

PERCEPTIONS OF HAUSA-ENGLISH BILINGUALS ON CODE-SWITCHING ACT IN UUM

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Abstract: *The act of code-switching from one language to another appears to be a normal and pervasive phenomenon as speakers who are competent in two or more languages often switch between the linguistic varieties in a single sentence or speech to express their intent and share interactive values. Sometimes, the bilinguals may not possibly be aware that they repeatedly switch between the available codes in their utterances. Therefore, the paper discusses the perceptions of code-switching during the social contact of Hausa bilingual speakers studying at Universiti Utara Malaysia. Information for the analysis was part of the data collected using sets of questionnaires distributed to 80 bilinguals in the main study to investigate the functions and factors motivating Hausa-English code-switching. The report in this paper, however, only focuses on one of the three research questions, which aims at analysing the consciousness, frequency, and comfortableness of the bilinguals when they code-switch. The result of the investigation established that a majority of the bilingual speakers perform code-switching subconsciously, but they do it frequently and they feel comfortable about it when they interact with friends who share the same first language with them. On the specific question of whether they feel comfortable code-switching with friends of different gender, only slightly more than half (54%) of the participants gave a positive response. Accordingly, the bilinguals perceived the act of alternating between the two languages as a normal trait and a discourse strategy used to communicate effectively, which is mostly influenced by certain social variables such as participant, context, topic, status and solidarity, and linguistic features, i.e., the syntactic structure and grammatical constraints, of the two languages.*

Keywords: Hausa, Code-switching, Perception, Bilingual

Introduction

Code switching is as an old linguistic phenomenon. As a rule, the trait of mixing language varieties in communicative exchange emanates mostly from contact between two or more languages which in turn leads to bilingualism in a given society (Inuwa, 2017). It is the most widely studied language contact phenomenon (Lin & Li, 2012), and the most established topic

in linguistic and sociolinguistic studies alike. Speakers who are competent in two or more languages often switch between the available codes in a speech or statement to effectively express their minds and share communicative values. Therefore, switching from one language to another within the discourse of bilinguals is a common universal linguistic trait. The term is used in various studies as code-switching (Holmes, 2013), codeswitching (Bowers, 2006), code switching (Reyes, 2004) and abbreviated as CS. In a nutshell, code switching is the mental ability to use two or more languages within an utterance or in the same statement. This bilingual pattern of mixing languages persistently manifested in various speeches in both formal and informal contexts including conversations between household members, chats involving peers, while performing at theater, during classroom interaction, religious sermon, news casting, official meeting and so on. However, bilinguals at times may not be aware that they regularly switch between languages in their statements (Milroy & Gordon, 2003) as they may not possibly report the code they have selected in a series of communicative exchange (Wardhaugh, 2011), in aforementioned contexts.

On the other hand, Hausa is the most widely spoken language in West Africa and Africa in general along with Arabic and Kiswahili. The language is categorised as a member of a Chadic group of languages from the Afrosiatic language families. The language is closely related to Arabic and Hebrew more than any other language of the Afrosiatic phylum in Sub-Saharan Africa (Jaggar, 2011). It is largely established in the Northern Nigeria and Niger Republic. Recently, Hausa language has been estimated the mother tongue (first language) of approximately eighty to one hundred million people, and relatively over one hundred million non-native speakers who demonstrate a varying degree of aptitude in the language (Yusuf, 2011). Actually, languages must come into contact with one another, since language cannot grow in isolation. Through this interaction one language usually exercises its social and linguistics influence over another. By coming into rapport with other languages, Ahmed and Daura (1970) termed the Hausa language as classical Hausa and modern Hausa. *The classical Hausa* represents the Hausa language and literary styles which have been prominently influenced by Arabic and Islamic faith; contrary to *the modern Hausa*, which have been evidently inclined to western civilization and values through the activity of the English and French language.

