The Sociolinguistic Significance of the Attitudes towards Code-Switching in Saudi Arabia Academia

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Abstract

Code-switching between Arabic and English marks a significant linguistic change in the history and use of Arabic in Saudi Arabia. Any kind of language change, which is an inevitable process in almost every world language, has always been resisted in Saudi Arabia mostly due to a national identity and religious factors. The current study investigated the attitude of the Saudi academia comprising English language instructors and English major students towards code-switching between Arabic and English. The study examined the perceptions of the academia towards the use of varying languages and the attitude that resulted from a perception. A sample size of 10 instructors and 40 students from four universities in the Riyadh region of Saudi Arabia was taken for the purpose of carrying out this qualitative study. Focus Group and interview methods were used to collect data and a content analysis technique was adopted to analyze their transcripts. Findings and Results indicated that there was a close relationship between education and age on one side and the acceptability of code-switching on the other. Positive attitudes towards code-switching were found among the younger participants in their tertiary level of education. The results also revealed that such an attitude affected learners' academic performance since the learners attitude towards each language contributed to their learning and knowledge acquisition.

Keywords: language attitude, socio-linguistics, diglossia, colloquial Arabic, language varieties

1. Introduction

The predominance of multinational working environments, with a mix of several nationalities as working population, has necessitated the use of English in many Arabic-speaking countries as a language of communication and business. The bilingual speakers, it is observed, in such an environment code-switch between English and Arabic, or often between their domestic vernacular English and the Standard English that they acquired through formal learning, practice and certification. Eventually these bilingual speakers gained code-switching competence. Code-switching between English and any other language of a region therefore has come to be termed as a skill that is beneficial in social as well as professional needs. Studies have confirmed that the use of English is so widespread globally that almost all world languages including Arabic have experienced rapid changes, the factors causing these changes were demographic trends, new technology, and international communication (Crystal, 2003; James, 2010; Northrup, 2013; Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). One such change is code-switching developing between English and Arabic (Abdel-Rahman, 2007; Al-Rawi, 2012; Albirini, 2016).

Historically, Al-Braik (2007) argued, English had been ignored for centuries in Saudi Arabia till the early 1970s where the educational system in Saudi Arabia focused on Islamic teachings giving no importance or priority to teaching English or any other foreign language. Assagheer (2011) asserted that teaching English as a second language especially at very early ages affected negatively the child's acquisition of its native language. The author further added that English had always been correlated with the image of the colonizers who were perceived as enemies of Islam. In this way, students' attitude towards English was at large passive. After the discovery of oil, drastic economic and political shifts took place within the Saudi community, while the English speaking nations entered Saudi Arabia for trade, business and economy and made a tremendous effect on the need to learn the English language and employ code-switching techniques. It is therefore pertinent to study empirically people's attitude to code-switching in Saudi Arabia and explore what personal and social attributes

are associated with code-switching; how the speakers who used code-switching in terms of language style and choice make an impact on people's perceptions and what language changes occur within the colloquial dialects of Arabic due to code-switching. Besides, it is also important to investigate language attitude due to the increasing use of English as a global language and its implications on issues of linguistic identity and cultural diversity (Lasagabaster, 2005; Albirini, 2016).

This study has explored the attitude towards code-switching of two languages, Arabic and English, which has so far remained neglected in the domain of sociolinguistics in the Saudi context. Arabic is widely spoken and used as the first language in many countries, and code-switching between Arabic and English may represent only a linguistic phenomenon or a communication necessity. This study however does not aim at finding a relationship between language and attitude, it only presupposes that people develop attitudes towards a language in their attempt to like or dislike it. For instance, Muslims have a subjective affiliation for the Arabic language as it is the language of the holy Qur'an. With Gardner & Lambert's (1972) pioneering work on attitude and motivation a few decades ago, a study of language attitude was introduced in the linguistic agenda. Experts started looking at a language beyond its standard form, to find out how a language and its varieties were perceived by people or what attitudes were developed as a result of such perceptions (Garrett, 2010; Garrett, Coupland, & Williams, 2003). It was found that several communities including minority groups asserted their linguistic rights of using their indigenous languages either in personal communication or formal contexts. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights further emphasized upon the protection and preservation of linguistics rights of people and to encourage the use of a regional language or a dialect (Garrett, 2010).

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. Part 2 is a statement of the research problem, which comprises research questions and outlines the linguistic situation in Saudi Arabia in order to explore the extent of the use of code-switching between Arabic and English in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the responses to language changes in Arabic. This will serve as a starting point for investigating the attitudes of Saudi speakers towards the use of code-switching patterns. This section includes an analysis of the two varieties of Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic *(*MSA) and Colloquial Standard Arabic (CSA). The rationale is that the study of the linguistic status and the socio-cultural background of speakers can be useful in investigating speakers' attitudes towards practices (Garrett, Coupland, & Williams, 2003). Part 3 is concerned with reviewing the past studies on variables of this study like diglossia, language attitude and code-switching., along with a note on drivers of code-switching. Part 4 defines the research methodology comprising the research design, sampling and population and data collection methods and procedures. Part 5 includes data analysis, findings and interpretation of the results. Part 6 is conclusion with a few suggestions and recommendations.

