

Khatuna Buskivadze

**ATTITUDES TOWARDS TEACHERS' CODE-SWITCHING IN GEORGIAN
EDUCATIONAL DISCOURSE**

Abstract

Based upon the theories of sociolinguistics, the article examines students' and teachers' attitudes towards teachers' code choice and analyses the features and functions of teachers' code-switching

(CS) in the context of the Georgian educational discourse (practice research, teaching English for specific purposes (ESP). The article presents the results of quantitative research. The study of teachers' code-switching in the ESP classroom reveals that code switching is extensively employed by business English teachers. Teachers, as well as students, have a negative attitude towards teachers using L1 in Business English classes. CS is positively encouraged by less than a half of the students surveyed.

Keywords: *Code Switching, ESP, Educational Context, Business English, Attitudes.*

1. Introduction

In the modern world being bilingual is more common than being monolingual. Bilinguals are characterised by alternating languages for personal or social purposes, for showing their attitudes, for including themselves or excluding others from the particular groups of identities. As a result, code-switching is the core focus in the field of bilingualism. Much research has been done in terms of language choice, language attitudes and code switching. The novelty of the present research is findings in Georgian educational discourse:

- Georgian Students' and Teachers' Attitudes towards English and Georgian languages in the process of teaching Business English;
- The social and pragmatic functions of Code Switching in the context of teaching business English.

1.1 Definitions: Code, Code Switching

The term 'Code' was borrowed from communication theory and semiotics. It has been widely discussed in the fields of linguistics and literature. As for Sociolinguistics, in this particular field, the term 'Code' derives from Berstein's controversial work (1971&1973). Influenced by Berstein, Halliday (1978) emphasises codes in his theory of social semiotics. Code refers to the language and a variety of language which are transmitted by different groups in social situations (Mey, 1998; Swann, 2004). In this article, code refers to the language (English or Georgian) used in ESP (Business English) classroom.

As for Code-switching, it has been studied and defined from different perspectives such as grammatical (structural) (Appel & Musken, 1985); psycholinguistics (Clyne, 1991; Giles, 1982, Li, 1996); pragmatic (Yu, 2004) and sociolinguistics (Auer, 1984; Gumperz, 1892; Milroy & Muysken, 1995). Code-switching research is an expanding field. The term "code-switching" has no clear definition accepted by the majority of researchers in the field (Gardner-Chloros, 2009: 10-13).

According to Myers-Scotton, code-switching is the use of two or more languages in the same conversation usually within the same conversational turn or even within the same sentence of that turn (Myers-Scotton 1997: 47). Myers-Scotton's competence- and production-centred definition of Code-Switching differs from the function-based definition maintained by Auer (1998) who reserves the

term code-switching for instances where the switch from one language to another is meaningful at a specific point in a conversation. From the sociolinguistic perspective, Auer distinguishes between participant-related and discourse-related code-switching (Auer 1994&1998).

This study thus seeks to answer the following Research Questions:

- What is the students' attitude towards teachers' code-switching in ESP (Business English) classes?
- What is the teachers' attitude towards teachers' code-switching in ESP (Business English) classes?
- What can results reveal about the values assigned by the speakers to different languages?

2. Sociolinguistic motivation of Code-Switching

From the sociolinguistic perspective, there have been several studies (Appeal & Musken 1987; Milroy 1987; Gardener-Chloros 1995 & 2005; Myers-Scotton 1983 & 2001) on code-switching to determine how to identify the roles of each language in the community and the motivation of the speakers to switch codes.

Based on a sociolinguistic approach, the speakers' incentive of choosing a particular code is conditioned by several aspects: 'the topic of the conversation, the participants, the setting, and the affective aspect of the message' (Hamers & Blanc, 2000, p.266).

John J. Gumperz (1972) introduced the dichotomy of Situational and Metaphorical Code-Switching. Situational CS deals with some changes of language choice corresponding to choices of the situation, participant, setting, and activity type. As for the metaphorical CS, it refers to the other changes of language choice to achieve special communicative effects with participants and the setting remaining the same. In the ESP classroom, metaphorical code-switching is related to the roles: a teacher and a non-teacher (Simon, 2001). Situational code-switching is determined by different kinds of lesson contents or tasks in which the use of specific code can be predicted.

2.1 Socio-Pragmatic Functions of Code Switching

Myers Scotton played a significant role in the study of code-switching in terms of emphasising the social functions and motivation of code-switching. In his theory, which is known as the Markedness Model, Myers Scotton states that speakers make certain use of the correlation between codes, certain styles and groups and, based on this knowledge, they pattern their communicative strategies with the help of using these varieties.

