

Code Switching in EFL Classrooms: A Bangladeshi Perspective

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Abstract—Code switching (CS) in classrooms, especially in bilingual classes, is a common phenomenon. This paper tends to expose the plausible reasons behind the application of first language (L1) in English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms where English is considered the medium of instruction in all spheres of pedagogical issues. Another important aspect of this study is to reveal the perception of both students and teachers towards their CS to L1. The findings of this survey show that a switch to L1, whether initiated by the teachers or the students, makes the lesson or topic discussed in the class more comprehensible.

Index Terms—code switching, EFL classroom, reasons, attitudes, learning success

I. INTRODUCTION

Code switching (CS) requires an in depth inspection to be carried out in the country like Bangladesh. Undoubtedly, Bangladesh is a country that has a glorious language history dated back to 1952. To walk with the change and to amalgamate with the so called mainstream society, people here give English, a language of global interest, an undeniable position in their every walk of life though English has not yet received any official status. Banu and Sussex (1999) state that the role of English in Bangladesh is purely functional as English is used as an international link language. They also claim English has been used for years and for different purposes and gradually it is becoming part of the socio-cultural system.

Being a part of global community, English has an increasing demand here and, true to say, the necessity and importance of learning English is growing more and more. In Bangladesh, English is taught at primary, secondary, higher secondary and tertiary levels. With its outgrowing importance, English has become the medium of instruction in most of the universities of the country, especially the private universities. Given priority to this language use, Bangladesh has become, though unofficially, a bilingual country. As students at tertiary level belong to a bilingual community, code switching in the classrooms, therefore, is a very common phenomenon which cannot be ignored in any way. As Hudson (1996, p. 51) claims “code switching is the inevitable consequence of bilingualism”.

II. CODE SWITCHING

CS is defined as the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence, or constituent (Jamshidi & Navehebrahim, 2013). It can occur when a speaker starts his conversation in a language, then changes it to another language in the middle of his speech.

Gumperz (1982, p. 59) refers to it as “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems”. Cook (2001a) opines that code switching is the process of “going from one language to the other in mid-speech when both speakers know the same languages” (p. 83). Speakers start with second language (L2) but they switch code to their first language (L1) in the same discourse, that the speakers balance both L1 and L2 simultaneously. Jan (1999) discusses that code switching is generated by a number of socio-cultural factors such as role relationships, topics, intention and effect, attitude, values and beliefs, personal emotions, situation, domain, setting and language choice.

Schmitt and McCarthy (1997, p. 2) state “a learner’s L1 is one of the most important factors in learning L2 vocabulary”. Teachers use code switching to make students understand difficult and new vocabularies in the text. They use contextual reference using their L1 to make the topic enjoyable. Norrish (1997) claims that teachers switch code when the level of English used in the textbook or to be taught is beyond the learner’s ability or when the teachers have exhausted the means to adjust his speech to the learner’s level. Situation or learning context creates a significant pressure on the teachers to use L1 in the classroom. Cook (2001b) referred to code switching in the classroom as a natural response in a bilingual situation. Cole (1998) argues for selective, principled use of the L1 due to its practicality and efficiency. A pragmatic/careful switch to L1 always creates a sense of solidarity and sameness. According to Holmes (2001, p. 35), “A speaker may switch to L1 as a signal of group membership and shared ethnicity with an addressee”. Therefore, mother tongue interference in classrooms, where English is considered the medium of instruction, can have multiple constructive reasons.

III. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The hypotheses to be tested under this study are as following:

1. Both teachers and students switch their code from English to Bengali in English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms.
2. Learning outcome of the students largely depends on teachers' careful code switching.
3. Students hold positive attitude towards mother tongue interference in EFL classroom.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Very little attention is paid to the matter of using L1 in the context of EFL classrooms at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. This interested me to conduct an in depth investigation into this field. The objectives of the study include:

1. to determine the reasons that lead to the use of code switching in the classroom discourse
2. to determine the perception of both students and teachers towards their incorporation of L1 in classroom setting
3. to measure the impact of teachers' code switching on EFL learning and teaching
4. to determine the expected frequency of code switching
5. to add new insight to the existing literature on CS

V. METHODOLOGY

A. The Subjects

The survey for this study was conducted on 34 teachers and 175 students from two universities. All participants including teachers and students are Bengali-English bilinguals. Among the teachers, 22 are from Northern University Bangladesh (NUB), one of the leading private universities of Bangladesh, and 12 are from Khulna University (KU), a reputed public university of the country. The medium of instruction of both universities is English. The teachers from both NUB and KU were randomly chosen from the following departments: English, Business Administration (BA), Law, Computer Science and Engineering (CSE), and Electronics and Communication Engineering (ECE). Teachers were taken into account from different disciplines in comparison to the students' departments to find out if teachers from different departments switch codes or CS is limited to few departments.