2. Problem Statement

The economic and political consequences after the discovery of oil in the early 1970s have led to drastic social and linguistic changes within the country (Owen, 2008). The economic and political relations between Saudi Arabia and other English speaking countries including the United States became much closer causing the spread of the English language. Several Saudis acquired the knowledge of the English language in order to communicate with the foreign nationals who came to work and invest in Saudi Arabia (Faruk, 2014). Karmani (2005) argues that the development of ARAMCO, the largest oil company, not only influenced the Saudi economics but also the Saudi linguistic system, which he refers to as "petro-linguistics". Furthermore, the diplomatic relations between the English Speaking countries and Saudi Arabia necessitated the use of English at the formal level too. In the education sector, so far 130,000 Saudis have been granted scholarships to acquire university degrees with English as a medium of instruction. During their study, many of them joined English language institutions to develop their speaking and writing skills. Their children too joined nurseries, schools and social institutions which led them to acquire English from very early age. A large number of these individuals thus grew up as bilinguals amidst English language speakers. On their return to homeland, Saudi Arabia, the alternating use of both Arabic and English was quite an obvious feature to describe the linguistic situation in Saudi Arabia.

Al-Rawi (2012, p. 33) comments that code-switching is now so common in Saudi Arabia that "upper-class and educated middle-class families are proud of raising bilingual children," without any attempt to avoid code switching and stick to one language even on pertinent occasions. However, a few religious leaders have criticized this tendency of speakers to switch between Arabic and English, considering it a threat to the Arab and the Muslim identity and marginalization of Arabic as a language and a culture. Even critics have called it a risk of dominance of English on the entire Arab's linguistic and cultural identity (Onsman, 2012). Amidst such anxiety and debate, it was felt necessary to investigate linguistic attitudes and sociolinguistic aspects as reflected in the choice of code and style of the bilingual Saudis. Moreover, in order to understand code-switching it was also necessary to

become familiar with people's attitudes towards both minority and majority languages. Hence, this study first reflected upon the linguistic situation in Saudi Arabia historically along with discussing the reserved nature of the Saudi community that kept them clinging to the Arabic language for centuries. This study also focused on the attitudes built from the beliefs and opinions of the Saudis, who have used Arabic as their first language, but ~~have~~ decided to code-switch between Arabic and English. The study also evaluated the socio-cultural changes that took place within the Saudi community and also determined implications on the linguistic system in Saudi Arabia.

2.1 Research Questions

This study hence examines the following two research questions:

1) Is there any relationship between language attitudes and language behavior among speakers with different age, gender and education background who practice code-switching between Arabic and English in Saudi Arabia?

2) Does the attitude to a particular language have any implications on bilingual speakers' choice of that language?

The rationale of this study is that code-switching being a recent linguistic phenomenon in the Saudi community has not received its due attention yet. Unlike other Arab countries, very little study has been done in relation to code-switching between Arabic and English in Saudi Arabia. The mainstream of discussions has focused mainly on the dangers and problems associated with the use of code-switching between Arabic and English, however neglecting the sociolinguistic aspects of the process like a study of language attitudes which the current study aims to accomplish.

2.2 The Linguistic Situation in Saudi Arabia

Arabic is "the sole or joint official language in twenty independent Middle Eastern and African states" including Saudi Arabia (Holes, 2004, p. 1). In spite of demographic diversity of the country, Saudi Arabia is a monolingual country. Arabic is also celebrated indigenously in Saudi Arabia since it is the language of Qur'an, the holy book of Muslims (Al-Sameray, 2011; Holes, 2004). According to Muslims' beliefs, the Qur'an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad around fourteen centuries ago. In this way, there is a close relationship between Islam and the Arabic language. The Arabic language thus is a main constituent of the Arab and Muslim identity to many Arab people and scholars (Darwish, 2015; Gu, 2013). Historically, therefore, there has been a close relationship between the Arabic language and the spread of Islam (Weninger & Watson, 2011) which developed linguistic contacts between the natives of Middle Eastern countries, who also spoke Arabic. Eventually, several linguistic changes within the Arabic language crept in leading to different versions. For instance, Arabic that was spoken around 6th century A.D. came to be known as Classical Arabic (Versteegh, 2014), a version of the Arabic language in which the Qur'an was revealed. The use of the Classical Arabic spanned from the emergence of Islam in the 6th century till the end of the Abbasid era in 1517 A.D. (Fischer, 2002).

