

Effects of Teachers' Code-switching in Tertiary Level English Medium Classroom on Students' proficiency in Speaking English: Case Study of A Cumilla-Based Private University



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Classroom on Students' proficiency in Speaking English: Case Study of A
Cumilla-Based Private University**

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.



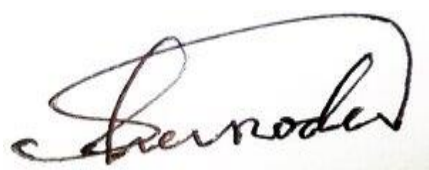
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DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.



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Abstract

Officially Bangladesh is a monolingual country. But because of the influence of the former British colonial language and the global linguistic imperialism, English language becomes an important index in many official spheres of Bangladesh. The tertiary level education sector, specially the private universities incorporate English as their medium of instruction (EMI). Moreover, in the case of the Departments of English, by default English becomes their medium of instruction. So, the teachers and students of English department become bilingual, having competency in both Bengali and English. This bilingualism creates code-switching opportunities for them in English language classrooms. Both the teachers and students switch codes for several reasons, like- for teachers, to make themselves understood easily, for students, to cover their weakness in English vocabulary, etc. There are both pros and cons of code-switching or translanguaging in EFL classrooms. On the one hand, it is believed that code-switching helps the learners to understand and acquire the second language (English) easily. On the other hand, it is also believed that code-switching creates an obstacle in the second language (English) acquisition process. I selected this topic to do my research because this issue is very practical and a very limited amount of research is done in this regard. However, in this current study the broad scenario will be narrowed down. As most of the time teachers play the authoritative role in the classroom, so, this study will be focused on only the teachers' code-switching in EFL classroom and its effects on only students' spoken fluency in English as their reading and writing skills are covered and concerned by the education system. Qualitative approach will be incorporated to analyze and discuss why the teachers often switch their codes to deliver lectures and how it affects students' acquisition of English speaking proficiency. The research will be based on a private university, located in Cumilla, a southeastern district of Bangladesh.

Keywords: bilingualism, medium of instruction, code-switching, translanguaging, fluency in English.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background Study

English language proficiency plays an important role for a person of an EFL country like Bangladesh. To keep pace with the modern world, proficiency in English has become a considerable index for measuring the worth of a person in this country. But the language learning and practising environment lacks very much here because English is not used informally as the people speak Bengali mostly. So, the main field for learning English language and having a suitable environment for practicing it is the classroom, specially the tertiary level classroom. In the tertiary level education, the teachers and students of English department get suitable scopes for practicing English language as by default their Medium of Instruction (MOI) is English. However, in spite of getting comparatively better scopes, it is seen that many students are not quite comfortable or fluent in English speaking even after completing their graduation and face problems in higher education or job sectors. The writing and reading skills are directly covered by the curriculum, but the speaking remains untouched.

1.2 Problem Statement

The reason for lagging behind in English speaking may lie in the classroom approach of the teachers and students. As, both the teachers and students are bilingual and the students are yet to be competent in English as their acquisition process is still going on. So, they frequently switch codes in the classroom. The switching of codes can be a reason for affecting students' performance. The study will analyze whether it is an effective element or not and the factors that make the teachers switch codes. The teachers are qualified for teaching English. So, why do they switch code? There are some possible reasons for it. Positively, as the students have not become proficient in English yet, they may not understand the lectures if the teacher uses only English to deliver it. The lesson will be easier for them if the teacher uses both English as well as Bengali to explain it. Then the classroom environment will be more comfortable for the

students which will motivate them in acquiring the lesson. However, it is also believed that in the long run, teachers' code-switching can affect the students negatively. Their code-switching in the classroom may indulge the students in code-switching also. They will think that it is 'Ok' to use both English and Bengali while interacting in the classroom. So, they will not try hard to make conversation in English and thus ultimately, they cannot be fluent in English.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

In this study, further discussion and analysis regarding this issue are made on the basis of collected data from related participants and previous studies done by other researchers. The purpose of this research is to find out the main reasons for teachers' code-switching in EFL classrooms and how it affects students' English fluency acquisition. This is a qualitative research. Data are collected from both teachers and students of the Department of English of a private university in Cumilla and some recordings of their online classes. The participants shared their opinions and experiences through one to one and FGD (Forum Group Discussion) interviews. But, as all the educational institutions are closed in Covid-19 pandemic situation, the interviews were taken virtually. Each interview took about twenty minutes. However, the study can be affected by this distant observation for this pandemic. Close and in-person observation can provide broader and more realistic findings.

