



Code-Switching in Speech Acts: A Focus on Offer Interactions by Saudi EFL Female Bilinguals

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Abstract

The present study adopted a socio-pragmatic approach to contribute to the broader literature on code-switching (CS) in bilingual communication by exploring its role in the context of speech act negotiations. Specifically, it explores 107 instances of CS from English to Arabic by nine Saudi female speakers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) during interactions with a British native speaker during offer interactions in an informal context. Conversations were recorded during a dinner attended by three friends. The number of times women switched from English into Arabic, the position of CS within the offer interaction, and its type and function were quantified. The study revealed that CS was frequent, aligning with sociolinguistic findings indicating that even proficient bilinguals use CS conversationally. The findings reveal nuanced preferences, patterns, and functions associated with CS in this particular social activity. The participants strategically used CS during offer negotiations, often favouring turn-switching in a non-sequential manner. The primary function of CS was the expression of feelings, frequently involving appreciative expressions and preferences. In addition, participants used CS to emphasise points and invoke God, reflecting cultural and religious influences on language choice. Overall, CS serves as a tool for effective communication, offering insights into the speaker's identity and cultural background.

Keywords: *bilingualism; code-switching; L2 interactions; offer; speech acts; spoken discourse*

1. Introduction

Code-switching (CS) is a linguistic phenomenon in which two or more languages or language varieties are alternately used in a single interaction. This practice is common in multilingual and multicultural communities, where individuals may use different languages for different purposes and contexts. Numerous researchers (e.g., see Gumperz, 1982; Moradi & Chen, 2022) considered CS to be a normal and significant component of bilingualism. In recent years, code-switching has received increased attention in the field of language learning and teaching, as educators and researchers have sought to understand its role in language acquisition and proficiency. Research on CS has delved into areas such as language classroom instructions (e.g., Lin, 2013; Turnbull & Dailey-O’Cain, 2009), sociolinguistics (e.g., Almoaily & Almulhim, 2023; Song, 2019; Yim & Clément, 2021), and psycholinguistics (e.g., Bosma & Blom, 2019; Cantone & MacSwan, 2009). One of the areas of study in CS explores the social functions associated with CS, specifically the utilisation of language switching as a means to foster rapport and solidarity among individuals who share the same linguistic or cultural background (e.g., Gumperz, 1982; Wang, 2019).

Although CS from a sociolinguistic perspective has been widely studied, there is no study that has explored the link between CS and the speakers’ expected behaviour in negotiating a particular speech act in authentic extended discourse. Previous research has found that Arab bilinguals may be influenced by their native language in their performance of L2 speech acts. They, for example, tend to use Arabic religious terms such as *ʔin fa:ʔ ʔalla:h* (translated to *God’s willing*) in their L2 offers (Almusallam, 2023), apologies (El-Dakhs, 2018), and refusals (Jasim, 2017). Although invoking such religious terms serves as an example of CS to Arabic, such behaviour has been analysed as means to understand L2 learners’ pragmatic competence. It has been considered as a sign of pragmatic failure resulting from negative pragmatic transfer rather than a possible practice of CS aiming to achieve certain communicative goals. Previous research highlights that communicative needs of speakers play a vital role in determining the distribution of CS in discourse (Bentahila and Davies, 1992). The context of CS in bilinguals’ speech acts, hence, remains unexplored. Practices of switching to the native language in the communication of speech acts and their functions were not addressed. To fill this gap, the current study aims to investigate the CS performance in offering negotiations by advanced EFL young Saudi women during interactions with a

British native speaker at dinner events. It explores CS from a socio-pragmatic perspective, determined by expected behaviours, particularly in the negotiation of speech acts as parts of extended discourse. This is distinct from viewing CS merely as a sign of limited linguistic competence in the foreign language (FL). The results of the study would address the gap in the existing literature concerning Saudi CS in negotiating speech acts in bilingual environments. In addition, the study seeks to contribute to the broader fields of CS and L2 pragmatics, interactions, and speech acts in general.

The paper is organised as follows: Initially, CS is defined and reviewed, briefly including its definitions and functions. Subsequently, an examination of studies focusing on CS in Arabic-speaking communities is conducted. The methodology is then outlined, including significant demographic data regarding the participants and details about the type of data analysis used in this study. An exploration of CS types is provided, including quantitative descriptions, followed by discussions of these findings. Finally, the study concludes with a few tentative conclusions, implications, and directions for future research.

2. Research questions

The current study explored CS in offer negotiations among Saudi females interacting in a natural setting in an EFL context. It focuses on informal interactions within friendship groups. The study specifically explored the frequency, position, types, and functions of CS from English into Arabic using recorded natural data, aiming to answer the following questions:

- 1) Where did the advanced EFL Saudi females negotiate offers through CS (initial offers, acceptance, refusals, insistence, or negotiation)?
- 2) What types of CS were utilised in offer negotiations by the advanced EFL Saudi females?
- 3) What were the potential functions of CS in offer negotiations by the advanced EFL Saudi females?

3. Literature Review

3.1. Code-switching: definitions and functions

CS refers to a change in languages that serve diverse functions in discourse. It is mainly defined as the usage of more than one language within the same conversation (Aabi, 2020; Smolak et al., 2020). The most cited definition of CS, proposed by Gumperz (1982, pp. 59), described it as “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems”. Cook (2013, pp. 174) illustrates that CS occurs in a conversation when interactants speak the same languages, describing it as "going from one language to the other in mid-speech when both speakers know the same languages". This study follows Gumperz’s definition of CS, with an emphasis on CS as a conversational event within the same speech exchange. This emphasis on social activity is relevant to the objectives of the current study, which seeks to investigate CS in offering interactions as part of casual conversations between female speakers.