In the course of its development, Classical Arabic further evolved into two versions or varieties of Arabic, namely Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), based on the grammatical rules of Classical Arabic; and Colloquial Spoken Arabic (CSA), encompassing a number of regional dialects. The former still represents the formal version of Arabic as it is the language of all formal documents such as textbooks, official orders, government documents, dossiers, magazines and journals, and like. The latter is used in everyday communication either in spoken or written forms through social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc. Besides these two varieties of Arabic, a Saudi pidgin is also used across the entire country, which may be termed as simply a linguistic variety developed here to meet the interaction needs of the Saudis with the Asian workers. The country houses millions of migrant workers from India, Pakistan, and other Asian countries who usually cannot speak Arabic. Hence, for communicative purposes, the Saudi speakers and these migrant workers devised what is known as Saudi pidginized Arabic, which has been the concern of many researchers over the recent years (Al-Ageel, 2015; Alzubeiry, 2015; Gomaa, 2007; Al-Azraqi, 2010; Almoaily, 2013). The same has also been referred to as Gulf pidgin Arabic or simply Saudi pidgin, now widely used and spoken in all parts of Saudi Arabia. Saudi pidgin is outside the scope of this study as it never posed a challenge to the Arabic language nor does it have the potential to become a formal variety of Arabic. However, before proceeding further in understanding the true nature of code-switching, it is necessary to know a little about the MSA and the CSA.

2.3 Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is often used interchangeably with Classical Arabic, though it is much different. According to Mol (2003, p. 4) "what is called MSA by one person is called Classical Arabic by another person."

Classical Arabic is also the language of the Qur'anic verses, which a normal Arab speaker does not understand completely and is often confined only to scholars of Arabic studies. A few clergymen may still use it in their speeches during the Friday prayer. This claim is supported by Bassiouney's (2006, p. 4) argument that Classical Arabic, the religious language of the Qur'an, "is rarely used except in reciting the Qur'an or quoting older classical texts." However, the Classical Arabic has undergone several significant morphological, syntactic, and semantic changes as it evolved in its present form, now often referred to as MSA. Linguistically speaking, MSA therefore represents changes such as omission of certain classical grammatical constructs from Classical Arabic; inclusion of stricter word order; usage of a simpler numeral system; and more recently coinage of new words or borrowing of words from other languages. For these reasons, perhaps, the MSA used in Saudi Arabia particularly in its press and media is different from the MSA in other Arabic speaking countries such as Egypt and Morocco (Mol, 2003). However, MSA still remains a formal version of Arabic taught in schools and formal purposes (Bassiouney, 2006; Mol, 2003), "the language of writing- used in textbooks, newspapers, magazines, fiction and non-fiction and in bureaucracy" (Haeri, 2003, p. X).

One of the features of MSA is also lexical borrowing (Abdel-Rahman, 2007), as it was difficult to find Arabic equivalents for many of English words. Many English loanwords have been adopted in Arabic; and eventually linguists and reformers called for the necessity of Arabicizing these English loanwords since they had no Arabic equivalents and needed to be accepted and used formally in Arabic (Lancioni & Bettini, 2011). The call was responded by a strong wave of resistance from many religious circles. Their resistance to lexical borrowing was based on the argument that the lexical expansion of Arabic and the adoption of borrowed words would lead to the death of Classic and Standard Arabic words and the language of the Qur'an would become more incomprehensible to future generations. Hence, a few Arab linguists and scholars (Ibrahim, 2006) described borrowed words as *dakheel*, literally meaning strange and outsider and therefore must not be treated as Arabic words.

2.4 Colloquial Spoken Arabic (CSA)

Colloquial Spoken Arabic, also known as Saudi Arabic, is the dominant vernacular in Saudi Arabia used only for ordinary conversations just like Cairene Arabic in Egypt, Moroccan Arabic in Morocco, Syrian Arabic in Syria, and Iraqi Arabic in Iraq. This vernacular version of Arabic encompasses four regional dialects viz. *Hijaz*, spoken in the Hijaz area; *Najd*, spoken in the capital city of Riyadh and central Saudi Arabia; *khaliji*, spoken in the Eastern region; and *Bedouin*, spoken by the tribal all over the country (Hashim, 2011). The CSA is essentially an intermingling of all these dialects and is used so dominantly in day to day life that many language users, academicians and linguists seek CSA to replace MSA as the latter is not appropriate for everyday communication and informal use (Pelfryman & Khalil, 2003). It is also argued that CSA has expanded even in formal and written forms in an unprecedented manner. This argument is supported by the increasing use of social media sites and apps by the Saudis like Facebook, Twitter, blogs, WhatsApp. Much of the users' participations on social media and applications show the use of CSA (Otaibi, 2016). In schools, too, teachers sometimes code-switch between MSA and CSA. CSA though may have gained a sort of legitimacy in Saudi Arabia and worldwide; however, it cannot be seen grown as a formal language. In spite of its dominance as everyday language of communication, scholars regard CSA as an inferior version of Arabic, a low variety confined only to limited academic and formal circles, a perception and attitude commonly held by most Saudis (Bassiouney, 2006; Weninger & Watson, 2011). According to Suleiman (2004, p. 76), spoken dialects of Arabic "constitute a state of decay in the linguistic fabric of the Arabic language." In the same way, Owens (2006, p. 9) asserts that "modern dialects have no official legitimization in the Arab world" and rejected to give any significance to the dichotomy of MSA and CSA, giving the latter an inferior status.