Student participants were also randomly chosen from different subjects as they come from several departments. All students were attending EFL classes as part of their undergraduate and postgraduate programs. Among them 120 students are from NUB who are attending their undergraduate programs in three departments (English, Business Administration (BA), and Law). All of them have completed their 1st year, i.e. at least 3 trimesters. The remaining 55 students from KU are completing their postgraduate program in English Language. Student participants were taught English as a foreign language for twelve years as their compulsory subject at primary, secondary and higher secondary levels before joining the university programs. Though they studied English as a compulsory subject from Class 1 to Class 12, they achieved very low proficiency in English because of poor teaching, low contact hours, and poor teaching curricula and methodology.

In the following tables, detailed information of the participants is given categorically.

TABLE 1
INFORMATION RELATED TO TEACHER PARTICIPANTS

| | | NUB | | | KU | | | Total | |
|--------|--------|-----------------------|----|----|----|----|----|-------|----|
| | | Department/Discipline | | | | | | | |
| Gender | Male | Ph.D. | 01 | 00 | 00 | 01 | 00 | 00 | 02 |
| | | Master's | 02 | 06 | 03 | 06 | 01 | 01 | 19 |
| | Female | Ph.D. | 00 | 00 | 01 | 01 | 00 | 00 | 02 |
| | | Master's | 02 | 07 | 00 | 01 | 01 | 00 | 11 |
| Total | | | 05 | 13 | 04 | 09 | 02 | 01 | 34 |

TABLE 2
MORE INFORMATION RELATED TO TEACHER PARTICIPANTS

| Academic Rank | | Total |
|---------------------|----|-------|
| Professor | 04 | 34 |
| Associate Professor | 05 | |
| Assistant Professor | 11 | |
| Senior Lecturer | 05 | |
| Lecturer | 09 | |
| Teaching Experience | | Total |
| Less than 5 years | 16 | 34 |
| 5-10 years | 14 | |
| Above 10 years | 04 | |

TABLE 3
INFORMATION RELATED TO STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

| Table 3 | | NUB | | KU | | Total |
|---------|--------|-----------------------|----|---------------|----|-------|
| | | Level | | | | |
| | | Graduate | | Post-graduate | | |
| | | Department/Discipline | | | | |
| Gender | Male | 60 | 20 | 05 | 39 | 124 |
| | Female | 20 | 00 | 15 | 16 | 51 |
| Total | | 80 | 20 | 20 | 55 | 175 |

From tables 1, 2, and 3, it becomes visible that the male and female ratio was not maintained in any case, whether it is student or teacher, as it does not fall into the objectives of this research. Four of the teachers hold Ph.D. degree and the rest of them have master's degree. The teaching experience of the teachers ranges from less than 5 years to above 10 years. Though this is not considered while analyzing data, it is important to be noted that teachers' academic ranks differ from Lecturer to Professor.

B. Methods and Procedures

The study was conducted using two different types of written questionnaires that were distributed among the participants of the two distinct groups. The questionnaire designed for the teachers (see Appendix A) include 15 questions. Among these questions, some of them presuppose a number of obvious reasons for which the teachers switch their codes. These questions try to validate and prove if the assumed reasons have evidence or not. Few questions are set to find out what kind of attitude the teachers hold towards their own and towards the students' code switching.

The second questionnaire (see Appendix B) comprises a set of questions, and most of them primarily pre-consider code switching plays a positive role in favor of the students and aim at explaining students' views on the use of Bengali in EFL classrooms. This questionnaire also tries to find out why and how code switching bears a favorable appeal to students and what their attitude towards teachers' code switching is.

The questionnaires have been designed using the researcher's personal experience and taking helps from previous studies of code switching. A pilot study was also conducted on both of the questionnaires to ensure the reliability and validity of the survey. The key purpose of this pilot study was to be sure if the questionnaires were feasible to bring out the objectives of the present study. Considering the feedback elicited from 3 teachers and 10 students, some changes were made in the questionnaires such as: deletion of some questions, rephrasing some sentences of few questions as they became difficult to understand etc. Then, each of the questionnaires is prepared suitably and divided into two parts: first part is related to the personal background of participants and second part is about research questions.

The data are analyzed with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 16.0 in order of the questions' appearance (Appendix A & Appendix B) and in terms of related studies (Alshammari, 2011; Jingxia, 2010; Tang, 2002). The responses are shown in percentage using tables.

VI. LITERATURE REVIEW

In many cases, code switching is commonly viewed with suspicion in EFL classes (Yao, 2011). Many consider it a crime for the teachers who employ L1, of course in a limited sense, for their lessons to be comprehensible. Teachers try to continue their classes in the target language (TL), but when the situation demands, they are, to some extent, forced to switch their codes. We know the prime purpose of a language is to serve the function of communication. For the sake of communication between teachers and students to be fruitful, teacher has no alternative but code switching. Harbord (1992) points out that many ELT teachers have tried to create English only classrooms but the result they have found is students have failed to get the meaning across leading to incomprehension and resentment.