The above-mentioned social pragmatic model illustrates several premises:

- The interpretation of the utterance is studied by focusing on its social meaning;
- Speakers and hearers can recognise linguistic choices;
- Speakers always have multiple identities;
- Reflects the identity that has not been established, but its realisation is being negotiated by the linguistic choice;
- Speakers are goal-directed - their behaviour is purposive with their goal to optimize their rewards (Myers-Scotton, 1993).

Taking the above-mentioned model into consideration the following assumptions can be made:

- ESP (business English) Teachers' Code-Switching behaviour is a systematic and highly purposeful activity rather than random;
- Social and individual factors and motivations altogether can be the most influential ones.

2.2 Functions of Classroom Code Switching

Ferguson, who explored the role of the code-switching across different classroom context, outlined three broad functional categories:

1. Code- switching for curriculum access;
2. Code- switching for classroom discourse management;
3. Code- Switching for Interpersonal relations (Ferguson, 2003).

Canagarajah suggested a categorisation similar to Ferguson (Canagarajah, 1995).

Categories	Micro functions of Classroom CS
Content Transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review ● Definition ● Explanation ● Negotiation cultural relevance ● Parallel translation ● Unofficial student collaboration
Classroom Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opening the class ● Negotiation directions ● Requisition help ● Managing discipline ● Teacher encouragement ● Teacher compliments ● Teacher's commands ● Teacher admonitions ● Mitigation ● Pleading ● Unofficial interactions

Table 1. Micro functions of classroom CS introduced by Canagarajah (1995)

The above-mentioned functions determined the way of compiling questionnaires for our sociolinguistic research. It will be thoroughly analysed in the methodology part.

3. ESP in Georgia

Language ideology reflects the belief system and values that speakers have about various languages. Georgians often switch languages, dialects, styles, etc. for showing their identity. English as a foreign language plays a role. It is widely taught in Georgian state and private universities. The Georgian universities provide students with intense classes not only of General English but ESP (English for specific purposes) and EAP (English for academic purposes). Talking about ESP, one can consider Law, Tourism, Business, Medicine, etc. classes, which are introduced in the curriculum of some universities in Georgia.

The main focus of this research is Business English classes. Teaching Business has never been the same as teaching General English.

3.1 Origins of ESP

The dictionary of Cambridge defines English for specific purposes (ESP) as 'the teaching of English for use in a particular area of activity, for example, business or science.' ESP is based on designing courses to meet learners' needs. The role of the ESP teacher is to orientate and provide resources for their students.

Traditionally linguistics aimed to describe the rules of English usage, that is, grammar. However, the new studies shifted attention away from defining the formal features of language usage to discovering how language is used in real communication (Widdowson, 1978).

The demands of a brave new world - English as a Lingua Franca, a revolution in linguistics and the development of educational psychology - focus on the learner seemed to point towards the need for increased specialisation in language learning.

“In English language teaching this gave rise to the view that there are important differences between, say, the English of commerce and that of engineering. These ideas married up naturally with the development of English courses for specific groups of learners” (Hutchinson & Waters, 2006).

4. Methodology

The present study suggests a sociolinguistic, quantitative research approach - online questionnaires for ESP students and lecturers. Much research (Rauf, 2017; Alenezi, 2010, etc.) has been done about CS in ESL, EFL in different countries but not in Georgia. Less has been done on code-switching within teaching Business English. This study was conducted at selected state universities in Tbilisi. The novelty of the research is twofold as the research was conducted not only among teachers and students separately but in combination of these two groups.

4.1 Research participants

The study was carried out among 70 students and 7 teachers from different universities (Ilia State University (School of Business); Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (, Faculty of Economics and Business) and Faculty of Humanities (English Philology).

4.1.1 Business English Teachers

To start with, the educational background of research participants varied. The teacher participants have different profiles (4 of them mentioned having MA degree; 1 of them has MA in Advanced English Studies and Teacher Training; 1 of them is a PhD candidate of English philology (From Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University), while the rest 2 have PhDs in Psychology, English philology, Synchronous interpreting (From Ilia State University). As for their age, 2 teachers were 31-35; 41-45; 36-30 years old, only one was 56-60.

All the teachers were born in Georgia, although regional places are also mentioned: Chiatura, Sokhumi, Tbilisi. The majority of teachers (6 - 85.7%) named their mother tongue to be Georgian (teachers from both universities), only one (14.3%) named Russian (from Ilia State University).