In a recent report by the Ministry of Education, Saudi educationalists too warned that students' writing is badly influenced by their frequent use of colloquial Arabic in schools. The report stressed upon the use of only MSA within the Saudi schools. The Ministry's decree triggered controversies and debates among the Saudis over Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites. While the decree was hailed by many Saudis, it was also mocked by others. Advocates of the use of MSA in all communications within schools considered it a great triumph of the Arab and Muslim identity and considered it an effective and useful decision for students' academic achievements. Inspired by the Ministry's decree, a big section of the Saudi community even expressed their wish to use MSA even in informal and everyday communication since spoken or colloquial Arabic was a corrupt version of Arabic. The Ministry's decree also reflected the deep disagreement and conflicting opinions of Saudis in relation to the choice of their use of Arabic in formal and informal situations. However, in spite of such resistance and disagreements shown for the Colloquial Spoken Arabic (CSA), Saudi Arabia remains a diglossic community with both the varieties of Arabic, MSA and CSA, being used widely, for both speaking and writing

purposes. Speakers often make use of code-switching between MSA and CSA for specific purposes (Albirini & Chakrani, 2016; Bassiouney, 2006). In this context, this study argues that code-switching between MSA and CSA is also one of the significant linguistic features in Saudi Arabia.

2.5 Drivers of Code-switching

It is also important to understand what drives people to change codes. Code-switching has not been a new phenomenon but have existed since people started using languages for communication. In primal state, for instance, people code-switched as there was no fixed linguistic patterns. But as languages developed gradually, code-switching became a necessity. It was initially adopted to be treated "like a local" in a L2 environment in order to convey a concept more "native" to a certain language. Another driver for code-switching would also be to communicate in secret when in a group in order to say something that no one except the person addressed would understand. More proactively, some people are driven to code-switch to fit in in a bilingual group, morphing their speech to sound more like people around them. An example of this would be a non -Arab would start a conversation saying "*Yallah Shbaab*" (Hello Guys). A few would code-switch with the objective that people appreciate them or look kindly upon them, particularly in service-industry where employees would use an accent or a phrase because they receive better tips or favors each time they code-switch. In Saudi Arabia, the natives get generally friendlier to non-natives, the expatriates, when the latter would insert CSA words or phrases throughout their speech. A more educated, elite group, or a member of the academia, would code-switch by tossing in a foreign word or phrase to show his/her familiarity with a second language. Many users would code-switch because certain words or phrases sound better in another language to express certain emotions or feelings; for instance, "*Shukran*" (Thank You) or *Marhaba* (welcome) or *sayonara* (good bye) or *Bon voyage* (Good and safe journey). Code-switching is also visible when there is no word or phrase available in the language of conversation and the speaker would code-switch to another language in order to maintain the momentum in the conversation.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Diglossia

Having two different varieties of Arabic and each used under certain circumstances posed the question of diglossia in Saudi Arabia and opened extensive discussions over this subject. The term diglossia was first coined by Charles Ferguson in 1959. It is simply a situation where two varieties of a language are used within a given community under different circumstances. According to Ferguson (1959, p. 325), diglossia is defined as "a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any section of the community for ordinary conversation." Based on this concept, Ferguson cited MSA and CSA as obvious examples of diglossia, describing MSA as a highly supervised variety while CSA as a low variety. Another difference between MSA and CSA brought to attention later was that MSA had a larger vocabulary and complex grammar whereas CSA used flexibility in grammar (Ferguson, 1959).

A recent study (Ababtain, 2013) at Wayne State University has studied the mechanism of Saudi Arabic diglossic switching on Twitter in order to investigate norms as well as rules that people adopt to switch between different varieties of Arabic. This study also investigated whether differentiated variables like gender and age affected the choice of codes and the whole process of code-switching. The author examined samples from two different Twitter handles, one written in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and the other in the CSA. The results revealed that the MSA was recognized as a high variety of Arabic, used only by the elite and educated Saudi users, who are involved in literary, intellectual, scientific and religious topics. On the other hand, the CSA was deemed to be a low variety of Arabic, employed only for routine talks. An interesting evidence of this study suggested that female users prefer MSA to CSA more than the male users. The female users also avoided code-switching within the same tweet. Hence, education and gender variations were found to be important variables in the choice of codes.

3.2 Attitude

Attitude is broadly defined as an individual's feeling, prejudice or belief about a given topic. Likert (1932, p. 10) defines the term attitude as "an inference which is made on the basis of a complex of beliefs about an object." The implication is that people develop attitudes towards almost everything including life, education, religion, and even language. Therefore, Garrett (2010, p. 20) defines the term as "an evaluative orientation to a social

object of some sort, whether it is a language, or a new government policy, etc." In relation to language, people usually have their personal opinions, beliefs, and prejudice towards a particular language, second language learning, or a language variety, thus suggesting a close relationship between language and attitudes. Truly speaking, people associate personal traits of intelligence, self-confidence, sociability, likability with a given language and its speakers. They also express their likes or dislikes for a given language; considering the native language as a symbol of patriotism etc. Garrett (2010) gives the example of Welsh English. He argues that non-Welsh speakers viewed Cardiff English as less prestigious than the Welsh/English bilingual speakers did. The implication is that people have personal judgments and evaluations about a language.

