

Mixing and Switching of Codes: Facilitating Means for Communication among Bangladeshi Speakers

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Abstract: This research aims at delving deep into the reality whether code-switching and code-mixing are of negative impact on the Bangla language or they can be a useful tool for the sake of dynamic communication. This research diagnoses socio-psychological contexts of code-switching and code-mixing drift among the young speakers of Bangladesh with an eye to getting to the reality. The paper cares about these people for they are the representative-speakers of Bangladesh who, at present, are continuously coming into contact with powerful languages of the world and their influences thereby in wider range for globalization. This paper addresses a practical gap that no researcher has yet decided how code-switching and code-mixing can be effective tools for the Bangladeshi speakers without undermining their mother tongue and their linguistic aspirations. This research paper paves the way for getting at a definitive resolution of the gap of code-switching and code-mixing in Bangladesh. For doing this research, 60 participants of three levels allocated in three groups, are considered for their opinions. Group -1 includes tertiary level students of World University of Bangladesh, Dhaka and Ranada Prasad Shaha University, Narayanganj, Bangladesh. Group - 2 takes the secondary level learners of two English medium schools – ‘Changes’ and ‘ABC International’, Narayanganj, Bangladesh into account. And Group - 3 comprises two leading Bangla medium colleges of Dhaka City – one is Notre Dame College and the other is Holy Cross College. This paper, to achieve findings, takes to case studies with questionnaire and interview. As a result of completing the above procedure, it is found that the controlled and conscious ‘mixing’ and ‘switching’ of codes can help the Bangladeshi speakers gain skill of target language and facilitate their communication based on conversation without impairing their mother tongue. Apart from this, the larger implications of the findings are huge forasmuch as they, irrespective of the status of a language, allude to the fact that the controlled and conscious mixing of codes can be allowed for the sake of effective communication.

Key Words: Code-switching, Code-mixing, socio-psychological contexts of code- switching and Code- mixing, Conscious and controlled mixing and switching of codes, Linguistic aspirations

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I. INTRODUCTION

Code-switching and code-mixing are well-known traits in speech pattern. Code- switching in practice is not a very recent issue; rather intentionally or unintentionally, it has been used for long by the speakers of different communities worldwide. At present, English is considered a linguistic passport for global communication. Switching from Bangla to English, and vice-versa has recently become a mark of smartness and elegance, especially among the young generation of Bangladesh. At university level, the medium of instruction and examination is English though students from different backgrounds of education do not have the same range of proficiency in English. In society, there is a special recognition of the persons mixing or switching English code in their speech. To mingle English with Bangla in casual or formal conversation has therefore become a popular trend in Bangladesh. With the advancement of trade and global communication, bilingualism and multilingualism have become most common sociolinguistic phenomenon which includes switching and mixing of codes of different languages to interact and get the message across successfully. With the growing penetration of English into the lives of people, its usage in both the formal and informal contexts is also rising day by day. This research - descriptive and quantitative in nature - finds out the reasons and types of code-mixing and code-switching among the young generation of Bangladesh though its purpose is to determine how they should be considered for communication. This research is based on the data collected from private universities, Bangla medium colleges and English medium schools; interviews with the young speakers of those institutions are purposefully conducted. Data collected by means of the ways mentioned above are transcribed statistically and analyzed in terms of the research objectives.

Remarkable Switching and Mixing of Codes in Bangla Literature:

Many Bengali litterateurs have, to give rise to contextual literary effects, mixed up more than one language in their writings. Worth mentioning, the most eminent Bengali litterateur, Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore took to code-switching and code-mixing to bring about befitting literary tone in his writing. Code-switching and code-mixing from his masterpiece novel, *ShesherKobita*, for example, can be mentioned.

1) "Thikshomoytateashakeibolepunctuality." (The meaning of the sentence: Punctuality means to be present in time.)

(The meanings of the Bangla words: ThikShomoytate = intime; ashakei = to be present; bole = means)

2) "KettybolleGovernesserkachemeyetaaarjaishikhuk mannersshekheni." (The meaning of the sentence: The girl, though learned something from the Governness, did not learn manners.)

(The meanings of the Bangla words: bolle = said; Governesserkache = to/from Governness; meyeta = the girl; aarjai = whatever; shikhuk = learned; shekheni = did not learn)

3) "Aamratojanie baritetar jaowa-aashaaache. Oftener than is good for him."

(The meaning of the sentence: As we know, he comes to this house.)

