EXPLORING CODE SWITCHING IN THE BESTSELLER FILM MAGAZINE

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ABSTRACT

English being second and foreign language has various varieties e.g. Indian, Shrilankan, Pakistani, Bangladeshi English etc and plays harmonizing role in the socio-political-economic context of South Asian countries. Bi/multilingual is a typical characteristic of today's society. Alternative use of two languages i.e. code switching (CS) is integral part and plays dominant role in the mass media. Owing to the multilingual features of English speaker and Hindi as second language in India, and as the language of Hindi cinema, there is a remarkable switching from English to Hindi in film magazines. CS also serves stylistic purpose of attracting the attention of the speaker. CS is a communicative strategy and due to functional/pragmatic reasons it is used. Interdisciplinary research (IDR) has enabled the researcher to study the use of language in mass-media, basically the 'Filmfare' magazine, widely circulated (available in hard and soft copy formats) in the most of the South Asian countries. The present research paper centers on the use of language in media, exploring the study of code switching in Indian film magazines as a case in point. However, the further research in language and media has potential of opening the new avenues in sociolinguistics and marketing strategies.

Keywords: socio-political-economic context, bi/multilingual, code switching, interdisciplinary research.

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Introduction:

Popper Karl R (1963) has rightly stated that 'We are not students of some subject matter, but students of problems. And problems may cut right across the borders of any subject matter or discipline.' The statement directs us to the interdisciplinary approach to study particular problem. Interdisciplinary research (IDR) is a mode of research that integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines/bodies of specialized knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline. IDR can provide connections between two disciplines that lead to new knowledge and solutions. Keeping this view in mind, the researcher has employed IDR to study the code switching in the bestseller film magazines. IDR enabled the researcher to study language, media and society. The present research paper in the light of IDR explores the alternative use of languages (code switching) in the bestseller, widely circulated *Filmfare* English film magazines, available in hard and softcopy formats.

English is used almost in every walk of life. English in South Asian countries has typical features of its own due to the linguistic and cultural pluralism. English has come to play complementary roles in the socio-political-economic context. Bi/multilingual, the use of two or more languages, is typical characteristic of present day society. The use of two or the more languages is a wide-reaching and observable fact. Such use is affecting society as well as individuals. Alternative use of two languages i.e. code switching (CS) is integral part and parcel of the speech community. It also plays dominant role in the mass media as a medium for inter-state communication and broadcasting. The use of mixed language is rampant in the area of media and creative writing

such as, newspapers, movies, advertisements, radio, and film magazines.

Longman's Dictionary of Applied Linguistics defines CS as, 'a change by a speaker or (writer) from one language or language variety to another one'. In generic sense, CS is a term in <u>linguistics</u> referring to alternation between two or more <u>languages</u>, <u>dialects</u>, or <u>language registers</u> in the course of <u>discourse</u> between people who have more than one language in common. Sometimes the switch lasts only for a few sentences, or even for a single phrase. More broadly defined, CS occurs when people alter their speech and behavior so as to fit into different social situations. The most common changes involve vocabulary, levels of casualness or formality. However, it is observed that the mass media is meant for masses and not purely for English speakers, so it does use mixed language. The *Filmfare* magazine also employs CS at various levels.

CS and Filmfare Magazine:

Filmfare is the most popular, widely circulated, bi-weekly entertainment magazine. Earlier, it was a part of The Times Group, India's largest media services. But now it is published by the Worldwide Media, which is also a joint venture between The Times Group and BBC Magazines, the publishing division of BBC Worldwide. It is English-language magazine about Hindi-language cinema generally known as Bollywood. It is read by the overseas (Indian) community worldwide and in South Asian countries in particular. On an average, it has a circulation of 1.4 lakhs. It is available in print and non-print (emagazine, soft copy is available on internet) formats. Further, *Filmfare* organizes and sponsors two well known awards: the *Filmfare Awards* for movies in Hindi, and the *Filmfare Awards South* for movies in the Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, and Telugu languages. It may not be wrong to say that these awards have proved a smart marketing tool which attracts readership worldwide. It covers hottest Bollywood news, upcoming films, fashions, musicians, directors, and younger stars. It maintains a fine balance between the gossip and facts. The interviews give updates on the professional and personal life of the stars.

