

**AN ANALYSIS OF CODE-SWITCHING AND CODE-MIXING AMONGST STUDENTS  
OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL COLLEGE  
MUEA-BUEA IN CAMEROON**

**ABSTRACT**

The research work aims at providing an analysis of code-switching and code-mixing amongst students of Our Lady of Mount Carmel College Muea-Buea in Cameroon. In order to achieve the goal of this study, the researcher used a qualitative research method, which involves recording utterances and observation. The data was analyzed by using Van Dijk functional approach of discourse analysis. The instruments used in collecting the data were: a note book to prevent data loss and a smart phone for recording utterances. The findings of the study show the following; Code-switching and code-mixing helps to ease and strengthen communication between the teacher and students involved in classroom interaction. In each of the conversation there are two forms of code-switching they are: the intra and inter-sentential code-switching. Likewise, there are several motivating factors as to why students' code-switch and code-mix and these factors are classified under the linguistic, social, and stylistic factors. From the data analysis, the linguistic factors are identified to be the most prominent factors that plays a major role as to why students code-switch and code-mix. Lastly, it was observed that code-switching and code-mixing can both have positive and negative impacts on the students. The research concluded by saying, the use of code-switching and code-mixing in the classroom can help students comprehend any material and also help the teachers to build a good communication with the students.

KEYWORDS: Codeswitching, Codemixing, Pupils, Factors, Linguistics

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Code switching and Code mixing are important aspect of language given their use and status in the speech pattern of average bilingual in any human society, especially in the African society. In the words of Milroy and Muysken (1995:9) code-switching is the alternate use by bilinguals of two or more languages in the same conversation. Macswan(1999:37) also claims that code-switching is a speech style in which fluent bilinguals move in and out of two (or conceivably more) languages. Obiamalu and Mbagwu (2009) submit that code switching is a bilingual situation in which speakers move from one language to another in their linguistic repertoire for various linguistics and social factors. Essien, Okon, (1995:272) defines code-mixing as a "language phenomenon which two languages are used for the same message or communication". Kim (2006) submits that, code-mixing includes all cases where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentences. In other words code-mixing refers to the mixing of various linguistic units (morpheme, words, modifiers, phrase, clauses and sentences)

primarily; it involves mixing two languages within a sentence. Various scholars and writers provided reasons as to why individuals code switch and code mix. And some of this reason runs purely from linguistic to certain sociolinguistic considerations such as emphasizing group identity, to serve a linguistic need of providing lexical, phrasal or sentential filler in an utterance. However, both can be said to have positive and negative effects closely associated with them. It is also a discourse analysis which intends to analyze the linguistic and sociolinguistic factors that prompt the needs to code switch and code mix. Thus, this study intends to enlighten the unawareness of the existence of code switching and code mixing, and bring to light the reason for the switching and mixing of codes, likewise the effects of code switching and code mixing.

The significance of this study lies in bringing awareness to the students on the existence of code switching and code mixing, and how they switch and mix codes unconsciously in their day to day classroom interaction. it will equally unveil the importance, the reasons and the effects of switching and mixing code and it will help them understand the nature of language use and how to use it when necessary.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

This research work adopts qualitative research design. The study simply analyzes the nature of code switching as an aspect of linguistic system of human interaction and discourse analysis was fully implemented in the full textual analysis. The sampling technique used in the data collection, is the random sampling method..The data is presented in accordance with the methods of data collection and this method of data collection aligns with using a qualitative research method which involves recording utterances and observation. The data was equally analyzed by using Van Dijk functional approach to discourse analysis. This data is presented in the following ways, the first effort is to document the interactions, pointing out instances of code switching and code mixing, in the recorded discourses, and stipulating the factors that are responsible for code switching.

## **3. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

This section presents the interaction between the language teachers and students hence forth, referred to as speaker 1 and 2 respectively. The data is analyzed using van dijk functional discourse approach. The analysis is done along three basic lines of concern: linguistic factors, stylistic factors, and social factors.

Data: 1

a. S1: Bonjour

Gloss: Good morning

b. S2: Bonjour madam

Gloss: good morning madam

c. S1: Aujourd'hui nous discuterons d'une date très importante dans l'histoire du bilinguisme. In Cameroon, we honor the first Fridays of February do you know why?

Gloss: Today we would discussed on a very important date in the history of bilingualism. In Cameroon we honor the first Friday of February do yo know why?

d. S1: Yes, Pas ce que, c'est la journée du bilinguisme.

Gloss: Yes, because, it is bilingualism day.

e.S1: Correct we celebrate bilingualism on this day. Le bilinguismeest la maîtrise de deux langues, cest la capacite de parler couramment deux langue.

Gloss: Correct wecelebrate bilingualism on this day. Bilingualism is the ability to be fluent in two languages.

d. S1: Alor savez-vous comment nous appelons les gens qui parle couramment deux langue? They are referred to as bilingues.

Gloss: So do you know how we refer to those who are fluent in two languages? They are referred to as bilinguals.

From the data presented, various factors that prompt the speakers to code-switch and code-mix can be analyzed.