It is important to distinguish between base and embedded language when analysing CS in a given social interaction. This distinction serves as the foundation for one of the most seminal production-based models in the CS literature, namely Myers-Scotton's (1993) Matrix Language Frame Model (MLF Model). The MLF model establishes a hierarchical interplay between the bilingual languages, where the matrix language (ML) serves as the dominant language in bilingual performance while the embedded language (EL) plays a minor role. The MLF model's main premise is that the ML grammar determines the morphosyntactic frame of intra-sentential EL constituents in CS. The ML provides both content constituents and system morphemes to the CS utterance, whereas the EL solely provides content morphemes. During extended discourse, the ML contributes the most morphemes and constitutes the majority of the corpus. However, challenges arise in identifying the ML due to psycholinguistic and social elements. For example, the presumption that the speaker possesses greater proficiency in the ML is frequently inaccurate; a bilingual individual may have equal or greater competence in the EL. Social influences may impact the selection of ML as the conventional (or expected) choice for a domain or interaction type, yet there are numerous additional reasons that inspire CS, such as discourse-related functions (e.g., Alfonzetti, 1998). Several researchers (Gafaranga, 2016; Gardner-Chloros, 2009; Gumperz, 1982; Poplack, 1980) have challenged this perspective that code-switching is a linguistic skill

reflecting bilinguals' language resources and communicative strategies rather than a lack of competency in either of the languages involved. In line with this perspective, Morad and Chen (2022), in their investigation of the social motivations and socio-pragmatic aspects of Chinese-English CS among Chinese undergraduate students, rejected negative views that associate CS with a lack of proficiency or deviant language use. Their findings revealed that CS was a useful and effective verbal strategy for Chinese-English bilinguals to convey their thoughts, intentions, experiences, solidarity, emphasis, and other aspects that affect interaction outcomes. Considering the data in this study, English served as the ML and Arabic as the EL, yet it would be inappropriate to assume that the participants were more proficient in English than their native language. The determined ML was set by the context in which the participants interacted. Consequently, defining the ML is not always easy, necessitating the assessment of as many criteria as possible.

Research has identified that CS serves diverse functions in discourse. From the perspective of a language teacher, the main functions of CS in the literature include promoting classroom interaction and management (Qian et al., 2009), engaging students in tasks (Zhu & Vanek, 2017), and teaching language as a subject matter (Gauci & Grima, 2013). Potowski's (2009) analysis of CS during classroom interaction in a dual-immersion school (Spanish and English) in Illinois, involving 5th graders, revealed six different functions, including lexical gap, discourse marker, repetition, fixed vocabulary, word focus, and translation. CS into L1 has also been used for structural purposes, such as sharing information, understanding task needs, maintaining fluency, and achieving social objectives (Leeming, 2011). It is noteworthy that Leeming's study focused on four female Japanese university students learning English, suggesting that both the type of learner and the situation may influence the functions of CS. Moreover, CS is occasionally employed to enable bilinguals to use their native language as a resource for understanding new information and expressing themselves more effectively (Grosjean, 2010), especially when encountering difficulties in expressing themselves in the target language (Wei, 2018). In a two-year case study of an adult multilingual linguist learning Swedish as an L3 in a natural situation, Hammarberg (2001) discovered that the participant made switches into English, her first language (L1), or second languages (German, French, or Italian). Generally, the L1 (English) was more common in switches with a pragmatic function, primarily used for managing interaction and facilitating word learning.

In addition to its communicative and educational functions in language classrooms, CS can also serve social and cultural functions. For instance, it can be used to signal identity and membership in a particular linguistic or cultural group (Eldridge, 1996; Hughes et al., 2006; Rampton, 1995) and to establish rapport and solidarity between interactants who share the same linguistic or cultural background (Gumperz, 1982; Wang, 2019). For instance, Bentahila and Davies (2002) showed that the CS between Arabic and French in the same song is used as a clear marker to symbolise the identity of a very particular socioeconomic or ethnic community, i.e. the informal discourse of North African bilinguals. In an effort to understand the role of CS in everyday communication within Malaysian society, Nil and Paramasivam (2012) conducted an analysis of CS usage in the media, with a specific focus on a Malaysian movie. The movie showcased two primary objectives of CS, encompassing various micro-functions. These objectives included speech accommodation, involving actions such as reiteration, repair, clarification, emphasis, and simplification; and the construction of identity, encompassing activities such as establishing relationships, solidarity, and equality. Moreover, Wang (2019), in her investigation of how a Chinese child's CS between English and Chinese may have facilitated bilingual socialisation in the United States over nearly one year, found that the child used CS to seek assistance with new vocabulary, negotiate meaning, and aid in bilingual language development and socialisation, similar to the findings of Lin (2013). Moradi and Chen (2022), reporting from questionnaire responses, indicated that CS is used in daily conversations by Chinese-English bilinguals because (a) CS can convey intended meaning precisely, (b) it makes communication easier and faster, (c) it takes less time to access lexical items, and language retrieval is thus faster when switching between languages, and (d) some ideas and concepts appear to be better expressed in one language over another. According to Cook (2002) and Schroeder (2016), CS can assist individuals in expanding their social identities and effectively managing issues related to cultural diversity. Moreover, CS has also been viewed as having a micro-transition role through which individuals can assume one role while engaged in another (Anicich & Hirsh, 2017).

