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The Causes, Perceptions, and Impacts of Code Switching in Amharic Speeches

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Abstract

Language is a code that enables individuals or groups to gain knowledge and experience, to express their ideas, feelings and needs and to communicate with each other. To communicate and exchange information effectively, people require shared language system which enables them to establish the relationship, interact with each other and attain social development. Speakers or discussants that use the Amharic language are commonly observed switching to English words, phrases or clauses while making speeches in mass communication contexts without considering the linguistic background of their respective interlocutors. The main objective of this research was to investigate the causes, perception and impacts of code switching among Amharic language users. To this effect, data were collected from respondents through interviews and questionnaires and were analyzed and interpreted qualitatively and quantitatively. The overall results of the study indicate the presence of problems in achieving effective communication, for people were found to use Amharic-English code switching for different purposes. Such practices of language use were perceived to distort meanings, and impede smooth communication and erode cultural values gradually. To overcome these problems, concerned training institutions should give language-related trainings to trainees and raise their awareness of the problem associated with code switching in monolingual contexts. Furthermore, educated people should consider the linguistic background of their audience, situations and topic when making public speech and use appropriate language accordingly.

Key words: /Bilingual /Code switching/Communication/Language system /Meaning/Monolingual/

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is a systematic code (signs and symbols) used to express thoughts, ideas and feelings, or convey information, offer explanations, make arguments, gain and record knowledge and experiences (Corner & Hawthorne, 1993). To achieve effective communication, individuals or people have to use a common language to negotiate and jointly construct meanings and understandings. In fact, “Communication is a dynamic interactive process that involves the effective transmission of facts, ideas, thoughts, feelings and values” (Rahman, 2010, p.3).

From a media perspective, communication is commonly defined as “a process that involves the transmission of messages from senders to receivers” (Berger, 2000, p.271). Effective communication takes place between individuals or among people if the conveyed message is grasped, interpreted, and understood clearly or if the social meaning is created. However, different factors impede effective communication. These include differences in gender, class or education level between the sender and receiver, the difference in the perception of the message, the difference in culture and the choice of the language made by the communicator (Streeck, 1994; Sless, 2018). Any of these or in combination can determine the effective transmission of a message. For instance, if a sender or source of information code switches from one language to another within a single utterance without considering the linguistic background of the audience, message cannot be successfully decoded by the receiver. This phenomenon is understood as code switching which is systematic by its nature and widely practiced among bilingual and multilingual communities. However, code switching from two languages within a single discourse is believed to cause communication problems in monolingual contexts. Therefore, investigating the causes and impacts of such experiences is very essential. Besides, it is necessary to recommend solutions to increase speakers’ awareness concerning the negative impacts of the use of code switching in a monolingual context.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Effective communication is essential for the development of any country. Globally, it is also needed for enhancing bilateral and multilateral interaction and integration among countries. However, there are communication barriers, which affect complete message transfer among those involved in communication. As mentioned above, one of the communication barriers is when speakers use code switching in monolingual contexts. According to Bokamba (1989, p. 278) “Code switching is the mixing of words, phrases and sentences from distinct grammatical (sub) systems across sentence boundaries within the same speech event....”

Ethiopia is a multilingual nation, where code switching is a common practice among speakers of different local languages (Zelalem, 1998; Nadia, 2015). Even Amharic- English code switching has been widely used among speakers who have good proficiency in both languages and this “... has become a commonly used mode of communication” (Zelalem, 1998, p. 214). From the sociolinguistic perspective, as Zelalem further explained “The problem arises when bilinguals switch from formal and informal situations and without taking their monolingual Amharic listeners into consideration” (p. 215).

Although code switching from Amharic to English is commonly observed among educated people (Zelalem, 1998), the majority of Ethiopian people do not speak English. As the finding of Gal’s (1979) study indicates an interlocutor is the most important factor that determines the speaker’s choice of code; particularly in a monolingual society in “circumstances where effective transmission and acquisition of information is required” (Anto et al., 2016, p.30) code switching should be avoided.

Currently, there are positive and negative reactions towards code switching. Some consider it a resource that helps continue the flow of communication process and to make messages comprehensible if the speaker and interlocutor are bilinguals (Estman, 1992; Adendorff, 1996). It is also perceived as evidence of “unique cognitive ability” of language use (Parama et al., 2017 p. 87). On the other hand, some researchers (i.e.,

Zelalem, 1998; Anto et al, 2016) believe that the use of code switching can cause communication problems in the case of monolingual audiences. It creates a misunderstanding of the information due to the inability of listeners to capture the required information from the speakers. This happens when a sender or source of information uses code switching or when expressions that cannot be easily understood by the listeners and messages cannot be transmitted properly. According to Lipski (1982, p. 19) “code-switching is evidence of internal confusion, the inability to separate the two languages sufficiently”. Furthermore, as pointed out by Hidalgo (1988, as cited in Hughes, et al., 2006) monolingual speakers have a negative perception of code switching because of the problems of intelligibility, attractiveness and correctness. Similarly, in a study conducted on Tigrinya-English code switching, Barihe (2011) identified that Tigrinya monolinguals have a negative attitude on Tigrinya-English code switching when they listen to FM radio program for they faced difficulties in understanding the messages clearly.