Similarly, the multilingual setting of Nigeria, the status of the English language in the teaching and learning environment, and also the growing trend in globalization and technological advancement are contributing immensely to the impact of English over Hausa. In due course, a number of language contact phenomena such as borrowing, diaglossia, interference, and code switching are constantly manifesting within the speech exchanges of Hausa bilinguals in Nigeria and the diaspora to the extent that they (bilinguals) can hardly maintain a conversation without shifting back and forth between Hausa, English and other languages available in their linguistic repertoire. Specifically, the study attempts to answer the following research question: What are the perceptions of Hausa-English bilinguals on the phenomenon of code-switching as they repeatedly employ it within their speech exchange? As a result, the study aimed at revealing the perceptions of Hausa bilinguals on code-switching phenomenon in UUM as they recurrently employ it within their spontaneous conversation irrespective of the topic, context, age and gender of the participants involved.

Almost all Hausa speakers within the Universiti Utara Malaysia enclave are bilinguals right from the primary years of education. They acquire Hausa as a first language while English as a second language or at times third language through formal education in Nigeria, since English is the official language and medium of instruction in Nigerian schools and universities.

Though, at the primary class 1-3, Nigerian pupils were permitted to learn and being instructed using the mother tongue or any dominant language around their location, alongside learning English as a core subject (Ajeigbe, 1987). Therefore, most of these speakers studying at UUM are relatively competent in English, or what Utoh-Ojemudia and Daylop (1996) term as *Dominant bilinguals* who are more fluent in mother tongue than in English but they can converse fluently in both the languages. As a result, code-switching and other sociolinguistic behaviors are manifesting in their normal conversation to the extent that they may not be aware that they repeatedly code switch between languages as they might not possibly report the code they have selected in a communicative episode.

Normally, university students in a country which uses English language for tertiary education, such as Ghana, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, and a host of others too numerous to mention, usually find it easier to discuss or explain certain university subjects using English (Holmes, 2013). Switching from Hausa variety to English code or vice-versa normally manifests within the discourse of these bilinguals since English too is the language of instructions at the post graduate schools of the university. However, code switching between the languages consistently appears naturally and subconsciously within their casual interaction, especially during their meetings regularly held after Juma'at prayers inside the university mosque, in which they discuss various issues concerning their study, living and religious matters. They also normally shift from one language variety to another in the course of exchanging jokes and pleasantries throughout dinner time at cafeterias. Hausa bilinguals mostly employ code switching in the sequence of group discussions about academic topics and activities, and other relevant circumstances which involve two or more Hausa speakers at UUM. This is why the study is designed to explore how Hausa and English bilinguals perceive the trait of code-switching phenomenon as it persistently manifests in their spontaneous conversations.

Literature Review

Code Switching as Linguistic Phenomenon

Most of early linguistic studies on code switching, specifically in the 1950s backward considered the habits of bilinguals as sub-standard practice of language (Weinreich, 1968). Nevertheless, modern linguistic inquiries discovered otherwise. Jagero and Odongo (2011) argue that code switching is a normal bilingual behavior. It has been described as natural language contact phenomena (Obiamalu & Mbagwu, 2009). The bilingual act is also perceived as subconscious behavior (Auer, 2010; Li, 2000; Woolard, 2004). Therefore, alternating between two or more languages manifests subconsciously and naturally in a given discourse of bilingual speakers. Ariffen and Rafik-Galea (2009) regard the trait as discourse strategies used by bilinguals to effectively communicate their state of mind. While discussing code switching in multilingual contexts like Nigeria, Essien (2000) found that code switching among bilinguals such as Nigerians has to be considered as normal linguistic phenomenon, especially in societies where two or more vernaculars and dialects are spoken. The code-switching act appears naturally and subconsciously within the speech of any bilingual speaker and remains quite persistent throughout life (Holmes, 2013). In contrary, Chamo (2012) argued that code switching is a conscious practice that usually appears in conversation involving bilinguals. Generally, alternating use of two or more languages is a natural trait that manifests subconsciously in speeches, which could be in sentences and/or phrases from both languages in a long and successive sentence or paragraph.