Eyes always speak the inner thoughts that most often remain unspoken. Teachers can feel, as they have the ability to do so, the pulse of the students and understand that the English only class creates a barrier in students' understanding in certain cases. Therefore, code switching becomes a natural phenomenon and an inevitable part of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), especially in EFL classrooms. If it is about the validity or usefulness of code switching, there are many studies that speak in favor of CS. For example, Schweers (1999) investigated the validity of using L1 in EFL classrooms at a university level. It was concluded that all teachers who participated in the study believed that L1 should be used in EFL classes. Likewise the majority of the students agreed that their L1 should be used to clear any difficult concept and they admitted that they felt less lost during the lesson when their teachers used L1.

Code switching is necessary in the classroom if the teacher and students share the same language and should be regarded as a natural part of bilingual's behavior (Jamshidi and Navehebrahim, 2013). When the teacher uses L1 in EFL classrooms, it creates a rapport between teachers and students and it also signals solidarity and sameness among them. A similar kind of study was conducted in a Saudi intermediate girls' school and the study revealed that teachers and students hold positive attitudes towards the use of their L1 Arabic in the classrooms (Al-Nofaie, 2010).

Rashid (2014) conducted a research on 13 teachers and 63 students from Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST), Bangladesh. The study shows that a high percent of the teachers (61.54%) and students (57.14%)

agree with the use of code switching and when CS was investigated as a strategy of teaching and learning, the lion portion of teachers (84.62%) and students (87.39%) believe that CS is an eminent strategy for teaching and learning English in the university classrooms.

Teachers switch code when the level of English used in the text-book or course material is beyond the student's ability. CS is used to explain new terms or words and difficult grammatical items. Ahmad and Josseff (2009) found in their survey that 72.4% of the respondents (total 257) acknowledged that CS helped them understand new words, 71.6% perceived that CS assisted them in understanding any difficult concepts while 68.8% agreed that teachers' CS helped them understand the grammar being taught.

Jingxia (2010) conducted a research on 259 students and 60 teachers from 3 Chinese universities. The results of the research show that students (96.9%) think it is important for their teachers to use Chinese (L1) "always, sometime, or occasionally" to meet for their needs as their lessons are generally a little beyond their comprehension, and the majority of teachers (81.7%) and students (75.3%) believe that CS to Chinese greatly benefit the class.

In accordance with the above mentioned studies, the present study also tries to shed light on CS in the context of Bangladeshi EFL classrooms.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT

As mentioned before, the purpose of the present study is to bring the reasons behind CS classroom use into light and it also attempts to uphold the attitudes of both teachers and students towards CS. First part of the analysis graphs the teachers' responses and the second portion demonstrates responses gathered from the student participants.

TABLE 4
STATISTICAL RESULTS OF TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

| Response | | Always | Sometimes | Undecided | Seldom | Never | Total |
|----------|------------|--------------------|----------------|------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Q1 | Frequency | 00 | 27 | 00 | 06 | 01 | 34 |
| | Percentage | 00 | 79.4 | 00 | 17.6 | 2.9 | 100 |
| Q2 | Frequency | 03 | 26 | 04 | 01 | 00 | 34 |
| | Percentage | 8.8 | 76.5 | 11.8 | 2.9 | 00 | 100 |
| Response | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Total |
| Q3 | Frequency | 03 | 23 | 06 | 02 | 00 | 34 |
| | Percentage | 8.8 | 67.6 | 17.6 | 5.9 | 00 | 100 |
| Q4 | Frequency | 09 | 21 | 02 | 02 | 00 | 34 |
| | Percentage | 26.5 | 61.8 | 5.9 | 5.9 | 00 | 100 |
| Q5 | Frequency | 23 | 08 | 02 | 01 | 00 | 34 |
| | Percentage | 67.6 | 23.5 | 5.9 | 2.9 | 00 | 100 |
| Q6 | Frequency | 05 | 21 | 06 | 02 | 00 | 34 |
| | Percentage | 14.7 | 61.8 | 17.6 | 5.9 | 00 | 100 |
| Q7 | Frequency | 03 | 12 | 09 | 05 | 05 | 34 |
| | Percentage | 8.8 | 35.3 | 26.5 | 14.7 | 14.7 | 100 |
| Q8 | Frequency | 07 | 21 | 05 | 01 | 00 | 34 |
| | Percentage | 20.6 | 61.8 | 14.7 | 2.9 | 00 | 100 |
| Q9 | Frequency | 06 | 21 | 05 | 01 | 01 | 34 |
| | Percentage | 17.6 | 61.8 | 14.7 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 100 |
| Q10 | Frequency | 19 | 12 | 03 | 00 | 00 | 34 |
| | Percentage | 55.9 | 35.3 | 8.8 | 00 | 00 | 100 |
| Q11 | Frequency | 03 | 18 | 07 | 04 | 02 | 34 |
| | Percentage | 8.8 | 52.9 | 20.6 | 11.8 | 5.9 | 100 |
| Response | | Greatly Beneficial | Beneficial | Undecided | Not Beneficial | Harmful | Total |
| Q12 | Frequency | 18 | 11 | 03 | 01 | 01 | 34 |
| | Percentage | 52.9 | 32.4 | 8.8 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 100 |
| Response | | In English | | In Bengali | They Switch Codes | | Total |
| Q13 | Frequency | 05 | | 03 | 26 | | 34 |
| | Percentage | 14.7 | | 8.8 | 76.5 | | 100 |
| Response | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Total |
| Q14 | Frequency | 00 | 00 | 01 | 09 | 24 | 34 |
| | Percentage | 00 | 00 | 2.9 | 26.5 | 70.6 | 100 |
| Response | | Frequently | Not Frequently | Undecided | Very Little | Not at All | Total |
| Q15 | Frequency | 00 | 02 | 04 | 10 | 18 | 34 |
| | Percentage | 00 | 5.9 | 11.8 | 29.4 | 52.9 | 100 |