In conclusion, CS can serve various functions in language learning and bilingual communication. It helps in changing social roles, facilitating communication, bridging language and cultural gaps, emphasising points, and expressing identity.

3.2. Code switching by Arab bilinguals

Several studies have identified CS as a common practice among Arab learners of English, particularly in informal settings, serving as a tool for communication, identity expression, enhanced comprehension, emotional expression, and solidarity with their peers (Alatawi, 2015). The majority of studies addressing CS in the Arab world (e.g., Alenezi, 2016; Alshugithri, 2019) have focused on its occurrence in educational settings, specifically as a pedagogical tool for teaching and learning English in the classroom.

Few studies have explored CS in communications in naturalistic settings. Ismail (2015), in her exploration of CS from Arabic to English in natural conversations among young Saudi couples during mixed-gender dinner gatherings, observed that Saudi females exhibited a significantly higher frequency of CS from Arabic into English, particularly involving single noun and adjective switches, compared to their male counterparts in both single and mixed-gender interactions. Ismail concludes that such CS by Saudi women could be perceived as producing an elevated style of speech, given the socio-economic prestige of English in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, attitudes towards CS by Arabic speakers have been examined. For instance, Aldalbahy (2022) investigated the relationship between CS and language proficiency among Saudi female students using questionnaires and an elicited production task, which involved recording participants' spontaneous speech on two topics: video games for children and intercultural marriage. The results indicated that code-switching is regarded as a strategic competence utilised by proficient bilingual individuals as a useful tool for effective communication. Al-Mansour (1998), in his exploration of CS by Saudi adults studying in the United States, found that while speakers with low levels of linguistic proficiency may develop intra-sentential CS, they do not produce inter-sentential CS. On the other hand, speakers with high levels of proficiency in both Arabic and English produce all forms of CS, whether inter-sentential or intra-sentential.

In summary, the literature suggests that CS by Arab learners of English is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by various factors, including linguistic, cultural, and social factors. However, most research has explored the role of CS in English language learning among Arab learners, aiming to develop effective pedagogical approaches that incorporate CS as a learning strategy. A few studies have provided insights on the sociolinguistic aspects of CS in non-pedagogical contexts, e.g., online written marketing (Almoaily, 2022), CS from Arabic to English

in mixed-gender informal conversations (Abu-Melhim, 1991; Ismail, 2015), informal conversations among Saudi male bilinguals living in the United States (Al-Enazi, 2002; Al-Mansour, 1998), CS between Arabic and French in song lyrics within the genre of rai music (Bentahila and Davies, 2002), and CS between Arabic and English in Arabic TV programmes (Alatawi, 2015). Bilingual speakers may employ CS when discussing a particular issue because these features sometimes carry meanings or connotations better understood by their interlocutors in the other language (Moradi & Chen, 2022). In this context, Safi (1992) investigated the functions of Arabic-English CS among Saudi students in the United States. Her findings revealed that Arabic is employed to signal identity and maintain solidarity, such as in matters related to religion and culture, while English is used for discussing areas of specialisation or expressing personal opinions. Similarly, Al-Enazi (2002) explored CS in informal naturalistic speech among bilingual Saudi male adults and children living in the United States when interacting within their community. He found that the dominant language for adults was Arabic, and they switched to English for specific terms related to academics, prestigious, or dates and numbers, whereas English was the dominant language for children and they switched to Arabic for Saudi cultural and religious terms. As a result, one can assume that when discussing a particular topic or act, the embedded language parts are sometimes preferable possibilities for performing a specific illocutionary force. All the above studies on CS in non-pedagogical contexts have focused on CS in situations where the ML of the discourse was Arabic. The present study, however, diverges from this trend by focusing on natural conversations in informal contexts where English serves as the ML of the discourse by Arab bilinguals.

To date, there has been relatively little research focused on CS between English and Arabic, or any other languages, among bilingual individuals from a speech act perspective. This paper aims to address this gap by examining the CS employed by Saudi advanced EFL speakers in informal settings when negotiating offers in an L2 context, involving the presence of a British native speaker. The study aims to contribute understandings of how CS is influenced by speakers' expected behaviours and utilised by bilingual individuals in natural communication.

4. Methods

4.1. Participants

To ensure that the interactions were natural conversations among genuine friends, the participants were recruited based on pre-existing real-life friendships, using a "friend of a friend" sampling procedure similar to Milroy's (1980). Three participants, who agreed to be hostesses, were asked to invite two friends each over for dinner. A total of nine Saudi EFL speakers participated in the study. The guests were informed in advance that an English native speaker would be present, and consequently, English would be the language of communication during the meal. This was done in order to establish a natural setting that would require the participants to communicate in English. Following the MLF Model (Myers-Scotton, 1993), it can be asserted that English served as the ML, while Arabic functioned as the EL in the context of this study.

All nine participants in the study were graduates of programmes in English literature or translation and resided in Saudi Arabia. They had received formal English instruction in Saudi schools for a minimum of 6 to 12 years before attending college. The participants were homogeneous in terms of age, ranging from 23–30 years, and level of education, as all held a university degree, either a Bachelor's (BA) or Master's (MA), in an English language-related major. While standardised data on the English proficiency of all participants was not available, five of them had achieved a band score of 7 or above on the IELTS. For the remaining participants, it can be inferred that they had advanced levels of English proficiency based on their academic and professional backgrounds. Some participants had earned MA degrees in English literature or linguistics, while others were English instructors. It is vital to note that all participants were all born and raised in Riyadh and routinely gathered for dinner at each other's homes.

