Chapter Five

Code-Switching as Transfer: An Empirical Study

Part III

Discussion and Conclusion
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PART III

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the findings demonstrated that the usage of transfer strategy was widely prevalent in the study population particularly in the younger lot of the subjects, and the direction of transfer in the form of code-switching was mostly from first language of the subjects, i.e. Urdu/Hindi to second language, i.e. English. This chapter deals with discussion of the major findings and is divided into three broad sections.

Section 1, presents a broad view and includes the various demographic factors of all the subjects recruited in this study. It also attempts to do a general discussion on the distribution of code-switching in the whole sample population.

As this research is a comparative work, section 2 deals with a comparative discussion of the effects of age, sex, medium of instruction at school level and level of education on the distribution of code-switching in the four groups which have been segregated on the basis of tasks assigned to the subjects, i.e. code-switching from L1 to L2 (written task), from L2 to L1 (written task), from L1 to L2 (oral task) and from L2 to L1 (oral task).

Section 3 concerns the types of code-switching and their distribution across our sample population. In this section, the researcher will also give details of the various motivating factors for code-switching encountered in this research work.

5.2 GENERAL DISCUSSION

5.2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

A total of 80 subjects were recruited in this study out of which 60 subjects who were included according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, attempted both L1 and L2 tasks (oral and written) whereas rest 20 were categorised separately. 10 literate but less educated subjects who refused to attempt L2 tasks (oral and written) were also
included along with 10 illiterate subjects. Following discussion refers to the category of 60 subjects unless mentioned otherwise.

Of the 60 subjects, 29 were male and 31 female. (Table 5.1) They were equally divided in a sample size of 20 according to their age groups: younger (15-30 years), middle (31-45 years) and older (46 and above) age groups. This distribution was pre-planned. (Table 5.2)

Subjects were also divided according to their medium of instruction at school level. 27 (45%) subjects had English, 24 (40%) had Hindi and 9 (15%) had Urdu as their medium of instruction at school level (Table 5.3). According to their level of education 31 (~52%) subjects were either intermediate or, were either pursuing or completed their graduation, 25 (~42%) were post graduate or above educated and four were just class tenth pass (Table 5.4).

5.2.2 COMPARATIVE DISCUSSION OF CODE-SWITCHING IN THE WHOLE SAMPLE POPULATION

Occurrence of code-switching was found to be much greater from L1(Urdu/Hindi) to L2(English) than L2 to L1 in both oral and written tasks (Table 5.54) and the difference was strongly significant (p=0.000). This clearly indicates that the study population indulged in more code-switching from their first language i.e. Hindi or Urdu to their target language i.e. English rather than vice versa. This is an expected observation since people often tend to include their second language in their native language rather than their native language in target language. In terms of this study, out of the total 704 instances of code-switching found in the corpus, 585 (~83%) were from L1 to L2 and 119 (~17%) were from L2 to L1 (Table 5.54).

When comparison was drawn between written and oral data, ~63% of the code-switching was found to be done in oral corpus and ~37% in written corpus (Table 5.56). Also a strong significant difference was found (p= 0.007, Table 5.55). This clearly shows that in the corpus oral code-switching was more frequent than written code-switching, as is expected from our daily observation, for e.g. people often tend to say,

1. “It was a very good cricket match. Maza a gaya”
But when they are writing on a similar subject they will usually say

2. “It was a very good cricket match. We loved it”

In the above example when the speaker is conversing in English, he/she code switched ‘Maza a gaya’, inter-sententially from English to Hindi, in order to emphasize his/her ecstasy. Such observations are not common while writing. The reason behind this switching may be that people are more casual about their language when they speak whereas while writing they seem to be more conscious and formal.

This fact can be better understood by analyzing an example from the corpus of this present study. Here a 32 yrs old female is sharing a childhood incidence and explaining how her parents arranged a surprise birthday party for her. Sentence 3 is taken from the transcript of written task in her L1 and sentence 4 is taken from her oral L1.

