

**CODE-SWITCHING AMONG STUDENTS OF DHAKA UNIVERSITY,
BANGLADESH: A STUDY ON RESIDENTIAL STUDENTS**

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on an analysis of Bangla, English and Hindi code switching among the students of Dhaka University, Bangladesh. Based on the empirical data from questionnaire filled up by the students of two male and two female residential halls of Dhaka University, this paper aims to analyze the frequency and prototypes of code switching. It also presents a brief overview on exploring the factors that influence or encourage code switching and also the attitudes of the students towards the contemporary trend of code switching and its impact on their mother tongue Bangla. After collecting the data, they are transcribed, tabulated and analyzed by following quantitative method in terms of the research objectives. Overall findings indicate that in spite of having a negative attitude towards code switching, students prefer to switch Bangla-English and Bangla-Hindi codes with the friends in the informal discussions and while using social media.

Keyword: *Code-Switching; Prototypes; Bangla; Hindi; English; Dhaka University*

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini berfokus pada analisis alih kode bahasa Bangla, bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Hindi di kalangan mahasiswa Universitas Dhaka, Bangladesh. Berdasarkan data empiris dari kuesioner yang diisi oleh dua mahasiswa laki-laki dan dua mahasiswa perempuan yang tinggal di Asrama Mahasiswa Universitas Dhaka, artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis frekuensi dan prototipe dari alih kode. Artikel ini juga menyajikan gambaran singkat tentang pencarian faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi atau mendorong alih kode dan juga sikap mahasiswa terhadap tren masa kini dari pengalihan kode dan dampaknya terhadap bahasa ibu mereka yaitu bahasa Bangla. Setelah mengumpulkan data, data tersebut ditranskripsi, ditabulasikan dan dianalisis dengan menggunakan metode kuantitatif sebagaimana tujuan penelitian ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun memiliki sikap negatif terhadap peralihan kode, mahasiswa lebih memilih untuk mengubah kode Bangla-Inggris dan Bangla-Hindi dengan teman-teman dalam diskusi informal dan saat menggunakan media sosial.

Kata Kunci: *Alih Kode, Prototipe, Bahasa Bangla, Bahasa Hindi, Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Dhak*

A. Introduction

The capability to communicate our emotions, thoughts, and opinions to others through language is truly a gift. Apart from communication, language reflects our culture since cultural influences of any particular society acutely affect a language. The use of language and its variation can undoubtedly put impact on our identity and ideas. It is considered normal for a person to speak more than one language. When an individual has access to two or more linguistic codes as a means of communication, the state is known as multilingualism. It is such communication that creates a phenomenon called Code-switching (CS). Code-switching is additionally characterized as the substitute utilization of more than one dialect in a similar discussion or discourse. According to Gumperz (1982), this is also defined as the alternate use of more than one language in the same conversation.

The role of English in Bangladesh is simply practical as English is utilized as a worldwide link language. English has been used for a considerable length of time and for various purposes and it is slowly turning out to be part of the socio-cultural framework. This is the reason; English is utilized pretty much wherever as a part of the nation, particularly in educational institutions. At the universities of Bangladesh, formally English is used as the medium of instruction whereas informally both Bangla and English languages are used. These two languages are used simultaneously or interchangeably.

At present, in the universities, each of the classes is conducted in English and speaking in English is encouraged, as the young generation of Bangladesh is taking up another grouping of dialect while chatting with their friends, most specifically, when they are in casual circumstances, there is a propensity to blend both Bangla and English in their discussion. This tendency influences their typical language use and helps them to frame a propensity for code exchanging and code mixing in their everyday speech. In addition, diverse Hindi switching has turned out to be prominent in Bangladesh. Today's youngsters, most specifically the girls, are fond of Hindi movies and Hindi TV series. A lot of exposure to different Hindi channels has affected their speaking style. They frequently use Hindi words and sentences in their conversation. This state of mind influences their typical language use and makes them to shape a tendency for code-switching in their regular discourse.