1.4 Research Questions

Against the above background, the researcher posed two research questions in the study which are as follows:

1. What are the factors that make English language teachers switch codes?
2. How does teachers' code-switching affect students' fluency in English?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study stands on a very important issue. Many students become proficient in English writing and reading. But cannot become proficient in speaking, even after their completion of tertiary education and eventually, face problems in higher education and job sectors. Job sectors of Bangladesh give significant importance on English, specially on speaking English. The candidate who does not have enough competency in English speaking, will face difficulties in getting a good job. The students cannot develop speaking skill because of not having a suitable environment to practice it. While there are enough scopes of practising English speaking in the tertiary level classroom, the students cannot utilize it because of code-switching. Teachers' code-switching in the class has a possible impact on students' proficiency in English speaking. This issue is very practical and silently lies in the education system and classroom culture of our country and incessantly stinging.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter investigates the literature regarding this topic. The definition of code-switching is discussed here. The functions and approaches of code-switching, literature related to classroom

code-switching, their findings and attitude towards classroom code-switching in different contexts are analyzed here.

English is one of the mostly used international languages. It has become an important aspect of life, like- job, business, politics, education, literature and so on. For developing and growing a globally compatible skilled workforce the role of English is undeniable (Hamid, 2010). English is mostly learned in non-speaking countries like Bangladesh, because of its importance all over the world. English has a great impact on the education system of Bangladesh. Bangladesh's education system can be divided into four stages- 1. Primary level, 2. Secondary Level, 3. Higher (Tertiary) level (*National Education Policy 2010*, 2010). From Primary to Secondary level, English is being taught as a compulsory subject. In Higher (Tertiary) level education English language is considered as the medium of instruction (MOI).

2.1 Definition of Code-switching

Code-switching can be broadly designated as the employment of two languages within one conversation (Valdes-Fallis, 1977), or as Heller (1989) denoted, the usage of more than one language during the same conversation. More specifically, the term can be outlined as shift among languages in the middle of speech when interlocutors know these languages (Cook, 2011), or as Myers-Scotton (1993) defined the choice of the structure from two or more linguistic variation in the same conversation by bilingual or multilingual people.

There are three main approaches to code-switching - Psycholinguistic, linguistic or grammatical and sociolinguistic. Psycholinguistic approach studies different aspects of language abilities that allow speakers alternate languages. Linguistic approach studies the grammatical rules for language shift. Sociolinguistic approach studies the reasons for code-switching (Appel and Muysken, 1987).

2.2 The Causes of Code-switching

The reasons for code-switching in FL classrooms and its effects on students' performance are topics of discussion in many studies. According to Nurhamidah et al. (2018, p. 78), "... code-switching was preserved as benefits as it served some functions for teachers to convey material and for students to receive material and communicate in the classroom". Its findings show that teachers have to take risks to reduce the number of presentations in order to ensure students understand the material (2018, p. 78). Also, the findings show that teachers switched code as translation of material since some ideas were only available in Javanese so teachers had no option except translating the idea into other languages than English (2018, p. 78). So, in this study, it is clear that teachers perceived code-switching as a helpful asset to bridge the communication during the teaching and learning process. Rios and Campos (2014, p. 376), tried to find when code-switching could be helpful for students' learning. Their main goals were "... to learn more about the factors that make bilinguals switch codes, and to find if code-switching affects teachers and learners' performance in a positive or negative way". Based on their findings they came to a conclusion that in the initial stage of an EFL classroom, teachers can use code-switching and allow the students to switch codes when they need to, but gradually teachers neither themselves should switch codes nor allow and encourage the students to do that. They should encourage the students to use English in order to interact in the class without being concerned about the quality. According to Khan and Sultana (2020, p. 292), "Some students will be definitely comfortable in a monolingual approach but there will be some students who will prefer some code-switching maybe because of the language barriers." So, according to these studies, it can be assumed that teachers' code switching can affect students' performance both positively and negatively. But, in the classroom teachers should go for a monolingual approach as soon as possible. One of the reasons behind teachers' inability to maintain a monolingual English-only class is students' unequal proficiency in English. As the

research of Khan and Sultana (2020, p. 292) says some students will understand the English comfortably and some will struggle, that is because the curriculum of teaching English across the country is not equal. Park (2015) also discusses this matter where he talks about the unequal Englishes in neoliberal society.

2.3 The Incident of Translingualism

The code-switching practice has close ties with the movement of translingualism, which refers to use of multiple languages in a conversation. According to Wible (2013), “the rise of translingualism should be understood within the larger context of shifting attitudes toward language difference in the US over the last few decades, which is attested by the growing legitimacy of dialects and heritage languages and the growing recognition of the benefits of multilingualism and foreign language education.” On translingualism, Jenks and Lee (2020, p. 218) say, “specifically, most world Englishes scholars are committed to confronting the notion that an understanding of English is best achieved through the lens of a monolingual, educated, native speaker.”