Code-switching behavior is governed by linguistic and social constraints (Gumperz, 1977; Poplack, 1980, 1981). Poplack (1980) defined code-switching as “the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence, or constituent” (p. 583). These alternations are

controlled by social factors such as age, sex, ethnic identity, educational level as well as linguistic constraints. Poplack defined these linguistic constraints as “grammatical rules” that govern language alternation based on “acceptability judgments” garnered from the grammar norms of the community (p. 585). Gender, although regarded as an important sociolinguistic variable has not been given much prominence in the code-switching literature. In the diverse communities where the link between gender and code-switching has been explored the results are varied. Some studies, for example, Poplack’s (1980), have found differences in the quantity and type of code-switching used by each gender within the same community. Other studies, on the other hand, show no direct correlation between gender and the overall frequency and type of code-switching (Cheshire & Gardner-Chloros, 1998; Sayahi, 2011). Further, there have been evidences that indicate that women and men may code-switch for different reasons and concerns (Al Batoush, 2014; Atawneh, 2007; Finnis, 2014).

Social factors and social dimensions are the determinant elements for the choice of a particular language code rather than another. They are useful and also the basic mechanism in recounting and examining utterances of all types of social interactions (Holmes, 2013). Such factors involve the influence of the participants, social context, topic, formality, status, purposes of the discussion as well as functional use of the language. Holmes (2013) further highlighted that the way people speak is influenced by certain social aspects and social scopes in which they are speaking. This all depends on where they are speaking, who can hear what they are talking, and what their outlooks and purposes are during the speech exchange. Normally, people express the same message somewhat differently to different audiences. Linguistic factors, on the other hand, refer to the grammatical structure and constraints of the languages that usually determine the patterns of code-switching. Code-switching can either occur within sentences (intrasentential), between sentences (intersentential) or on extrasentential level, which signifies an incidence in which a bilingual may attach a tag from one language code into a statement in another, otherwise known as tag switching. In this regard, Bokamba (1989) defined code switching as the mixing of words, phrases or sentences from two different grammatical structures across sentence boundaries in a single statement.

There is evidence that bilingual speakers both consciously and unconsciously participate in code-switching. According to Becker (1997), “Code-switches are often triggered by unconscious factors and consequently, bilingual speakers are often unaware of their spontaneous alternation between languages” (p.8). Becker (1997) further classified unconsciously motivated code-switches to three categories: code-switches that result from a momentary inclination during the production stage of speech, switches that are triggered due to the frequent exposure of such items in another language, and code-switches due to the untranslatability of a given item into another language. However, it has also been discovered that bilingual code-switches may also occur due to conscious psychological factors. Becker (1997) purported that bilingual speakers use code-switching as a communication resource to achieve their communicative intentions. In addition, social motivations may also play a part in conscious code-switching. English as a second language speakers tend to code-switch under two conditions: (1) when speaking with an audience they know is bilingual and (2) when they need a word in L2 that they do not have or cannot remember (Nilep, 2006; Woolard, 2004).

Related Hausa Studies on Code Switching

Even with the pervasive nature of code switching in nearly all affairs of bilingual Hausa speakers, investigation on how the bilinguals perceive the linguistic phenomena they practice in everyday conversation seems very limited or there is no specific study put in place to investigate the perceptions of the Hausa bilinguals on code switching based on the researcher’s

information. But some studies (literatures) on functions of code switching, factors motivating the occurrence of code switching and grammatical constraints and nature of the two languages involved in code switching have been conducted by researchers as reviewed. Chamo (2012) observed the manifestations of code switching between characters in Hausa movies of Kanywood industry. The observation digs into nature and reasons accountable for switches between Hausa and English codes in the contemporary Hausa films. It is finally found that the code-switching act in the Hausa popular culture is motivated by certain emotional feelings of the characters as they use code switching to share group identity and solidarity with group members in the movies. In the same vein, Abbas (2017) examined the usage and manifestations of code switching in the contemporary Hausa film songs. It is noted that switching back and forth in such songs is mostly subjective by the literacy passion of the authors with the exception of some singers who usually code switch to share group identity as cited in the following instances from one song, Rainy Seasons:

Farkon ganinki na yi wo *confusing*,
 Sai da zuciyata ta yi *squeezing*,
 Sai da temperature ta tai *raising*,
 Jiri nake ca ake na sha *poison*,
 Ni ko so nake a san ina da *reason*,
 Reason na farko kina da kyan *dressing*
 Reason na biyu kullum kitsonki *weaving*,
Oh! *rainy season*. (Abbas, 2017)

Further, Haruna, Christopher and Halim (2016) explored the practice of code-mixing/code-switching as depicted by writers in contemporary Hausa novels through extracting sentences from three selected creative works. The phenomena of mixing two or more languages played a significant role in the development of the characters' bilingual creativity status, filling some lexical words and changing the characters/speaker's role during conversation and other social interaction among themselves. In addition, the study finds that the majority of these writers of modern Hausa prose have at least a secondary school education which gives them room for combining Hausa and English languages in their style of writing the love stories. Most of the readers of these books are youth that mostly enjoy reading the books since their main concern is love, marriage life and style of urban socialization. Finally, the study established that the writers of modern Hausa literature – in order to entertain their target readers whom are conversant with two or more languages – often employ code-mixing as a linguistic device and primary strategy for conveying their messages by portraying the characters.

Inuwa (2014) reported a research on the social meanings of Hausa-English code-switching practice by Hausa bilinguals studying at Universiti Utara Malaysia. Proofs for the survey were collected by means of questionnaire instruments distributed to bilinguals. The data was further analyzed in accordance with conversational functions and reasons of code switching as a framework, which entails eight specific functions of code switching: quotations, reiteration, objectivization, lack of facilities, addressee specification, identity sharing, interjections and clarification. However, the outcomes of the survey showed that code switching is a conversational strategy used by bilinguals to efficiently share social and conversational ideals since it is motivated by syntactic structure of the two languages as well as some social factors, i.e, the context, topic, status and gender of the bilinguals in a given situation. Therefore, code switching is not a uniform bilingual behaviour because it varies from a single speaker to another, from one community to another, and from a situation to another. The researcher cited some instances of code switching as follows:

- a. Ka fara *downloading* tukunna sai ka yi *copy and paste*.
Download then to copy and paste.
- b. Zan yi *using questionnaire* ne.
I will just use a questionnaire. (Inuwa, 2014)

Ibrahim (2016) studied the act of mixing two or more languages in speeches of Hausa bilinguals as little is known about the characteristics of Hausa-English code switching in the United Kingdom. To fill this gap, the researcher examines the syntactic structures of CS and also its social and pragmatic functions in the discourse of Hausa-English bilinguals in Manchester. In doing so, a description of the participants and their linguistic experience was provided after conducting a review of related literature on CS with a view to provide a theoretical foundation for the analysis, which was collected during informal talks recorded at locations in different times and analysed based on various available approaches. The study discovered that switches in Hausa-English do not occur at random; rather they are constrained by a set of grammatical rules of both participating languages. Therefore, nouns are the most switched items, followed by discourse markers (interjections, particles, fillers & conjunctions), verbs, adverbs, prepositions, pronouns and then determiners. The findings, however, demonstrated that Hausa speakers practice CS to enhance everyday conversational interactions as it occurs in their speeches to serve these purposes: reiteration, quotation, clarification, low level of competence in English, lexical gap, grammatical loan and unique referent. It was concluded that intra-sentential and inter-sentential are the two structural patterns in Hausa-English conversation, initiated by various conversational contexts.

Further, Sarbi (2017) evaluated the effect of code switching from one language to another in the translation activity. The information used in the study was collected from texts, mass media as well as through physical observation of the bilingual speech exchanges at different occasions. Thus, five scenarios from the data have been selectively observed. The researcher in the first place discusses the situations where code switching affects both the source and the receptor language of proficient translator despite conducting an effective translation. The second case is the possibility of carrying out an effective translation in a situation where the translator can be a multilingual in the source, receptor and the interfering language. The third is the possibility of doing an unproductive translation where the translator is multilingual but ineffectual in the interfering language. The fourth condition is when a bilingual translator finds it necessary to consult another person who is proficient in the source and interfering language to help in turning the text into unilingual language. In this condition translation is possible after technical hitches of consultation. The last case is a situation where translation is impossible when the translator is an indolent and uneducated in the intruding language.