Q= Question

A. Teachers' Response

In order to find out the frequency of CS, question 1 "I switch code from English to Bengali in the English as Foreign Language (EFL) classes." was administered, and among 34 teachers, 27 teachers (79.4%) gave consent that they use CS "sometimes" and 6 teachers (17.6%) use it "seldom". Only one teacher (2.9%) denied the use of CS in classrooms. So,

almost all the teachers participated in this study use CS in EFL classrooms. Most of the teachers remain conscious while switching to Bengali as they are aware of the careful implementation of CS in formal setting. Question 2 “I remain conscious while switching to Bengali in the class.” ensures this awareness of the teachers.

To answer question 3 “Code switching is helpful in maintaining discipline in a large class. Do you agree?”, 23 teachers (67.6%) agreed and 3 teachers (8.8%) strongly agreed to the question. Teachers use CS to maintain large class. It is easy to manage and communicate small classes. The teachers can easily engage a class if its size is small, but it becomes difficult to manipulate a large class as controlling of such kind of class is really a challenge for teachers. In a large class, students’ proficiency level of English varies significantly and teacher cannot give special attention to each student. In this context, CS becomes helpful to handle every situation tactfully.

With the opinion of question 4 “I think code switching to Bengali is an effective strategy for learning and teaching English.”, teachers tend to agree to it. The result displays that 30 teachers (88.3%) expressed agreement to this question. This finding is in accordance with the study of Rashid (2014). As we know mother tongue always helps comprehend any foreign language. So, CS serves as an eminent strategy for both learning and teaching English.

Teachers switch codes for some specific reasons that are widely accepted by researchers. Students are not always familiar with new words, terms and expressions. Here, mother tongue interference becomes helpful. Responses to question 5 “Code switching helps to explain unfamiliar, difficult and new words, terms or expressions.” indicate that 23 teachers (67.6%) strongly expressed their solidarity with this view and 8 teachers (23.5%) ‘agreed’ to it.

English is not the mother tongue where the present study is conducted. Clarity of the things read is necessary to learn them. Teachers clear things with the help of CS. Responses to question 6 “Code switching serves as an effective tool to make things more clear to students.” display that 26 (76.5%) of the sample are ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ to this statement. To reply question 7 “Code switching helps the teachers to make class more lively and enjoyable”, 15 (44.1%) teachers think CS can make a class livelier and enjoyable where 9 teachers (26.5%) are uncertain about it and rest (29.4%) of the teachers is not in favor of this belief.

English only class makes the class lifeless and students get bored with it. To keep away the monotony of the class, teachers bring L1 carefully. To respond to question 8 “Without code switching, the class becomes monotonous for the students”, 28 teachers (82.4%) ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ where 5 (14.7%) are not sure about it.

Mother tongue in a foreign language environment always bears the mark of sweetness. We express our solidarity using language in a foreign context. Learning is always related to psychology of the learners. Use of L1 in EFL classrooms brings both teachers and students in a state of solidarity. The result collected from question 9 “Code switching to Bengali creates an idea of solidarity and sameness among/with students.” also confirms that, for this belief and reason, 27 (79.4%) teachers use CS in the classrooms.

Students, when they encounter any problem regarding their lesson or, sometimes, personal life, they come to teachers for consulting or counseling. This is a friendly environment where both students and teachers can converse freely without thinking about classroom language. Especially for teachers at NUB, everyday there is a fixed time (1 hour) allotted for counseling students. Question 10 “Frequent code switching of teachers helps students when they come for consulting or counseling. Do you agree?” brings out that 31 teachers (91.2%) acknowledge frequent code switching helps students when they come for consulting or counseling. It becomes more personal and stimulates empathy when teachers use CS to counsel them.