2.4 Pedagogical Application of Translingualism

After the evolution of the translingualism movement, it was practiced in the classroom. About its classroom application, Jenks and Lee (2020, p. 220) did research in Shanghai. They say, “ethnographic descriptions of communicative practices used to conduct English-medium pedagogy, showing that although English is the main language of university teaching and learning, interlocutors engage in translingual practices when attempting to understand their intercultural experiences in Shanghai while negotiating the work required to be members of an academic community in a global city.” Canagarajah (2013), also talks about the practice of translanguaging in the classroom that all students might benefit from a dialogical approach that

allows for such experimentation, provided that this pedagogy is primarily focused on awareness-building rather than explicit teaching of code-meshing strategies.

2.5 Language Policy Adopted by Private Universities

The private universities adopted a particular language policy for conducting activities. According to Khan and Sultana (2020, p. 292), “The private universities (PUs) in Bangladesh, specifically those widely accepted as high-ranked, has made English the *de facto* medium of instruction (MOI), while there is no such clause in the Private University Act 1992, Bangladesh about it (Act 34, Private University Act, Bangladesh, 1992).” Mainly, most of the private universities in this country follow the North American model.

Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter is about the methods and procedures of collecting and analyzing data. Some sections are included here, like- data types, data sources, sampling technique, methods of data

collection, methods of analysis, evaluation and justification of methodological choice. This is a qualitative research. The primary interest of this study is to observe how code-switching and translanguaging affect the classroom where the MOI (Medium of Instruction) is English and the perception of teachers and students towards code-switching and translanguaging practices.

3.1 Data Types

For this study, two types of data were collected- recordings of online classes as primary data and interviews as secondary data. The class recordings give assumptions about the reasons and circumstances of teachers' code-switching and the interviews give clarification about the assumptions and also determine its effects on students' English fluency.

3.2 Data Sources

Data are collected from both teachers and students of the Department of English of a private university in Cumilla and from some recordings of their online classes. The online class recordings were collected from the teachers who participated in the interviews. They share the google drive links of some of their classes with the author. For this pandemic situation, the author had to conduct the interviews through Zoom meetings and audio calls. For interviewing, nine students who have got (so far) at least CGPA 3.00 (out of 4), were chosen from the department. Seven of them were in the first, third and fourth year and two have already graduated. The students participated in FGD (Forum Group Discussion) interviews. There were three forums. Each forum consisted of three students. The author made an approach to four teachers of that department to participate in one to one interview. The participants shared their opinions and experiences through the interviews. Each interview took about twenty minutes.

3.3 Sampling Technique

The researcher collected class recordings from the Google drive links provided by the teachers and downloaded them in his computer for further analysis. For conducting the interviews, two sets of questions were made using Microsoft Word, one for the teachers and another for the students. The interviews were taken virtually on the Zoom platform and were recorded on a computer.

3.4 Methods of Collecting Data

For the purpose of the study two data collection methods were used:

- Observation method
- Forum Group Discussion
- One to one interview

3.4.1 Observation Method: Observation method is a complex research method “in which the observer participates in the daily life of the people under study ... observing things that happen, listening to what is said, and questioning people, over some length of time” (Becker & Geer, 1970, p. 133). For the research, online class recordings have been observed. As the researcher collected the recordings after the classes were taken, the subjects did not know about the observation. The researcher hides all the personal information of the subjects.

3.4.2 Forum Group Discussion: Forum group discussions (FGD) were conducted for getting the students’ point of view. There were three forums and in each forum there were three students. The researcher asked some selected questions related to the facts. In each forum, the students firstly shared their individual thoughts and opinions and then the other members agreed or disagreed and made their opinions.

3.4.3 One to One Interviews: One to one interview is a very common method for qualitative research where only one interviewee is interviewed at a time. For the research, the researcher

asked some selected questions to the teachers and they individually shared their thoughts and opinions regarding the facts. As the research concerns the code-switching of the teachers only, so one to one interviews help to find what the teachers think about their code-switching. The personal information of the interviewees are hidden.

3.5 Methods of Analysis

3.5.1 Thematic Analysis: Collected data were analyzed thematically to illustrate their opinions regarding the topic. The researcher closely examined the class recordings and interview transcriptions to identify common themes, like- topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that came up repeatedly. As, both the teachers and the students are from the same department as well as the same university, the responses are very practical, relative, parallel and complementary. Based on the collected data, a specific and theoretical discussion has been made regarding what the participants think about teachers' code-switching and how this affects students' acquisition of English fluency.