However, Inuwa (2017) discussed the habit of code switching and its communicative significance based on various types of code switching as practiced by Hausa bilinguals. Information for the study was collected through spontaneous recordings of the bilinguals' conversations at various occasions. The data was later analyzed according to the classification of code switching by looking into the syntactic positions and circumstances in which the behaviour repeatedly occurs in conversation of the bilinguals. Thus, the act of code switching practiced by Hausa bilinguals can be one of a situational code switching, a metaphorical code switching, a tag switching, an intrasentential code switching or an intersentential one. Besides, the result found that the bilingual speakers mostly switch from Hausa language to another linguistic code, especially English to quote a statement made by a prominent person. As they usually code switch to reiterate or to clarify a statement or to make some objective comments in a speech exchange. The bilinguals also employed code switching to share identity or to

address different audience or sometimes when they lack an appropriate term to use in one language. They still switch between the two or more languages to express exclamations. It is finally discovered that code switching entails interactive and social values as opposed to notion that view the trait as a substandard practice of language or simply a sign of partial control of two or more languages available in the linguistic repertoire of any bilingual.

Research Design And Methodology

The present sociolinguistic study employed quantitative technique for collection and interpretation of the data towards analysing the perceptions on code-switching amongst Hausa bilinguals in UUM. While most of the bilinguals shared the same residence halls, some also studied similar courses at various colleges in the university. Consequently, the situation triggered a frequent manifestation of code-switching within their speech exchange, especially in the course of informal conversations or interactions outside of the classroom context.

Theoretical Framework

The collected data used in the present study were analysed within the framework of Homes' (2013) social factors and social dimensions of language use that usually influence bilingual code-switching. Although grammatical aspects of the two or more languages normally motivate the occurrence of code-switching, the study also focuses on social factors due to the fact that it is sociolinguistic oriented investigation of code switching. The way people speak is influenced by certain social aspects and social scopes in which they are speaking. It all depends on where they are speaking, who can hear what they are talking, and what their outlooks and purposes during the speech exchange are since people express the same message somewhat differently to different audiences.

Therefore, social factors and social dimensions are the determinant elements for the choice of a particular language variety rather than another. They are useful and the basic mechanisms in examining and reporting utterances of all types of social interactions. Such factors comprise the participants, social context, topic, formality, status and purpose of discussion besides the functional use of the language. The participants in this study are fluent Hausa-English bilingual speakers that usually find it easier to discuss social issues using the languages especially after Juma'at prayer inside the university mosque, while exchanging pleasantries at dinner time in cafeterias, during group discussions on academic topics/activities, and other situations involving two or more Hausa speakers in a given UUM context. Thus, the study aimed at exploring how these Hausa-English bilinguals perceive the trait of code-switching as it persistently manifests in their spontaneous conversations.

Data Collection and Analysis

The researchers distributed the questionnaires to 90 participants and collected the completed copies. There are no definite criteria in disseminating the questionnaires to the nominated Hausa-English bilinguals since they nearly have the same linguistic ability of alternating between both languages during dialogue. Thus, any respondent in the sample frame is deemed proficient in representing the focused population. The investigator distributed the questionnaires to all the reachable bilinguals within the research site, who filled them and returned 80 back to him.

After accumulating the necessary information, descriptive breakdown was used for the analysis of the data in answering the proposed research question. According to Creswell (2014), the descriptive analysis is a systematic interpretation of individuals' attitudes in a particular context. The gathered data were used in a descriptive manner by identifying the perceptions of

Hausa bilinguals on code-switching act. Some interrelated phases were run in arranging and shaping the data for analysis as endorsed by Creswell. In the beginning, the researcher collected the hard copies of the questionnaires and numbered them from 1 to 80, before recording the scores of each questionnaire into the computer software (SPSS Version 18). Then, the researcher used simple percentage in scoring the result of each participant's responses from the questionnaire.