In the study of judgments, responses, and evaluations of people about language, Garrett, Coupland, & Williams (2003) referred to three components of attitude: cognition, affect, and behavior. The cognitive component represents an individual's beliefs, ideas, or opinions about language. Many people today, for instance, recognize the importance of English as a global language. In order to have a good job, or success in business, for instance, many people realize the need to learn to speak and write English. The cognitive component represents people opinion about a language; for instance, the Arabs deify the Arabic language because it is the language of the Holy Qur'an and believe its content to be the words of God. They have also developed the belief that English is a killing language, responsible for the death and disappearance of many world languages. Second, the affective component refers to an individual's feelings, emotions, bias, or prejudice about a language. Such people often show their likes or dislikes for a given language due to a personal bias, prejudice or a fear. Garrett, Coupland, & Williams (2003) argue that such people in many cases even do not know why a particular language is pleasant or ugly. Finally, the behavioral component represents an individual's acts or behavioral intentions toward a language. In other words, this component refers to transferring an attitude into a behavior. Garrett (2010) gives the example of English teenagers who act hostile towards people who use Receive Pronunciation (RP), the standard accent of English used particularly in south England initially by comparatively a minority group holding power, money, and influence but gradually adopted by many native speakers throughout England. Crystal (2007) accords "undeserved privilege" given to RP as the reason for the negative perception by a particular section of the society. If we extend this example to closely relate the three components together, it becomes obvious that such English teenagers who hate RP have some particular opinion (cognition) about it that makes them dislike (affection) it and therefore they act in a hostile manner towards the people who use it (behavior). The same phenomena are true of studying attitude towards code-switching in irrespective of age, gender, profession or occupation.

3.3 Code-Switching

Linguistically, code switching has marked a significant change in the use of colloquial Arabic both in writing and speaking. Recently, in Saudi Arabia, there have been many programs on radio, television and social media which have attracted bilingual speakers of English and Arabic and given them the opportunity to be presenters of those programmes. Usually, the TV or radio anchors interview bilingual people or receive calls from bilingual speakers who wish to talk about different topics. For instance, Abo Meteb Alamreeki, a bilingual speaker of English and Arabic, a male in his twenties, born in the United States, runs a comedy show on YouTube, now appears on Saudi TV programmes and in regular soaps. Alamreeki has characterized himself as an individual who code-switches frequently from Arabic to English in all his presentations. Another example is "WhatsApp show" on Mix FM radio channel, presented by Mazro, a Saudi bilingual speaker. Mazro receives calls from listeners who talk about their daily life or share their ideas on interesting topics. The show has gained popularity because both the callers and the anchor, switch frequently from Arabic to English (Otaibi, 2016). Such instances reveal the public opinion and attitude towards bilingualism and code-switching, the subject of the current study.

Code-switching differs from code mixing in both usage and linguistic practice; the former makes the use of the monolingual features of each code while the latter presents a convergence of the two languages (Muysken, 2000); the former occurs when a bilingual speaker switches between two codes in a single interaction with another bilingual speaker while the latter mixes words and phrases, affixes and other lexical items of more than one language in the same conversation. In relation to code-switching, people show different attitudes. Some are positive while others are very hostile; a few assert their right to choose the language they like, others thinking it as a threat to social and political unity. In Iraq, for instance, code-switching between Arabic and Kurdish used to be considered a threat to the political unity of the country (Miller, 2007). In order to understand people's attitudes to code-switching, different factors need to be considered. These include the language of majority, the language of minority, the political power of the minority group, religion, age, sex, language planning policies and education (Ferguson, 2003). In other words, there are socio-psychological, socio-political and socio-pragmatic factors that can explain people's positive/negative attitudes to code-switching. However, there is

no universal rule that can be applied in all cases. The argument is that every case has to be treated based on the domain where the two languages/language varieties coexist.

Piller (2000), for instance, argues that in multilingual societies, the language spoken by the majority is generally considered superior to those spoken by the minority since it has a wider social function. Different studies, however, contradict this claim. In his study of Arab speakers' attitudes towards code-switching between Tunisian English and French, Belazi (1992) concludes that Tunisians generally have a positive attitude towards code-switching since French is associated with modernity. Similarly, Sayahi (2011) indicates that code-switching between colloquial Tunisian Arabic and French is generally accepted in different contexts in Tunisia, as and links it with education. The author argues that the more people are educated, the more familiar and tolerant they are with code-switching. It is also argued that there is a close relationship between gender and positive attitude to code-switching as women have a more favorable attitude towards code-switching. Similarly, Man & Lu (2006) discovered that Hong Kong academia practice code-switching because of the absence of direct equivalence of words between English and Cantonese nor is any translation available, Equivalence thus becomes an inadvertent purpose or a strategy by many bilinguals who switch codes to hide their deficiency and lack of competence about the lexicon of the target language. Such bilinguals would also perceive code-switching as a low, inferior style of language speaking style, enabling a speaker only to compensate for language deficiency. Such an attitude about code-switching reduces it to a mere bilingual talk without any research potential or carrying any legitimate or acceptable codes of either language. This research study was also motivated by this very phenomenon that there were no universal rules that could generalize people's attitudes towards code-switching. It would therefore act as a good rationale of this study.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

Research studies have developed different approaches in order to study people's attitude to language and language varieties. These include content analysis approach, direct approach, and indirect approach (Garrett, Coupland, & Williams, 2003). The content analysis approach can be understood in terms of a qualitative societal treatment approach. It means that the relative status of different language varieties within a given community can be investigated in an informal way, with the purpose of gaining initial or preliminary thoughts about language attitudes of that community. The content analysis approach encompasses a number of methods that include subjectivity, observation and making inferences about language attitudes within the community. Moreover, the content analysis approach also assists in understanding people's attitude toward language; though replicability and transferability of this method are yet to ascertain (Garrett, Coupland, & Williams, 2003).