In fact, local studies on issues of Ethiopian languages code switching are scanty (Bahire, 2011). These limited studies were conducted mainly from the linguistic (e.g., Dawit, 2004) and sociolinguistic perspectives. Studies from the grammatical perspectives of code switching focus on the underlying structure that governs code-switching of two or more languages, whereas studies from sociolinguistic perspectives examine the reasons for code switching, factors influencing code switching and impacts of code switching. Although much research has not been done on code switching in Ethiopia, the following studies are based on a sociolinguistic approach: Barihe (2011) investigated Tigrinya-English code switching; Nadia (2015) examined Oromo-Harari code-switching; Bikila (2008) studied the social and structural aspects of Afan Oromo- English code switching, and Zelalem researched Amharic- English code switching. As far as the knowledge of the present researchers is concerned, only Zelalem’s (1998) study deals with Amharic-English code switching but his study partly focused on the linguistic issues and did not treat the impact of code switching on Amharic language development, culture and social values. Therefore, the present study employing sociolinguistic approach attempts to investigate the motivation for the use of code switching, its impacts and people’s perceptions towards it. Accordingly, it attempts to address the following objective and research questions.

1.3 Main Objective

The general objective of this study is to examine the causes, perceptions, and impacts of code switching in Amharic speeches and discussions addressed to the public.

1.4 Research Questions

- 1 Why do speakers and discussants use code switching in speeches and discussions addressed to the public?
- 2 What are the impacts of code switching on cultural values and Amharic language development?
- 3 What are the perceptions of people towards code switching in speeches and discussions addressed to public?

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 The Concept of Communication

From a media point of view, communication can be defined as the process of transmitting information from one person to another and achieving common understanding (Keyton, 2011, as cited in Alluri, 2016). Communication can also take place verbally using symbols, words, sounds that carry thoughts, ideas, experiences, etc. or non-verbally using such as gestures, pictures, facial expressions, tone of voice among individuals. Even if communication takes place within an individual (which is called intrapersonal), it is often

considered a two-way exchange of messages, communicating with others (interpersonal communication) (Berry, 2007).

Language enables people to communicate with each other and create meanings. But to communicate with each other, both the speaker and listener should share the same language system and use formal expressions to maximize understanding between them. However, during communication, some communicators use various inappropriate expressions that have the possibility of hampering proper understanding. One of the barriers of communication is the use of code switching, switching from one language to another, in both formal and informal situations where the switched language is not known by the interlocutor. Particularly, in a monolingual context, if the speaker code switches, the message cannot be understood by the listener. This is because effective communication can occur when the addresser and addressee have a shared language system. Concerning this idea, Wyer and Shrum (2015, p. 186) said, “Communicators who wish to transmit information to a recipient are presumably motivated to construct their messages in a way that the recipient will understand and consider to be informative”. This implies that if the recipient understands the message, the sender will achieve his/her objective.

2.2 The Concept of Code Switching

Code switching refers to linguistic behavior that happens when speakers switch between different codes in the course of a single interaction. This is often done by bilingual or multilingual speakers. Code switching is a change by a speaker from one language or language variety to another one. A person may start speaking one language and then changes to another one in the middle of his/her speech, or sometimes even in the middle of a sentence. In short, code switching is defined as a linguistic phenomenon of “switching from one language to another in the same discourse” (Nunan & Carter, 2001, p. 275). However, a speaker should choose when, why, and how to alternate between languages.

Studies on code switching have attracted the attention of many researchers since the 1950s (Ibrahim, Shah & Armia, 2013). It has been studied from different perspectives by several scholars. To mention a few, Rose (2006) studied the function of code switching; Mokgwathi and Webb (2013) studied the effects of code switching in education and Rahimi and Jafari (2011) studied attitudes towards code switching. In fact, many studies conducted on code switching were found to facilitate L2 learning (i.e. Brown, 2006; Weng, 2012; Modupeola, 2013). In these studies, code switching was found to help teachers to give clear learning instructions, to make the meanings of unknown words understandable and to provide clarification for complex ideas/ concepts to students.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Studies on code switching utilize several theoretical frameworks. Of these, the most prevalent theories can be classified into three dimensions: sociolinguistics, the structural, and more recently, the psycholinguistics perspective (Orji & Chidebelu, 2017). The sociolinguistics dimension focuses on how meaning is created, what motivates speakers to code switch and what factors promote or hinder the use of code switching? These factors include age, gender, attitude, education, identity, community norms, etc... The structural dimension deals with the grammatical aspects of code switching. It examines the underlying structure that governs code-switching of two or more languages. In fact, studies on code switching have shown that there are rules that govern code-switching practice (Lopez & Gonzale-Davies, 2016). The psycholinguistic dimension gives emphasis to study “how bilinguals’ linguistic systems are stored and organized in the cognitive system and how they are accessed in language production and perception” (Orji & Chidebelu, 2017, p. 22). This refers to investigating the speaker’s language ability that enables him /her to code switch languages effectively during communication. Of these three theoretical dimensions, the sociolinguistic approach is the one which is employed in this study.

Grice’s cooperative principle: In addition to the sociolinguistic perspective, Gricean perspective can also be used as a theoretical foundation in the present study. This perspective is similar to that of sociolinguistic

perspective. Both of them are concerned with real language use and meaning creation during communication. Both perspectives stress the need for effective communication through the consideration of factors such as the needs and backgrounds of audience and situation.

According to Grice's principle (1975), people have to cooperate during communication so as to minimize misunderstanding. If speakers use code switching in monolingual society, they may not communicate their messages effectively, for they attempt to convey their messages by using incomprehensible expressions. Such a practice violates Grice's maxim of manner, one of the four maxims of cooperative principles (Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner) that informs the speaker to avoid the use of unintelligible expressions. This maxim stresses the rationale that social behavior should be respected to achieve effective communication. According to this principle, if the two parties engaging in communication do not use a shared code, they do not cooperate to each other and then a communication breakdown occurs.