4.2. Study design and procedure

In an effort to reflect what happens in real talk, the data in this study consisted of audio recordings of spontaneous, natural talk that allowed the exploration of the underlying interactional patterns found in genuine conversations. Recognising that variations in communicative behaviour may be attributable to factors such as setting, topic, age, and gender of participants (Barron, 2017; Schneider, 2012). This study

was explored with a specific focus on a unified social environment: offering negotiations during dinners at the homes of female friends of similar age.

Before starting data collection, all participants provided their consent to participate in the study. An information sheet about the study and a consent form in the participants' native language were sent through email, giving them ample time to read and understand the details of the study. Participants were informed that the study aimed to observe ordinary and informal conversations among friends, that their conversations during the dinner would be audio-recorded, and that there were no specific topics to be discussed. The true focus of the study was not revealed to the participants, as this could have affected the results. Moreover, to minimise the impact of the “observer's paradox”, as described by Labov (1972, pp. 209), and to encourage natural behaviour among the participants, two recording devices were discreetly placed at opposite sides of the seating area prior to the arrival of guests. By obtaining prior consent and placing recording devices beforehand, the intent was to minimise reminding participants of the recording process, create an environment where participants felt comfortable, and enable the dinner gathering to take place as naturally as possible.

Three dinners were recorded, each lasting between two and three hours, resulting in a total of approximately nine hours of recorded data. Each group consisted of three female friends and a British English native speaker, with one participant was the hostess and the others were guests. All participants were informed that only anonymised transcripts of the interactions would be included in the data analysis, and consequently, all were assigned pseudonyms to safeguard their identities. I attended the recording sessions to take notes. After the recordings were completed, demographic data was collected, including information such as names, age, education, occupation, contact details, and proficiency levels (based on IELTS scores).

4.3. Data coding

During the study, I conducted initial observations and analysis of the women's CS in their offer interactions, considering different functions. Insights from the functional coding approach and the ethnography of communication in the literature on CS informed this analysis. Given the limited research on bilingual CS in non-educational settings (Lin, 2013), I additionally analysed the specific themes generated from the data, allowing the data to guide analysis by itself.

The recorded interactions were transcribed and processed using NVivo 10. The data was transcribed and coded according to the position of the CS in the offer negotiation, specifically the identification of whether the CS occurred in the initial offer, insistence, acceptance, refusal, or negotiation.

The occurrences of CS were further classified based on the type of switches, using categories developed by Cheshire and Gardner-Chloros (1998), Ismail (2015), and Romaine (1995). Accordingly, bilingual speakers may engage in CS in the same conversational turn or in consecutive turns. Generally, CS can occur at two points: inter-sententially, which takes place across sentences, phrase boundaries, or between speaker turns; and intra-sententially, which occurs within a sentence, clause, or word boundary (Romaine, 1995, pp. 122–123). Subsequently, Cheshire and Gardner-Chloros (1998) additionally distinguish between intra-sentential switching and the most common sort of switching, single-word switches, and their taxonomy of CS types. They also classified turn-switching as a distinct category from inter-sentential switching. Cheshire and Gardner-Chloros (1998, pp. 20) in their classification defined “non-sequential turn-switching” as a change in the bilingual's language from the preceding speaker, indicative of uncooperative communication. In contrast, the term “sequential switches” describes a switch into the preceding speaker's language, seen as an indicator of the speaker's cooperativeness in the conversation. It is important to note that categorising changes at a turn boundary as either away from or towards the prior speaker's language limits the data, as one switch excludes the other in this category of CS. Table 1 below shows the four observed categories of CS types in the data.

Table 1 Types of CS

Category	Definition	Example
Turn-switching	Switches at a turn boundary that correspond to the previous speaker's or interlocutor's language (sequential) and switches that do not (non-sequential).	A: < <i>tabi:n waraq ?inab</i> >? <Do you want vine leaves?> B: Aha
	Inter-sentential switching	A switch from one code to another takes place at a sentence boundary or clause

Category	Definition	Example
	boundary, but not at a turn boundary.	
Intra-sentential switching	A switch within a sentence boundary or clause boundary, but does not include single-word switches.	A: What <?eif musʿa:rasah bi ʔal-> English? <what is (wrestling)) in the->
Single-word intra-sentential switching	A single-word switch that can be adapted phonologically and morpho-syntactically to the host grammar system of the ML.	A: Tea <sʿah>? <Right>? B: <la:>. Mint. No

The CS occurrences were then classified based on the functions these switches have, using categories developed by Caballero and Celaya (2022), Cook (2002), Eldridge (1996), Hammarberg (2001), Hughes et al. (2006), Nil and Paramasivam (2012), Potowski (2009), Rampton (1995), and Wang (2019). However, during the revision of the prior classifications of CS functions, it became clear that some categories (e.g., vocabulary gaps) have been used frequently in the CS literature, while others were context-specific. Given the difference in settings and participants across studies, my classification schema for CS's functions is not only theory-driven but also data-driven. This approach aims to account for situations that have not been previously addressed in the literature, such as expressing appreciation, preferences, sympathy, and invoking God. Table 2 displays the main eight types of functions discovered and their specific definitions, as well as unedited illustrations from the data.