The languages the participants use with their family members are Georgian (71.4%) (from both universities); English (14.3%) (from Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University); Russian (14.3%) (from Ilia State University). Identity and language are interconnected. Having a good command of English is very important for 5 teachers; for 1, knowing English is important and, surprisingly, for 1 teacher mastering the English language is unimportant. Six teachers, positively consider English as an important part of their identity, while one has a negative attitude towards the above-mentioned connection.

4.1.2 Students

The educational background of students participated in our survey varied. There were 36% of undergraduate participants; 14% had already completed their Masters courses; while 52% have completed Bachelor Degree.

A place of birth for the majority of students is Georgia, 56% of students were born in Tbilisi, some regional places are also mentioned: Kutaisi, Rustavi, Kobuleti, Zugdidi, Telavi, Abasha, Zestafoni. 1 student named Russia, Moscow as his or her birth place. The most of the students (95%) named their mother tongue to be Georgian, 4% - Azerbaijani and 1% Armenian.

The languages the participants use with their family members are Georgian (91%); English (1 %); Georgian and Russian (1%); Azerbaijan (4%); Armenian (1%).

Talking about the students' proficiency level in English, they consider themselves to have very good (34%); good (53%) and fair (13%) command of English.

54% of students surveyed have positive, while 23% showed negative attitude towards knowing English. 3% of students feel neutral towards having a good command of English.

4.2 Instruments and data Collection Procedures

Considering the current world challenge known as Covid-19, we found the online questionnaire (Google forms) the most helpful instrument for conducting our research.

Both teachers (who teach Business English) and students (who took the course of Business English) were sent questionnaire links. The Questionnaire was based on Canagarajah's classification, functions of CS in English language classes (Canagarajah, 1995).

The research restriction was influenced by the quarantine, we were not able to observe the lessons in a real classroom environment.

4.3 Data Analysis

Based on the personal data (teacher participants' educational background) from most of the teachers surveyed, we can conclude that they are highly qualified and experienced for their job - teaching business English. Most of the teachers surveyed feel they have a sense of belonging towards the English language.

The common language shared by 90% of students from Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University and 10% of participants from Ilia state University is Georgian, which is also a national language of the country. Since the students' answers about their levels of English are positive, we can conclude that they do not have difficulties understanding the teachers' talk in English. The majority of students surveyed find knowing English very important.

A huge number (94%) of students think that English is a part of their identity; However, a few (6%) among 70 students state their negative position. Some of the instances are given below:

Positive:

"Yeah it is, because it's lingua franca";

"Yes, I think speak in English more often than in Georgian";

"In General, language is fundamental to cultural identity. It has an ability to completely shape one's personal identity. This applies to the mother tongue. In my case it's Georgian. As for English, it is my second language and, for me, learning another language opens up new windows of opportunities. A new language gives us a new worldview and makes us more aware of the cultures, lifestyles, customs and beliefs of other people";

"I think without English it's hard to be successful in your field and therefore, I agree with this opinion";

"Yes, I basically talk half in English. half Georgian, half English. its part of my personality";

"yes it is, because i use it on daily basis"

Negative:

"No, it's not. It doesn't affect my identity, rather it has an effect on how society views my ability to know it and to use it due to lack of respect to our own language, also there is no job left for translators whatsoever".

"I think not, because at the moment I'm studying English at the university but so far I have no close connection with this language."

Considering the above given examples, English plays a role in students' daily life. They feel that English is demanded in today's Georgia and all around the world. Half English-half Georgian is a part of some students' personalities.

5. Results and Discussions

The Present data illustrates the functions of CS in the process of Teaching Business English. Table 1 and Table 2 provide the comparison of teachers' and students' answers. The participants of the study were able to choose more than one option: Only Georgian Only English or a combination of both English and Georgian languages. For getting a picture of the current situation, students and teachers were asked the following question, "In business English Classes, teachers use." As revealed by the research, although English is a most frequently used language in Business English classes, only Georgian and/or English and Georgian in combination is quite commonly used by teachers.

Table 1.

