

Introduction

In a study conducted by Nik Mastura, Nik Ismail Azlan and Suthagar Narasuman, results indicated that 50% of bilingual students agreed that code-switching was more effective in learning. It helps them understand lessons better and makes terms less vague if students and teachers were to explain in the native language alongside their second language (for example, the language being taught in the classroom) (Elsevier, 2012). Code-switching is defined as the act of shifting from one language to another within a single conversation or even a sentence – but it is so much more than this: for instance, code-switching is incredibly important for effective communication in many social groups, which is a significant contribution for society's emotional integrity, contributing to their "sense of belonging". Researchers today have come to the understanding that "language comprehension and production is a complex process that involves a network of different regions of the brain" (Cherry, 2021) including Wernicke's area of the brain (visually located in the left cerebral hemisphere near the lateral sulcus, however, the exact region is still debated). Code-switching develops and becomes a natural phenomenon for bilingual populations (almost an unconscious effort), where they often have to stop themselves from "switching to the language that the monolingual speaker would not understand" (Yuhua, 2021) in a conversation. However, by resisting to switching languages, there are issues surrounding emotional and intellectual development that could pose a risk of being deficit or not occurring at all. "Existing research from psychological science underscores the fact that language plays a key role in emotion because it allows the speakers to articulate, conceal, or discuss feelings" (Science, 2012). Moreover, concepts are better expressed when the language utilized is reveals his or her emotional state, where research suggests that emotions can change whilst the bilingual individual switches languages between sentences, mid-sentence, and end of a sentence (these are only a few examples of when code-switching is used in

communication, but linguistics studies indicate many other scenarios and types of code-switching that are specific to these scenarios (Science, 2012) – this concept has implications, again, for development, especially in helping children articulate and regulate their emotions, a key to being independent and functioning in society today. However, it is important to understand that development as well can occur at any time, therefore, scenarios involving early development (development in childhood) can still potentially occur in young adults or adulthood. My focus in this essay is to express, as a bilingual individual, how positive and contributing code-switching can be for an individual, community, and society.

Body

It should be highlighted that language plays an essential role in expressing emotion: bilingual parents contribute to their children's emotional development by providing the children an exemplary model of how to articulate, conceal, or discuss feelings, through verbally expressing emotions – this is accompanied by changes in emotion as well. In order to do this, naturally, the parents may opt to use a specific language (out of the two) to express an “emotional concept” (Science, 2012) because they may hold the judgment that the language chosen will provide a “better cultural context for conveying emotion” (Science, 2012) – whether to their children or to their partner, colleagues, etc. This has further implications for the child's experience with emotion as a result of not only the emotional concept demonstrated by the parent but also other emotional concepts that may be expressed by other adults in their life – family members, teachers, caregivers, friend's parents, etc. To help children to indicate and communicate their emotions, shifting from one language to the other could help children articulate and manage their “negative arousal” and “culture-specific emotions” (Science, 2012) as emotional responses to certain concepts expressed by adults in their life – mainly their parents/caregivers they grow up and develop with. Essentially, this emotion regulatory process that only code-switching

could provide can teach children: manners, acceptance, cultural appreciation, and individualism that could help contribute to society: emotional regulation has suggestive preventions of racism, and aggression, favouring optimistic implications such as self-confidence and self-esteem (development of an internal locus of control as suggestive by Julian B. Rotter, an attribute to the development of personality) reduction of stress, desire to help others, and other sociocultural implications as a result.

The code-switching skill provides implications for English language teaching and learning in educational institutions and programs. In a qualitative study carried out by Rahmawaty Kadir, they investigate the “types and functions of code-switching between English and Bahasa Indonesia that occur in the song lyrics” (Kadir, 2021). Functions of code-switching in Bahasa Indonesia lyrics specifically can “vary amongst discussion of particular topics, lexical needs, and availability, being emphatic, expressing group identity, simplifying words and expressions, and conveying a strong emotion/gaining attention” (Kadir, 2021). Composers and singers will always plan, write and reflect upon their chosen lyrics before the release of their songs, where code-switching is often glorified as a “stylistic innovation” as a way to share their culture through art. Code-switching in music has no rules, essentially appearing in any part of the song if wanted as it can occur whenever surrounding the intentions to elicit empathy and sympathy – two concepts that hold culturally different perspectives. Furthermore, “showing prestige” is linked with code-switching as if a dominant language has a special status in the country, implications for religion, education, and the nation are to be “prestige”. My focus here is on the educational implications that ties with this concept: if the language (English) is seen as high standing, the desire to learn it, will be greater. By learning the English language, many groups of individuals around the world can become advantaged and gain opportunities, including higher chances of employment as English is considered the

“language of business” (ACL, 2019) therefore increasing household income (improving lives for themselves, and their generations of children). In addition, immigration benefits can also arise as a result of learning English: “Slowly but surely, English has entered not only the education field but social and economic areas too, for instance, in advertisements, literature, movies, newspapers, and song lyrics” (Kadir, 2021). Therefore, conscious code-switching to English in lyrics can be an essential tool for learning, especially in EFL classes, and holds greater implications for overall language learning for those who wish to broaden their fluency in other languages, proving that code-switching can be an essential language tool in almost every scenario.