2.4 Reasons for Code Switching

There are different reasons for people to use code switching. One of the reasons for using code switching is the prestige in the language that initiates a speaker to use it simultaneously within his/her mother tongue. Another reason for code switching is that it can serve as a sign of cultural solidarity or distance or serve as an act of identity marker (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). Sometimes, speakers may change from one language to another to give emphasis to the message or the word from the other language may be more appropriate to the speech situation or the content. Moreover, Gumperz (2009) summarized the function of code switching as a conversational strategy used to communicate social meanings that include quotation, addressee specification, interjection, reiteration, message qualification, and personalization versus objectification.

Although code switching is used for different purposes, its use can be productive if it fits the background of the audience, situations and topic. In relation to this, Essien (1995, p. 271) clearly states that code switching is "the process by which the speaker or the initiator of speech, changes or switches from one language or code to another, depending on the situation, audience, subject matter, etc." In this statement, code switching is implied as being a system for communication between two or more persons when the situation, audience, and subject matter allow doing so. Furthermore, Auer's (1998) review shows that studies conducted before the 1980s identified factors that influence the use of code switching. These include extra-linguistic features like a topic, setting, and relationships between participants, community norms and values, as well as societal, political and ideological developments.

2.5 Impact of Code Switching in Communication

When a sender or source of information uses code switching which cannot be easily understood by the audience, a message cannot be transmitted properly. This situation creates misunderstanding between the sender and the receiver in monolingual contexts. When code switching by speakers occurs, especially where most audiences are monolingual, they are unable to communicate clear information to the audience, which is the beginning of failure in any kind of activity. Therefore, using inappropriate expressions or shifting languages during speaking affects the effectiveness of communication between the speakers and interlocutors. For instance, the study conducted by Aichhorn and Puck (2017) showed that code switching became a barrier to effective discussion in online meetings, for the team members captured only bits of information in the discussion because the team members who share the same language engaged in discussion by switching to their own language now and then without considering other respondents who do not know their language. Such code switching practices during meetings create feelings of dissatisfaction, distrust and exclusion among team members (Tenzer et al., 2014) and affect knowledge sharing negatively. Another negative impact of code switching was observed in the international meeting held by software development teams of whom some were unable to give their ideas and insights, for they could not understand the switched language (Hinds et al., 2014).

Amharic-English code switching is commonly practiced in Ethiopia among educated people. However, it is commonly observed that the practice of code switching takes place without considering the principles for code switching. Effective code switching demands the speaker to adapt his/her language choice based on the linguistic background of participants, places and topics (Essien, 1995).

2.6 People's Perceptions about Code Switching

In the era of globalization, people's perceptions about code switching are inclined to be positive, reasoning that it promotes better understanding and communication but still some reports show people's negative perceptions about code switching. For instance, the finding of Edward's (2004) study indicates that some monolinguals hate code switching considering it nonsense. Moreover, as reported by Chana and Romaine (1984), Punjabi-English bilinguals in Birmingham had a negative perception of code switching. The study held by Pena (2004) showed that there was a negative perception of code switching among the first and second-generation members of the Spanish-Galician community in London, reasoning that code switching is a mark of poor linguistic competence. Similarly, in Chloros' (2009) study, it was found that both monolinguals and bilinguals believe that code switching occurs because of careless language habits or lack of language competence. Some researchers view code switching is a sign of lack of proficiency in the target language and should be banned during communication (i.e., Muysken, 2000).

Grosjean (2010, p.751) asserted that "Code switching has often been criticized, mainly by monolinguals but also by some bilinguals. Many feel that it creates an unpleasant mixture of languages produced by people who are careless in the way they speak". Here the negative perception of bilinguals emanates from the belief that code switching affects the purity or the standard of a language. Such a negative attitude towards code switching may be attributed to "...a deep-rooted monolingual linguistic ideology" (Gafaranga, 2007, p.279). Some monolinguals get offended with code switching during interactions because they do not understand the messages delivered; as a result of this, they hold negative views of code switching.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Design of the Study

The study was based on a descriptive research design that takes the form of a cross-sectional survey and makes use of mixed methods research that includes quantitative and qualitative methods to answer the research questions posed in this study.

3.2 Study Area and Period

The study was conducted from October 2018 to October 15, 2019; it was conducted in three public universities, namely Jimma, Addis Ababa, and BahirDar, and Media Agencies. These universities were selected because of the presence of postgraduate students attending training on journalism and communication. These students were believed to have knowledge and experiences relevant to the current study. Moreover, participants from different media agencies were involved in providing information, for they directly get involved in mass communication in which code switching practices were observed.

3.3 Population

The population of the study included postgraduate university students from journalism and communication departments, instructors, media agency workers and language experts. University students were selected because they were expected to be more aware of communication rules and language use in comparison to other department students. Besides, they were working in the media where their voices had major effects on the audience, so it was felt that involving them in this study had its own advantages. Media agency workers

(EBC, FBC, and Amhara Media Agency) are also believed to have relevant knowledge and experiences about code switching. The age of the participants ranged from 21 to 55 years with a mean age of 33.039 and a standard variation of 7.678. The majority of these participants, 34 (54.8%) held master's degrees, 22 (35.5%) were bachelor's degree holders and 5 (8.1) reported having PhD degrees.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Based on a convenient sampling method, 62 participants were involved in the study. Of these 43(69.4%) were males and 19 (30.6%) females drawn purposefully from the three universities: Jimma, Addis Ababa and Bahir Dar, and three media agencies, namely Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC), Amhara Mass Media Agency and Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC). Interviewees were selected voluntarily from the three news organizations.