Table 2 Functions of CS

Category	Definition	Example
Emphasising a point	Expressions used to capture the attention of other interlocutors.	((A extends her hand to pour coffee for B.)) B: <la:, la:, xala:sʿ.> Thank you. <No, No. It's enough.>

Category	Definition	Example
Expression of feeling	Words or short expressions that convey agreement, disagreement, appreciation, surprise, preferences, or sympathy.	((A accidentally spills some hot coffee on her hand.)) A: Oops. B: < <i>bism ʔilla: ʔala:jk-i salimt-i</i> > ((B gives tissue to A)) <On the name of God. Are you fine?>
Membership to a group	Establish rapport and solidarity between members of a group.	((A stands to take plates to the kitchen)) B: < <i>tabeen ʔa-sa:ʔid-ik bi-fai</i> >? <Do you want me to help you in anything?>
Managing cultural diversity	Dealing with challenges and differences that arise between the culture of individuals' origin (native culture) and the culture they are interacting with or adapting to (target culture).	A: < <i>Kunafah</i> >? Do you want < <i>Kunafah</i> >? ((It is a dessert name.)) B: Yes please
Changing social roles	Alterations in the responsibilities and expectations of individuals within a group as they engage in a particular social event.	A guest: < <i>ʔana: ʔ-abya: ʔa- sʔib.</i> > <I want to pour.> Hostess: < <i>ʔi:b-i:</i> > <Give it to me.>
Invoke God	Using religious expressions to affirm the truth of a statement and enhance one's sincerity	((A serves coffee to B.)) A: < <i>ʔalla:h jisʔid-ik</i> > <May God bless you.>
Vocabulary gap	Inability to recall a specific term due to the absence of an exact synonym or because the speakers are	A: What < <i>ʔeif musʔ a:raʔah bi ʔal-</i> > English? <what is (wrestling)) in the->

Category	Definition	Example
	uncertain about the correct form or unable to remember it.	
Joke	Comments that are made so that others have fun and laugh	A: Dinner is ready. B: <ʔasʕlan nifim ʔar-ri:hah> <By the way, we smell the scent> All: @@@

After the data was categorised, a second rater, a bilingual Arabic/English linguist proficient in English, examined 50% of the code-switching instances to ensure inter-rater reliability. The level of agreement attained was 95%. Any disagreements were handled by revisiting and re-analysing the data, as well as discussing data analysis until an agreement was reached.

5. Results

The recorded conversations provided a total of 202 offer interactions, in which 107 instances of CS were detected. The transcribed data not only documented the number of times women switched from English to Arabic but also provided insights into the specific location of the switch in the offer interaction, its type, and its function.

5.1. Position of CS in the offer interactions

.خطأ! لم يتم العثور على مصدر المرجع. shows the distribution of the position of CS in offer interactions. It is evident that CS is most prevalent during the negotiation phase of an offer, constituting 30.8% of all observed cases, and during the initial move of an offer interaction, representing 26.2% of total occurrences. It is noteworthy that the negotiation process is not characterised by insistence on the offer; instead, it frequently involves providing additional options or detailed specifications. For instance, this may involve specifying the desired amount of sugar to be added to a cup of tea. The preference for conducting negotiations in their native language suggests that participants perceive the negotiation of an offer as more congruent with Arabic. Indeed, the study found that more intricate negotiations of offers tend to be a characteristic of Arab communicators compared to English speakers (I. I. Almusallam, 2023; Grainger et al., 2015).

Table 3 Position of CS in offer interactions

	Initial offer	Insistence	Negotiation	Acceptance	Refusal
Frequency	24	9	29	20	17
Percentage	26.2%	8.4%	30.8%	18.7%	15.9%

The limited presence of CS during instances of insistence can be directly attributed to the overall infrequency of insistence within offers. This scarcity of insistence among the participants is a contributing factor to the lower percentage of CS (8.4%) in this particular context. Despite the infrequency of CS in insistence, it can be inferred that participants consider insistence as a distinctive feature of Arabic communication, prompting their inclination to employ it when insistence becomes necessary. In the extensive Saudi EFL corpus analysed, a mere 11 instances of insistence were identified, with only two being conveyed in English, while the rest incorporated CS into Arabic.

Finally, it is worth emphasising that the frequency of CS during the negotiation of an offer is approximately double that observed during the refusal or acceptance of an offer, with respective percentages of 30.8%, 15.9%, and 18.7%. This preference may reflect the participants' strategic choices, aimed at enhancing communicative effectiveness and adeptly navigating the intricacies of complex interactions. It indicates that participants may employ CS more deliberately during the negotiation phase, as it plays a crucial role in ensuring that offers and counter-offers are well understood and mutually agreed upon. Furthermore, this strategic use of CS in negotiation may signify the participants' perception of negotiation as a representative of Arabs' identity and culture rather than English.

5.2. Types of CS in offer interactions

The data presented in Figure 1 unveils distinct patterns of language-switching behaviours within the context of offer negotiations, providing insights into the speech dynamics of advanced Saudi EFL females. The most prominent language switching behaviour observed during offer interactions was turn-switching, constituting a substantial 72% of all instances of CS. Notably, within this category, the majority of switches occurred in a non-sequential fashion, constituting 73% of this category. In contrast, sequential turn-switching accounted for a far lesser

proportion, at 27%. This observation suggests that participants exhibited a notable preference for non-sequential turn-switching when engaged in offer negotiations.

In the context of offer negotiation, a second preference emerged among the participants concerning language switching within sentences. Single-word intra-sentential switching was notably favoured, representing 17% of all language switches. In contrast, intra-sentential switching, where language switches occur within a single sentence, was identified in only 2% of the corpus of CS in offer interactions. This type of switching was the least utilised in this specific communicative context. The infrequent usage of intra-sentential switching may indicate that participants primarily relied on other, more prevalent switching behaviours to convey their messages during offer negotiations. Moreover, inter-sentential switching accounted for 9% of the total. The prominence of single-word intra-sentential switching was particularly notable, as it constituted approximately twice the proportion of inter-sentential switches. This preference for single-word intra-sentential switching implies that participants may have employed this behaviour for various communicative purposes, such as emphasising specific terms or incorporating cultural nuances into their speech.