3 “Paanch January ke din mere maata pita ne mere saare mitro ko bulaya aur achanak se ek party arrange kar di”

4 “Uss waqt mere parents ne mere saare friends ko achanak se bulaya aur...uh... meri surprise birthday party organise ki.”

In sentence 3 although she used the term ‘arrange’ but instead of ‘parents’ she chose to write ‘mata pita’ in Hindi. Similarly the choice of ‘mitro’ for ‘friends’ and ‘achanak’ for ‘surprise’ can be noticed. It is clearly apparent that in her expression on common topic and same language, she chose to be more casual while speaking than writing i.e. she code-switched more from Hindi to English while speaking whereas while writing she chose to adhere to her mother tongue most of the time.

Other important conclusion drawn from the data was that occurrence of code-switching was highest in younger age group (~49%) in the corpus when compared to middle (~33%) and older age group (~18%) (Table 5.6, Fig 5.2). This fact is emphasized in the following example.

5. “Inki sabse badi main problem mujhe nazar aati hai ki inke spouses ka attitude jo ki male dominating hai. Aise me husbands ko bahot cooperative
aur caring hona chahiye. Jab tak husbands apne working wives ki mehnat ko aur sacrifices ko seriously nahi lenge aur unka haath nahi batayenge tab tak working women ki pareshaniya kam nahi ho sakti hain."

6. Aap subah uth kar pehle baccho ko school bhejna phir khud taiyyar hona, tiffin banana, phir sabhi baccho ko bus stop tak chodna, phir office se aakar raat ke khane ka intezaam karna aur bed par jate jate raat ke gyarah baj jata hai. Iss wajah se kaafī aurtein job se resign kar deti hain.

Transcript 5 is taken from a 19 year old female, studying in class XI and her medium of instruction in school is English whereas transcript 6 is taken from a 49 year old female who had completed her graduation and her medium of instruction at school level was also English. Both the excerpt are taken from their written task performed in their L1 on same topic ‘Problems of working women’. It can be easily observed that although the older female is more educated than the younger one and medium of instruction in school is same for both of them, but when they are writing on a similar topic the extent of code switching is significantly greater in the younger subject from her L1 to L2.

Also female subjects code-switched more (mean ~15) than male subjects (mean~8) (Table 5.5, Fig 5.1).

Medium of instruction at school level also proved to be an important factor, with those instructed in English showed maximum tendency to code-switch (mean~16) when compared to those in Urdu (mean~9) and Hindi (mean~8) (Table 5.7, Fig 5.3).

7 Working women ki life bahot tough hoti hai...uh..uh..aajkal zyada tar ladies working women banna chahti hain. Sirf ek house wife ban kar nahi rehna chati aj kal ki aurtein...uh..ambitious hoti hain. Mere khayal me...uh..job karna family ke sath itna aasan nahi hai.

8 Bade shaher aur chote shaheron me rehne ki baat ki jaye toh...uh..bahut kathinaiyon ka saamna karna padta hai jo log chote shaher me rehta hain. Waha rehne me fayde aur nuksaan dono hain...par...nuksaan zada hai. Har choti si cheez lene ke liye aapko bahut dur aana padta hai.
Transcript 7 and 8 are taken from spoken task of two old subjects performed in their L1. Subject speaking the first transcript had English as the medium of instruction in school whereas the other one had Hindi as the medium of instruction. Clearly we can see the explicit use of code switching by the first subject whereas the other one chose not to code switch at all.

Level of education was also taken into consideration. It was interesting to note that subjects who are educated till intermediate or graduation indulged maximum in code-switching (mean~14). Only class Xth educated subjects showed minimum (mean ~6) and those who were highly educated were in between these two groups (mean~10) (Table 5.8, Fig. 5.4).

Coming to a discussion on the above mentioned findings, the researcher can say that they are mostly according to our cultural norms of the society. The younger generation is very much influenced by the current hip-hop culture, television, cinema and the media. We can safely say that TV and Bollywood has maximum impact on the younger generation, as middle aged population and particularly the older population of our society are more mature and rigid about their cultural values and especially language choice. The findings that females tend to code-switch more often also reflects in our society as they are more image conscious than males as English being the more prestigious option available to them.