(The meanings of the Bangla words: Aamrato = as we; jan = know; e barite = to this house; tarjaowa-aashaaache = he comes)

Code-mixing:

Hudson (1996:53) defines code-mixing as a case where a fluent bilingual speaker speaking to another fluent bilingual (person) changes language without metamorphosing the situation. He also said, "To get the right effect, the speakers balance the two languages against each other as a kind of linguistic cocktail." (retrieved from www.shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in)

Kak&Wani(2009) states that code-mixing is a process whereby words of one language are inserted into another or it involves interaction between two languages below clause (sentential) level. (retrieved from www.jstor.org, 10-11-2018)

Warrdrough (1986: 103) states that code-mixing occurs when a speaker uses both languages together to such an extent that they change from one language to the other language in the course of a single utterance. According to him (1992:107), "Conversational code-mixing involves the deliberate mixing of two languages without an associated topic change."

Weinreich (1953:73) thinks that intra-sentential code-mixing is a sign of lack of bilingual proficiency and interference.

Valdes-Fallis (1978, p. 6) claims that people can mix words, phrases and clauses. When one person switches between two languages, the person is bilingual.

According to Muysken(2000-2013), "Code-mixing is a process in which lexical items and grammatical features of two or more languages exist in the same sentence". (retrieved from www.frontiers.org, 10-11-2018)

According to Longman Dictionary, code-mixing is a mixing of two codes or languages, usually without a change of topic. This is quite common in bilingual or multilingual communities and is often a mark of solidarity, e.g. between two bilingual friends or colleagues in an informal situation. Code-mixing can involve various levels of language, e.g. phonology, morphology, grammatical structures or lexical items. (cited in https://archive.org/stream/DictionaryOfLanguageTeachingAndAppliedlinguistics/Dictionary_of_Language_Teaching_and_Applied).

However, to my mind, code-mixing is mixing of words, phrases, clauses or even sentences of different languages or varieties for effective communication in different contexts without considering any pragmatic social consequence.

Code-mixing involves mixing of –

- a) Two Languages
- b) More than two languages
- c) Two or more diglossic varieties

There are two types of code-mixing:

- I) Intra-sentential code-mixing
- II) Inter-sentential code-mixing

I) **Intra-sentential Code-mixing:** Intra-sentential code-mixing occurs within a sentence or a clause. For example - I bet, ajkerkhelaya, Mashrafi will do his best.

(The meaning of the sentence: I bet, Mashrafi will do his best in today's game.)

(The meaning of the Bangla words: Ajkerkhelaya = in today's game)

An intra-sentential code mixing can occur in three processes:

1) Noun insertion: The code-mixing involves mixing of 'noun' of one code in a sentence which is in another code. For example -Will you have some "*Pitha*"? *Pitha* means cake.

2) Verb insertion: This code mixing involves the mixing of 'verb' in a sentence from one code and remaining part of the sentence is in another code. For example – *Tumi ki kajta* finish *korecho*?

(The meaning of the sentence: Have you finished your work.)

(The meaning of the Bangla words: *Tumiki* = Have you (according to Present Perfect Tense); *kajta* = the work; finish *korecho* = finished)

3) Clause insertion: Complex sentence with different clauses of another code reflects this code-mixing. For example– *Amitader kache jabo* but you have to help them.

(The meaning of the sentence: I shall go to them, but you have to help them.)

(The meaning of the Bangla words: *Aami* = I; *tader kache* = to them; *jabo* = shall go (according to Future Tense))

II) **Inter-sentential Code-mixing:** Inter-sentential code-mixing occurs outside the sentence or the clause level (i.e. at sentence or clause boundaries).

Example: Whatever it may be, *tomake ashteihobe*.

(The meaning of the sentence: Whatever it may be, you must come.)

(The meanings of the Bangla words: *tomake* = you; *ashteihobe* = must come)

Code-switching:

Code-switching is switching between two languages back and forth in the same sentence. (retrieved from www.bilingualism.com, 25th October 2018).

Hudson (1980:56) defines code-switching as a strategy in which a speaker "uses different varieties at different times". (retrieved from www.springer.com, 10-11-2018).

According to Romaine (1992:110), code-switching is the use of more than one language, variety, or style, by a speaker within an utterance or discourse, or between different interlocutors or situations. (retrieved from www.slideshare.net, 10-11-2018)

According to Crystal (1987), code or language switching occurs when an individual who is bilingual alternates between two languages during his/her speech with another bilingual person. (retrieved from www.citesecrix.ist.edu)

According to Crystal (1991, p. 59), code-switching can also be described as the switch of bilinguals (depending on who they are talking to or where they are) between standard and regional forms of English, ----, or between occupational and domestic varieties, (cited in <http://my-uadcourses.blogspot.com/2011/04/code-mixing-and-codeswitching.html>).