3.5 Data Collection Tools

Two instruments were used to collect data: questionnaires and interviews. The main data gathering tool is the questionnaire that consists of demographic, work experience, education and language background and code switching questions. The first part has seven questions that ask about gender, age, year of work experience, educational and language background. The second part has 28 questions related to purposes for code switching, the impact of code switching, and perceptions of people about code switching. Each type of questions has close-ended and open-ended questions. The close-ended questionnaire was designed based on a five-stage Likert scale, (ranging from 1 'strongly disagree' to 5 'strongly agree') to elicit information on code switching impact, purpose, and perception. The second data-gathering tool was semi-structured interviews which were conducted with 12 selected media agency workers to investigate their perceptions towards Amharic-English code switching. The data through interviews augmented information gathered via questionnaire. Besides, new, additional and detailed information was obtained from each interviewee which was conducted in Amharic for 30 minutes.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

Data obtained from interviews and open-ended questionnaire were analyzed qualitatively, whereas the data obtained through close-ended questionnaire were processed with SPSS version 22 and analyzed quantitatively. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the findings, and recommendations were forwarded according to the conclusions.

4. Results

This section presents the data gathered through close and open-ended questionnaire and interviews along with their description, analysis, and interpretation. The data from the close-ended questionnaire are presented using tables and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The data collected using open-ended questionnaires and interviews are presented in the form of narrative and/or direct quotations and analyzed thematically.

4.1 Reasons for Code Switching

To identify the reasons why speakers or discussants code switch in speeches and discussions addressed to the public, participants were asked to respond to survey items and the following responses were obtained.

Table 1: Reasons for code switching: Descriptive Statistics ($\alpha=.723$)

Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
13.I switch from Amharic to English when I don't have enough vocabulary in Amharic	62	1.00	5.00	3.50	1.24
14. I switch from Amharic to the English language to demonstrate my expertise in the English language	61	1.00	5.00	2.40	1.10
15. Code switching to English is due to a lack of semantically equivalent words in Amharic	62	1.00	5.00	3.84	1.10
16.Code switching is due to faster accessibility of specific words in English(readily available words, retrieved more quickly to hold the floor)	62	1.00	5.00	3.50	1.11
17.Amharic- English code switching is used to repeating messages (reiteration)	61	1.00	5.00	3.10	1.11
18. Amharic –English code switching is due to the suitability of words for the context is available in the English language.	62	1.00	5.00	3.63	1.20
Grand Mean				3.30	

Table 1 shows the respondents' responses given to six items used to identify reasons for code switching. Of these items, item 15 is with the highest mean value ($M=3.84$, $SD= 1.10$) which shows that the participants agree with the statement that the major reason for code switching was to get semantically equivalent words from the English language for they lack appropriate words from Amharic. The second major reason for code switching was due to the suitability of words for the context which are available in the English language ($M=3.63$, $SD=1.20$). The third reason for code switching can be inferred from the responses given to item 13 ($M= 3.50$, $SD= 1.24$) that the respondents tend to agree with the statement that switching from Amharic to English occurs when a speaker doesn't have enough vocabulary in Amharic (lexical deficiency). As shown in the table, all the values of standard deviation are low and they show the presence of homogenous responses clustered around the means.

Table 1 also reveals that the majority of respondents disagree with the statement that switching from Amharic to the English language is to demonstrate the speaker's expertise in the English language ($M=2.40$, $SD= 1.10$). However, the qualitative data indicate that demonstrating oneself as an educated person or scholar appears as the prime reason for Amharic- English code switching. This difference might be because of the nature of closed-ended questions which is based on self-report in which the respondents provide answers expected from them (Johnson & Van de Vijver, 2002).

4.2 Impacts of Code Switching on Language and Culture

In EFL contexts, many researchers (i.e., Ahmad, 2009; Simasiku, 2015; Promnath, 2016) have confirmed that a proper use of code switching has positive effects on learning a language for it helps the students to understand the lesson effectively. However, when code switching is used in a public speech in which bilingual and monolingual people attend, it may have negative effects on the people who do not know English. The following table displays the responses of participants to 9 items designed to assess Amharic-English code switching impacts on Amharic language development, communication and culture of Ethiopians.

Table 2: The impact of code switching on Amharic language, culture, and communication ($\alpha=.701$)

Items	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
20. Amharic-English code switching corrupts the purity of Amharic language and affects the linguistic development of Amharic language.	60	1.00	5.00	4.30	.90
21. The use of pure Amharic shows cultural authenticity and reservation of cultural identity.	61	1.00	5.00	4.10	1.03
22. When I switch from Amharic to English, I feel that I am violating the purity of the language.	59	1.00	5.00	3.60	1.13
24. Amharic-English code switching brings misunderstandings to many Ethiopians who are not educated.	61	1.00	5.00	4.40	.92
25. Amharic should protect itself from the influence of English language, which is a dominant language world wise.	60	1.00	5.00	3.53	1.20
26. Amharic-English code switching is considered a mark of a higher economic status, superiority or well-educated background.	60	1.00	5.00	3.03	1.34
28. Amharic-English code switching is a mark of poor language competence.	61	1.00	5.00	3.34	1.10
29. Amharic-English code switching is a threat to the national identity and pride.	57	1.00	5.00	3.40	1.24
31. Amharic-English code switching leads to poor standards in both languages	61	1.00	5.00	3.50	1.26
Grand mean of 9 items				3.70	

Note. Items 23, 27 and 30 were deleted, for they affected the total item correlation coefficient results.

As it can be seen from the information in Table 2, item 24 ($M=4.34$, $SD=.92$) is with the highest mean value that indicates the participants' high level of agreement (i.e., a mean value of 4 is 'agree' and a mean value of 5 is 'strongly agree') to the statement that Amharic-English code switching brings misunderstandings to many of Ethiopians who are not educated. This implies that whenever Amharic-English code switching is used during communication, information cannot be shared between the speakers and listeners who do not know English properly. The second variable that shows a dominant impact on Amharic language is item 20, which has a mean value of 4.30 and a standard deviation of 0.90. This means the value falls in between 4 and 5 in the scale that shows respondents' agreement to the statement that Amharic-English code switching affects the purity of Amharic language and its development. The third item with a high mean value is item 21 ($M=4.10$, $SD=1.03$). This mean value falls in between 4 and 5 in the scale that shows participants' agreement to the statement that the use of pure Amharic helps to attain cultural authenticity and preserve cultural identity.