As we have already discussed that code-switching from L2 (English) to L1 (Hindi/Urdu) is more common in our corpus and also in our society, we can safely say that the findings regarding medium of instruction at school level is an expected one. i.e. those with English background in school tend to code-switch more.

Regarding the findings on the level of education, since the average educated group (XIIth and graduate) is predominantly the younger generation, so their indulgence in code-switching more often can be explained.
5.3 GROUP SPECIFIC DISCUSSION

5.3.1 COMPARATIVE DISCUSSION ON THE IMPACT OF AGE ON CODE-SWITCHING

5.3.1.1 Distribution pattern of code-switching according to age groups

On analysing the younger age groups, it was found that ~25% of the group code-switched from L1 to L2 in oral task which was greater than other groups (Table 5.16). Similar findings were drawn for middle (Table 5.17) and older (Table 5.18) group population. These findings correlate with the previous findings and establishes that people mostly tend to code-switch while they are communicating orally from L1 to L2, irrespective of their age groups.

5.3.1.2 Distribution pattern of code-switching in the four task groups as influenced by age.

On analyzing code-switching from L1 to L2 in written task according to the age of subjects it was observed that the difference of code-switching between younger and older population was significant (p=0.028) (Table 5.24, Table 5.25). This statistically proves that younger age groups code-switch more than older group from L1 to L2 in written task. Although the instance of code-switching found in younger group was more than middle age group and middle was greater than older age group but this difference could not be established as significant. On analyzing code-switching from L2 to L1 in written task, the difference between the middle and older age groups was found significant. (Table 5.26, Table 5.27). Similarly the difference between the younger and older age group was significant from L1 to L2 (oral task) (p=0.009) (Table 5.28, Table 5.29) and L2 to L1 (oral task) (p=0.049) as well. (Table 5.30, Table 5.31).

From the above discussions, it can be concluded that younger age group code-switches more than older age group in all the tasks and statistical significance exists between these two groups from L1 to L2 (written and oral) and from L2 to L1 (oral) whereas significant difference between middle and older age group is found from L2 to L1 (written). This further strengthens the notion that younger generation is an avid user of transfer strategy while communicating both oral and in written form. Another important observation is that the difference between younger and older group is
strongest from L1 to L2 in oral task (p=0.009) (Table 5.29). This again correlates with the previous discussion that people are more liberal with their language while they are speaking rather than writing.

5.3.2 COMPARATIVE DISCUSSION ON THE IMPACT OF GENDER ON CODE-SWITCHING

5.3.2.1 Distribution pattern of code-switching according to gender

The researcher has already discussed under general discussion that females have used code-switching more than males. The mean of females (~15) is almost double than that of males (~8) (Table 5.5, Fig 5.1). Various reasons can be cited for this. Females are in general more image conscious than males. Also attention seeking is quite prevalent in females. They are probably more affected by their surroundings and thus are greatly influenced by the western culture.

5.3.2.2 Distribution patterns of code-switching in the four tasks as influenced by gender.

From table 5.40, 5.41, 5.42 and 5.43 it can be concluded that strong significance in gender difference is seen in the usage of code-switching from L1 to L2 in written and oral tasks but no such significance exists between L2 to L1 in written and oral tasks. It means that females have a higher propensity to switch from their first language to target language but not vice versa.

5.3.3 COMPARATIVE DISCUSSION ON THE IMPACT OF MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AT SCHOOL LEVEL ON CODE-SWITCHING.

5.3.3.1 Distribution patterns of code-switching according to medium of instruction at school level

In our study, the subjects with English as their medium of instruction at school level were found to be employing the strategy of code-switching most frequently when compared to the subjects with Urdu and Hindi as their medium of instruction. (Table 5.7, Fig 5.3). This observation can be easily explained in the context of our previous finding that maximum code-switching occurred from L1 to L2 i.e. from Urdu/Hindi to English. Therefore it can be inferred that subjects with medium of instruction in English must be having better command in English language which gives them the
liberty to code-switch smoothly from L1 to L2 when compared to the subjects having Urdu/Hindi as medium of instruction.