The analysis for the above presented data will be based on the factors responsible for code-switching and code-mixing. These factors can be deduced to be the linguistic and stylistic factor. The most prominent linguistic factor that prompts the need to code-switch and code-mix is the "*failure to retrieve correct words*". The failure to retrieve correct word might be as a result of incompetent linguistic performance. Such an instance is seen when the speaker in data 1 (e) tries to recall the word "bilingual "in English language but fails to do so. And instead of wasting such time, the speaker would rather switch to French language in order to retrieve the word because it is faster and easier. This is seen when he refers to them as "*bilingue*".

In the same light, another factors that prompt the need to code-switch and code-mix is that is the stylistic factor of "*making a precise point*". An example of this is seen in data1 (b) here the speaker lays emphasis on the history of bilingualism but in order to make a precise point, the speaker calls out the name of the country where bilingualism is of great importance and the speaker does this by saying in 1(b) "*In Cameroon*". We honor the first Friday of February.

It is important to note that the utterances presented in data 1 shows the existence of two forms of code-switching and they are: the intra-sentential and the inter-sentential. The inter-sentential code-switching involves a switch between sentences and an example of this is switch is seen in data 1 (b and d). The intra-sentential form of switching involves switching within sentences. An example of an intra-sentential switching is seen in data 1 (c and e).

Data: 2

a. S1: Mylene, peux-tu définir le mot adverbe?

Gloss: Mylene, can you define an adverbe?

b. S2: (silence)

Gloss: (silence)

c. S1: alormylene, tu ne sais pas ce qu'est un adverbe? So you're trying to tell me you haven't come across le mot adverbe

Gloss: so mylene, you do not know what an adverb is? So you're trying to tell me you haven't come across the word adverb?

- a. S2: sir, I have come across le mot mais je ne me souvien pas de la définition.

Gloss: i have come across the word, but i do not remember the definition

d. S1: wandaful

Gloss: wandaful (slang expression).

From the data presented, the researcher highlights the presence of an intra-sentential code-switching and this form of code-switching is seen in data 2 (g and f)

Data: 3

- a. S2: Bonne après-midi monsieur.

Gloss: Good afternoon sir.

- b. S1: how was your siesta

- c. S2: (laugh)... trop court.

Gloss: (laugh)... too short.

- d. S1: okay ashai (expression or sorry). Ce soir nous discuterons du verbe. What are verb ?ilfaudrait le définir en française.

Another factor that prompts the need to code-switch and code-mix is the Social factors. There are different social factors that cause may causes speakers of a language to code-switch and code-mix. In data 3 the researcher highlights "*the mood of the speaker*" as an important social factor that can prompt the speaker to code-switch because, there are some individual that if they are in a good mood they are able to easily express themselves, however, there are some that if they are in a bad mood they find it difficult to grasp some words. An instance of such is seen data 3(1). Let's consider the fact that, the speaker maybe in a good mood, in such a situation, the speaker would be able feel sympathetic towards another person, as such the speaker would be able to find an expression that best explains how the speaker feels.

From all the presented data, it can be observed that code-switching and code-mixing can affect the students both positively and negatively.

Positively code-switching is beneficial in the sense that, it can help one access equivalent expression in another language as seen in data1 (e) and knowledge of two languages has made it possible for individuals to get access some equivalent expression in another language.

Negatively, it serve as a marker of incompetent linguistic performance and this is seen in data 1 (e). in order words, code-switching can be used to indicate the lack of linguistic competence.

With regards to the conversation presented above, the following findings were made:

- i. In each of the recordings, two types of code-switching were pertinent. -the intra-sentential and inter-sentential. The existence of these types of code-switching boils down to language contact. However, code-switching is useful in the dissemination of information.
- ii. In each recording, it was observed that there are several motivating factors as to why speakers of a language code switch. These factors, as mentioned above are: the

linguistics, stylistics, and social factors. Though all these three factors contribute to why participants of the recording code-switch, the linguistics factors are more prominent, as speakers of a language code-switch mostly because they fail to retrieve correct words from the target language.

- iii. Lastly, code-switching and code-mixing in our day to day classroom interaction can either affect speakers positively or negatively. Positively, in an academic context, it helps in the transfer of knowledge to students as such; code-switching can be a useful tool in the classroom for both teachers and students (bista, 2020:1).

#### **4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This research work carried out is based on an analysis of code switching and code mixing amongst secondary school student of Our Lady of Mount Carmel College Muea-Buea in Cameroon. This study is an attempt to bring awareness to the existence of code switching and code mixing amongst students of Our Lady Of Mount Carmel College Muea-Buea in Cameroon. For this to be possible the researcher carried out a field work, with the help of some participants.

##### **4.1 CONCLUSION**

Code switching is seen more frequently in our daily life and it is a growing trend not only amongst students but in the society as whole. Code switching is a linguistic phenomenon commonly occurring in bilingual and multilingual speech communities. The use of code switching in the classroom can be a useful tool in assisting both the language teacher and students in their teaching and learning process. Code switching helps the teacher transfer information to the students effectively. As such, this research work has investigated the aim of code switching, and research questions were used to analyzed the data.

In conclusion, the use of code switching and code mixing in the classroom can help the students easily to comprehend any material and also help the teacher to build a good communication with the students.

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