Of the 9 items, item 26 ($M=3.03$, $SD=1.34$) is with the lowest mean score that falls in between 3 and 4 in the five-point scale that shows the uncertainty(not sure) of the participants about the statement that Amharic-English code switching is considered a mark of a higher economic status, superiority or well-educated background. But the overall mean value of the 9 items is 3.70 which shows participants' agreement level to all 9 statements.

4.3 Perception about Code Switching

Ethiopia is a country of multilingual communities in which more than eighty languages are spoken. In the presence of many languages, code switching is inevitable because of contact among different languages. However, English is used as a foreign language in Ethiopia and only educated people know it, whereas the majority of the Ethiopian people do not know English. Nowadays it has become a common practice that educated people use Amharic-English code switching in mass media and in different meetings and public gatherings. This has created communication problems for the majority of Ethiopian people who do not know English. To measure participants' perception of Amharic-English code switching, six items were used and the responses are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of the responses of participants' perceptions about code switching

Item	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
33. Amharic-English code switching is liked and appreciated by the majority of Ethiopian people.	61	1.00	5.00	2.40	1.10
34. When Amharic is used on media, it should not mix English words, for the majority of the Ethiopian people do not know the English language.	61	1.00	5.00	3.82	1.30
37. Amharic-English code switching creates misunderstanding between people who do not know the two languages	59	1.00	5.00	4.30	1.02
38. I believe that effective communication will take place between people who have a shared language system	60	1.00	5.00	4.20	.90
39. Amharic-English code switching is a mark of inappropriate language use in mass media in Ethiopia where English is not the wider society language	61	1.00	5.00	4.00	1.20
40. Code switching cannot be used as one communication strategy in a monolingual society	59	1.00	5.00	3.80	1.10
Grand Mean				3.80	

Note. As shown in the above table, items 35 and 36 were deleted, for their total item correlation results are below 0.3 and found to affect the overall reliability of the items ($\alpha=.577$). But after the deletion of the two items, the reliability coefficient of the six items increased to $\alpha=.710$, which is in the acceptable range (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000).

As shown in Table 3, mixing Amharic and English language in the same speech event confirmed to create a communication breakdown among the people who do not know English well (item 37, $M=4.30$, $SD=1.02$). Another item that has similar content to the item that has a high mean value is item 38 with a mean value of 4.20 and a standard deviation of .90. The results of both items are almost similar and show a consistency of the response of the participants. Of the six items used to measure the perceptions of the participants, item 33 ($M=2.40$, $SD=1.10$) is with the lowest mean value, which indicates that the majority of participants disagree with the statement that Amharic-English code switching is liked and appreciated by the majority of Ethiopian people. Consistent with this response, the response to item 39 (4.00, $SD=1.20$) indicates that participants perceived code switching as a mark of inappropriate language use in mass media. Besides, the responses to other items imply that code switching should not be used in monolingual society and mass media intended to disseminate information to the wider community in Ethiopia.

To address the research questions of the present study, the researchers collected not only quantitative data but also qualitative data which are intended to give more depth to the overall results. The qualitative data were coded and analyzed. The framework for the analysis was thematic analysis which is a commonly used approach to analyze data collected through open-ended questionnaires and interviews. In the analysis of the qualitative data, the two major themes and six sub-themes were categorized. These are reasons for code switching that include seeking prestige, semantic significance, a habit of using code switching and the impact of Amharic-English code switching that includes sub-themes: communication, Amharic language development, culture, social norms and values. In each of these categories, representative quotes along with their description and interpretation are given below.

4.4 Reasons for Code Switching

To elicit data that address this research question, (*Why do speakers and discussants use code switching in speeches and discussions addressed to public?*) the following responses were obtained from open-ended and interview questions. These responses can be classified into sub-themes, for there are different reasons for code switching.

Seeking prestige: Some respondents reported that they code switch while delivering public speech because they want to be recognized as prominent persons who speak the prestigious language, English. This is evident in one respondent's statements:

As it is known in Ethiopia, if you speak English words you will be respected as an educated person or elite. I myself use English words when I make a speech in Amharic to show I can speak English very well.

These statements suggest that since English is the language of western people who are educated, civilized, and have better income compared to third world people, a person who speaks their language is assumed to be a privileged one. In fact, it is a piece of common knowledge in Ethiopia that people who speak English fluently and accurately are appreciated and respected.

Semantic significance/filling gaps: The other reason for code-switching, as reported by the research participants, relates to the semantic significance or compensating linguistic deficiency. Many scholars believe that code switching is a strategic behavior that enables speakers to convey their messages in better ways and achieve efficient communication. The following respondents' statements demonstrate their practices of code switching by selecting or using English words so as to deliver their messages effectively.

Since I am Afan Oromo speaker, whenever I run out of Amharic words I use English words.

It is a matter of survival, when I cannot find an easy context, I use code switching.

I feel satisfied when one English word explains all I have in mind.

People may employ code switching due to lexical gaps occurring in the target language.

My major reason is that since some of the English words in my schemata are available, they are easily accessible.