3.7 Evaluation and Justification of Methodological Choice

The researcher chose qualitative research because it is the most appropriate method for the discussed topic. For conducting research in this topic, the researcher needed to incorporate human experience and specific insightful data for analyzing and qualitative research allowed him to do so, like- he directly talked to the students and the teachers who actually experience and practice code-switching in the classroom. They shared their own insightful and specific experience regarding the causes of teachers' code-switching and its effects on students' performance. So, qualitative research also allowed him to understand participants' attitudes towards the problem. It allowed him to collect detail-oriented data which were very much necessary and other types of research could hardly allow it. The process of qualitative data is

always open-ended and flexible; it facilitates the researcher not to be confined in any kind of regulations which could affect the research.

The researcher had to go for online class recording observation instead of on-campus physical classroom observation, because due to this pandemic situation, no educational institutions are conducting on-campus classes. In one way, it looks like a limitation of the study but in other way, it works like an advantage. Because these were online class recordings and were taken prior to the researcher's approach to the teachers for these recordings, the participants did not have any idea about the observation. So, the classroom attitudes and conversation of the teachers and students were very spontaneous and genuine which portrayed a real scenario of code-switching practice. This kind of genuineness was not quite possible in on-campus classroom observation. The researcher had to inform at least the teachers about the observation and concerned facts to get permission, which had a possibility of modification in participants' attitudes.

The researcher also had to conduct the interviews virtually because of the same reason- COVID-19 pandemic. In this situation, physical (face-to-face) meetings have enough risks of spreading the virus and affecting people.

Though all the data collection process had been done virtually, the participants shared both of their normal (on-campus) and online classroom experiences. But they prioritized their normal (on-campus) classroom experience because it is the 'usual' version of classroom and it is not so many days since online education has been introduced due to COVID-19 pandemic. Also, the online education system is dependent on many circumstances which on-campus education is not and the participants were hoping that they will get back to the normal version of classroom in near future. As the students participated in FGD interviews with their fellows and

teachers participated in one to one interviews, this helped them to speak freely without any hesitation.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis and Findings

In this chapter the researcher shows the thematic analysis of the collected data and the findings from the analysis. Some sections are included here, like- analysis of class recordings, findings from class recordings, analysis of students' FGD interviews, findings from students' FGD

interviews, analysis of teachers' one to one interviews, findings from teachers' one to one interviews and overall findings. Through these analyses and findings the researcher tries to find out the causes of teachers' code-switching and its effects on students' English fluency.

4.1 Analysis of Class Recordings

In the class recordings of the first teacher, the teacher was switching codes frequently and spontaneously to deliver her lectures. The classes were about English poetries. She was using both Pedagogical and Spontaneous Translanguaging in those classes. When she was doing the ancillary works, like- asking well-being of the students, taking attendance, asking the students about her audibility and screen visibility, talking about something which was not directly from the lesson but in some way relevant with the topic, asking students if they had any question, talking about books, exams, etc. she was switching codes spontaneously. Here is a glimpse of her utterance,

“Till now does anyone have any queries? (pause) Karo ki kono question ache?”

(Tr. Till now does anyone have any queries? Does anyone have any questions?)

But when she was delivering the lectures, she was switching codes pedagogically, like- she was first reading a small part of the text which is in English, and then translating or paraphrasing that part into Bangla and continuously repeating this process. In her words,

“She walks in beauty, like the night. Se hatche, sundor vabe hatche. Raater moto kore sundor, thik ache?”

(Tr. She walks in beauty, like the night. She is walking, walking beautifully.

Beautiful like the night, all right?)

The students' participation rate was quite low, which is a common characteristic of online classes. The students were replying to her in more Bangla and less English. They were using English in just short responses, like- yes Ma'am, no Ma'am, etc, But they were using Bangla in long responses, like- asking for clarification of their confusions, asking for exam information, answering questions, etc. The students were pretty comfortable with code-switching. Then in the class, the teacher and the students' involved in a debate over a particular social issue which was relevant to the text. All of them used Bangla in that debate spontaneously.

In the class recordings of the second teacher, the teacher took the classes using English language only. The classes were about linguistics and ELT. In both ancillary works and delivering lectures, he used English and very rarely used Bangla. Though students' participation rate was quite low here also, like the classes of the first teacher, but here the students were using only English or more English less Bangla for responding to him. Here is a glimpse of the classroom conversation-

Teacher: "What is referential meaning? Can you hear me clearly?"

Student: "Factual meaning of a word."

Moreover, some students were using Bangla in long conversations, like-

"Sir, associate meaning ta ektu abar bolben?" (Tr. Sir, can you talk about associate meaning again?)

The students followed the teachers' choice of code. If the teacher chose to switch codes, the students tended to switch codes as well and if the teacher chose to speak in English, the students tried to respond in English. In this case, the students were not very comfortable with code-switching.