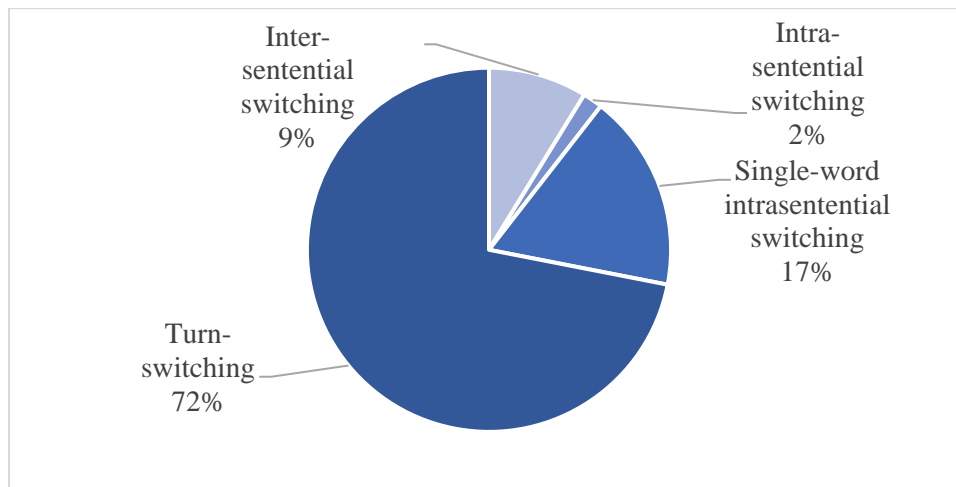


Figure 1: Types of CS in offer interactions

5.3. Functions of CS in offer interactions

In the context of offer interactions, the analysis identified eight fundamental functions that play a pivotal role in CS (see Table 4). Foremost among these functions was the expression of feelings, constituting nearly half of the observed CS instances in the dataset, specifically 47%. Speakers often opt to switch to their native

language when aiming to articulate their emotions. Subsequently, CS was strategically employed to emphasise specific points in the offering interaction, contributing to approximately one-fifth of the overall CS (18.3%). This emphasis primarily served the purpose of highlighting particular offers, refusals, or capturing the addressee's attention. A fraction of the CS emerged as a result of guests attempting to perform some of the hostess's responsibilities, accounting for approximately 13.4% of the total CS. Furthermore, it was observed that speakers tended to switch to Arabic to invoke God, a practice deeply rooted in the tendency of Arabs to incorporate religious references into their discourse. This phenomenon has been substantiated by several studies (e.g., Almusallam, 2023; El-Dakhs, 2018), which have reported instances of pragmatic transfer of such practices by Arab speakers of EFL. Conversely, the remaining functions were relatively sporadic in occurrence within the dataset, with merely approximately 4.9% dedicated to expressing matters pertaining to cultural diversity and approximately 2.8% serving the function of confirming membership within the friendship group. A mere two instances of CS resulted from vocabulary gaps. The scarcity of this category can be attributed to the advanced level of English proficiency exhibited by the participants, who were highly proficient in the English language.

Table 4 Functions of CS in offer interactions¹

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Emphasising a point	26	18.3%
Express feeling	67	47.2%
Membership to a group	4	2.8%
Managing cultural diversity	7	4.9%
Changing social roles	19	13.4%
Invoke God	16	11.3%
Vocabulary gap	2	1.4%
Joke	1	0.7%

Delving deeper into the function of expressing feelings, Figure 2 illustrates that expressions of appreciation and preferences were the predominant types of emotions conveyed through CS, comprising 34.4% and 29.9% of the total, respectively. Other

¹ It is important to note that one instance of CS might serve more than one function. Therefore, the total number of functions does not reflect the total number of CS in the corpus. For instance, one CS instance may aim to emphasise a point, and, therefore, the speaker invokes God to enhance this function.

types of emotions included expressions of disagreement (13.4%), expressions of agreement (12%), and demonstrations of sympathy and care (10.4%). The frequency of showing appreciation and expressing preferences was context-dependent, where it is customary to express gratitude or indicate a preference for a specific offering.