In the direct approach, the researcher approaches directly to respondents by means of interviewing or through questionnaires and focus group discussions in order to explore how they evaluate a language or language variety. To be meaningful, objective, and in order to get reliable results, items of questionnaire and interviews need to be properly designed (Garrett, Coupland, & Williams, 2003). Moreover, there should be no bias on the part of the researcher. In spite of its effectiveness for being objective, it has drawbacks too. It may often fail to generate the possibly unconscious attitudes that people may possess and suggest that such attitudes can be obtained and inferred by using more indirect methods. The implication is that direct methods may only be effective in reflecting a comprehensive picture of subjects' attitudes who do not prefer to disclose their most personal or private attitudes. This has negative implications on the reliability of the results too (Garrett, Coupland, & Williams, 2003). In the face of these limitations, it is suggested that direct methods may be used in alignment with indirect methods.

The indirect approach is based on methods and techniques that are concerned with eliciting respondents/subjects' covert attitudes. In this approach, subjects/ respondents are asked to evaluate the personal qualities of speakers whose voices of a contrasting group of speakers are recorded on tape. In this way, indirect method of research is able to focus on the affective component of language attitudes which are generally disregarded in direct methods. Indirect methods also reveal even the private reactions that direct methods fail to generate. However, indirect methods cannot be used independently since they focus only on the psychological state of respondents with no regard to their cognitive and emotional states (Garrett, Coupland, & Williams, 2003). For the purpose of this study, therefore, an integrated approach was used by combining direct and indirect methods.

4.2 Sampling and Population

The data was collected from respondents comprising students of both male and female sections using Arabic/ English as a medium of instruction at four universities of Saudi Arabia in the Riyadh region including a few faculty instructors. This research should not be gender bias so the sample included equal number of male and

female respondents. A random purposive sampling method was chosen to identify instructors and students. For a qualitative study, purposive sampling method is highly recommended (Patton, 2002); also known as judgmental sampling, it depends on the judgment of the researcher when it comes to a selection of units of analysis e.g., respondents. Usually, the sample investigated in this method is quite small and heterogeneous, especially when compared with other probability sampling techniques. In the current study, the purposive sampling and its heterogeneity helped the researchers to identify common attributes (Patton, 2002) in both male and female sections and also ascertain such indicators that could signify various spectrums and perspectives (Dillman, 2000) of code-switching and language attitudes.

The population comprised only academia for a number of reasons: first, code-switching is frequently practiced in bilingual classrooms; secondly, it is much easier to contextualize and investigate any research propositions on language attitude and preferences in academia; thirdly, code-switching requires analysis of phonological, lexical and syntactic preferences of speakers, for which academia offers appropriate feedback; last, but not the least, much research on code-switching has been carried out in relation to teaching and learning languages, hence academia ideally suited to investigate the attitude of Arabic/ English speakers toward code-switching.

The respondents belonged to all levels of academia, from preparatory year program to degree level programs. The instructors' sample comprised both Saudi and bilingual foreigners, who spoke English and Arabic fluently as they came from countries like Egypt, Tunisia, Jordon and Sudan where Arabic is the native language. However, the students' groups, both male and female, comprised only of Saudi nationals who are studying English as the major subject of their graduation.

4.3 Data Collection Methods

Data was collected through in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). Interviews were conducted before carrying out FGDs and informal meetings with the discussants. Logistically, too it helped the researchers to place FGDs after the Interviews as much of the information collected from the informants during the interviews was cross checked and verified from the FGD discussants. Transcribing of interviews and FGD was also an ongoing process and the data was stored for later retrieval. The transcribed data was organized simultaneously in set categories for sorting and managing into themes and individual and organizational indicators for the analysis stage, a process that was progressively completed for each university as the data evolved.

The transcribed data was supplemented with a content analysis of articles by Saudi writers, speeches by religious leaders, and several case studies with academia involved. Respondents were also asked to listen to the recorded speeches and voice samples randomly selected from the different group of speakers. This helped researchers gain initial insights into people's attitudes to code-switching in Saudi Arabia.