Researcher has selected, randomly, ten issues of *Filmfare* magazines for the present research. The reason behind this selection of *Filmfare* is that it is

widely read and circulated film magazine in Indian subcontinent and particularly in India. The magazine is easily available on Internet too. Thus, the omnipresent Internet enables the magazine to cater to all the film-lovers and has readers worldwide in general and in South Asia, say, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar etc in particular. Though the magazine is written in English, it uses lots of Hindi words, phrases and sometimes sentences. It contains various instances of CS. The instances of CS have classified in various ways. However, the researcher employs classification by Poplack in the said magazine.

Classification of CS:

CS is classified in three types by Poplack (1980) taking into account the syntactic domain.

Tag Switching:

Tag in one language is inserted into an utterance which is otherwise entirely in the other language. Tags from another language may be inserted easily at number of points in a monolingual utterance without violating syntactic rules e.g. 'She is extremely beautiful, nahi kyaa?'

Inter-Sentential Switching:

Here, a switch takes place at a clause or sentence boundary. It requires greater fluency in both the languages than tag switching e.g. 'Mujhe vahaa jaanaa thaa, but I couldn't get time.'('I wanted to go there, but I couldn't get time.')

Intra-Sentential Switching:

Switching of different types occurs within the clause or sentence boundary. This involves the greatest syntactic risk. An example from Hindi - English discourse is:

'Usko is difficulty kaa pahile se knowledge nahii thaa.' ('He didn't have knowledge of this difficulty')

Probable Reasons for CS:

Owing to the multilingual feature of the speaker of the English language and the fact that Hindi is the language of Hindi movie and second language of India, there is a remarkable switching from English to Hindi. There are many reasons for CS such as: Lexical gaps (gaps in denotation/connotation); lack of registral competence; neutralization; reinforcement; mood of the speaker; speakers who irregularly uses second language; for stylistic purpose; CS can also happen for no apparent reason. It can be because the speaker feels a certain word explains a feeling, situation or emotion better than the other. Rather than informational the use of CS also serves the stylistic purpose of attracting the attention of the speaker. It is used for the sake of creating humor or parody. Besides these reasons, in general exclusion of certain person/s; in–group identity; different ethnic backgrounds of the speakers also cause CS.

Common Attitudes towards CS:

Even though, CS is rampant the fact remains that attitudes towards CS differ from one bilingual community to another. Some linguists view CS as inevitable and feel that it helps to express meanings more precisely. Those who view CS positively consider it a verbal strategy that helps in effective and emphatic communication. According to B.B.Kachru, CS is a communicative strategy. Those who view CS negatively feel that it can 'pollute' a language, it is a corrupt variety or language and therefore in polite societies it should not be used. CS being identified with a special name/label, which is generally inductive of 'mixed' nature. The labels used to identify CS in India are attitudinally loaded (Hinglish, Manglish, Banglish). However, not all the mixed varieties are accepted. The pejorative terms such as Tex-Mex and Tuti-futi are indicative of the negative attitudes toward switching. The present study views CS positively and considers it as a necessary strategy so as to attract the attention of the magazine readers.

Exploring CS in the Selected Film Magazines:

An attempt has made to analyze the 10 film magazines (Filmfare). The instances of CS are categorized as per Poplack's classification discussed earlier. Further researcher has also categorized the code switched items in to Dependent Switching or Independent Switching so far as the meaning is concern. The most of the CS items contain Tag, Phrase, Idiom, Colloquial Expression, Sentence, Adjective etc. The following is the summary of the analysis of 10 Filmfare magazines as per the Level/Type of the switching.