This study mainly focuses on different patterns and frequency of code-switching among those students (both male and female) of Dhaka University who are residing at halls. These students usually get enough time to communicate and do chitchat with their friends at the campus. Keeping this in mind, the research has been conducted among those residential students. Apart from that, this paper finds out causes and factors of code-switching along with the students' attitudes towards it.

1. Theoretical Framework:

1.1 Code Switching & Code Mixing:

In case of a solo conversation, code-switching occurs when someone, specifically a speaker alternates between two or more languages or language varieties. Though the distinction between code switching and code mixing is one of the most puzzling debates in the study of code alternation, some scholars use the terms 'code-mixing' and 'code-switching' interchangeably. Generally multilingual speakers use elements of multiple languages when conversing with each other. Code switching can be defined as the use of more than one language, variety, or style by a speaker within an utterance or discourse, or between different interlocutors or situations. So, code-switching is the use of more than one linguistic variety in a manner consistent with the syntax and phonology of each variety. According to Gumperz, code switching is "juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems. Different linguists have tried to define code switching and code mixing in different ways. According to a citation by Ayemoni 2006, Hymes (1974) defined code switching as a common term for alternative use of two or more languages, variety of languages or even speech styles. Code mixing refers to the transfer of linguistic elements from one language to another and it is a process whereby a word or a phrase of a second language is used in the syntax of a language. Azami (2005) also states that code switching is not merely mixing words and sentences of two distinct languages, rather the speakers need good command over the languages they mix (p. 55). Nandita Gosh (2014) showed that the influence of code switching has brought a new pattern of language use by the students of private universities in Bangladesh and they are mixing codes in their everyday conversation consciously and subconsciously. Al Mamun (2012) has showed that the young people of Bangladesh are conscious about the fact that the practice of code switching affects their mother tongue negatively but they are practicing it with a positive attitude towards code switching. Various researches have been done on the prototype and influence of the use of code switching where private university students were taken as participants. But to be very specific, not a mentionable amount of research works have been done on the public university students in this regard. Apart from that there is not enough exploratory study specifically on Hindi's intrusion into the contemporary Bangla language. So, I considered these as research gap and tried to concentrate on these aspects of code switching in the current research.

1.2 Types of Code Switching:

John J. Gumperz and Jan Petter Blom (1972) mentioned two kinds of code switching: Situational and Metaphorical. Situational code switching happens when the languages used alter according to the context or situations the conversant are in.

This means that they speak one language in one situation and another in a different one. On the other hand, Metaphorical code switching means switching code to discuss a topic which refers to another conversational domain where the change of topic is needed. Scholars use different names for various types of code-switching. However, three major forms of code-switching are identified by the scholars: inter-sentential, intra-sentential switching and tag switching.

Inter-sentential switching occurs outside the sentence or the clause level (i.e. at sentence or clause boundaries) which is also termed as 'extra-sentential' switching. In Bangla-English inter-sentential switching one could say, "*Tumi amar sathe emon korla? You know what today is my birthday*" ("How could you be so rough to me? you know what, this is my birthday"). Intra-sentential switching occurs within a sentence or a clause. For example, one could say, "*ami to buccho can't even imagine je o kemne korlo eita* " ("I can't even imagine how he could do that?"). Tag-switching is the switching of either a tag phrase or a word, or both, from one language to another (common in intra-sentential switches). For example someone could say, "She's so cute, *tai na?*" ("She's so cute, isn't it? ")

1.3 Reasons of Code Switching:

Wardhaugh (1992) talked about a few factors that are responsible for code switching including Diglossia, bilingualism and multilingualism. These three factors are described here. A diglossic circumstance prevails in a society when it has two particular codes which demonstrate clear functional separation. That means, when one code is utilized in one set of conditions and the other in a completely unique set. Here people usually have two varieties of languages in a diglossic circumstance. One is low variety (L) which is normally utilized as a part of informal discussion whereas another is high variety (H) which is utilized as a part of formal discussion, writing, in political and religious discourse and so on. As a rule, the H assortment is considered as more prestigious than the L assortment. Speakers of the diglossic culture regularly change the two varieties in their ordinary discussion. Wardhaugh (1992) mentioned bilingualism and multilingualism which are again good context of code switching. There are a few communities where individuals use two distinct dialects in their daily life. One code is utilized to keep up correspondence inside the group and another is outside the group. For instance, a Chinese who talks both Mandarin and Cantonese in two distinct settings tend to blend both the codes in his/her discussion. Then again, there are some multilingual individuals who talk distinctive dialects in various settings, for instance, one at home, one at work environment, another in town and still another for motivation behind exchange. Again, the best case of the multilingual community is the Indian people. Most of the Indian need to know more than two languages. The introduction of various dialects in their everyday life makes ready of regular code switching and code mixing.