The above quotes indicate the reasons why many people code switch. One of the reasons implied in the statement is to convey the messages efficiently or to enhance communication during an interaction between interlocutors. The other reason for code switching is to fill lexical gaps or to compensate for the linguistic deficiency. Selecting a word from the English language can be used as shorthand for much broader, complex concepts which is another motive for code switching as implied in the above quotes. One of the above statements also implies that code switching occurs when certain English words are easily accessible to the speakers which may be due to the recency of use of lexicon of that language or repeated use of certain words. Here, the speakers can achieve their objectives of communication, if their interlocutors are bilinguals, whereas when bilinguals interact with monolinguals using code switching, there will be communication failure.

A habit of using code switching: The third major category of reasons for code switching is its regular occurrence in speech events. As some of the respondents reported, code switching has been a day-to-day practice of educated people and it has become almost a habit to use a mixed language in every speech situation. This linguistic practice is evident in the following respondents' statements:

It has become a trend to consider the use of code switching as a sign of modernization.

Using English in the middle of speech is a sign of civilization nowadays.

Code switching has become a habit.

In my perception, I use code switching intentionally because nowadays everything is given out in English. So it is my desire to be a perfect speaker as English people.

The above respondents' statements show that the use of Amharic- English code switching has become an everyday practice, considering English the language of progress and modernity. This is a very dangerous trend, which is likely to be the common practice of educated people in Ethiopia without considering its effects on L1, culture, communication and other factors such as circumstances, places, topics and the participants. When one interviewee reported his observation, he said that some of the people use code switching automatically, without being aware of doing so. As a result, it might be difficult to control their speech in the case of monolingual contexts, where the speakers and listeners do not share language codes.

4.5 Impact of Amharic-English Code Switching

Amharic-English code switching is believed to have many side effects on communication, Amharic language development, culture and social values. In response to the research question (*What are the impacts of code switching on cultural values and Amharic language development?*), it is evident from the following reported statements which are classified into three sub-themes.

Communication problem: As the literature review section of this study and the responses to the close ended questionnaire reveal efficient and effective communication can be achieved if the speaker and the listener share the same language system. In the absence of this, communication failure is inevitable. In line with this notion, the following statements were obtained from open-ended questionnaire and interview questions.

Code switching affects communication between the speaker and the listener if the message is incomprehensible.

Sometimes using English words in the middle of one's speech makes the message uncomprehensible for those who do not know/speak English. It causes misunderstanding.

These quotes suggest that if a speaker wants to achieve effectiveness in communication, he/she has to select the language that suits the speech situation, and audience; otherwise code switching affects the dissemination of critical information effectively. The above statements also imply that code switching violates the principle of effective interaction between the speakers and interlocutors that require the construction of meaning. If meaning is not constructed, communication failure will occur. Comprehension problem created because of code switching is very critical between monolingual and bilingual interactions.

A threat to Amharic language development: The other reported data in relation to the impact of code switching concern Amharic language development. The following quotes show the concern of the respondents about the fate of Amharic language in the future.

If we code switch frequently, we likely forget many Amharic words and expressions.

I think code switching hinders the development of Amharic language which may cause the deprivation of culture, identity, and knowledge entailed.

If English words replace Amharic language, gradually the number of English words will dominate Amharic words and this result in the disappearance of the Amharic language in the long run.

Such statements reflect the negative impact that may occur in the Amharic language as a result of code switching. In the long run, if such negative impacts continue, Amharic language may lose its originality and becomes a suppressed and retarded language and English will be a favored language over it.

Impacts of code switching on culture and social norms and values: The other impact of code switching on culture and social values is evident from the following quotes:

It creates identity disorder. In the English language, there are no words that honor/respect elderly people such as esachew, esu. It violates the Ethiopians' cultural values.

Amharic English code switching may ultimately result in attitudinal problems among monolinguals.

As much as possible language is a good manifestation of cultural practice, so code switching may demolish the indigenous culture; it may lead to identity crisis. This identity crisis might continue gradually from generation to generation.

It is not only about the impact of cultural values. The knowledge, civilization, history, identity of Ethiopians is coded in Amharic language. If code switching problems remain unsolved all these sources of heritages will be buried and the new generation will be detached from its previous generation and its wisdom.

The above quotes strongly suggest that code switching has many negative impacts on Ethiopian culture. If Amharic-English code switching becomes a strong norm of language accommodation; it violates Ethiopians' cultural values. For instance, as indicated above, respect to elderly people can be addressed only with the use of certain words from local languages. Furthermore, as one of the interviewees explained the frequent use of code switching in the community erodes the identity of the local language whereby indigenous knowledge, history, ancient civilization, the literary culture, etc., are recorded. In the long run, as a result of this, the new generation may not learn the wisdom and history of the previous generation.

5 Discussion

This study investigates the causes, perceptions, and impacts of code –switching in monolingual contexts. The two languages considered in this study are Amharic and English from which people switch one to another. Amharic is one of the official languages and the federal working language in Ethiopia, whereas English is a foreign language which is commonly used as a medium of instruction starting from secondary schools to the tertiary level and it is taught as a subject starting from the primary schools to the tertiary level. Furthermore, it is a working language in many large businesses and corporations inside and outside Ethiopia. Of all foreign languages spoken, in Ethiopia, the English language has the highest prestige because most Ethiopians who speak good English get a good job and respect. English is useful not only in Ethiopia but also in other countries as it is a language of education, trade, tourism and technology at a global level. Many Ethiopians believe that being competent users of English will open doors for academic and professional success. Nowadays, English proficiency is mandatory to be successful in academic and professional careers.