5. Data Analysis, Findings and Results

The researchers "contextualized" the data in the transcribed form in order to determine the different notions of causality (Punch, 2005; Orme, 2013), and in order to follow the subjective parameters. It simply meant that when the data analysis was performed, certain causal patterns of behavioral and cognitive types were observed across interviews transcripts and other documentation. These patterns allowed the researchers to make a close examination of the code-switching patterns and attitude of the respondents in order to identify the "multiple contextual factors" (Creswell & Maitta, 2000), with a constructivist approach (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) and with participatory perspectives (Mertens, 2003). Such a contextualized approach (Punch, 2005) enabled the researchers to record and document what was being seen and heard and to establish relationships between categories (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Interesting revelations were discovered from the current study so much grounded in both the groups of academia, the instructors of English language and the students pursuing English as major. The first impressions of this study suggested that Arabic speakers, irrespective of age, gender, or the academic role used code-switching to shroud their imperfections of the English language. The study also revealed an interesting fact about code-switching in the sample under study that Arabic (the native language) of colloquial type (CSA) was preferred in informal situations while English (second language) was switched over to when faced with formal situations. A few instructor- respondents also admitted that MSA or formal Arabic was treated with dignity and respect in elite surroundings or when discussions dealt with topics of intellectual interests. This finding is consistent with Ababtain (2013) whose doctoral study also found similar results. They also shared another fact that they freely used code-switching styles and at times borrowings in casual or more formal gatherings with elite people. A few others supported this attitude and added that they spoke only Arabic or English with a minimum of loans on formal occasions, preferring to use code-switching styles for informal occasions. This was

a good evidence of the Research Question 1 of this study that needed to find any relationship between language attitudes and language behavior in speakers of different age, education background, and gender while they practiced code-switching between Arabic and English.

Additionally, the researchers also observed during the FGD that while the respondents spoke to their colleagues, they were professional and polite, demonstrated a buttoned up voice suiting the academic environment. However, observations and a few transcripts of audio recordings revealed that the same speakers who spoke a language so distinctly would suddenly switch over to less formal, undetectable accent of the same language that he was speaking a little while earlier, if a phone call was answered or when a verbal exchange occurred with a close acquaintance. This observation revealed that a speaker would morph into a different identity or a speech pattern in personal and cultural situations. The observation also gave the evidence that code-switching was not just only about mixing languages and speech patterns in conversation but also that members belonging to different ethnic communities represented different spaces they inhabited. Each member also carried the stress of establishing an academic rapport, a single point of interaction despite respective cultural and linguistic spaces and diverse ethnicity.

Another observation was recorded when an Arabic/English bilingual instructor spoke dexterously with his students (who were mostly Arabic speakers and having little knowledge of English) in a hybridized style mixing Arabic-English diction presenting a perfect example of movement from one language to another. Such a code-switching was also observed when instructors exercised their power or control over the students. One of the instructors even confessed that code-switching was particularly helpful in achieving communicative and metalinguistic objectives, which otherwise was not feasible through classroom practice, a finding which is consistent with some research studies (Cook, 2001; Ferguson, 2003; Sayahi, 2011). These studies regard code-switching as a "legitimate strategy" (Cook, 2001, p. 105); as "ideological and conceptual" (Ferguson, 2003, p. 129) and as a "deep rooted" attitudes (Sayahi, 2011, p. 34).

Similarly, in short texts like Twitter, the evidence drawn from both male and female students was that male users would avoid code-switching within the same tweet while female users would use it generously. Gender variation thus has been found an important factor affecting code-choice or preferring code-switching. This finding is in congruence with the study carried out by Ababtain (2013) in the Saudi Arabian context. Such findings suggest that for the speakers of Arabic and English, there may actually exist three linguistic systems: Arabic, English and Anglo-Arabic, the third being a hybrid form that can be used only by bilinguals, and not pertinent to monolingual speakers of either Arabic or English. Thus people capable of using two languages, say X and Y, shall actually have three linguistic capabilities: X, Y and Z, the third (Z) being the hybridized form of the first two.

The voice samples and the interview transcripts also revealed several types of code-switching for instance, the tag switching type was exemplified when a council member frequently uttered such tags like *tamaam?* (OK?) *Kwaias? (*Good*?)* and *Inshallah!!* (God willing!!), thus inserting a phrase or an utterance in Arabic at the end of each sentence while conversing with a fellow bilingual colleague. There are also instances of two other types, inter-sentential switching and intra-sentential switching, when a switch was observed either inside or outside a clause or a sentence.

> *Speaker A: All schedules will be ready by 12:00 so we can meet again at 01:00 PM.*

> *Speaker B: Why not 12:00? "ayzeen nekhlas"; we need to finish with it anyway. (Inter-sentential)*

> *Speaker A: I agree with you but this is the prayer's time; "da waqt elsalah." (intra-sentential)*

The most interesting finding of this study, particularly from the academia as gathered in FGD which also comprised of instructors from multiple nationalities and ethnic groups, was that code-switching was particularly useful in bringing speakers of different ethnic groups together in specific situations such as introducing oneself or talking about one's interests and hobbies or highlighting the characteristics of one's ethnic group. Thus it was hinted that code-switching could also be useful in informal situations, such as introducing oneself, and facilitating interpersonal relationships.

