



## A Survey on Code-Mixing, Code-Switching, Language Alteration and Interference

### KEYWORDS

language contact; language Alteration; Interference; CS; CM

**Hamzeh Moradi**

Ph.D Research Scholar in Linguistics, Panjab University Chandigarh, 160014, India

**ABSTRACT** *Code-switching is a communicative tool which bilinguals for various reasons apply in their process of communication. Code-switching (CS)/code-mixing (CM) is a phenomenon which appears in multilingual communities where two or more languages or language varieties are used in a single conversation, in this process language changes even within a sentence. The present study demonstrates an in-depth description and overview towards CS, CM, language alternation and interference, along with their peculiar and distinctive features.*

### 1. Introduction

The term code-switching is mainly used and discussed in linguistics. The most general definition of code-switching is this: the use of two language varieties in the same conversation. The term code-switching can be defined as the alternation between two or more languages, language varieties, or language registers in discourse between people who have more than one language in common. Generally one of the two languages is dominant language; the major language is often called the matrix language, while the minor language is the embedded language.

Nowadays there is a lot of research on code-switching phenomenon within three perspectives that include: linguistics, sociolinguistics, and more recently, psycholinguistics. Linguists generally concerns themselves only with the structural aspects of code-switching and based on some theoretical models try to formulate constraints upon it. Sociolinguists have concentrated on the social motivations, attitudes and social correlates of code-switching. Psycholinguists engaged themselves with the questions about how bilinguals' linguistic systems are stored and organized in the cognitive system and how they are accessed in language production and perception.

Many scholars and linguists have tried to define code-switching (CS) and Code-mixing (CM). Hymes (1974) defines CS as a common term for alternative use of two or more languages, varieties of a language or even speech styles. Bokamba (1989) views it as the mixing of words, phrases and sentences from two distinct grammatical systems across sentence boundaries within the same speech event

### 2. Code-Mixing, Code-Switching, Language Alteration and Interference

Code-mixing will be defined here as the alternation of two or more languages within a sentence. Language alternation of this kind is fluent, rapid and unmarked by hesitation phenomena and represents the output of a bilingual who is a competent speaker of each of the individual languages. Code-mixing represents the realization of his/her ability to use elements of each within a single sentence, given the appropriate psycho- and sociolinguistic context for the use of more than one language.

Code-switching is defined as that language alternation which occurs between sentences, as opposed to within

sentences. More specifically, code-switching may be defined as the inter-sentential alternation of languages within a single utterance or speech turn (Myers-Scotton 1993). Like code-mixing, code-switching arises in the context of the bilingual individual's competence in each of the languages spoken; both code-mixing and code-switching are to be differentiated from incomplete mastery of one or both languages, as may be manifested by second and foreign language learners. Competent bilinguals who engage in code-switching and code-mixing are able to converse in either of their languages as readily and as completely as a monolingual speaker of that language. We may note that it is only under specific sociolinguistic conditions that code-mixing and switching will arise.

Some scholars such as Kachru (1978), Pfaff (1979), Sridhar & Sridhar (1980) and Bokamba (1988) differentiate between "code-mixing" and "code-switching", some, on the basis of whether it is intersentential (code-switching) or intrasentential (code-mixing), reserve the term code-switching for inter-sentential switches only and instead prefer to use code-mixing for intra-sentential switches. The reason is that only code-mixing (i.e., intra-sentential switching) requires the integration of the rules of the two languages involved in the discourse (Kachru, Sridhar and Sridhar). Muysken (2000) proposed a typology of code-mixing and subsumes code-switching under the typology by equating it with alternation which is one of the three types of code-mixing proposed, thus avoiding the term code-switching. The term code-switching, according to Muysken, is not appropriate for the general type of mixing as it separates the phenomena too strongly from the phenomena of borrowing and interface. He prefers using a more neutral term like code-mixing.

Annamalia (1989) notes that 'switching' and 'mixing' are marked by characteristics that no new grammar is created beyond the grammars of two languages involved. The difference between switching and mixing is that in mixing, the speech event is constant, with no variation in participants or topic, and all participants have knowledge of both languages. He also proposed that 'mixing' is a linguistic strategy for discourse functions primarily involving social meanings and switching is a discourse strategy for linguistic (verbal) communication reflecting language competence of the speaker.

Clyne (1987) employs the term code-switching in the sense

of the 'alternative use of two languages either within a sentence or between sentences'. He uses the term code-switching to refer to the process whereby a speaker moves from one language to another, either within a single sentence or between one utterance and the next in the same interaction.

Thomason (2000) proposes seven mechanisms which operate singly or in combination, to produce contact-induced changes of all kinds. Code-switching being the most studied of the seven mechanisms is given the first position in a survey of mechanisms of interference. Thomason (2001:132) defines code-switching as the use of material from two or more languages by a single bilingual in the same conversation. Myers Scotten also uses the term 'codeswitching' as 'labeling such phenomena as 'mixing' and distinguishes between 'classic codeswitching' and 'composite codeswitching' (Myers Scotten, 2002).

As Muysken (2000) mentions, due to several different processes such as alternation, insertion and congruent lexicalization which correspond to dominant models, and approaches patterns of CS and CM discovered to be different from one another. With regards to the Pieter Muysken (2000) approach, the process of code-mixing is understood as the insertion of a different foreign lexical or phrasal category into a given structure. Another approach which departs from alternation is Poplack's (1980) that views "the constraints on mixing in terms of the compatibility or equivalence of the languages involved at the switch point" (Muysken, 2000:4).