B. Research Methods

1. Research Objective:

The objective of the research is to find out frequency, proto types of code-switching and the different factors and effects of code-switching among the residential students of Dhaka University in Bangladesh and also their attitude towards it.

2. Significance of the Study:

Youngsters have always the tendency to adopt new style of speaking. This study will show how often the residential students of Dhaka University use code switching and it also shows an insight of students' outlook on the consequence of code switching on Bangla language. The findings and the results of the research can be used for conducting further research on tertiary level learners' attitude towards code-switching. Apart from that, this research can also be used as a literature for future researches on the prototype and nature of code-switching in the University campus both within and beyond the classroom for a larger number of participants.

3. Participants:

The participants of this research were thirty six (36) students from the four residential halls of University of Dhaka in Bangladesh. The subjects were chosen from Haji Muhsin Hall, Bijoy Ekattor Hall, Begum Rokeya Hall and the Bongomata Fajilatunnesa Mujib Hall. Among the participants, 18 were male and 18 were female. That is, the ratio of male-female participant is 50:50. The age range of the participants is mostly within 18-24 years.

4. Instruments:

The participants were given questionnaires for conducting the survey. Therefore, the main source of information is Survey Questionnaire. The questionnaire is consisting of a total of 28 questions and it is divided into three sections. The first section of the questionnaire looks for the basic information of the participants (gender, academic year and name of the hall) whereas the second part of the questionnaire consists of 27 close-ended questions and in the third part there was one open-ended question. All the questions are created on the basis of the theoretical research in literature review. For each close-ended question there are 5 options including very often, often, sometimes, seldom and never. The last part has one question on the participants' personal opinion regarding code-switching.

5. Methods of Data Analysis:

On the basis of three main research questions, in total 28 questions were asked to the students. Among those 27 were close-ended and the last one was open ended question. Data have been analyzed on the basis of Likert Scale. A Likert Scale is a type of rating scale used to measure opinions or attitudes and using this scale the respondents are asked to rate items on a level of agreement. For example: strongly agree, agree and disagree