### 5.3.3.2 Distribution pattern of code-switching in the four tasks groups as influenced by medium of instruction at school level.

A similar pattern emerges on analysis of influence of medium of instruction on code-switching in the four task groups. When the transfer is from L1 to L2, both in written and oral corpus, English as a medium of instruction at school level clearly dominates over Urdu and Hindi medium of instruction (Table 5.32, Table 5.33, Table 5.36 and Table 5.37) whereas when the transfer is from L2 to L1, statistically no significance is found in the difference between the languages (Table 5.34, Table 5.35, Table 5.38, Table 5.39). This finding correlates with the previous conclusion and also re-establishes the notion that medium of instruction is a dominating factor in deciding the direction of transfer in code-switching.

### 5.3.4 COMPARATIVE DISCUSSION ON THE IMPACT OF LEVEL OF EDUCATION ON CODE-SWITCHING

As already discussed, intermediate or graduate subjects were more frequently involved in code-switching in comparison to other groups. (Table 5.8, Fig 5.4).

But the difference found in occurrence of code-switching when subjects were distributed according to the level of education was statistically not significant in all the four task groups i.e. from L1 to L2 (written and oral) (Table 5.44, 5.45, 5.48 and 5.49) and L2 to L1 (written and oral) (Table 5.46, 5.47, 5.50 and 5.51). This shows the pervasiveness of language alteration in our society. Code-switching is prevalent in all the strata of society irrespective of the educational status. This uniformity and lack of influence of educational status is also explained by the exclusion criteria of this study which excluded subjects who had educational status of less than class tenth.

### 5.3.5 COMPARATIVE DISCUSSION ON DISTRIBUTION PATTERN OF CODE-SWITCHING BETWEEN ILLITERATE SUBJECTS AND THOSE WHO HAVE NOT ATTEMPTED L2 TASKS

Table 5.19 shows that those subjects who have not attempted L2 tasks, they too code-switch in a pattern similar to the rest of the population i.e. more in oral (~68%) than
written task (~32%). This finding encourages us to extrapolate this result to the whole society.

Table 5.20 summarises the illiterate subjects and the occurrence of code-switching in their L1 to L2 oral task. It is observed that almost all of them code-switch, though lesser in number. This again shows the pervasiveness of this phenomenon. Also it justifies the previous finding that level of education has no significant effect on code-switching. With the easy availability of television, newspapers and cinema, it is not at all necessary for someone to be literate to code-switch.

The researcher also tried to analyse the L1 to L2 oral data between the two groups statistically in Table 5.52. Clearly, the literate group switched more (mean=3.8±4.022) than illiterate group (mean=1.00±0.943) and the difference was significant (p=0.046). This result is entirely acceptable considering that the less educated literate group has greater linguistic knowledge and richer arsenal of lexical items at their disposal than the illiterate group.

5.4 VARIETIES OF CODE-SWITCHING FOUND IN OUR CORPUS

In our corpus, total 704 instances of code-switching were found. Intra-sentential variety constituted almost all of it (97%) and inter-sentential and tag-switching were rarely seen. All the instances of inter-sentential and tag-switching were found in oral corpus (Table 5.9). In those subjects who have not attempted L2 task, instances of inter-sentential and tag-switching were not found (Table 5.10). Similar was the finding in case of illiterate subjects (Table 5.11).

Similarly, about 97% of code-switch was found to be insertion and only about 3% alternation was present in the study corpus (Table 5.12, Figure 5.6). No instance of alternation was found in illiterates and in those subjects who have not attempted L2 tasks. (Table 5.13 and table 5.14 respectively)

5.5 MOTIVATION FOR CODE-SWITCHING FOUND IN OUR CORPUS

Table 5.21 enlists various motivations for code-switching encountered by the researcher during the field work. Each will be discussed below
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i) **Ease of use** - this is the most common (38.8%) reason given by subjects for indulging in code-switching. It would be better at this stage if an example from the corpus is discussed here.