In the class recordings of the third teacher, there was code-switching from both sides. The classes were about Shakespear's drama. Like the first teacher, here the teacher first read the

parts of the text and then translated that part into Bangla. But, the teacher was not translating everytime. Sometimes, he just paraphrased the part in English or explained the part in English and sometimes, he used Bangla for translation. Same things happened when he dealt with the ancillary works. His code-switching was not regular but at maximum times he did it. The students also responded sometimes in full English and sometimes in full Bangla. They were quite comfortable with their choice of codes.

In the fourth teacher's classes, the teacher used English as the MOI. But in some cases, upon students' request he switched codes. He was delivering his lectures in English except for a few cases. He tried to make his lecture in English but when he assumed that the students did not understand his words properly, he used Bangla to make it easier. Here is a little part of the class conversation,

Teacher: "..... so far are you getting me? Do you have any confusion?"

Students: (silence)

Teacher: "No response! Do you have any questions?"

Student 1: "No, Sir. Understood"

Student 2: "Sir, last part tuku bujhi ni. Arekbar repeat korben?" (Tr. Sir, I can't understand the last part. Can you repeat it?)

Teacher: "Ok, ekhane bola hoyeche" (Tr. Ok, as explained here))

The students sometimes made conversation in English and sometimes in Bangla.

4.2 Findings from Class Recordings

From the above analyses, some findings can be sorted out. The students follow the teacher's choice of code in the class. If the teacher switches codes, the students also tend to switch codes. If the teacher uses only English, the students also try to make conversation in English. So, the

teacher's choice of MOI determines the code of the class. But, often such situations arise when the teacher is compelled to use Bangla. Like, sometimes when the teacher realizes that his/her students are struggling to understand the lessons in English properly, he has to use Bangla to make the lessons understandable. Also sometimes, it becomes difficult for the teacher to explain the lesson in English properly. Then s/he has to seek the help of the first language to make the lesson easier. Every student is not equally competent. Some may understand the lectures in English easily. But some others may struggle. Teachers' main goals are to give equal importance to all students and to make the students understand the content clearly. To do that, sometimes they have to breach the language policy of a monolingual classroom. But, here, another issue evolves. The teachers have to translanguage in their main lectures, which is called 'Pedagogical Translanguaging', for the sake of students' better understanding. But they also translanguage in their ancillary part of the class, which can be avoided. Its effect shows on students' interaction. They can respond to the pedagogical, subjective questions in English quite easily. But, it is much more difficult for them to speak about non-pedagogical matters in English, which need spontaneity. Like- requesting repetition of the discussion, talking about exams or assignments, etc.

4.3 Analysis of Students' FGD Interviews

In FGD, the students individually answered some specific questions asked by the researcher. Then they participated in a group discussion where they expressed their opinion with their fellows and agreed or disagreed with each other and tried to give some logical explanations about their opinion.

Among the students, in the first forum, the first student who was interviewed has already graduated from that department. She said, when she got admitted in English; she expected that after graduation, she would be able to speak fluently in English. However, initially, during her graduation period, she thought that teachers should use Bengali and English side by side in the

classroom. Because, when a teacher delivered a lecture only in English, she could not understand the lecture properly. But, after completing graduation and starting her Masters program in another university, she is thinking the opposite because she is facing problems in English speaking now. In her words,

“Age mone hoto teacher der code switch kora uchit. Full English hole bujhte osubidha hobe. Kintu ekhon mone hocche full English use korle sob develop hoto. Fluency build hoto.”

(Tr. It seemed before that teachers should switch codes. It will be difficult to understand if it is in full ENGLISH. But now it seems if full English was used then all skills would have been developed. Fluency would have been built.)

She thinks that in tertiary level classroom teachers should not switch codes and should use English solely in the class. That may make the lecture quite harder for the students but gradually their vocabulary will be enriched and they will be fluent in English. The teachers should not switch codes and should compel the students to speak in English. It will be hard for the students initially and their performance can be hampered but gradually they will build up a habit of speaking and listening English, because there will not be any other alternative to do well in the exam except acquiring English fluency and vocabulary. Then the students will not have to struggle. She now thinks that teachers' code switching made her reluctant to try hard to interact in English.

The second student of the first forum was a third year student. He said he took English as his major because he likes that subject. He thought that having competency in English is very important nowadays, so studying in English would give him the best scope to be competent in the four skills- reading, writing, speaking and listening as well as he would feel comfortable studying in his favorite subject. But in his three years experience he said that his expectations were not fulfilled enough. He said he has improved in several areas but more could be done.

He thinks the teachers should be more strict on using English in the classroom. Then the students will have enough scopes to practice speaking in English. He agreed with the first student that teachers should conduct the classes in English as much as s/he can. Their decisions drive the students about what they should or should not do in the class.