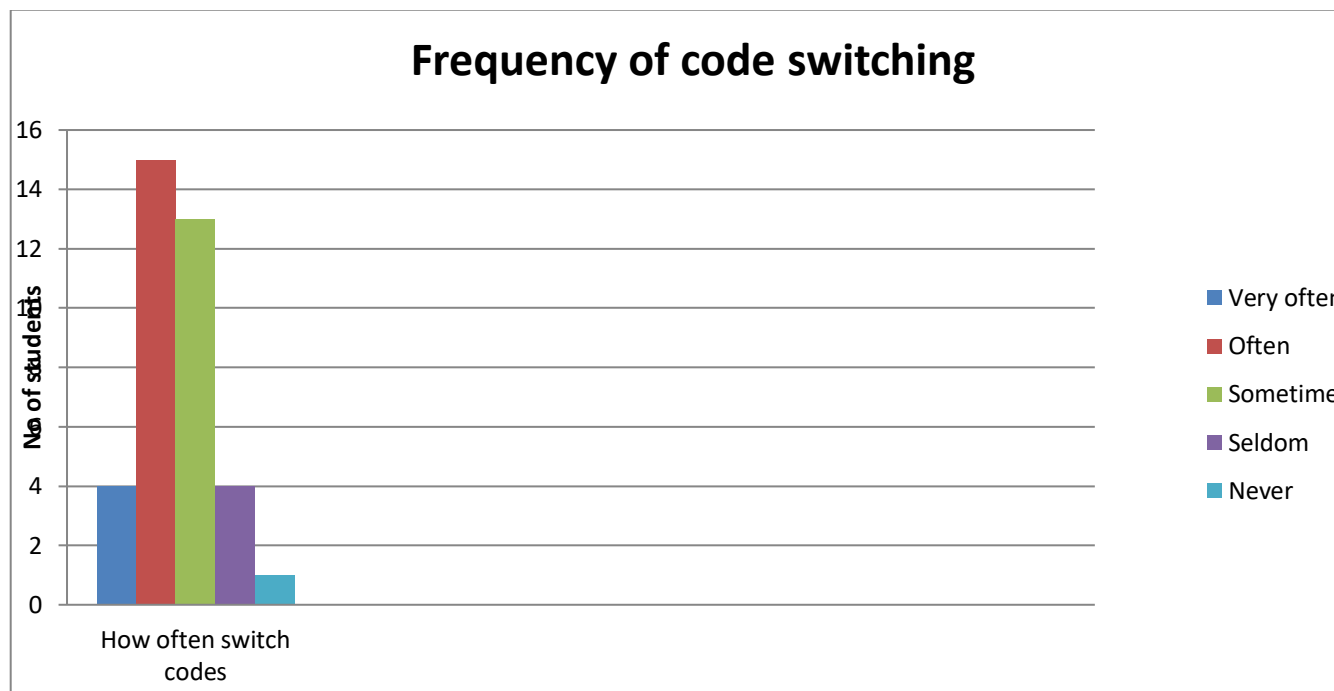
6. Limitations

The study was conducted only among the students of four residential halls of Dhaka University. Although, there are total 19 halls in Dhaka University, it was not possible to make contact with the students of those halls due to time constraints. It would be better if detailed interviews of some of the students could be taken so that in some cases their discourse could be analyzed for getting more accurate findings.