In the above example the speaker used the term ‘party arrange’ for the sake of her convenience. Being Urdu/Hindi as her mother tongue, she could have used the term ‘party ki vyavastha’ in Hindi or ‘jashn ka intezaam’ in Urdu but it would have been cumbersome and to ease that she code-switched to the English word ‘party arrange’.

ii) **No substitute word** - this is the second most common (11.9%) reason given by subjects.

In the above example there is no substitute word for ‘cake’ and ‘chocolate’ in Urdu/Hindi which was the mother tongue of the subject. So she had to switch to English in her written L1 task.

iii) **Name entity** - (11.9%) of the total subjects was compelled to code-switch because of name entity.

The speaker, while writing in his L2 uses a Hindi word ‘antakshari’ to name a musical game.

iv) **Lack of command on L2** - (10.4%)

The speaker did not know the English word for ‘samajhdar’ and so instead of using the appropriate word ‘sensible’ she code-switched.

v) **Unable to recall the appropriate word** - (9.7%)
“no qualified woman...wants to be in the kitchen all the time...like a kaamwali”

Here the speaker was unable to recall the exact word for ‘Kaamwali’, although she knew the English word ‘maid’. To let the conversation go smoothly, she switched to the native alternate.

vi) To express emotion-(4.4%)

“aur...usi din se meri zindagi tabah hogai. I lost everything”

The speaker indulges in inter-sentential code-switching to express his feelings.

Other reasons encountered were, to persuade audience and to emphasize. Another very important reason for code switching found in our society is the prestige value associated with it. But in our corpus, this was the least frequent reason mentioned. This can be explained by the fact that the tasks were carried out in isolation and prestige associated with conversation holds more significance for people when they are interacting with friends, relatives or attending some social gathering. Based on above description it can be concluded that the most common reasons for code-switching given by subjects include ease of use, name entity and no substitute word and least mentioned reasons include - to persuade audience and to emphasize. The associated examples illustrate this phenomenon quite clearly.

5.6 CONCLUSION

This section draws together the key aspects of the present study. After giving a brief summary, the findings of the empirical work is explained by answering the research questions. Pedagogical implications and limitations of this study are subsequently explored and finally this concluding section ends by making suggestions for further research.

5.6.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The focus of this thesis is to study and investigate the most common and pervasive communication strategy of transfer i.e. code switching, in both the L1 and L2 of Urdu/Hindi speakers of English.
In India, the phenomenon of code-switching is distinctive and different from other studies in the literature; because the Indian speech community was affected by colonisation of an English speaking country. Therefore, code-switching in India is motivated by various reasons such as prestige and globalisation, apart from the participant dependent motivations found in our study corpus. In other words, the code-switching behaviour of Indians is the result of its people’s interest in the language and the identity it carries on account of the prosperity and economic strength of the country. In particular, this is an attempt to discover the extent, type and direction of Indian code switching.

Another important aspect of this study is the comparative perspective. This research intends to explore the influence of various social and demographic factors on code switching, and also in the process draws a comparative inference.

This study begins by presenting a historical overview and trends in CSs in relation to our present goal. In depth taxonomic detailing has been done to understand how language transfer is seen as a communication strategy in SLA. Language transfer is studied next which leads us to our topic of empirical work i.e. code switching. Purpose of the study, its significance and research questions are explained. In the same chapter various tools and techniques used in the study are established.

Finally findings of the empirical work are discussed and inference is drawn. Based on those finding the researcher has answered the research questions put forward in the very beginning of this study.

5.6.2 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study findings are discussed with respect to the research questions formulised by the researcher in the beginning of this study.

Regarding research question one i.e. do different age groups and different generation use code switching differently? the findings indicate that younger age group uses more code switching than middle and older population. Statistically this is proved between younger and older generation only. There is no difference in the direction and type of code switching. Irrespective of their age group, most of them code switch from their mother tongue i.e. Urdu/Hindi to their second language i.e. English. And
intra-sentential code-switching is more common than inter-sentential code switching in general.