<i>In the Business English Classes, Teachers use</i>	<i>Georgian</i>		<i>English</i>		<i>Combination of both</i>	
	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student
to give instructions	0	1	5	57	2	15
to explain difficult concepts	0	11	4	44	3	16
to explain grammar explicitly	0	3	5	54	2	16
to check for comprehension	0	2	4	59	3	11
to introduce unfamiliar materials/topics in Business	0	4	4	52	3	18
to explain the differences between the students' L1 and English	0	3	3	51	4	18
to draw students' attention to the correct pronunciation of sounds in English	0	2	6	60	1	9
to maintain classroom discipline and structure of the lesson	0	2	5	54	2	15

to provide praise/feedback/personal remarks about students' performance	0	2	4	60	3	11
to encourage students' participation in classroom activities	0	3	5	58	2	14
to build/strengthen interpersonal relationships between the teacher and students	0	3	5	53	2	18
to reduce students' anxiety in learning Business English	0	6	5	51	2	16
to increase students' motivation and confidence in learning Business English	0	2	5	50	2	20

It is considered by students that teachers use Georgian for explaining difficult concepts and reducing students' anxiety in learning. The combination of both English and Georgian is mostly used for increasing students' motivation and confidence as well as for strengthening interpersonal relationships between the teacher and students in teaching Business English.

Table 2 depicts students' and teachers' preference of using a particular language or combination of English and Georgian.

Table 2.

<i>In the Business English Classes, I prefer (teacher) to use</i>	<i>Georgian</i>		<i>English</i>		<i>Combination of both</i>	
	<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Student</i>	<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Student</i>	<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Student</i>
to give instructions	0	4	4	56	3	14
to explain difficult concepts	0	9	4	48	3	19
to explain grammar explicitly	0	6	5	52	3	14
to check for comprehension	0	0	5	58	3	13
to introduce	0	6	5	50	3	19

unfamiliar materials/topics in Business						
to explain the differences between the students' L1 and English	0	4	4	54	4	15
to draw students' attention to the correct pronunciation of sounds in English	0	1	5	63	2	11
to maintain classroom discipline and structure of the lesson	0	3	5	57	3	14
to provide praise/feedback/personal remarks about students' performance	0	4	5	58	3	13
to encourage students' participation in classroom activities	0	2	5	59	2	13
to build/strengthen interpersonal relationships between the teacher and students	0	4	5	56	2	16
to reduce students' anxiety in learning Business English	0	6	5	55	3	14
to increase students' motivation and confidence in learning Business English	0	3	5	54	3	16

The collected data illustrates that using only Georgian is not positively encouraged neither by teachers nor students. As for students' and teachers' attitudes towards the usage of a combination of Georgian and English is quite positive. The interesting fact is that introducing unfamiliar materials/topics in Business is characterised by CS more than explaining the differences between the students' L1 and English. The future of this research would be observations on the process of teaching for authentic examples from teachers' repertoire. Study on students' CS would be our further interest in Georgian Educational Discourse.

6. Conclusions

Knowing English is an immensely important skill in the Globalized World. Moreover, Business English is the product of the modern world, it requires functional knowledge used for communicative purposes. As CS appeared to be the most common behaviour among bilingual speakers, it became a subject of our survey.

Thus, we came to several conclusions:

- All of the teachers and 94% of the students have negative attitudes towards Teacher's CS behaviour (using both English and Georgian) in teaching Business English;
- The majority of the students consider English as a part of their identity;
- 6 out of 7 teachers consider English as a part of their identity;
- Based on the result, English is more valued than Georgian in Business English classes.

References

1. Auer, P. 1998. Code-switching in conversation: Language, interaction and identity, London & New York: Routledge.
2. Canagarajah, S. 1995. Functions of Code Switching in ESL Classrooms: Socialising Bilingualism in Jaffna. *Journal of Multilingual & Multicultural Development*, 16, 173-195.
3. Canagarajah, S. 2007. Lingua franca English, multilingual communities, and language acquisition. *The Modern Language Journal*.
4. Ferguson, C. A. 2003. Classroom Code-Switching in Post-Colonial Contexts Functions, Attitudes and Policies. *AILA Review*.
5. Gumperz, J. J. 1977. *The Sociolinguistic Significance of Conversational Code-Switching*, University of California, Berkeley.
6. Hamers, J. F. and Blanc, Michael H. A. 2000. *Bilinguality and Bilingualism*, Second edition, Cambridge University Press.
7. Hutchinson, T.; Waters, A. 2006. *English for Specific Purposes: A Learning-centred Approach*. Cambridge University Press.
8. Mayers-Scotton, C. 1993. *Social motivations for codeswitching: Evidence from Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Author's Bibliographical data

The Author of the research is a PhD student at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Faculty of Humanities, researching Code-switching in Sociolinguistics and Applied Linguistics. She is a CELTA-qualified teacher (Certificate in English Language for Adults). She has been working at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University as an ESP (Medical English) teacher since 2018 and at Ilia State University as an invited English lecturer of General English course since 2016. Khatuna has been teaching EFL and ESP (Tourism) at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University since 2020.