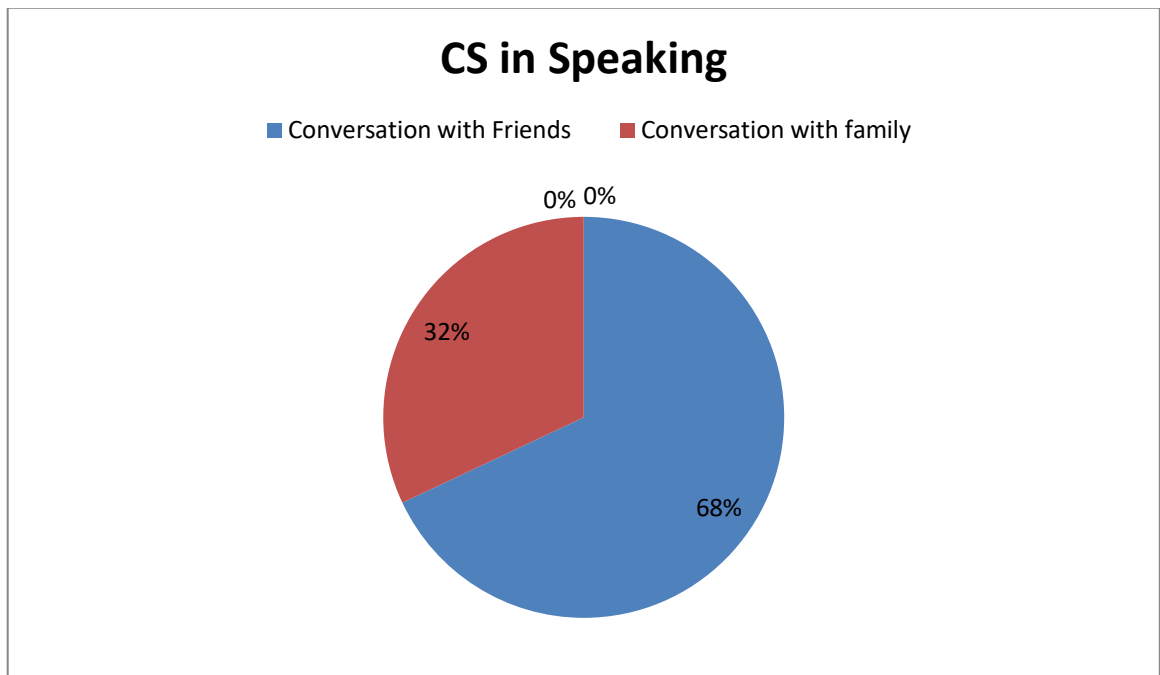
C. Finding & Discussion

In the questionnaire, there were in total 27 questions which were classified on the basis of the three research questions. On the basis of those three research questions, the detailed findings will be shown here in this section.

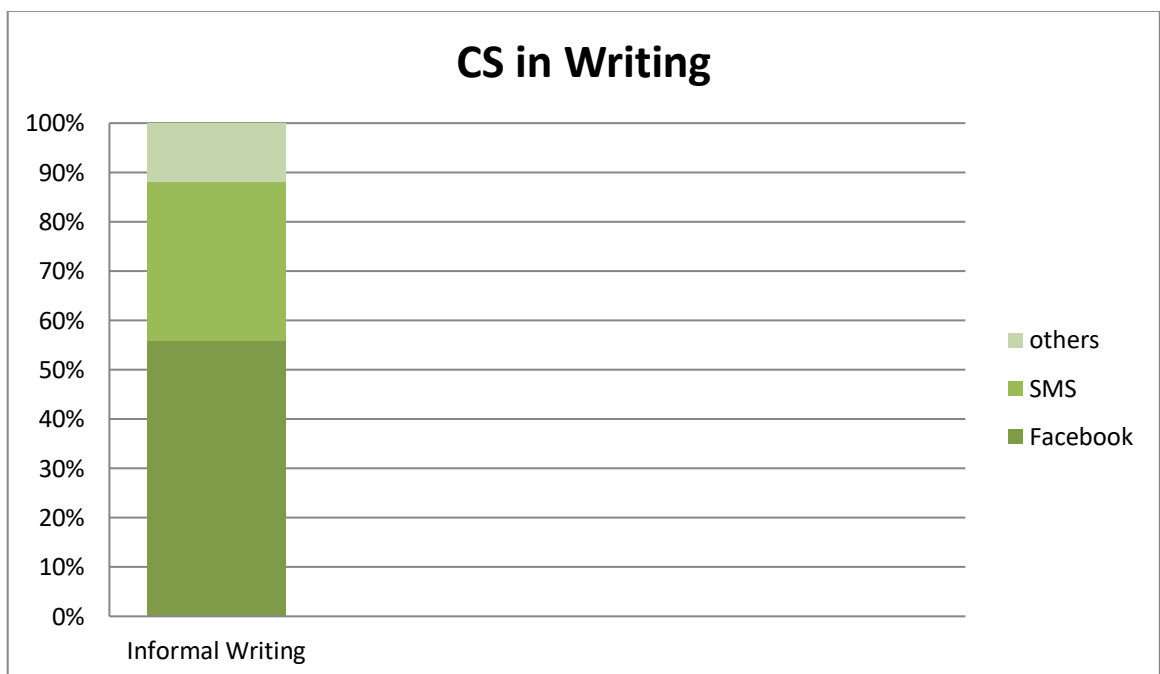
The first research question was, ‘How often do the male and female students switch codes?’ After the analysis of the data, it has been found that 15 students out of 36 (which is about 42% of the total students) switch codes often. And 13 students sometimes switch codes whereas others seldom use code-switching. The findings have been shown on the graph here:



This research also found out that about 80% students mix Bangla with English frequently, whereas 20% said that seldom they mix Bangla with Hindi. Among these 20% students, 80% are female. Now, in case of the types of code-switching (CS), while speaking, students use Intra-sentential code-switching often whereas Inter-sentential and tag switching are used sometimes. And while talking to the friends 68% of their conversation experiences code-switching (CS); while talking to the family members it is 32%.