According to Heller (1988, p.1), code-switching takes place when a person mixes two languages in a sentence or conversation. (retrieved from www.academia.com, 10-11-2018)

Hymes defines code-switching as "a common term for alternative use of two or more languages, varieties of a language or even speech styles." (cited in <http://grammar.about.com/od/c/g/codeswitchingterm.htm>)

According to Longman Dictionary, code-switching is a change by a speaker (or writer) from one language or language variety to another. It can take place in a conversation when one speaker uses one language and the other speaker answers in a different language. A person may start speaking one language and then change to another one in the middle of his speech, or sometimes even in the middle of a sentence. (cited in https://archive.org/stream/DictionaryOfLanguageTeachingAndAppliedlinguistics/Dictionary_of_Language_Teaching_and_Applied).

Hymes defines code-switching as "a common term for alternative use of two or more languages, varieties of a language or even speech styles."

However, for me, code-switching is switching from one language to another ensuring a special effect and social pragmatic consequence with an eye to serving a particular purpose.

Different Functions of Switching and Mixing of Codes:

There are various functions of code-mixing and code-switching, and speakers use them for different purposes.

1. Directive function: Speakers switch languages either to include or to exclude some people in or from their conversations. Maybe they want to tell a secret; they, therefore, switch a language so that other people around them cannot understand, or maybe the opposite, the speakers want to put an end to their private

conversation and engage other people in their conversation with the code those people know and so they switch codes.

2. Expressed function: People switch codes in order to uphold their ethnical identity. Suppose, a speaker is delivering speech in English in an international forum; however, to stress his feeling for his country and culture, he can technically use his own language in a selective way without impeding the communication. Moreover, switching and mixing of codes might be expressions of status too.
3. Referential function: Some speakers are unable to express their ideas easily in one language and so they switch to another language in order to express the ideas more easily. It is common among bilingual children and immigrant families.
4. Emphatic function: Sometimes a speaker switches language and repeats something in two different languages to emphasize it.
5. Poetic function: A speaker may mix or switch codes to create different moods in his conversation as a poet frequently creates with his verses. In this case, the speaker can quote contextual lines from any poet or he himself can use words, phrases, clauses and sentences of his own to create fitting atmosphere as a bard does in his speech.

Different Forms of Code-switching:

1. Inter-sentential switching: The language switches for entire sentence or for clauses. For example -
 - ‘Long time no see. *Varsityteasona?*’
(The meaning of the sentences: Long time no see. Don’t you come to university?)
(The meaning of the Bangla words: *Varsityte* = to university; *asona?* = Don’t you come?)
 - ‘Oh my God! *Etakiholo.*’
(The meaning of the sentence: Oh my God! what happened.)
(The meaning of the Bangla words: *Eta ki* = what; *holo* = happened)
2. Intra-sentential switching: The speaker switches languages within a clause or sentence boundary. For instance
 - ‘*Tumi* promise *koroaamake* trip *e niyejabe*’.
(The meaning of the sentence: (You) promise me that you will take me on a trip.)
(The meaning of the Bangla words: *Tumi* = You; promise *koro* = promise; *aamake* = me; trip *e* = on trip; *niyejabe* = (will) take)
 - *Aami* result *erkonokhoborpainai*.
(The meaning of the sentence: I have not got any news of result.)
(The meaning of the Bangla words: *Aami* = I; result *er* = of result; *kono* = any; *khobor* = news; *paini* = have not got)
3. Extra-sentential switching or Tag-switching: A tag from one language is inserted into another language. For instance –
 - You sent me a friend request, *taina?*
(The meaning of the sentence: You sent me a friend request, didn’t you?)
(The meaning of the Bangla word: *taina?* = didn’t you? (according to Past Tense))
 - ‘*Babyta onekcute, na?*’
(The meaning of the sentence: The baby is very cute. Isn’t it?)