The third student of the first forum was a first year student. She expects that by the end of her graduation she will have good command in English. English was not her first choice as a major, but she likes it. She said teachers always try to conduct class in English, but they have to use Bangla when some students fail to understand the lecture in English. She thinks teachers should use English in the class but should use Bangla as well when it is required to motivate the students. She also agreed with her other two forum members that when the teachers keep switching codes or keep talking in Bangla, it inspires her to switch codes or use Bangla. And when the teachers deliver lectures and make conversation with the students in English, she does not dare to make conversation in Bangla, rather tries to make conversation in English. In her words,

“Teacher ra onek somoy pura English e kotha bolen. Tokhon dekha jacche kichu student er bujhte kosto hoy. Tokhon teacher ra abar seta Banglay bujhay dey sohoj kore. Kintu jokhn tara full English e lecture den, tokhon amra tader sathe kotha bolte, kono kichu jigges korte gele Bangla use korte voy pai. Tokhon chesta kori English e kotha bolte. Ar jokhon dekhi teacher rao English Bangla duitai use kortesen, tokhon amrao Bangla use kori, English kom use kori tokhn.”

(Tr. Sometimes teachers give lectures in full English. That time some students struggle to understand. Then teachers explain it easily in Bangla. But when they give lectures in full English, then we hesitate to interact in Bangla with them or

ask anything. Then we try to use English. And when we see that teachers are using both English and Bangla, then we use more Bangla than English.)

As she is a first year student, she hopes that over time, they will be comfortable in English only classes and then the teachers will not have to switch codes.

The first student of the second forum was a fourth year student. While she got admission in English department, she expected her competency on grammar, vocabulary and English fluency would improve. She thinks in the past four years she has improved in these sectors but not enough, specially in fluency. She said, in the initial stage of the graduation period, like-up to first year or second year first semester, switching code in the class is ok. But at that time the teachers should prepare the students for English-only classroom. Gradually the teachers should give more emphasis on English and narrow down the usage of Bangla in the classroom. She also said if the students make mistakes, the teachers will correct them. In her words,

“Prothom prothom 1,I; 1,II kingba 2,I porjonto code-switching thik ache. Kintu erpor theke full English e class howa uchit. Student ra vul korle teacher ra correct kore dibe. Evabe aste aste student rao English e comfortable hoye jabe ebong English e fluently kotha bolte parbe.”

(Tr. Code-switching can be acceptable up to 1,I, 1,II or 2,1. But after that the classes should be in English. If students make any mistakes then teachers will correct them. Gradually, they will feel comfortable in English and will speak English quite fluently.)

She said that in the main curriculum they have only presentations and viva where they have to speak in English. But these are not enough for practising English speaking. Besides, in the presentations, many students just memorise the scripts of their presentations, which is not an

example of spontaneous speaking. Lastly, she said, there is no doubt that teachers' code-switching helps them to understand the lectures easily and they can do well in the exam where speaking and listening skills are not required. But also there is no doubt that this code-switching impedes their acquisition of fluency in English.

The second student of the second forum was a first year student. He has English medium background, so he has quite better competency in English than others. Here is what he said,

“Actually English-only class is no problem for me, but all of my classmates are not from English medium schools. There is a huge difference of English curriculum between English and Bangla medium schools. You need to have the appropriate environment to practice English speaking, which I got back in school life. But it is very possible to create an English friendly environment in an English department classroom and practice English speaking. Students, who are not from English medium, may face difficulties initially. But now, we are mature enough to overcome the difficulties. Teachers should not use Bangla unnecessarily in the class. They should encourage students to make conversation in English.”

He agreed with the first student of this forum that in the initial stage students might struggle to understand everything in English. So, teachers should use Bangla, but they should be watchful and gradually convert the class system from English-Bangla to English-only.

The third student of the second forum was a third year student. He had the same kind of expectations as his fellows from the department. He gave quite a similar opinion. Though he likes the classes when teachers switch codes, he wants to interact with the teacher in English but he feels shy because if he makes any mistakes, his classmates can mock him. He thinks

English speaking practice in the classroom is very much needed to be a fluent speaker. Teachers should conduct the classes in English and make the students communicate in English as well.

In the third forum, the first student has already completed her graduation and entered into her first job. She also thinks that if the teacher would not switch code and compel them to use English in the class, her English fluency could be better than what she has got now. She thinks that as she is not a native speaker of English, so initially she faced difficulties. Additionally, from her own experience, she says that in the English department, if there was a continuous process of using English that means if the department office, classrooms, friends and overall the environment were 'English only' then not only speaking but also other skills regarding English language could be developed better. Now, in her professional life, she is still facing some difficulties in English speaking.

The second student was a third year student. She said, in the beginning of her graduation life when the teachers used English in their lectures, she could not understand them properly. But now, over time, her competency in listening and speaking has increased and she can understand the lectures and interact in English quite easily than before. She thinks teachers should create more scope for students so that they can practice speaking in the class.