The Respondents

The sample used in this study involved 80 respondents, 68 males and 12 females, fluctuating in age between 19 and 54 years. The participants were judiciously selected to represent the Hausa bilingual populace (Noor, 2011). They were purposefully selected based on the outlining features of the subdivision members of Hausa-English bilingual speakers (Creswell, 2014). Nearly all the bilinguals who took part in the study are very competent in the two languages. The respondents come from the main Hausa dialect groups in Nigeria comprising Guddiranci (Katagum emirate and its environs), Katsinanci (Katsina state and Surroundings) Kanonci (Kano and Surrounding area), Sakkwatanci (old Sokoto state), Zazzaganci (Zaria city and Environs), and Bausanci (Bauchi metropolitan and Environs).

The Instrument

Questionnaire as a survey tool which presents the participants with sequence of questions to which they are needed to respond is used as the main instrument in the study. The investigator adapted a questionnaire used by Van Dulm (2007) in investigating the manifestation of English-Afrikaans code switching in South Africa under the sketch of feature checking theory, which was used in pretest, main test and also used in post-test stage to fix its consistency by the developer. The modified questionnaire was piloted with 30 bilingual respondents before conducting the main project. Hence, four-section questionnaire which contains twenty-seven (27) questions was prepared. Section A contains ten demographic questions. Section B entails four questions which intend to evaluate the aptitude of the bilinguals in both the languages. Section C covers eight questions which symbolize specific functions of code switching, while section D presents five questions, with four questions meant to collect information concerning the perceptions of the respondents in practicing code-switching (as analysed and reported in this paper), and one question to elicit responses on factors motivating the act of code switching between Hausa-English bilinguals. The four questions (items 23 until 26) on the perceptions about code-switching are:

23. Do you frequently switch between Hausa and English when you interact with friends during group activities?

Yes No Sometime

24. Do you feel more comfortable switching from Hausa-English around friends/colleagues whose first language is the same as yours?

Yes No Sometime

25. Do you feel more comfortable switching from Hausa-English around friends/colleagues of different gender?

Yes No Sometime

26. Do you think switching from Hausa-English in everyday conversations is:

Conscious (intentional) Subconscious (unintentional)

Results and Discussions

Behavior of Hausa-English Code Switching

This section answered the research question three of the main study, which asked: How do the code-switchers view the phenomenon of alternating between the languages as they repeatedly employ them within their speech exchange?