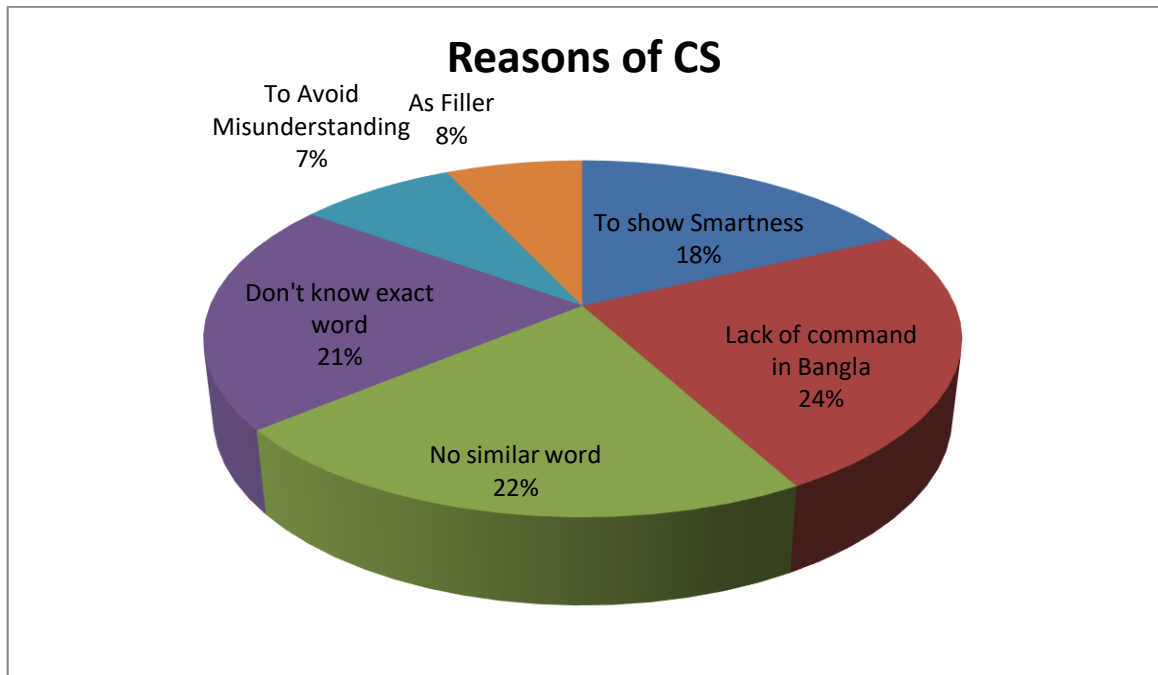


And in case of formal writing they do not usually switch codes but while doing informal writing, 56% times they switch codes on Facebook and 32% in writing text messages.



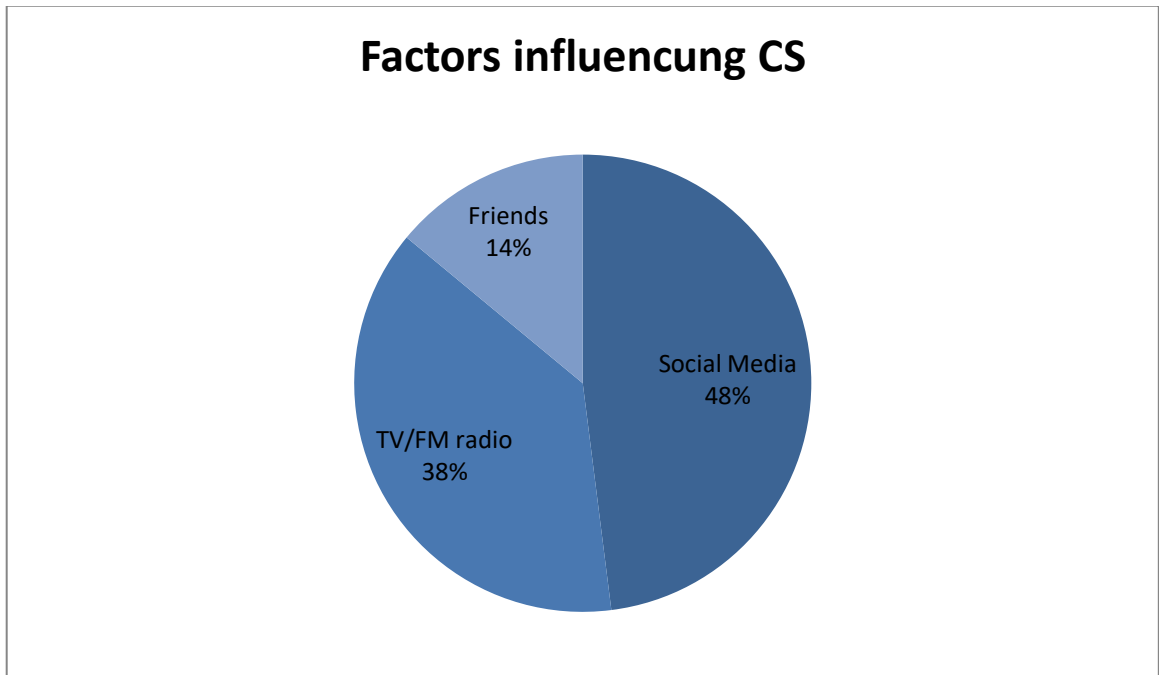
The second research question was, ‘what are the factors that influence/encourage code-switching (CS)?’