Another objective of this study, as intended in Research Question 2, was to find out whether the attitude to a particular language, English or Arabic, had any implications on bilingual speakers' choice of that language. A few evidence hinted at this phenomenon during the course of this study. It was suggested by a few discussants that code-switching was stigmatized in the communities where it occurred and was termed as facetious or pejorative and hence despised. But this study did not discover any such stigma nor was there any embarrassment in the voice of the bilingual speaker. However, there was an inadvertent evidence of a marked ethnic or a group

boundary when the respondents switched between two languages. The researchers then went a little deeper into this dichotomy and examined these instances in the light of us-them dichotomy. A closer examination of transcripts revealed that the Arabs used their native language, Arabic, as an in -group exercise, signifying the "us" code whenever there were instances of informal or personalized statements; but, they used English, as an out-group activity, signifying the "them" code in more formal and objective expressions. Thus the bilingual speaker changed the language to show their attitude to what is being stated. Such attitude was also often seen in immigrant minorities who showed adherence and loyalty to the home (native) language (in-group attitude) and deliberately switched away from the second language (out-group attitude).

In one of the presentations of a student in the university preparatory year program, it was observed that the student (an Arab bilingual high school sophomore studying English Language) would *code-switch* within the same English language whenever he would find himself in the presence of instructors from a particular nationality or an ethnic group, including a few native English instructors. The student was found code-switching from a kind of vernacular English to a sort of Standard English that could be termed as internal code-switching within the same language. The researchers found out that this student had received a sort of formal education in overseas location during his childhood and hence he could exhibit code-switching competence within the same language.

The reason behind this type of code-switching was also visible at instances when researchers collected evidence from the students of sampled universities. It was observed that most students would code-switch to modify their speech or behavior and actions in order to appear similar to English Speaking instructors and get themselves accepted as bilinguals. In some cases, a few students confessed that it was an unconscious and inadvertent attempt to slip into another language or accent to fit in completely but in other cases, students would do so to seek instructors' attention and empathy, or may be a favor. One of the arguments in the FGD hinted that the academia indiscriminately, both instructors and students, would often code-switch (from Arabic to English or vice versa) or choose the right accent in the right context in order to appear flawless. In all such attempts, they did not want to be accused of making sort of linguistic distortion or falling a prey to us-them dichotomy mentioned earlier.

6. Conclusion

There have been several socio-economic and political consequences after the discovery of oil in Saudi Arabia since early 1970s leading to social and linguistic changes within the country, much felt in business communication, education and more recently, in social media. This study using a constructivist approach investigated these changes that have made socio-linguistic impact on the attitudes of bilingual speakers of Saudi Arabia academia, revealing the relationship between language attitudes and language behavior irrespective of age, education background, and gender particularly in the use of code-switching. A close examination of code-switching patterns and attitude of the respondents, comprising students pursuing English major and their instructors, revealed a few behavioural and cognitive attributes. First and foremost, the so-called bilinguals in Saudi Arabia, the native speakers of Arabic, resort to code-switching only to hide their imperfections of the English language. They preferred their native language (Arabic) in informal conversations such as introducing themselves, and facilitating interpersonal relationships but would switch over to English in casual and formal situations particularly with elite gatherings. It was also discovered that MSA or formal Arabic was treated with dignity and respect among elite groups to discuss topics of intellectual interests. Another observation revealed that a bilingual speaker's attitude to morph into another identity by adopting a different speech pattern compatible to his or her personal, ethnic or cultural situation, hinting that code-switching enabled members of different ethnic communities to represent their respective spaces they inhabited in their ethnic groups. Moreover, belonging to the academia, these bilingual speakers also showed a certain stress to establish an academic rapport with their peers and teachers. In shorter texts like Twitter and Facebook, this study revealed that female users used code-switching more generously than male users suggesting that gender variation was an important element to investigate code-switching.

Another objective of this study was to find out how attitude towards a particular language, English or Arabic in this context, influenced bilingual speakers' choice of that language. A common belief about code-switching was that it did not hold a respectable position and was often despised. But this study did not discover any such stigma linked with code-switching nor was there any hesitation felt by the bilingual respondents of this study; however, a marked ethnic boundary was felt when they switched between two languages. This ethnic garb was evaluated in the light of us-them dichotomy, only to discover that the use of the native language, Arabic, was an in–group exercise, signifying the "us" code for informal occasions or personalized statements; while English was used as an out-group activity, signifying the "them" code in more formal and objective expressions. A language change

by the bilingual thus reflected the attitude towards what was stated. Such attitude was much popular among those expatriates who would code-switch to show adherence to their home (native) language (in-group attitude) and tend to switch away from the second language (out-group attitude).

The study also revealed internal code-switching within the same language when respondents were found switching from vernacular English to Standard English in the presence of members of a specific nationality or an ethnic group. The attitude hints at the habits of those members of academia who code-switch to modify their speech or behavior or often mimic in the foreign language in order to get themselves accepted as bilinguals or seek instructors' attention and empathy. Last, but not the least, a few members of academia were also found code-switching (from Arabic to English or vice versa) in order to appear flawless and therefore emphasized much on the right accent, in order to avoid committing any linguistic distortion. All the findings of this study contributed much to the understanding of the sociolinguistic aspects of bilinguals and their attitudes towards code-switching among the Saudi Arabia academia.

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