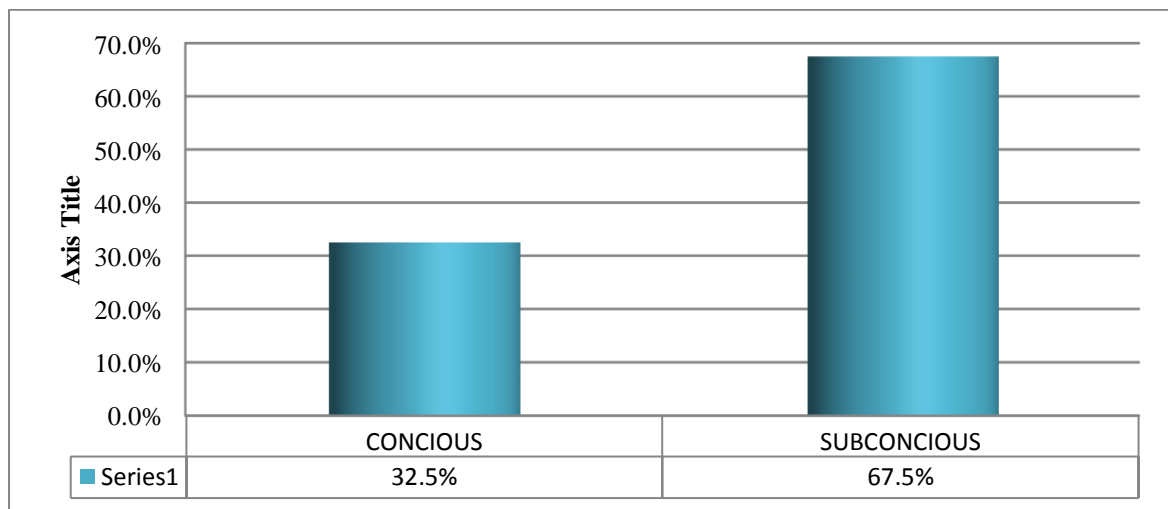


Figure 1: Behavior of Hausa-English Code Switching

As recorded in the figure 1 above, Question 26 in the questionnaire demanded the bilinguals' responses on their view concerning the manifestation of code switching behavior within their utterances, i.e., whether they are employing it intentionally or unintentionally (consciously or unconsciously) as it frequently appears within their speech exchange. The results of the bilingual responses show that 54 (67.5%) report that they subconsciously switch between Hausa-English, while 26 (32.5%) claim that they consciously switch between the language varieties. This signifies that the manifestation of code amongst the majority of Hausa-English bilinguals is subconscious behaviour (Figure 1).

Perceptions on code switching amongst the bilinguals

This section presented three other questions, which were aimed at gathering the respondents' perceptions concerning the frequency, comfortableness, and gender in the use of Hausa-English code-switching as they appear below (Figure 2).