Studies suggest that by learning more than 2 languages and knowing how to speak more than 2 languages can improve academic performance – the correlation of bilingualism and overall academic performance is strong. “In one study, a random selection of 3rd-graders (Year 3’s) received a 30-minute Spanish lesson three times a week for an entire semester. Spanish lessons were conducted entirely in Spanish and focused on verbal skills development. Students who participated in the Spanish program the entire semester scored notably higher on the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT) in language skills and mathematics than students who did not participate in the Spanish program. (Armstrong, P.W., & Rogers, J.D. 1997. Basic skills revisited)” (Loveless, 2022). Schools have continuously expressed the importance of learning a language by making it a required subject to take here in the UK (GCSEs). “In the 21st Century knowing a second language is not only beneficial but necessary for success in life” (ACTFL, n.d.) – as previously discussed, code-switching is a proven resource for language learning, promoting the sharing of diverse cultures and communities, further allowing contact with each other. In order for growing children to survive and function effectively in the modern world and its grand-scale global marketplace, certain skills that are only learned through language

need to be adopted. “Institutions of higher learning are scrutinizing applicants to identify future world leaders. Employers and businesses are seeking applicants who can navigate the modern global economy. It is through learning another language that students can develop both these skill sets” (ACTFL, n.d.). Language learning amongst students has enabled students to improve their cognitive function, revolving skills, and assets such as “enhanced problem-solving skills” (contributions to math focused ordeals) and “improved memory functions” both short and long term memory, that is said to be limited in the capacity as suggested by Miller – the idea is to make everything that the student learns, as long term memory, and language learning (through methods such as code-switching) can enable that to occur (long-term memory capacity is unlimited as imposed by the multi-store model of memory as the “final stage” (McLeod, 2020) which was proposed by Atkinson-Shiffrin. Another example where code-switching alongside bilingualism becomes an advantageous skill for academic purposes is when children are learning how to read. “Bilingual students pick up certain pre-reading skills faster than their monolingual classmates” (Waterford.org, 2019). When it comes to children learning how to read, pre-reading skills are very important to aid their learning: educators have outlined some skills that would be beneficial for children learning to read, that have a direct association with the skills that develop and improve as language learning and speaking is taking place (for example, code-switching). Examples of these skills include: “Learning new vocabulary”, “phonological awareness” (being aware of sounds and the association needed to be made in relation to those sounds), “listening comprehension” (Waterford.org, 2019), and many others, which can be directly associated with the tasks carried out in a Spanish class as a sequential bilingual or an unconscious skill developed by practicing a language at a young age with your parents as a simultaneous bilingual, for example. A main contribution of bilingualism to reading is vocabulary – this piece of text provides an exemplary implication of how vocabulary is important in academic development at a young age

(5th grade/Year 5): “Bilingual students are usually exposed to more words in both languages than children who only speak their native language. For this reason, they’re more likely to learn the equivalent of any word they pick up in the opposite language. Because they’re already familiar with more of their vocabulary words, spelling words and learning the alphabet comes more naturally. Plus, they’ll be predisposed to spelling more complex vocabulary words in later grades.” (Waterford.org, 2019). Essentially, bilingual children are better equipped for further learning expanding further from reading and literacy – without code-switching accompanied with the fundamentals of language teaching, children will be one step behind by reaching a high academic potential or their greatest academic potential later on in life. As a result of high intellectual ability, a more advanced society can prosper and socioeconomic benefits would arise naturally.

It is important to understand why opportunities to improve academic ability are so important for society. In order to do this, I will outline the issues the United Kingdom face with their academic today: “The most disadvantaged teens are almost twice as likely to achieve below a grade 4 in English and maths than their richer peers” (Skynews, 2019). Therefore, reinforcing language learning in younger students from disadvantaged backgrounds can hopefully increase their academic success and exhibit their potential beyond in complete disregard to their economic background in the future – that should be irrelevant to their personality and attributes as an individual which unfortunately is still associated with their economic state today: “If you are refused a job in this province because you look poor, denied service at a shop or restaurant because you are experiencing homelessness or face barriers in accessing housing because you are unemployed, you have no recourse under the law” (Mclsaac, 2018). Through academic ability, there will be opportunities available for those who need it, and language learning (through tools such as code-switching) can potentially have a small or hopefully impactful effect on children’s ability,

preventing any bias and improving their lifestyle and even the lifestyle of their loved ones.

To further contribute to the reputation of code-switching, code-switching is unique in the sense that it offers inclusivity and can be applied to many different language-communication scenarios. To highlight the volatility of code-switching, code-switching skills can be applied even to “deaf adults”, which are often a forgotten/segregated population in many societies around the world. Results from a study conducted by Robert Hoffmeister and Donald F. Moores, indicated that “deaf signers who have deaf parents and learned ASL at a very early age evidenced the most code-switching behaviour” (Hoffmeister & Moores, 1987). This indicates that by learning a language at a young age, communication is more effective and code-switching contributes to and aids that learning. However, in these specific circumstances, many ASL-specific factors come into play and have a direct impact on the level and direct effect of code-switching in the development of sign language in the sample of “deaf adults”: code-switching holds no discrepancy towards individuals.

Conclusion

Code-switching should hardly ever be seen in a negative limelight: research suggest huge implications for the betterment of society and the advancement of its pupils. As a bilingual student, I may hold bias towards code-switching and its benefits, however, I have expressed and discussed research that has supported my optimistic outlook on code-switching. Therefore, in summary, when questioning the power of code-switching, it is important to remember that: 1. Code-switching aids language learning 2. Code-switching can improve cultural inclusivity 3. Code-switching has correlations with socioeconomic factors of a society 4. Code-switching can be a huge advantage

in the developmental stages of life 5. Code-switching should be employed by language teaching facilities and schools