This study provides insight into the prevailing situation of Amharic-English code switching use in the era of globalization. From a sociolinguistic perspective, it is worth studying the reason for code switching (Appel & Muysken, 2006); this is because if the causes are identified scientifically, it may not be difficult to take appropriate measures in cases of problems. Accordingly, in the present study, several factors that have contributed to the wide practice of code switching were identified in Ethiopia. Among these the major one is the prestige the English language has in a globalized world, that is, “English has become the lingua franca that indexes prestige, competitiveness, employability, and economic success.” (Miranda et al., 2018, p.203). In Ethiopia English is commonly perceived as a language that has the highest prestige among other languages in the world. The prestige the language has may initiate a speaker to use it simultaneously with his/her mother tongue. For instance, one of the respondents said, “Most public figures such as government officials, physicians, and lawyers are seen switching from Amharic to English to show that they speak English very well.” Another interviewee said, “In my view, I use code switching intentionally because nowadays everything is given out in English.” Such quotes illustrate the value participants give to the English language.

Another reason for giving high value to the English language is that nowadays it has become an important lingua-franca among international communities; it is the dominant language of the web. In line with this, Ranasuriya, (2015, p. 1) states that since the English language is a dominant language, it is "...associated with a religion, education, and a wide sphere of operation and interest." in the world and many people prefer to use it along with their mother tongues.

The other major factor that contributes to the frequent use of code switching is the semantic significance of English. Table 1 shows high mean values displayed by items 15 and 18 that indicate the participants' high level of agreement with the statement that Amharic-English code switching enables people to convey their messages effectively. This function of code switching is evident in one of the respondents' statements (i.e., I feel satisfied when one English word explains all I have in mind.). Maybe, its rich vocabulary makes English the most favored language but it has to be used in an appropriate context.

In relation to lexical gaps of a speaker, one respondent said, "People may employ code switching due to lexical gaps occurring in the target language." This implies that if the needed terms are not found in Amharic, speakers switch to English. The finding of another study conducted from a sociolinguistics perspective confirmed that lack of semantically equivalent words from the target language forces the speaker to use words from other languages (Baker, 2006).

The other important reason identified in the present study addresses why Amharic-English code switching is widely practiced among educated people. As many respondents in the interview reported, code switching has been a day- to-day practice of educated people. In other words, it has become almost a habit for educated people to use code switching in every speech situation. This finding aligns with Zelalem's (1998) finding that some bilinguals have been accustomed to the use of Amharic-English code switching to the extent of doing it unconsciously.

One of the most important findings in this study is that Amharic-English code switching has many side effects on communication, Amharic language development, culture and social values. For instance, it creates communication problems; that is, monolinguals are commonly believed to experience difficulties understanding code switched discourse. It is commonly believed that efficient and effective communication can be achieved if the speaker and the listener share the same language system. If not, communication failure is inevitable. Both quantitative and qualitative data suggest that when code switching is used by bilingual speakers to interact with monolinguals, they are unable to communicate clear information to their audience. Such a practice violates Grice's (1975) maxim of manner, which informs the speaker to avoid the use of unintelligible expressions. Therefore, using code switching without considering the linguistic background of the audience during discussion creates a communication breakdown.

Concerning the side effects of code switching on communication in monolingual society, many researchers express their concerns. For instance, Wyer and Shrum, (2015, p.186) suggested: "communicators who wish to transmit information to a recipient are presumably motivated to construct their messages in a way that the recipient will understand and consider to be informative". Anton et al., (2016, p. 30) commented "Even though bilinguals often code switch in everyday life, such practice is mostly avoided in circumstances where effective transmission and acquisition of information is required." In line with this view, Gumperz (2009) also states that effective communication cannot take place where there is no coordinated effort between the speaker and listener to negotiate meanings. If the addressees are unable to grasp the messages conveyed through code switching which is not familiar to them, there will not be a negotiation of meanings between addressers and addressees. Here the present researchers are not totally against code switching practices, but they believe that code switching can enhance effective information exchange if "bilinguals only code-switch with other bilinguals with whom they share a dual language identity" (Bullock & Toribo, 2009, p.10).

The other impact of Amharic-English code switching is that it is widely used by educated people for different purposes. This tradition threatens the development of Amharic language. For instance, as the response to item 25 (M=3.53, SD=1.20) reveals the majority of the respondents tend to agree that Amharic should protect itself from the influence of the English language. Similarly, the response to item 20 displays that many of the

participants believe that Amharic-English code switching affects the purity/standard of Amharic language. Similarly, the qualitative data illustrate respondents' concerns about the future fate of Amharic language that its development is negatively affected by the widespread practice of code switching. For instance, one interviewee said, "If English words replace Amharic words, gradually the number of English words will dominate Amharic words and this results in the deterioration of the Amharic language in the long run." These findings are similar to the findings of many other researchers (i.e., Aitchison, 1991; Phillipson, 1992; Ifechelobi, 2015), who report that the use of code switching gradually leads to the dominance of one language over the other. Because of the dominance of English, others' national languages could not attain the status of English, for it prevents them from going through a similar process of development and expansion (Phillipson, 1992). From these findings, it is possible to draw an inference that code switching can be a barrier to effective communication in a monolingual society and impedes the growth and expansion of a local language eventually.

The other impact of Amharic- English code switching focused on culture and social values. Since English is a dominant and powerful language in the world (Jiajing, 2007), it has negative consequences on national languages. As commented by Phillipson (2017), English has been made to spread in many countries to serve as a language of neoliberal empire without considering its consequences for other cultures and local languages. Similarly, Richards (2016) reported that some scholars were not happy with the global spread of English reasoning that it threatens local culture, languages and identities. In the present study, the qualitative data suggest that Amharic-English code switching has serious negative effects on culture, social norms and values. This is evident in one respondent's statements: "As much as possible language is a good manifestation of cultural practice, code switching finally leads to identity crisis. This identity crisis might continue gradually from generation to generation." Indeed, language marks national identity; for instance, the Amharic language is the identity of most Ethiopian people and the source of pride for them, for it is the language that has its own script (derived from Geez script) in Africa. Most importantly, Amharic is a symbol of heritage and a means of documentation of Ethiopian history, civilization, cultures, norms and social values which are written mainly in it. If code switching is widely used, all these sources of pride will be gradually eroded. The quantitative data (item 21, $M=4.10$, $SD=1.03$) also show that the majority of participants agree with the statement that the use of pure Amharic helps to attain cultural authenticity and preserve cultural identity. Therefore, Amharic language should be retained, strengthened and expanded as it is the identity of the Ethiopian people.