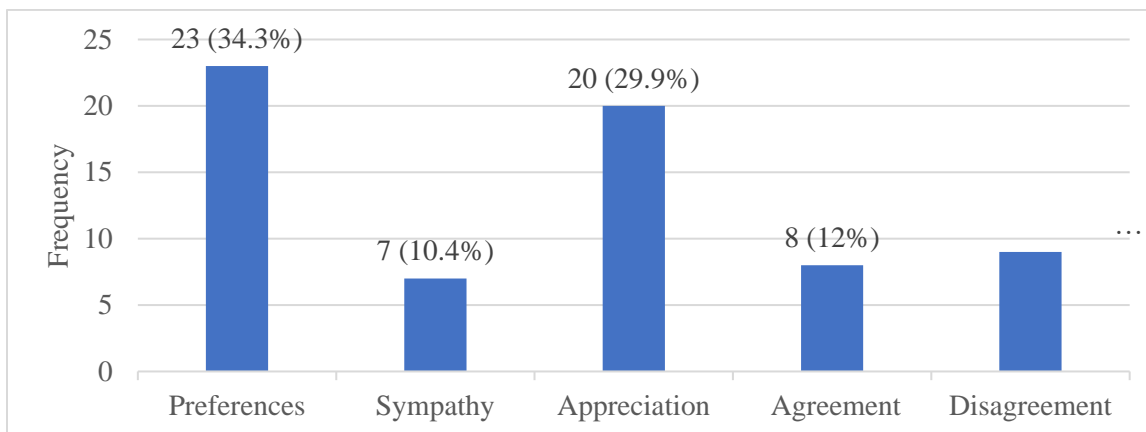


Figure 2: Distribution of feeling type in the function of expressing feelings

6. Discussion

The analysis provided valuable insights into the dynamics of CS behaviour in the context of speech act negotiations, particularly focusing on offers among advanced Saudi EFL females. The findings have revealed nuanced preferences, patterns, and functions associated with CS in this specific social activity among the participants. Firstly, it is important to emphasise that the frequency of CS in the context of the study (102 instances in 202 offer interactions) cannot be attributed to limited language competence. This conclusion is supported by the limited function of CS in the dataset to bridge vocabulary gaps resulting from uncertainty about the correct form or an inability to recall it. Indeed, only two instances of the CS in the corpus served this function. These findings may be compared to those reported in CS research from a sociolinguistic perspective (e.g., Aldalbahy, 2022; Al-Mansour, 1998; Driver, 2022; Gafaranga, 2016; Poplack, 1980), which highlighted that even bilingual speakers with high levels of linguistic competence exhibited effortless CS patterns in social contexts to structure their conversational activity.

These analyses of CS in offer interactions have yielded insightful findings regarding its strategic positioning, revealing that CS was mostly utilised during the negotiation of offers (30.8%), followed closely by the initial move (26.2%). It became evident that the EFL interactants switched to Arabic specifically when they engaged in offer

negotiations. This linguistic phenomenon can be explained from a cross-cultural communication perspective, suggesting that cultural differences and communication norms (Culpeper, 2008) play a significant role. This emphasises the importance of considering social context in understanding CS choices (Caballero & Celaya, 2022; Song, 2019; Wang, 2019). The observation implies that participants perceive their native language as more congruent with the nuances of negotiation, aligning with previous research indicating that Arab communicators tend to engage in more intricate negotiations within their communication style compared to English speakers (Feghali, 1997; Samarah, 2015). Moreover, the initiation of an offer using Arabic instead of English in the context of the study mainly aimed to attract the addressee's attention to the offer. This strategic emphasis was also evident in the frequency of using CS to strategically emphasise specific points of the offering interaction, contributing to approximately one-fifth of the overall instances of CS (18.3%).

One particular noteworthy finding is the prevalence of turn-switching as the primary language-switching behaviour during offer interactions, marked by a notable dominance of non-sequential switching. This suggests that the nine women in the study were inclined to switch languages in a manner that was less structured and predictable, suggesting a dynamic and flexible communication style in this specific context. Interestingly, this finding contrasts with the results reported by Ismail (2015), who observed a higher degree of linguistic convergence among Saudi women during turn-switches, while men exhibited a tendency towards linguistic divergence from the previous speaker's language. This discrepancy can be attributed to the differing contexts of the two studies, aligning with Gumperz's (1982) notion that CS is often influenced by various contextual, situational, linguistic, and extra-linguistic factors. There are two primary distinctions that merit consideration. Firstly, Ismail's research focused on code-switching from the native language to English in a monolingual social setting, whereas my study examines code-switching in the opposite direction, from English to Arabic, within the context of cross-cultural communication activities. Secondly, it is worth noting that Ismail explored code-switching in mixed-gender interactions (involving both males and females), whereas all participants in my study were females.

Furthermore, a second preference for single-word intra-sentential CS emerged among the participants. This underscores the ways in which participants incorporated language switching into their discourse for specific communicative

purposes. Most notably, these single word switches were often related to uttering the word “jukran”, translated to “thanks”, in response to an offer or invoking the name of God, “?alla:h” to increase the speaker’s sincerity. The limited utilisation of intra-sentential switching in the corpus of CS in offer interactions underscores its relatively minor role in this particular communicative context. However, this finding contradicts Poplack (1980), who, in the analysis of CS, found that bilinguals with greater language proficiency preferred intra-sentential switches over inter-sentential code-switching. Once again, the difference in the context of the study, which is negotiating the speech act of offer, can significantly influence the observed code-switching behaviours.

Finally, when examining the functions of CS in offer interactions, the analysis revealed that the most prominent function of CS was the expression of feelings, accounting for a substantial 47.2% of the observed instances. This indicates that the female participants often switched to their native language to convey their feelings more effectively, encompassing expressions of appreciation, preferences, disagreement, agreement, sympathy, or care. These expressions were often context-dependent, aligning with the customary practice of expressing gratitude or indicating a preference for a specific offering. The frequency of using CS to express feelings aligns with prior research (e.g., Caballero & Celaya, 2022). This preference can be interpreted in light of the assumption that feelings and emotions are typically expressed less profoundly in a foreign language (Dewaele, 2004; Driver, 2022). Bilingual individuals, therefore, may use CS as a means to access and express emotions in a language that feels more accessible, present, or appropriate for their emotional expression (Myers-Scotton, 1997). Additionally, CS was strategically employed to emphasise specific points within the offering interaction. This emphasis function was instrumental in capturing the addressee's attention to the offer, as discussed above in using CS in the initial offer. It demonstrates the participants' strategic use of CS to enhance the clarity and importance of certain aspects of the conversation.

