducted personally. The data collection process lasted for a period of two years *i.e.* from 2009-2011. The main ambition of the research was to gather objective data from the participants. Hence, most of the participants didn’t know the researcher’s full background. They were informed of the researcher’s non-native speaker of Odia status.
Apart from that, they were not informed of the research question so as to eliminate any degree of bias or prejudice.

3.3.2 Selection of Participants

At first, the researcher interacted with around 200 participants from various groups. After that the researcher chose the final 40 participants. The first round of interaction was not an interview per se. It was done in an informal manner. Some of the population were contacted over phone too. After the first round, the researcher gathered some strong trends regarding their linguistic behaviours. The final 40 participants represent the target population of this study effectively. Only two of the participants have any background in the study of linguistics. All other participants have had received no formal training in the area of language studies.

Socially, the participants belonged to the middle and upper-middle class of Odisha. They all have the same English medium school background. All the participants are either working professionals or have the ambition of becoming one after the completion of their studies. Some of the working professionals also showed inclination to go for further studies (specially the professionals under the three year experience mark) in future. “While work life is often considered an English domain, home-life is characterized by more Odia/Hindi mixing, and exclusive Odia is used with shopkeepers and servants” (Chand, 2009, p.60).
3.3.3 Demographic Background

Odisha, a state in the eastern part of India provides the demographic framework of the study. It is imperative, from the research point of view, to understand the geographical significance of Odisha as a region.

There are many dialects of Odia which are spoken in the state. Hence, it was important to identify one uniform dialect to be studied as the standard version of the dialect. After research, the dialect spoken in Khurda district was selected as the official dialect for the purpose of the study. All the participants in the study spoke this dialect of Odia as their matrix code.

The location of the research was restricted to Bhubaneswar as it is the capital of Odisha. All the interviews were conducted in Bhubaneswar. Some working professionals reside outside Odisha now. But they were interviewed while visiting their families in Bhubaneswar. All the participants were born and brought up in the state.

3.3.4 Defining the Group

The participants of this research were selected based on their geographical location and linguistic abilities. After the brief introduction to Odisha, it is pertinent to define the linguistic grouping of the participants.

“Starting with linguistic anthropology, critiques have focused on such research as socially focused, not linguistically focused” (Chand, 2009: 25). “Within the variationist paradigm, the ‘linguistic’ side (if one is to over generalise this research as having a linguistic and a social side) of such research has been problematized: for example, Lavandera (1978)
disputes the assumption that variants do share an underlying meaning, while prestige, as it is traditionally interpreted and methodologically approached in variationist research, does not allow a means of operationalizing—or even accounting for—covert and overt prestige (c.f., Trudgill 1974)” (Chand, 2009, p.26)

“Any quantification of English speakers in India is admittedly problematic, given the varying means of measuring language use and fluency across consecutive censuses” (U.N. Singh 2006). In the 1931 and 1951 Censuses, “one’s mother tongue ‘was the language first spoken “from the cradle,”’ while the 1991 Census defined mother tongue as ‘the language spoken in childhood by the person’s mother to the person. If the mother died in infancy, the language mainly spoken in the person’s home in childhood’” (Singh, 2006, p.34).

3.3.5 Questionnaire

To authenticate the data in order to validate the research, the researcher asked the participants to respond to a questionnaire that contained questions regarding their linguistic backgrounds, belief systems and ideologies that create the framework of their style of codeswitching. The interviews were transcribed and the researcher was able to identify repetitive themes. The interviews further validated the general trends found via the questionnaire.

The researcher tried to gather comprehensive information regarding the participants’ behaviour. Hence, the participants were observed while they interacted with their families, friends. Sometimes they were observed while interacting with strangers and colleagues too. “Cross-situational observation of speakers’ patterns of language use
allows us to abstract individual idiosyncrasies, and how sets of linguistic variables group together to signal different kinds of identities”. (Podesva & Campbell-Kibler, 2002, p.117)

The researcher gathered background information for each of the participants. It included their linguistic backgrounds since childhood. They were asked questions regarding their interaction with a foreign language like English especially via the medium of television, movies, reading habits or social media sites.

These probes revealed many pieces of information required to establish connections between the linguistic habits of the participants and the linguistic patterns present in Odisha. Verbal enquiry was preferred over written questionnaire method for this. This helped the researcher to elicit clear response from the participants and the interview was always under the control of the researcher.

The interviews with each of the forty participants lasted for an average of 15 minutes each. Some interactions went on for over half an hour. English was chosen as the language for the interviews though the participants were encouraged to speak in English or Odia. As all the participants were fluent in English, they never felt any awkwardness during our interactions. Keeping the mode of communication also encouraged the participants to switch codes more regularly.

The questionnaire is divided into four sections:

- Background: It contains questions related to the background of the participants and any other areas which may affect their identity creation linguistically (political ideology, travel experience etc.)
Mode of acquiring linguistic proficiency: It contains questions related to their schooling, native tongue, preferred mode of language etc. It also contains data needed to understand the participants’ motivation behind choosing a particular linguistic code.

Current internal and external factors behind language choice: It included questions regarding their habits and contexts of language usage, exposure to external factors in each language like media and the language they use while processing internal data.

Codeswitching: It contains questions related to their habit of codeswitching and was pivotal in gathering and identifying trends regarding codeswitching patterns among the participants.

“The questionnaire was designed to provide insight on the role of codeswitching as a linguistic resource for these bilinguals, and to gauge their attitudes toward this practice.” (Casas, 2008: 124) Fasold (1984) explained that if we know “a person’s attitudes, we would be able to make predictions about her behaviour related to those attitudes with some degree of accuracy” (p. 148).

“Many linguists have explored phenomena that could be influenced by attitudes, such as sound change and second language learning. Similarly, attitudes can affect the linguistic resources that we allow in interaction. They help explain the very existence of a speech style that may differ from other styles, and from the speech norms of the society to which speakers belong.” (Casas, 2008, p.128)
“The typical limitation of questionnaires, like the one used here, is that there may be a disparity between expressed attitudes and overt behaviour” (Wolfram & Fasold, 1974). With codeswitching, this is in fact and expected situation. Jacobson (1977) affirmed “that negative attitudes toward codeswitching do not seem to inhibit its practice as long as it happens in an informal, relaxed, intimate atmosphere”.