The third one of the third forum was a fourth year student. He said, when teachers use only English, he hesitates to talk with them in Bangla. But, when teachers use both English and Bangla, he and the other students feel that they get kind of silent permission to speak in both languages. He said he has improved in all the four skills over these three years. Even now he can quite easily understand what he is listening to in English, but he still struggles to speak spontaneously in English.

4.4 Findings from Students' FGD Interviews

Some significant issues can be found out from the above analyses. The one finding which comes up here and also came up from the class recordings is the students tend to follow the teachers' choice of code in the class. They follow what their teachers do. If the teachers do not switch code and stick English, the students also try to speak in English or they do not feel ok to use Bangla then and try to limit their usage of Bangla. But, when the teachers keep switching codes, the students are also encouraged to switch codes. Then they use more Bangla than English. So, teachers' choice of code determines students' choice of code. Another finding which supports the research of Rios and Campos (2014, p. 376) is, in the initial stage, teachers should or can switch codes and allow the students to switch codes also in the classroom for students' better understanding. But gradually, neither themselves nor the students should be allowed to switch codes. The classes should be converted into English-only from English-Bangla. The most significant finding of the analyses is that teachers' code-switching made students reluctant to try hard to interact in English, which negatively affected their English speaking performance. The students emphasized on this issue repeatedly.

4.5 Analysis of Teachers' One to One Interviews

Four teachers were interviewed individually. They shared their views on their causes and effects of code-switching in the classroom.

The first teacher said that in the classroom his target is to take the class in English and he expects that the students know a standard level of English. But, the real scenario is quite the opposite as all the students do not have the same level of competency in English. So, when he gives lectures and explains a topic in English, many students cannot understand the concept properly and do not pay attention in the lecture. So, then he is compelled to switch codes to clear the concept to the students, otherwise the students will not perform well. He thinks that

his code-switching puts negative impacts on students' proficiency in English speaking but he also has to be concerned about students' learning of the content. In his words,

“Majhe majhe code switch korte baddho hoi, karon amader poranor concept clear korte hoy student der kache. Tobe code-switching fluency te negative effect fele.”

(Tr. Sometimes we are compelled to switch codes, because we have to make the concept clear to the students. But code-switching affects fluency negatively.)

As a teacher, it is his responsibility to make students understand the content. He also shared his own student life experience related to this issue. He said that while he was a university student, he and his classmates did not understand the classes of a teacher for three months because the teacher delivered his lectures only in English and was not concerned about his students' understanding. So, they had to cope with the language so that they could understand the lectures and interact with the teacher. They first struggled but eventually made themselves adjust with English language.

The second teacher said his goal is to teach his students in a simplified way. He said, teachers' teaching approach depends on students' level of understanding. In his words,

“Ami sobsomoy simplified way tei poranor chesta kori. Ar obosshoi learner er level onujayi. Amake jante hoy amar student der understanding level ta kemon. Oi onujayio amar lecture ta vary kore.”

(Tr. I always try to conduct my classes in a simplified way. And of course it has to be according to my students' level. I have to know about my students' level of understanding. My lectures vary accordingly.)

About students' code-switching tendency, he said,

“2nd year porjonto Banglay response amra accept kori. 3rd, 4th year e gele expectation thake students English e interact korbe. Karon, ar ek, dui bochor por tara job interview face korbe.”

(Tr. We accept students' responses in Bangla upto 2nd year. In 3rd, 4th year, we expect that they will be able to interact in English. Because, after one or two years they will face job interviews.)

About code-switching culture in the classroom, he said,

“Mainly, student der English bujhte na parar jonno classroom e code-switching korte hoy, karon amader ke ensure korte hoy je student ra bujheche. Tachara Bangla je ekebarei dorkar hoy na ta na. Bivinnno khetre Bangla use kora chara way thake na. Tai code-switch ba code-mix korte hobe, tobe need basis e. Dorkar chara jate Bangla use na kora hoy seta lokkho rakhte hobe.”

(Tr. Mainly, students' lack of understanding English causes code-switching. Because, we have to ensure that they understand the content. Besides, it is not the matter that Bangla is absolutely not necessary. To some extent, we do not have any other option except using Bangla. So, code-switch or code-mix should be done but on a need basis. Uncontrolled code-switching should be checked.)

The third teacher also blamed students' unequal competency of English. He said, as a teacher, he has to make the students understand the content by any means. He also mentioned an important point that teachers' performance is assessed by students' performance and in the current curriculum, students' performance is mostly determined by what they write on the

answer scripts, not what or how they say. So, to be successful teachers they have to be more concerned with students' writing than speaking. About MOI, he said,

“MOI English e howa uchit. At least lecture er main part ta English e deliver kora uchit. Ami serokomi korchhi.”