A significant portion of the observed CS (13.4%) was associated with guests attempting to assume some of the hostess's responsibilities. This finding reflects a level of reciprocity and cooperation within the friends’ interactions, where participants would occasionally switch languages to assist in hosting duties. This CS can be explained by considering the socio-pragmatic dimensions of hospitality within young female informal gatherings in Saudi Arabia. A guest trying to make

hospitable offers instead of the hostess was observed as one of the socio-pragmatic characteristics of female friends' dinner gatherings in Saudi Arabia (Almusallam & Ismail, 2022). It reflects the dynamic and collaborative nature of friends' interactions (Coates, 1996). Furthermore, the use of CS to invoke God was observed, constituting a substantial 10.4% of CS instances serving this function. This practice highlights the deep-rooted influence of culture and religion on language choices and communication patterns. This aligns with the assumption that CS can be a place where beliefs and conflicts concerning languages, cultures, and ideologies play out (Wang, 2019).

It appears that the CS in the context of this study is driven by the advanced cultural knowledge of expected behaviour in both languages rather than the limited competence of the participants. Research has indicated that the occurrence of CS in the language used by a bilingual individual can serve as evidence of their grasp of the structures of each language, demonstrating their ability to effectively communicate in both (Gardner-Chloros, 2009) and an understanding of the requirements of a social activity (Leeming, 2011). Therefore, CS reflects the speakers' values and identities (Myers-Scotton, 1993).

7. Conclusion

The current study examined CS among Saudi female speakers of EFL during the negotiation of speech acts, particularly offers. Even though the study examines a small group of women within a particular context, dinner gatherings, the results offered here can provide insights regarding the interaction of CS performance and speech acts in natural talks. In summary, these results underscore the multi-faceted nature of CS within offer interactions, showcasing its role in conveying emotions, emphasising key points, negotiating offers, facilitating cooperation, and reflecting cultural and religious influences. The participants' strategic use of CS highlights the dynamic and context-dependent nature of their communication, emphasising the importance of understanding the functions and motivations behind language choices in specific cross-cultural interactions.

By understanding these factors, educators and practitioners can foster intercultural communicative competence and promote effective communication across cultures. Future research may delve into the motivations behind these preferences and the pragmatic functions of these language switching behaviours in greater detail, offering a more comprehensive understanding of multilingual discourse dynamics

during speech act negotiations. Moreover, given the present analysis was based on the talk of only nine Saudi female speakers of EFL, more evidence is needed to determine the extent to which the observed trends in this study are applicable to greater numbers of Saudi females or other contexts. Even though I acknowledge the potential limitation in the generalisability of the study, I believe that it may still reflect tendencies of code-switching in offer negotiations among advanced Saudi speakers of EFL within young female friendship groups in informal settings.

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التناوب اللغوي في الأفعال الكلامية: تحليل مناقشة العروض في أحاديث الإناث السعوديات ثنائيي اللغة الناطقات باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

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اعتمدت الدراسة منهج التداولية الاجتماعية لاستكشاف دور التناوب اللغوي في سياق مناقشة الأفعال الكلامية، والذي من شأنه أن يسهم في الأدبيات السابقة حول التناوب اللغوي في التواصل ثنائي اللغة. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف، استكشفت الدراسة على وجه الخصوص ١٠٧ حالات من التناوب اللغوي من الإنجليزية إلى العربية خلال مناقشة العروض من قبل تسع متحدثات سعوديات باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، خلال حواراتهن التلقائية مع متحدثة بالإنجليزية البريطانية كلغة أم، في سياق غير رسمي. تم تسجيل هذه الحوارات خلال ثلاث وجبات عشاء، حضرتها ثلاث صديقات في كل مرة. تم حصر عدد المرات التي تم فيها التناوب اللغوي من الإنجليزية إلى العربية خلال مناقشة العروض من قبل المشاركات، بالإضافة إلى تحديد مواقع التناوب اللغوي، وأنماطه، ووظائفه. وقد أظهرت النتائج أن التناوب اللغوي كان شائعاً بين المشاركات، مما يتماشى مع نتائج الدراسات اللغوية الاجتماعية السابقة، والتي تشير إلى أن ثنائيي اللغة المتقنين للغة الأجنبية يستخدمون التناوب اللغوي أثناء حواراتهم. كما كشفت النتائج عن تفضيلات، وأنماط، ووظائف محددة للتناوب اللغوي في العروض الكلامية خلال النشاط الاجتماعي تحت الدراسة. وكما استخدمت المشاركات التناوب اللغوي بشكل استراتيجي خلال مناقشة العروض، وأظهرن ميل في كثير من الأحيان لأن يكون التناوب اللغوي بشكل غير متسلسل أثناء تعاقب أدوار الحديث بين المتحدثات. كما أظهرت النتائج أن التعبير عن المشاعر كان الغرض الأساسي من التناوب اللغوي، وتضمن ذلك بشكل أساسي عبارات التعبير عن الامتنان والتفضيلات. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، استخدمت المشاركات التناوب اللغوي لتسليط الضوء على نقاط محددة خلال النقاش وذكر الله، مما يعكس التأثيرات الثقافية والدينية على اختيارات الأساليب اللغوية. وبشكل عام، أظهرت الدراسة أن التناوب اللغوي يُستخدم كأداة للتواصل الفعال، حيث أنه يُقدم نظرة حول هوية المُتحدث وخلفيته الثقافية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ثنائية اللغة؛ التناوب اللغوي؛ التناوب باللغة الثانية؛ العروض؛ الأفعال الكلامية؛ الخطاب اللفظي.