(The meaning of the Bangla words: *Babyta* = The baby; *Onek* = very; *na?* = Isn’t it? (according to Tag Question))

Prime Focus of the Study

The prime focus of my study is on finding out how code-switching and code-mixing can be effective tools for contextual communication without disparaging Bangla. Mixing English with Bangla is vastly popular with the young generation of Bangladesh. It has become a habitual fact for our young generation to switch and mix codes. It is obvious that the young people of Bangladesh develop this habitat at their early age. In comparison to the past, the new generation is accustomed to switching and mixing of codes to a large extent. Code-switching and code-mixing have become an indispensable part of the lives of these people. Because of this trend, a new variety of language, ‘Hybrid Bangla’ - negatively termed by some people - is appearing in Bangladesh for communication. However, by this study, I have found out, pointing at the prime causes for this mingling, code-switching and code-mixing are, as such, not exposing threats to Bangla; instead they can be very effective for communication if their use is conscious and controlled.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Talukder (2000), in her study, revealed a picture of how code-switching is used in pragmatic aspect in everyday life in Bangladesh. According to her, code-switching varied from place to place and from speaker to speaker. It had different uses in different domains. In this study, we find types of code-switching, function of code-switching and different interesting reasons of code-switching. The part, 'code-switching in different domains/fields' showed code-switching had grown a frequent and familiar communication device in our regular life. The next part, 'academic domain' among students, among teachers, between teachers and students, exposed the interesting reasons for code-switching. Code-switching in professional domain had different users. Multinational companies used code-switching for verbal communication but they were using Bangla for long narrative. Booming multinational companies and private ones were making code-switching more popular one. This research discussed emersion of 'Banglish' (mixing of English with Bangla) among Bangladeshi speakers. It also discussed the fact of the acceptance of the hybrid Facebook variety on the newly established FM radio stations (October 28, 2007). In this article, the writer used the term 'Banglish' as well as 'FM Banglish' to refer to the presentation style of the RJs in Bangladesh. This article also mentioned "Hinglish" a combination of English and Hindi. Commercial domain of Bangladesh, say for example cinema – as the article said - also tried to mix English with Bangla. In the informal domain like family, switching of codes was a common practice. In the survey part of code-switching, 75% people agreed that they used code-switching, 90% people mixed Bangla and English frequently while 10% people used the combination of Bangla, English and Hindi. 75% people switched codes consciously or subconsciously while 0% people changed it consciously, at the same time 30% people changed subconsciously. 70% people said the main reasons of switching codes were influence of internet and electronic media. The percentage of people switching codes in informal situations was 60%, 10% people switched codes either for academic purpose or for professional purpose, and 30% people used it for both the purposes. So for her, code-switching became an indispensable communication strategy then.

Sultana (2008), in her thesis, depicted code-switching in Bangladeshi commercial cinema. In Bangladeshi commercial cinema, she found the actors and actresses switching codes from Bangla to English while speaking. However, it should have not been thought, as she said, that in cinema code-switching was used without any reason; rather code-switching in the dialogues was designed to convey the intended meaning. She added that at that time dialogue or verbal language was an integral part of the films, and due to globalization, usage of various languages or codes in films was very common. She also said switching of codes from one language to another was remarkably noticed in numerous films; however, this code-switching, in fact, made the content more interesting.

Alam (2006), in her study, revealed a picture of the use and interest of English language in Bangladesh. According to her, due to the political, social and educational demands, English was remarkably used in this country. It was considered as a language of prestige, honor and a means of getting a job. The objective of this article was to find out the causes and patterns of code-mixing within the target group. The data were taken from officers of multinational and private companies and NGOs; here the engineers, researchers and journalists were also included. The findings showed that in official environment, 60% people switched codes frequently where 35% did this sometimes, and 5% never did this. She showed some reasons behind this. To draw the attention of others, to create impression for professional purpose, to impress the opposite sex, to take the advantage of knowing English, for lack of translation equivalent code-switching was exercised among these groups. She showed that people mixed codes in social and official party, clubs, shopping centre, chatting and in writing SMS. They mixed English with Bangla while talking to their parents, siblings, relatives, colleagues, and friends. Their language alternation types are based on words, sentences and whole passage where they do this in the case of words in most of the time. But their treatment in reaction to code-mixing differs where 33% people criticized and 57% did not do this and rests of them were confused. 40% people felt very happy with this conversational version where 13% were not and 47% were confused. She found different patterns of code-switching:

- (1) Intra word: In one hand, Bangla suffix was used with English root word and on the other hand, English suffix was used with Bangla root word.
- (2) Inter word: English word or phrase was used in Bangla sentence.

People mixed English with Bangla because they considered English as a language of solidarity and of upper class. However, from the research it became evident that some people were against code-switching as they thought it might undermine the level of prestige of Bangla.