Another different view proposed to differentiate the two is that if switching involves changing into a clause or a sentence, it should be defined as a code-switching, but if it involves the use of phrases or lexical items or group of words, it should be identified as code-mixing. Another view of distinguishing between code-switching and code-mixing is related to the formality of the situation. Code-mixing, occurs in the less formal situation, while code switching possibly occurs in a formal one. The table (1) below demonstrates the summarized differences between code-mixing and code-switching according to the various views described here:

**Table 1 CS vs. CM**

Points of view	Code switching	
Code mixing		
Grammatical items involved	Sentence & clause	Phrase, word
Base language	Clear	Sometimes unclear
Topic	May change	Maintained
Situations	Formal and informal	More likely informal
Speech Event	Sometimes inconstant	Constant

Yet another distinction being made is that between code-switching and interference. Some of the definitions of interference, such as Haugen's (1956: 40) as defines it as "overlapping of two languages", do not make a clear distinction between the two. According to Weinreich (1963: 1) interference can be defined as "instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language"; while Grosjean (1982) states that interference entails "the involuntary influence of one language on another". The key point here is that code-switching is usually regarded as a voluntary behavior in which the fluent bilingual has control over it, while interfer-

ence due to the influence of one linguistic system or one language on the other occurs involuntarily. Grosjean (1982) proposes that such interference is especially observable in conversations between a bilingual and a monolingual, where the bilingual consciously obviates code-switching, which may thwart communication, but cannot avoid unconscious interference. Nevertheless, it is not always easy to distinguish lexical interference from code-mixing, since interference may possibly cause the bilingual speaker to trigger his/her bilingual language mode, thus concurrently increasing the incidence of code-switching (Grosjean 1982).

The discussion of code-switching and language alternation began with work of Celso Alvarez (1998.2000). You may regard code-switching and language alternation as two distinct ways of considerations about language output, the first one relating to communicative functions and the second to grammatical form. Language alternation explains the alternating usage of two distinct grammatical systems or two languages. For instance if a conversation consists of some utterances in, say, Persian and other, say, English you may state that the conversation ostentatiously depicts language alternation. Code-switching mostly relates to contextualization of communication, language alternation concerns with the linguistic form

**3. Conclusion**

The study demonstrated an in-depth overview of four related but distinct terms in linguistics, specifically in language contact, i.e. code-switching, code-mixing, language alternation and interference. It highlights their peculiar features by presenting careful definitions and examples for each term and revealing their distinguishable characteristics. The first steps for conducting a successful research in linguistic studies are being familiar with the linguistic terms, concepts and theories related to the area of research and the ability to clearly highlight the similarities and differences between them in order to reach to a appropriate research methodology during a linguistic research. The present study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to other researchers and scholars who have the same interest in language study, specially code-switching and code-mixing.

## REFERENCE

- Alvarez, C. (1998). From 'switching code' to 'code-switching': towards a reconceptualization of communicative codes." In P. Auer (ed.) *Code-switching in Conversation: Language, Interaction, and Identity*, 29-48. London: Routledge. | Alvarez, C. (2000). Para um modelo do 'code-switching' e a alternancia de variedades como fenomenos distintos: dados do discurso Galego-Portuges/Espanhol na Galiza. *Sociolinguistic Studies* 1(1), 111-128. | Annamalia, E.(1989). The language factor in code mixing. *International Journal of Sociology of Language* 75: 47-54. | Bokamba, E. (1988). Code mixing, language variation and linguistic theory: Evidence from Bantu languages. *Lingua* 76: 21-62. | Clyne, M. (1987). Constraints on Code Switching: How universal are they? *Linguistics* 25: 739-64 | Di Sciullo, A.M., Muysken, P. and Singh, R. (1986). Government and code switching. *Journal of Linguistics*. 22: 1-24 | Grosjean, F. (1982). *Life with two languages. An introduction to bilingualism*. Cambridge. | Haugen, E. I. (1956). *Bilingualism in the Americas: A bibliography and research guide* (No. 26). Univ of Alabama Pr. | Hymes, D. (1968). The ethnography of speaking. In J.A.Fishman (Ed.), *Readings in the Sociology of Language*. The Hague. 99-138. | Kachru.B. B. (1978). Towards structuring code switching: A Indian perspective. *International Journal of Sociology of Language* 16: 27-46. | Muysken, P. (2000). *Bilingual speech: A Typology of code-mixing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. | Myers-Scotton, C. (1993). *Social motivation for code switching*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. | Myers-Scotton, C. (1993). *Duelling languages: Grammatical Structure in Code Switching*. Oxford: Clarendon. | Myers-Scotton, C. (2002). *Contact linguistics*. New York: Oxford University Press. | Pfaff, C.W. (1979). Constraints on language mixing: Intrasentential Code-Switching and Borrowing in Spanish/English. *Language* 55 (2): 291-318. | Poplack, S. (1980). Sometimes I'll start a sentence in Spanish Y TERMINO EN ESPANOL: Toward a typology of code switching. *Linguistics* 18: 581-618. | Romaine, S. (1986). The notion of government as constraint on language mixing: Some evidence from the code- mixed compound verb in Punjabi. In *Linguistic and language in contact: The interdependence on theory, data and application*, (ed.). D. Tannen. Washington DC: Goergetown University Press. | Sridhar, S.N and Sridhar, K.K. (1980). *The syntax and psycholinguistics bilingual code mixing*. Canadian Journal of Psychology 34: 92-116. | Thomason, S. (2000). *Contact languages: An introduction*. Washington DC. Georgetown University Press. | Thomason, Sarah G. (2001). *Language Contact: An Introduction*. Edinburgh & Washington, DC: Edinburgh University Press & Georgetown University Press. | Weinreich, U. (1963). On the semantic structure of language. *Universals of language*, 2, 142-216. |