Number of Magazine	Level/Type of the Switching			Total Code Switched Items
	Tag Switching	Inter-Sentential	Intra-Sentential	
Magazine 1	67	16	5	**88**
Magazine 2	50	8	7	**65**
Magazine 3	87	17	6	**110**
Magazine 4	54	9	5	**68**
Magazine 5	92	5	3	**100**
Magazine 6	60	2	1	**63**
Magazine 7	60	5	3	**68**
Magazine 8	64	5	4	**73**
Magazine 9	59	4	5	**68**
Magazine 10	36	3	3	**42**
Grand Total	**629**	**74**	**42**	**745**
Percentage	**84.43%**	**9.93%**	**5.64%**	**100%**

Important observation concerning all magazines together is that the total Code Switched items found are 745 and out of them 629 i.e. 84.43% make up by the Tag switching, just 5.64% by Intra-Sentential Switching and 9.93% by Inter-Sentential Switching. The following is the graphical representation of the above observation.

Comparative Analysis of all the 10 Magazines According to Code Switched Levels (Structural Analysis)
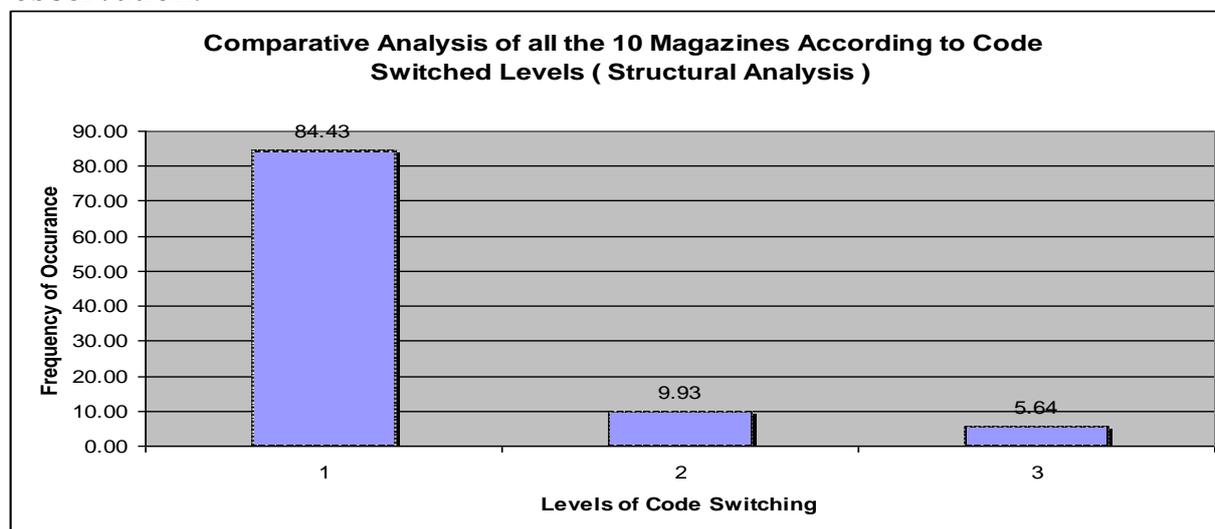
(In the graph, 1=Tag Switching; 2=Inter-Sentential Switching; 3=Intra-Sentential Switching)

The following is the summary of the analysis as per Independently/Dependently Switched Items. It gives an idea about the frequency of Code Switched items as capable of meaning with or without the context.