Kadim (2014) in her paper, focused on code-switching in Social Media by Bangladeshi users. In her survey 30 out of 30 respondents answered they mixed codes mostly while using Facebook with their friends. All the participants answered that they used both English and Bangla language while communicating.

Ghosh (2014), in her article, portrayed the scenario of code-switching in private universities of Bangladesh. For study, she arranged a questionnaire session. In response to whether students mix mother tongue with other languages, 70% students said yes while 30% said no. When they were asked whom they

switched code more frequently with, 78% students said they switched code mostly with their friends and the remaining 22% switched with their parents, siblings and relatives. In response to the next question, 56% opined that they switched code subconsciously. The percentage of students who said code-switching worked as a helpful tool in expressing their thought clearly was 58%. For the next question –whether code-mixing is fashionable and catches other’s attention - 56% said yes but 32% and 12% said ‘to some extent’ and ‘not at all’ respectively. 23% of respondents for the question whether code-switching has negative impact on our language and culture, disagreed and 25% were not sure about this hypothesis.

III. METHODOLOGY

To do this research I adopted Quantitative Approach. The data were interpreted using statistical analysis. The size of population was 60 and it was from six population units of which the students of O’ Level in ‘Changes’, and ‘ABC International’, two English medium schools of Narayanganj, Bangladesh, were the first and the second units. The third and fourth units comprised ‘Notre Dame College’ and ‘Holy Cross College’, Dhaka, Bangladesh, two Bangla medium colleges while the fifth and the sixth units comprised the first year students of the Department of English and Business Administration of Ranada Prasad Shaha University, Narayanganj, Bangladesh and the first year students of the Department of English of World University of Bangladesh, Dhaka. The number of sample was 60. The sample -10 from each unit- was based on random sampling method by using proportional allocation. A questionnaire containing 15 questions was used to collect data. In some cases, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was also used to analyze and interpret the data.

Response to Code-mixing and Code-switching:

There were twelve questions in the questionnaire and five of them are given below:

1. With whom do you mix code while talking?
2. Do you switch code in language based daily communication?
3. Is code-switching sometimes very effective for communication?
4. Has code-switching a positive impact in learning a foreign/ second language?
5. Has code-switching a negative impact on our native language and culture?

In response to question no 1 mentioned above, approximately 70% respondents said they mixed codes when they talked to their friends. 20% of the respondents said they mixed codes when they talked to the members of their family. 10% of the respondents said they mixed codes when they talked to their relatives.

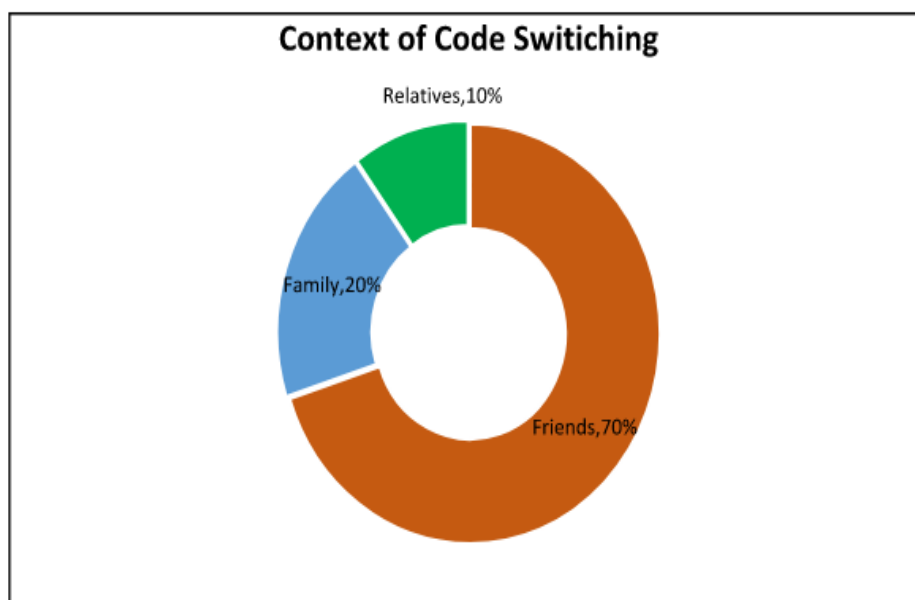


Figure 1 –Context of Code-switching

Psychological Factor:

Psychological factor can be divided in two kinds of motivation – one is Intrinsic Motivation and the other is Extrinsic Motivation. The questionnaire considered the motivations with coherent questions. In the questionnaire, there were the following two questions respondents’ responses to which would allude to psychological disclosure of the common speakers. The questions were -

- (I) Do you get an internal impetus to switch code while talking to young girls or boys to impress them?
- (II) Do you think mixing codes in speaking helps a speaker to stand out?