Question 11 “What kind of attitude do you hold towards teachers’ code switching to Bengali in the class?” tries to capture the attitudes of teachers towards CS. The finding shows that 3 teachers (8.8%) ‘strongly agree’ and 18 teachers (52.9%) ‘agree’ to the use of CS where 7 (20.6%) of the respondents are neutral and the remaining participants replied negatively. So, we can see that most of the teachers hold positive attitude towards CS to Bengali. This finding correlates with that of Jingxia (2010).

The result of question 12 “How does code switching to Bengali benefit the EFL class?” shows that the majority of the teachers (85.3%) believe that CS to Bengali greatly benefit the EFL class where 3 teachers (8.8%) are not sure about the benefit of CS and a small number of teachers (5.8%) consider CS to be ‘not beneficial’ or ‘harmful’.

The opinions to the question 13 “Students respond during the class” illustrate that 26 teachers (76.5%) confirm that their students switch codes during class time while 3 teachers (8.8%) say that students use only Bengali and remaining 5 teachers (14.7%) approve that students respond only in English. Students feel comfortable when they switch codes as it is found in the study of Yao (2011). Generating idea in English sometimes becomes difficult to them. Though teachers believe CS helps students a lot in EFL classrooms, they do not want their students to be encouraged to use CS in classroom. Nearly all the teachers (97.1%) ‘disagreed’ and ‘strongly disagreed’ to answer question 14 “Code switching from students can be encouraged in the class. Do you agree?”. This finding discloses a surprising aspect of classroom code switching. Though teachers sometimes switch codes, CS from students is not welcomed. If students switch codes to Bengali, teachers remind them to use English for further response. Responses to question 15 “What should be the frequency of code switching of students in the class?” confirm that 18 (52.9%) of teacher sample consider that CS from students should not be permitted in the classrooms and 10 (29.4%) allow it “very little” while 4 (11.8%) show uncertainty and 2 (5.9%) permit it but ‘not frequently’.

TABLE 5
STATISTICAL RESULTS OF STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

| Response | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Total |
|----------|--------------------|------------|-----------|----------------|-------------------|-------|
| Q1 | Frequency | 30 | 137 | 06 | 02 | 175 |
| | Percentage | 17.1 | 78.3 | 3.4 | 1.1 | 100 |
| Q2 | Frequency | 85 | 75 | 03 | 07 | 175 |
| | Percentage | 48.6 | 42.9 | 1.7 | 4.0 | 100 |
| Q3 | Frequency | 40 | 78 | 43 | 14 | 175 |
| | Percentage | 22.9 | 44.6 | 24.6 | 8.0 | 100 |
| Q4 | Frequency | 45 | 110 | 14 | 04 | 175 |
| | Percentage | 25.7 | 62.9 | 8.0 | 2.3 | 100 |
| Q5 | Frequency | 51 | 91 | 26 | 06 | 175 |
| | Percentage | 29.1 | 52.0 | 14.9 | 3.4 | 100 |
| Q6 | Frequency | 45 | 117 | 10 | 03 | 175 |
| | Percentage | 25.7 | 66.9 | 5.7 | 1.7 | 100 |
| Q7 | Frequency | 98 | 71 | 05 | 00 | 175 |
| | Percentage | 56.0 | 40.6 | 2.9 | 0.0 | 100 |
| Q8 | Frequency | 114 | 58 | 03 | 00 | 175 |
| | Percentage | 65.1 | 33.1 | 1.7 | 0.0 | 100 |
| Q9 | Frequency | 97 | 72 | 06 | 00 | 175 |
| | Percentage | 55.4 | 41.1 | 3.4 | 0.0 | 100 |
| Q10 | Frequency | 128 | 35 | 09 | 02 | 175 |
| | Percentage | 73.1 | 20.0 | 5.1 | 1.1 | 100 |
| Q11 | Frequency | 110 | 65 | 00 | 00 | 175 |
| | Percentage | 62.9 | 37.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100 |
| Q12 | Frequency | 100 | 63 | 07 | 03 | 175 |
| | Percentage | 57.1 | 36.0 | 4.0 | 1.7 | 100 |
| Q13 | Frequency | 95 | 71 | 06 | 03 | 175 |
| | Percentage | 54.3 | 40.6 | 3.4 | 1.7 | 100 |
| Q14 | Frequency | 55 | 99 | 09 | 06 | 175 |
| | Percentage | 31.4 | 56.6 | 5.1 | 3.4 | 100 |
| Q15 | Frequency | 86 | 45 | 39 | 04 | 175 |
| | Percentage | 49.1 | 25.7 | 22.3 | 2.3 | 100 |
| Response | Greatly Beneficial | Beneficial | Undecided | Not Beneficial | Harmful | Total |
| Q16 | Frequency | 99 | 60 | 11 | 04 | 175 |
| | Percentage | 56.6 | 34.3 | 6.3 | 2.3 | 100 |
| Response | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Total |
| Q17 | Frequency | 00 | 00 | 27 | 38 | 110 |
| | Percentage | 0.0 | 0.0 | 15.4 | 21.7 | 62.9 |
| Q18 | Frequency | 04 | 38 | 17 | 86 | 175 |
| | Percentage | 2.3 | 21.7 | 9.7 | 49.1 | 100 |