It has been found from the research that 18% of the total participants think that code-switching (CS) increases their smartness. According to them, when they mix English or Hindi with Bangla, it makes them smarter than those who cannot do so. The result may suggest that young people are accepting English as the way of being smart. 7% use code-switching to avoid misunderstanding while doing their conversation.

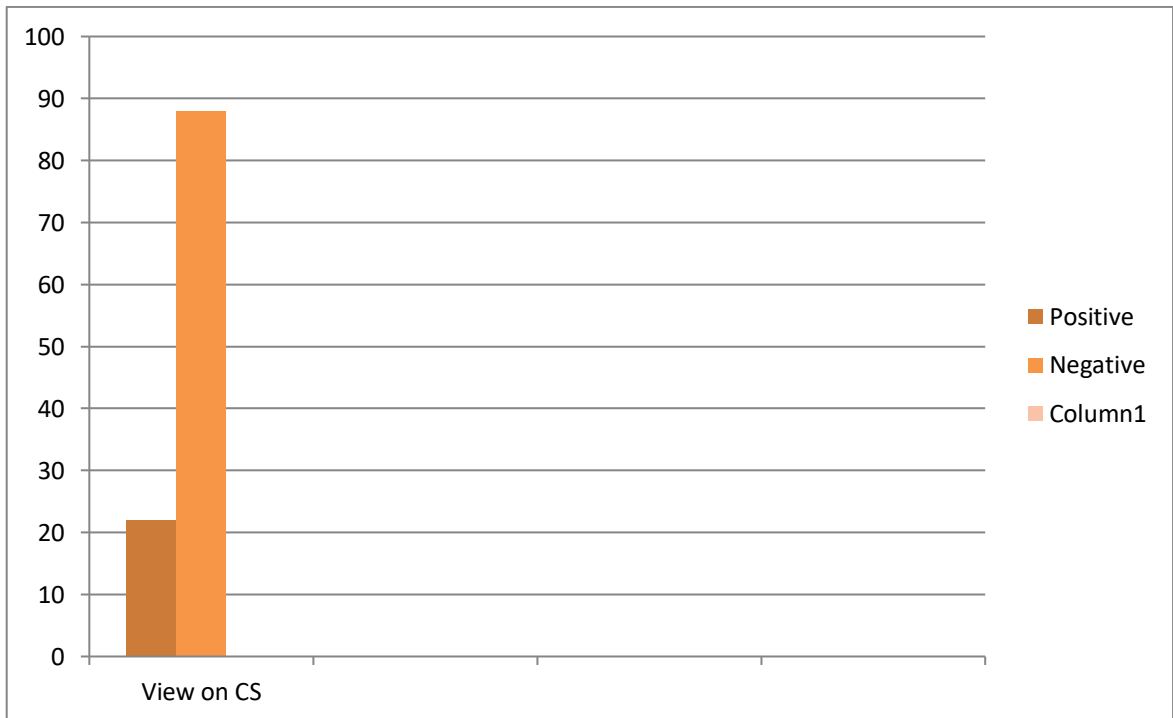


However 22% of the students think that since they do not find any similar words in Bangla while speaking, they use code-switching. And another reason of code-switching (CS) that came out of this research is students' lack of knowledge of exact vocabulary.