In response to question no (I), though not a good percent of participants but of course some admitted that they felt an internal impetus to mix English with Bangla while talking to the young of the opposite gender.

However, a good percent of respondents (60%) accepted that code mixing had a strong positive impact in learning a foreign/second language. The figure below will show the psychological factor behind mixing codes by the speaker of Bangladesh.

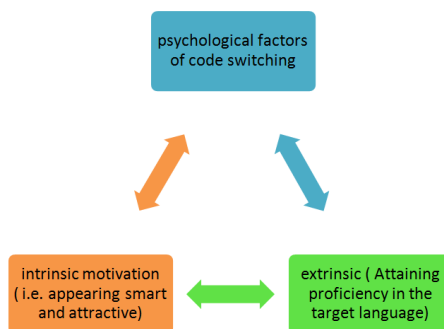


Figure 2 – Psychological Factors of Code-mixing

Social Factors:

For smooth social communication the young speakers mixed codes, and a very good percentage, almost 70% respondents said because of the rapid change in society – the change in almost every field – Bangla could not facilitate sufficiently every time. With regard to the matter of smooth communication, the young speakers could not assuredly take refuge to only one language. To discuss anything of modern technology in Bangla only was very difficult, the respondents said. To manage different situations, the educated young sometimes mixed codes in their speaking. For example, a respondent was talking to some people who were frequently mixing codes consciously in their speech, and they thought to mix English with Bangla was a parameter for being proved to be educated. In that case, the respondent intentionally mixed codes to keep pace with the situation. 51% students agreed that they switched code because sometimes it was hard to find a befitting Bangla word or phrase where English could help them. 60% felt mixing languages in conversation helped in drawing attention of others and was esteemed fashionable. Most important, majority of the university students (80% -100%) accepted that they mixed codes sometimes in a day just for the sake of smooth communication. Students of university worked in environments of more extended range and so they felt the necessity for mixing codes to larger extent for better communication. Among the students of Bangla medium college, the percentage of mixing code (30% - 40%) was low but they had the same opinion that they mixed code for easygoing communication. On the other hand, the students of English medium school (70% -80%) considered - though not as much as university students did - the mixing of codes necessary for smooth communication. However, it was not at all surprising that the percentage of the students of English medium school was higher than that of the Bangla medium college goes for the students of English medium schools naturally formed the habit of speaking English and that of mixing of codes thereby.

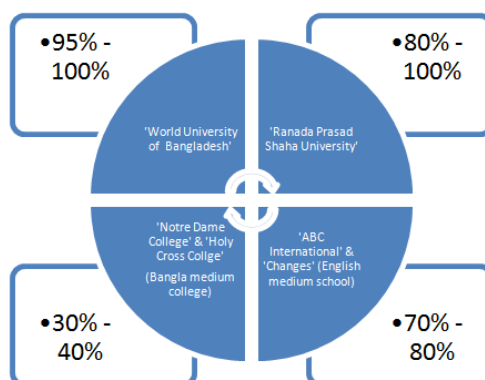


Figure 3: Code-mixing for Smooth Communication

IV. CONCLUSION

The belief so long embedded in the minds of Bengali speaking people with regard to the concern - the mixing and the switching of codes are threats to Bangla language - is not absolute, as this paper substantiates by virtue of research. It has been evident that participants have a linguistic discretion of the mixing and the switching of codes in different contexts. They are pretty sure the mixing and the switching of codes can –if not consciously controlled - affect their mother tongue, and they, therefore, take refuge to this mingling remaining aware of the reality only for the demand of different social and psychological contexts of conversation. This study reflects the view of a small size of population, yet as it has considered the representation of young generation, this study, no doubt, helps a linguistic enthusiast to be acquainted with the reality concerning the influence of the mixing and the switching of codes upon Bangla. Code-mixing and code-switching in the growing globalized context are not unusual at all; instead it is a modern drift of the speakers of Bangladesh to address the perplexities of varied communication ambiances with the mixing and the switching of codes of interest. However, the question – will the dominant languages, English in particular, in course of time, engulf Bangla and its linguistic culture under the mask of the switching and the mixing of codes? – can logically be responded that if a speaker mixes and switches codes consciously and purposefully in a controlled manner, they can be facilitating tools for smooth communication in multifarious speaking contexts.

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