Q= Question

B. Students' Response

The first question "Teachers switch codes in the classroom." concerns about the teachers' code switching in EFL classrooms. It ensures whether CS from teachers in classroom setting happens or not. 95.4% (167 respondents out of 175) of the students admitted that their teachers switch codes to Bengali. The following questions try to find out the reasons behind this CS and the attitudes of students towards their teachers' CS, that is, how they take this, what they think of it.

Question 2 "Teachers use frequent code switching in the classes for beginner students." and question 3 "Teachers reduce the frequency of code switching when the students become more senior." try to investigate if teachers use CS for beginner students and gradually reduce it when students becomes senior. The results of both questions respectively show that 91.4% of the participants believe CS is applied frequently in the classes for beginner students, quite similarly, 67.4% positively respond that, when they become seniors, the teachers reduce the frequency of CS. All students, except two, participated in this study received their secondary and higher secondary education through Bangla medium. Students get frightened when they come across English as their medium of instructions. Teachers easily understand, as they come from the same social context, the fearful conditions of the students.

For learners of English, the grammar is always a matter that requires a greater understanding. It is very much different from that of Bengali. To make grammatical structures easy, careful application of L1 becomes essential. Without the help of L1, new terms and vocabularies do not become completely clear to the students. The responses to the question 4 "By code switching from English to Bengali, teachers can better explain the grammatical terms, new and unfamiliar topics and vocabulary in the text." displays that 88.6% of the sample either 'agree' or 'strongly agree' to this opinion where 8.0% cannot decide and 3.4% 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' to it. This finding closely resembles the study of Yao (2011).

Comprehension of the lesson taught in the class using English sometimes becomes difficult. To investigate this statement, question 5 "By code switching from English to Bengali, teachers can make the lesson content taught in the

class more comprehensible.” tries to have feedbacks from students. More than three quarters of the participants (81.1%) respond positively where 14.9% of the subjects are uncertain, 3.4% ‘disagree’ and only one person (0.6) ‘strongly disagrees’. In the replies of question 6 “By code switching from English to Bengali, teachers can better clarify task instruction.” and question 7 “Teachers can better discipline the students by code switching from English to Bengali.”, it comes out that both questions have almost similar percentage of positive responses 92.6% and 96.6% respectively. So, the lion portion of the participants believes their teachers can better clarify task instruction and discipline the students using CS. Therefore, classroom management is largely indebted to teachers’ careful use of CS.

English only in the class makes the class less enjoyable and monotonous. This assumption is supported by almost all the participants in the responses of question 8 “Continuous use of English in the class makes the class tedious and monotonous.”, question 9 “Code switching makes my lesson enjoyable.” and question 10 “I feel satisfied with my learning process when teachers switch codes.”. As it is shown in the result, nearly all the participants (98.3%) ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ to question 8, 96.6% are in favor of question 9 and 93.1% respond positively to question 10. It is surprisingly true that none of the participants ‘disagrees’ to the statements of questions 8 and 9, and a very small percentage of the subjects 1.7% and 3.4% express uncertainty respectively.

Anyone, when his/her mother tongue is kept absent from the learning environment, especially learning from classroom setting, feels uncomfortable, tensed and lost. It becomes difficult for students of different levels to catch up the lesson always in English. Language becomes burden for them and they feel less interest in the lesson only because of classroom language. We know learning outcome of the students is largely related to the personality factors of students, and student psychology is a part of the personality factors. Question 11 “Code switching gives me comfort while understanding difficult topics or instruction.” gives a very surprising result, that is to say, all the participants (100%) believe CS gives them comfort while understanding difficult topics or instruction. Another finding, in the responses of question 12 “Code switching helps me feel less tensed.”, is that 163 (93.1%) participants indicate that they feel less tensed when their teachers switch codes to Bengali. Next, almost ninety-five percent (94.9%) of the subjects, in the question 13 “Code switching makes me feel less lost during the lesson.”, acknowledge that CS helps them in feeling less lost when they receive lessons in EFL classes.