Regarding research question two i.e. is there a difference in the way males and females use code switching? The analysis of the written and oral task shows that females clearly dominate males as far as quantitative analysis of code switching is concerned. But in terms of direction and type of code switching, findings are similar to the general observations drawn for the first question i.e. most of them code switch from their mother tongue i.e. Urdu/Hindi to their second language i.e. English. And intra-sentential code-switching is more common than inter-sentential code switching in general, irrespective of gender differences.

In answer to the research question three i.e. is the use of code switching influenced by the level of education? The researcher concludes that no significant effect of level of education is seen on the use of code switching. Further evidence comes from the result that even those who are less educated and illiterate, indulge in code switching.

As for research question four i.e. does the medium of instruction at school level, whether L1 or L2, affect the use of code switching? It is proved that medium of instruction at school level clearly affects the extent as well as the direction of code switching. Those with English medium of instruction code switch more than Urdu/Hindi medium, primarily from L1 to their L2. The prevalent type of code-switching is again intra-sentential.

The findings can be summarised as follows-

1. The study concludes that code-switching as a transfer strategy, is employed chiefly by the younger age group when compared to the middle and older population.

2. This strategy is employed more in oral than written communication.

3. The preferred direction of transfer is from the speaker’s native language to second language.

4. Age, sex and medium of instruction at school level have a significant effect on the occurrence of code-switching, whereas same cannot be established for level of education due to lack of statistical proof.
5. ‘Ease of use’ is clearly the most prevalent motivational factor which compels the speakers to use code-switching.

6. Apart from the educated class of the society, less educated and even the illiterate population uses this strategy quite liberally in their conversation.

5.6.3 PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY

This thesis intends to provide information about which age group has more tendency of using communication strategies of transfer and their motive behind this. This application of strategy can be either in accordance with the grammatical rules of the two languages involved or more commonly it altogether ignores the grammatical backbone. This can be a boon to the languages involved as well as to the L2 learners, if used according to the set rules. But some authors also believe that casual use of code switching can promote sheer disregard of grammar among the students. But we cannot altogether ignore the significance of using L1 in classroom settings. Code switching techniques can be an extremely useful way of employing the student’s L1 to emphasize important concepts, re-acquire the student’s attention when they become distracted, and to praise and reprimand as required (Cook, 2001b). Code switching can also involve using the L1 to supply vocabulary items, which the students are unfamiliar with, and then gradually remove them as the students progress (Ibid.). This can be especially useful when employing story-telling activities (Bradley, 2003). Permitting the use of some words from their L1 helps the momentum of the class going, by making learning fun and simultaneously helping students to acquire new L2 vocabulary.

Keeping this in mind, code switching should be encouraged in classroom setting. But this must not lead to utter disregard for grammar among students. By identifying the target group and understanding the motivation behind the usage of code switching by students, teachers can help them to use code switching as a tool to make their second language learning process smooth and relatively easier.

5.6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Given that only an intact group of 60 subjects were chosen for the main study, the sample size was small. Also for illiterate and L2 not attempted subjects analysis, only 10 subjects were recruited in order to save time. As majority of the subjects were...
either university students or employees, the findings need to be generalised in other contexts with caution.

Research instruments are one crucial element which affects the findings of this study. We find that inter-sentential code switching is very rare in our corpus. Although through our daily experience we know that it is fairly common in our oral conversation. The reason can be explained by the limitation of the research instrument used in this research. The method of data collection by using an informed task based questionnaire was bound to make the subjects conscious about the strategy they employed while performing the tasks. This was a serious limitation to the findings and needs to be eliminated.

5.6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This chapter will conclude by recommending further studies on the subject of Urdu/Hindi-English code-switching among Indians. This study would benefit immensely from further studies on grammatical constraints of code-switching.

Also, this study would benefit from an analysis of the instances of code-switching at home, with family and friends, and compare them to the data collected in our study.

In addition to that, more studies on the code-switching mechanisms of speech communities with similar cultural and sociolinguistic setting as the Indian speech community is needed in order to discover the similarities and differences between the code-switching functions of two speech communities with a unified sociolinguistic setting.

Finally the inclusion of other communication strategies of transfer for e.g. literal translation would lend a broader perspective to this study and is strongly recommended.