In the assessment made on the perception of the participants towards Amharic-English code switching, the quantitative data indicate the majority of the respondents agree that using Amharic and English language in the same speech event creates communication breakdown among the people who do not know English well ($M=4.30$, $SD= 1.02$). Item 38 also shows almost similar results ($M= 4.20$, $SD= .90$). The results of the two items show high mean scores that fall in between 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' and indicate the presence of consistency of the responses of the participants.

Another finding in the qualitative study is that code switching is perceived a mark of inappropriate language use in mass media; the participants have a negative perception towards code switching that occurs in mass media and they suggested that it should not be used in monolingual society and mass media intended to disseminate important information to the wider community in Ethiopia. Consistent to this finding, the quantitative data in Table 3 ($M= 2.40$, $SD=1.10$) shows that the participants disagree with the statement that Amharic-English code switching is liked and appreciated by the majority of Ethiopian people.

Indeed, code switching from Amharic to English is commonly observed among educated people (Zelalem, 1998), but Amharic monolinguals or the majority of Ethiopian people do not speak English. As a result, when they hear English words in the middle of the discussion they will be confused.

In a monolingual society, not only code switching becomes a source of confusion, it also causes people to develop a negative attitude towards bilinguals (Zelalem, 1998, p. 212). In reporting the attitudes of Ethiopian monolinguals towards bilinguals, Zelalem clearly stated "the attitude of switching is negative and sometimes indeed hostile". He further confirms the negative reaction of monolinguals saying, "I personally know of cases where monolinguals were hostile even to the extent of quarrelling with bilinguals, indeed even to the point of

communication breakdown” (p.212). Both the present and previous findings reveal that monolinguals have negative attitudes towards Amharic- English code switching.

6 Conclusions

This study examines the causes, impacts and perceptions of participants towards using Amharic-English code switching in Ethiopia, where the majority of the citizens do not know English. To achieve these objectives, data were collected through close and open-ended questionnaires which were distributed to 62 participants and the collected data were analyzed via SPSS version 22. Semi-structured interviews were also administered to 12 selected media agency workers, to investigate their perceptions towards Amharic-English code switching. The major findings of the study are presented in light of the study’s objectives or research questions.

One of the objectives of this study is to find out the main reasons why people code switch from Amharic to English. Concerning this, different reasons for code switching have been identified. Among these, the main ones are the prestige associated with the English language, the semantic significance of the English language, and the wider practice of Amharic-English code switching (habitual experience) among educated people. These main reasons for code switching create serious adverse effects on communication, language development, culture and social values.

Both quantitative and qualitative data indicate that when people code switch in the context of monolingual audience, they are unable to communicate clear information to their audience. This results in confusion and misunderstanding among the listeners to the extent that they face difficulties to grasp the message conveyed in code switched languages.

Amharic-English code switching, not only creates confusion, misunderstanding and inability in grasping the message but also retards the development of Amharic language. The effect of the dominant language, like English on local language is serious because of its value and prestige many educated people may be attracted towards mixing it frequently with Amharic words. As a result, code switching becomes habitual which might be very difficult to control. The danger of the dominant language (English) is that it results in the impoverishment of Amharic language.

Amharic-English code switching has serious adverse effects on culture, social norms and values. Amharic language is a source of pride, a sign of identity, and heritage. It preserves indigenous cultural identity, knowledge and spiritual life. But the wider practice of code switching gradually may lead to identity crisis and loss of prestige and heritage. On the other hand, the use of pure Amharic is believed to attain cultural authenticity and preserve cultural identity.

The quantitative and qualitative data reveal that most of the participants’ perception towards Amharic-English code switching is negative. It is perceived as a mark of inappropriate language use; the majority of the interviewed believe that Amharic- English code switching should not be used in monolingual contexts and mass media intended to disseminate important information to the wider community in Ethiopia, where the majority of the people do not know the English language.

7 Recommendations

In a multilingual society, code switching is seen as a common scenario. However, Amharic- English code switching is viewed as unethical language practice particularly in mass media because English is known only by educated people, whereas the vast majority of Ethiopian people do not know English. At the same time, the high frequency of code switching observed or the wide practice of Amharic–English code switching is very dangerous; this is because nowadays, it has become a tradition to use the two languages together in the same discourse. The findings of this study demonstrate the seriousness of the issues that require attention and intervention. That is the widespread practice of Amharic-English code switching among educated people is a threat to Amharic language growth and expansion. Therefore, the following recommendations are proposed.

- Training institutions should give language related trainings to trainees(i.e.,university students, media agency workers, instructors) and provide them adequate information to raise their awareness of the problem associated with code switching.
- Educated people should adapt their language to their audience, situations and topics. As much as possible they have to avoid Amharic-English code switching in monolingual contexts; that is, they should control and edit their mind before they speak or they have to deliver a planned speech to public to reduce their chance of code switching.
- There should be an institution that creates or translate technical words that replace the English words to overcome the problem of lack of appropriate equivalents in Amharic language.

Although this study has used quantitative and qualitative approaches, the small samples were used to limit the generalizability of the results. This presupposes further studies to be conducted on a large sample size. Future research is also required to explore the impact of Amharic-English code switching on monolingual Amharic speakers.

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