Question 14 “Do you favor teachers’ code switching from English to Bengali in the classroom?” tries to bring out the standing of the students whether they favor teachers CS or not. A high percent of the respondents (88%) favor the use of teachers’ CS while few of them (6.8%) consider CS to be detained from teachers’ end.

With L1 learners get psychological support and feel more relaxed and it accelerates learning process of the students. A number of studies represent that CS in EFL classrooms is a useful learning tool. Rashid (2013) states “without the exercise of code switching, learner’s alternate conceptions would remain unexplored.” The finding of question 15 “Teachers’ code switching accelerates learning process of the students.” shows that almost three quarter (74.9%) of the students acknowledge that their learning process gets accelerated when their teachers switch code, where 22.3% are not sure of it and a small number (2.9%) of them respond negatively to the statement.

The result processed from question 16 “How does code switching to Bengali benefit the class?” indicates that the overwhelming majority of the students (90.9%) believe that CS to Bengali ‘benefits’ or ‘greatly benefits’ the EFL class where 6.3% remain neutral in this view and only 2.9% think it harmful.

It is a matter of wonder, in the reply of the statement in question 17 “Class teacher encourages students to switch their codes in the classroom.” 148 students (84.6%) admit that their class teachers discourage CS from students, where the remaining of the sample (15.4%) show uncertainty. It makes clear that teachers prohibit CS from students in all respects.

The finding of question 18 “Teachers’ code switching in the class should be reduced as much as possible.” displays that among the respondents, 66.2% indicate that teachers’ CS in the class should not be reduced greatly as they believe their learning environment becomes comfortable with the presence of CS. If the teachers stop switching codes, their learning process might significantly get hampered. The finding also shows that 17 (9.7%) of the sample are uncertain about it; and nearly one-fourth of the subjects (24%) ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ to the statement, that is, they think CS from teachers should be reduced as much as possible.

VIII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The very first limitation of the present study is the sources of primary data. To conduct this study, only two universities were chosen for data collection with 34 teachers and 175 students. The sample size is very much small compared to a vast number of available EFL teachers and learners. There are more than hundred public and private universities in Bangladesh where English is the medium of instruction. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize and illustrate the real scenario of CS using this little amount of data source. To have a vivid image of CS, maximum number of subjects from maximum number of universities need to be involved in the research.

Second, to determine the effect of CS on ultimate language proficiency attainment, a long period of time should be allotted for the study, what the present study surely lacks. CS is widely discussed issue that requires a lot of time to investigate its contribution to learners’ linguistic competence.

Third, the study would be able to bring better motives behind the use of CS if interviews of the subjects and observations of the classes could have been done. Fourth, variables of the participants e.g. department, gender, age,

academic qualification, academic rank, teaching experience were not taken into consideration while analyzing data. Consideration of these variables may add new findings to the existing literatures on CS.

Fifth, one of the hypotheses is not tested successfully. To measure the proper learning outcome of the students, two groups, one with mixed L1 and L2 instruction and another with no L1 instruction, should be taken into consideration to test which group achieves greater scores.

IX. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The present study investigates the general situation of CS in Bangladeshi universities from different points and angles of CS practice from both teachers and students. Surely, this study represents the tip of an iceberg. It is only a preliminary survey in the research field of CS in EFL classrooms at tertiary level in Bangladesh. Therefore, an in-depth study is waiting to be carried out for interested researchers.

Depending on the findings, it can now easily be concluded that the hypotheses of the study are proved to be true. Teachers use CS for various reasons and they do believe CS largely helps an EFL class to be successful. Both teachers and students hold positive attitude towards it as they agree that it facilitates learning and provides a better understanding of the lesson content. However, though teachers switch codes solely for effective teaching and learning purpose, they do not allow students to switch codes frequently. CS has been found to serve, as Jingxia (2010) says, various functions like translating vocabulary items, explaining grammar, managing class, and building close relations with students. Teachers, sometimes, switch codes because of the mixed L2 abilities of the learners. To say more, students feel comfortable with their learning process when their teachers switch codes.

English plays, both theoretically and practically, a dominant role in teaching and learning sectors of Bangladesh. To teach English as a foreign language in classroom setting, mother tongue interference becomes admittedly obligatory. While teaching English as a compulsory subject, extra care should be given at primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels of Bangladesh. If students can be made competent well in using English from those levels, CS in tertiary level will be an occasional phenomenon. This study is a small contribution to the research arena of CS. Therefore, a vast amount of studies needs to be carried out to gain new insights regarding CS in the context of Bangladeshi EFL classrooms.

APPENDIX A. TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sir/Madam,

This survey is being conducted as part of a research work to find out the reasons and perception of both teachers and students towards their Code Switching (i.e. using English and Bangla in the same discourse/dialogue) in classroom setting. Your valuable opinion will greatly help me to design my research work effectively and to bring a new insight in the fields or research. Honesty is highly expected while answering the questions below. Please, use your own experience and opinion. Secrecy of your data provided will be strictly maintained.