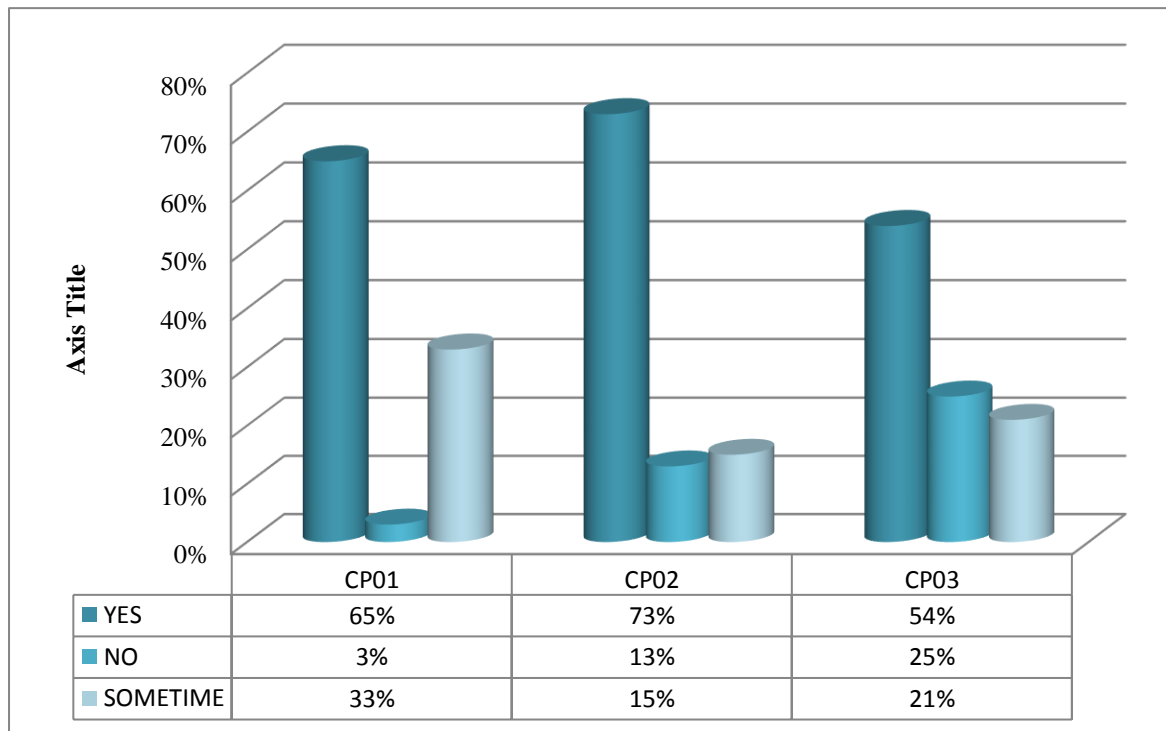


Figure 2: Perceptions of Code-switching amongst Bilinguals

Question 23 asked about the frequency of the use or occurrence of code switching during the mutual interaction with colleagues/friends. It is found (in CP01) that 52 (65.0%) of the respondent's report that they frequently switch between Hausa and English whenever they interact with bilingual friends or colleagues, while 2 (2.5%) claim they do not frequently switch between the language varieties, and 26 (32.5%) of the respondent's report that they sometimes do the code-switching. This shows that the majority of the respondents involve in code-switching when they are interacting with fellow Hausa bilinguals.

Question 24 required the bilinguals' responses concerning how comfortable they feel when they switch from Hausa to English or vice versa around their friends/colleagues of the same first language or mother tongue. The result (CP02) shows that 58 (72.5%) of the participants respond positively concerning how comfortable they are when code-switching with friends or colleagues of the same first language, while 10 (12%) report that they do not use code-switching in their interactions with friends of the same mother tongue, and 12 (15.0%) argue that they use code-switching in some occasions. This shows that majority of the Hausa-English bilinguals are comfortable to code-switch when interacting with friends of the same mother tongue.

Question 25 also inquired about how comfortable the bilinguals feel during code-switching, but specifically with friends of the opposite gender. To this question (CP03), 43 (53.8%) participants give a positive response, while 20 (25.0%) report their discomfort whenever they involve in the code-switching act with friends of different gender, and 17 (21.3%) claim to be comfortable at times but not always. This result again shows that majority of the Hausa-English bilinguals feel at ease whenever they involve in the code-switching act amid friends of different gender.

Discussion and Conclusion

Generally, the way people speak is influenced by certain social factors – the participants, social contexts, the topic and purposes, formality, status, solidarity, and functions – in which they are

speaking, which mostly motivate code switching between the available language varieties. In the vein, the linguistic factors – the syntactic structure of the two or more languages – often determine the patterns of code-switching. As Wardhaugh (2011) described, the bilinguals may not be aware about or report which code they have chosen in conversation. The study also established that frequent manifestation of code switching between majority Hausa-English bilinguals is a subconscious but a systematic and meaningful habit of language use within their interactive discourse. In this sense the bilinguals perceived the act of alternating between the two languages as a normal trait and a discourse strategy used to communicate effectively. This is why Hausa bilinguals studying at UUM code switch comfortably between Hausa and English when interacting with friends of the same mother tongue, as well as amidst friends of different gender.

Therefore, code switching entails interactive and social values as opposed to the notion that views the trait as a substandard practice of language or just a sign of partial control of two or more languages available in the linguistic repertoire of any bilingual. Because the same members belonging to a particular language group or ethnic background such as students or language-sharing group normally employ code-switching to share the identity that binds them together, Hausa bilinguals feel more comfortable doing the code-switching with fellow Hausa bilinguals as they share similar knowledge of their mother tongue and to some extent, competency in English. In this study, Hausa bilinguals also seem to not have much problem to code-switch with friends of the opposite sex. Having the same first language and similar second language proficiency has assisted and promoted the code-switching amongst them regardless of gender. This finding of code-switching being governed by linguistic as well as social constraints directly supports the views by Gumperz (1977) and Poplack (1980, 1981).

Suggestions for Future Studies

The research recommends an extensive grammatical study on Hausa-English code switching, because there is little work on the constraints of syntactic structure in the occurrence of code switching. There is also a need for extending the study of code switching to Hausa bilinguals in English as a foreign or second language classroom. Other research may also use qualitative techniques to observe and conduct one to one interview with the same participants or other Hausa bilinguals to deeply explore the manifestations of the phenomenon during the bilinguals' interactions.

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