(Tr. English should be the MOI in the class. At least the main part of the lecture should be delivered in English. I am doing so.)

The fourth teacher gave quite the same opinions of the other teachers. Additionally, he said that there are multiple benefits of English as MOI. It increases students' listening, pronunciation and speaking ability. He emphasized that students should become independent learners and should not depend on the teachers. He also emphasized on students' shyness. He said that students' shyness of speaking in English in the class is one of the major factors that causes them to fall behind in speaking skill. He also said he encourages his students to speak in English without being concerned about the mistakes. He wants them to grow the habit of speaking English. Then the teachers do not have to switch codes.

4.6 Findings from Teachers' One to One Interviews

Some significant findings come out from the above analyses. First of all, the teachers try to conduct classes in English. But, when they see that the students are struggling to understand the lectures then they have to use Bangla alongside English because, ultimately teachers' main goal is to make the contents clear to the students as teachers' performance is determined by students; performance in their exams. So, teachers' choice of code depends on the students'

understanding level. Another significant finding is that teachers should do and allow code-switching in the initial stages of tertiary education but keep emphasising on speaking in English. It will let the students feel comfortable in the class and grow the habit of speaking English. Gradually, the teachers should convert the class into English-only and should not do and allow code-switching. Though code-switching has a negative impact on acquiring fluency in English, in some cases, it is not avoidable. So, code-switching should be done according to necessity and the rate of code-switching should be controlled by the teachers. The tertiary level students should not depend on the teachers much, rather they should learn on their own.

4.7 Overall Findings

Teachers play an important role in the class. They direct the class and the students follow them. So, any kind of decision made by the teachers has a great impact on the students. Code-switching has a negative impact on students' English fluency. It does not let the students develop a habit of English speaking. But in other cases, code-switching or translanguaging is very helpful for the students. They can understand the contents comfortably. So, the teachers should control their rate of code-switching. Unnecessary code-switching should be stopped. Though teachers are accusing students of having poor understanding of English for their reason for code-switching, there are also some flaws in the present system. First of all, the unequal teaching of English across the country. The English curriculum of the Bangla medium educational institutions is not that resourceful than the English curriculum of the English mediums. Besides, the teaching-learning quality varies from area to area. A student of an urban school can get some learning friendly facilities which a student of a rural school cannot get. Thus, the unequal level of understanding grows. Moreover, there are some gaps between the expectation and reality of the private universities. They promote themselves by publishing that they are following the North American model and use English as the MOI, but the real scenario is quite different. Seeing those publicities, students are getting admitted having high

expectations from the departments and universities but hardly can fulfill those expectations. The authorities remain satisfied to provide surface level education. It is very difficult for the students to get in-depth, long lasting and future effective education. However, teachers should create enough scopes where students can practice speaking English. They should motivate the students to speak in English and let them know that there is nothing to feel shy of making mistakes.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Having competency in English has become a very important aspect of life nowadays. In Bangladesh, if anyone wants to get a good job, s/he must be proficient in English. Though the curriculum of tertiary education has given importance on English, it does not cover all the four skills. It is mainly based on writing and reading. For that reason, many students cannot develop their skills in speaking and listening. There are scopes to practice English speaking in the

tertiary classroom, but in most of the cases, the students' unequal competency in English does not let the teachers conduct the classes in English. They have to use English and Bangla parallelly to make the students understand. This code-switching encourages the students to interact in Bangla also and impede their acquisition of fluency. Thus, they cannot do expected improvement.

5.1 Limitation

For the COVID - 19 pandemic, the research had to be done based on distant observation and virtually collected data. It was not possible to attend a close, traditional in-person classroom and arrange face-to-face interviews. The pandemic also caused the researcher to rely on inadequate amounts of data and a single institution. Also, there was not enough time to do a detailed study in this regard.

5.2 Recommendation for Future Studies

There are many things to be done in this issue. Close, in-person observation will be more detailed and reliable. It will make the study richer. So, when there will be no limitations of movements and risks of getting affected by deadly viruses, the research can be done more accurately. Moreover, this issue needs enough time and multiple institutions should be managed to explore more to get a wide range of insights with diversity.

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Appendix

Interview Questions for Students:

1. When you chose 'English' as your subject, what were your expectations or thoughts about the subject or department?
2. Do you think code-switching or translanguaging should happen in the classroom?
3. Do teachers' code-switching influence your speaking learning process?
4. Have your expectations been fulfilled?
5. What are the solutions you think for acquiring competency in English fluency?

Interview Questions for Teachers:

1. What are your goals in your class?
2. What are your expectations from your students?
3. What do you think about the code-switching or translanguaging culture in the class?
4. What do you think about how code-switching or translanguaging affects students' acquisition of fluency in English?
5. What are the solutions?