There are some factors that influence code-switching came out from the research. In 48%



cases social media influence them, in 38% cases Television and FM radio are the influencing factors and some students are influenced by their friends as well. And it is ironical that they do code-switching but they do not have any positive attitude towards it. They think that it has a far reaching negative impact on Bangla. It is shown on the graph that almost 87% of the total students think that it has a negative influence on Bangla language.



At the last part of the questionnaire there was an open-ended question where the students were asked to give their very personal opinion about code switching and its impact on Bangla. 29 out of 36 students wrote their strong position against the frequent use of code-switching, 4 students wrote positive about it whereas the remaining 3 did not respond to the question. The study shows that the most common languages that are mixed frequently by the participants are Bangla and English. 92% of the total participants acknowledged that they frequently mix Bangla and English in their conversation. This result gives an idea of the wide spread use of English by the young generation of Bangladesh. To relate the study with the study of Al Mamun (2012), another major portion of the study shows that the mixing of Hindi with Bangla is gradually emerging in the country. A significant (22%) number of the participants responded that they mix Hindi with Bangla while speaking. But girls (38%) mix Hindi with Bangla more than boys (16%). The exposure to Bollywood movies and different Hindi TV series may be responsible for this phenomenon. Robaka Shamsheer (2012) also showed that different Hindi programs of Indian TV channels are influencing the people of Bangladesh so much that they are gradually forgetting their own traditional cultural norms and values. Almost similarly, this research shows that the female students are watching Hindi programs most and that's why they mix Hindi with Bangla more frequently than the boys. So, by putting light on the research question, it can be summed up that the tendency of Bangla- English and Bangla-Hindi code-switching among the residential students of Dhaka University is mentionable. Though due to lack of sufficient command in Bangla, to avoid misunderstanding and to show smartness they frequently do code-switching, they possess a negative view on this trend of frequent code-switching because it has a negative impact on Bangla. Alongside "Banglish" (mixing of Bangla and English), there is another new type of language emerging in Bangladesh and that is "Bangdi" (mixing of Bangla and Hindi).

D. Conclusion

The practice of Code Switching is the result of the tendency of youngsters to be stylish language speaker. The students of Dhaka University who are residing at halls are usually switching codes in their everyday conversation both consciously and subconsciously. It is true that sometimes use of code switching shows smartness and makes conversation easier, enjoyable or more comprehensible; but more frequent use of code switching can be harmful for any language. And this research shows the same thing as well. Due to frequent Bangla-English or Bangla-Hindi code switching it has become almost a habit among the young generations. Moreover, frequent use of code switching results in unusual accent of some Bangla words. Although the practice of code switching mostly occurs among friends and family members, young people tend to switch codes even with the strangers. Everybody should be careful in this aspect so that it should not become a habit. Most importantly, in the formal program code switching should be avoided. The way Hindi is entering into our own

language is really a matter of concern. As soon as Hindi language has gotten installed in the youth of Bangladesh, other cultural aspects of the Hindi-speaking people have been introduced into the Bangladeshis as a byproduct. Who knows, after one decade the term "Bangdi" may become so common like "Banglish"! Apart from that, this research shows that due to the lack of knowledge of exact Bangla words, students switch codes. Bangla is a rich language having its glorifying past and as a nation the Bangladeshis are the unique to sacrifice their lives for the recognition of mother tongue. It is really a matter of discomfiture to switch codes due to the lack of sufficient command on our own language, Bangla. Consequently, everybody should enhance the knowledge on the Bangla vocabulary and should try to avoid conscious and frequent code switching.

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