Regards,

Md. Obaidullah

Lecturer, Dept. of English, NUB

Personal and Academic Information

[Please put tick-mark (✓) on appropriate place]

- Department: English BA Law CSE ECE
 Age: Less than 35 years 35 years and above
 Gender: Male Female
 Academic Qualification: Bachelor's Master's Ph.D.
 Teaching Experience: Less than 5 years 5-10 years above 10 years
 Academic Rank: Lecturer Sr. Lecturer Assistant Professor
 Associate Professor Professor
 Level of Teaching: Undergraduate Graduate Both
 Type of Institution: Private (NUB) Public (KU)
 Medium of Instruction: English Bengali

Questions Regarding Code Switching

[Please put tick-mark (✓) on appropriate place]

- I switch code from English to Bengali in the English as Foreign Language (EFL) classes.
 Always Sometimes Undecided Seldom Never
- Code switching is helpful in maintaining discipline in a large class. Do you agree?
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
- I remain conscious while switching to Bengali in the class.
 Always Sometimes Undecided Seldom Never

4. I think code switching to Bengali is an effective strategy for learning and teaching English.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
5. Code switching helps to explain unfamiliar, difficult and new words, terms or expressions.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
6. Code switching serves as an effective tool to make things more clear to students.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
7. Code switching helps the teachers to make class more lively and enjoyable.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
8. Without code switching the class becomes monotonous for the students.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
9. Code switching to Bengali creates an idea of solidarity and sameness among/with students.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
10. Frequent code switching of teachers helps students when they come for consulting or counseling. Do you agree?
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
11. What kind of attitude do you hold towards teachers' code switching to Bengali in the class?
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
12. How does code switching to Bengali benefit the EFL class?
 Greatly Beneficial Beneficial Undecided Not Beneficial Harmful
13. Students respond during the class-
 In English In Bengali They switch codes
14. Code switching from students can be encouraged in the class. Do you agree?
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
15. What should be the frequency of code switching of students in the class?
 Frequently Not Frequently Undecided Very Little Not at All

APPENDIX B. STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Student/Participant,

This survey is being conducted as part of a research work to find out the reasons and perception of both teachers and students towards their Code Switching (i.e. using English and Bangla in the same discourse/dialogue) in classroom setting. Your valuable opinion will greatly help me to design my research work effectively and to bring a new insight in the fields or research. Honesty is highly expected while answering the questions below. Please, use your own classroom experience and give opinion. Secrecy of your data provided will be strictly maintained.

Regards,

Md. Obaidullah

Lecturer, Dept. of English, NUB

Personal and Academic Information

[Please put tick-mark (✓) on appropriate place]

- Department: English BA Law
 Age: Less than 20 years 20 years and above
 Gender: Male Female
 Academic Qualification:
 Secondary School Certificate (SSC): Bangla Medium English Medium
 Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC): Bangla Medium English Medium
 Graduation: B.A. (Hons.) in English B.A. (Hons.) other than in English
 1st Year 2nd Year
 3rd Year 4th Year
 Post-Graduation: M.A. in English M.A. other than in English
 Type of Institution: Private (NUB) Public (KU)
 Medium of Instruction: English Bengali

Questions Regarding Code Switching

[Please put tick-mark (✓) on appropriate place]

1. Teachers switch codes in the classroom.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
2. Teachers use frequent code switching in the classes for beginner students.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
3. Teachers reduce the frequency of code switching when the students become more senior.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. By code switching from English to Bengali, teachers can better explain the grammatical terms, new and unfamiliar topics and vocabulary in the text.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
5. By code switching from English to Bengali, teachers can make the lesson content taught in the class more comprehensible.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
6. By code switching from English to Bengali, teachers can better clarify task instruction.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
7. Teachers can better discipline the students by code switching from English to Bengali.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
8. Continuous use of English in the class makes the class tedious and monotonous.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
9. Code switching makes my lesson enjoyable.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
10. I feel satisfied with my learning process when teachers switch codes.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
11. Code switching gives me comfort while understanding difficult topics or instruction.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
12. Code switching helps me feel less tensed.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
13. Code switching makes me feel less lost during the lesson.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
14. Do you favor teachers' code switching from English to Bengali in the classroom?
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
15. Teachers' code switching accelerates learning process of the students.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
16. How does code switching to Bengali benefit the class?
 Greatly Beneficial Beneficial Undecided Not Beneficial Harmful
17. Class teacher encourages students to switch their codes in the classroom.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
18. Teachers' code switching in the class should be reduced as much as possible.
 Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

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At present, he is a lecturer at the Department of English, Northern University Bangladesh. Previously, he taught English as EFL in different schools and colleges. Currently, he teaches discourse analysis, SLA, sociolinguistics, research methodology, and English grammar courses.