Number of Magazine	Independently/Dependently Switched Item		Total Code Switched Items
	Dependent Switching	Independent Switching	
Magazine 1	1	87	**88**
Magazine 2	6	59	**65**
Magazine 3	18	92	**110**
Magazine 4	10	58	**68**
Magazine 5	14	86	**100**

Magazine 6	11	52	**63**
Magazine 7	13	55	**68**
Magazine 8	13	60	**73**
Magazine 9	8	60	**68**
Magazine 10	6	36	**42**
Grand Total	**100**	**645**	**745**
Percentage	**13.42%**	**86.58%**	**100**%

The total Switched items are 745 of which 86.58% i.e. 645 are Independently Switched while just 100 i.e. 13.42% Dependently Switched Items are found in magazines. The following is the graphical representation of the above observation.
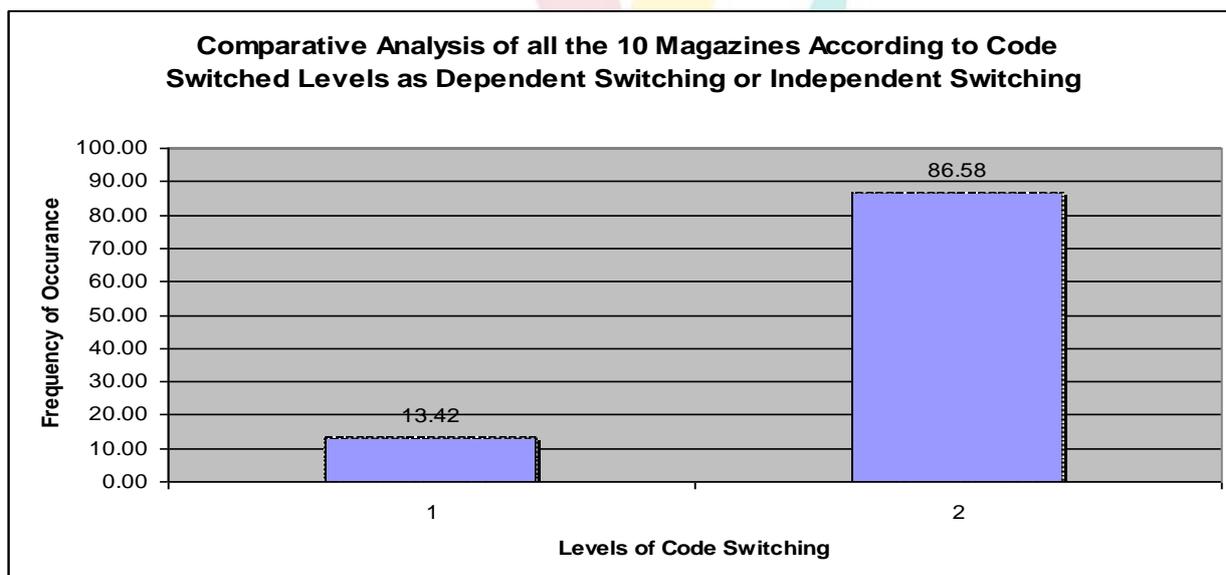
(In the graph, 1= Dependent Switching; 2=Independent Switching)

The Findings and Conclusions:

The IDR enables to have following findings and conclusions:

1. It is the primary observation that the use of code switched items, let it be a just simple tag as *'ji'*, or *'da'* [as in Ramu*ji* or Mithun*da*], is written in italics.

This shows that the use is by intention. It is observed that each word from other language, besides English is written in italics.

2. Roman, French, Italian and German languages too are written in italics e.g., *l'amour* , *du jour*, *deja vu*, *joje de viver*, *per se*, The *crème de la crème*.

3. It is examined that the words in English, which are difficult to understand are code switched. Certain words mean more (connotative meaning) as they convey culturally transmitted meaning or has the specific referential quality are also code switched e.g., *chamchas, tandav, aflatoon, masala,* the *mera pati parmeshwar* treatment, *jugalbandi,* etc.

4. Most of the tag switched items are independent and are capable of meaning without the context. There are just 100 i.e. 13.42% Dependently Switched Items found in magazines. In view of the above, it will be not wrong to say that most code switched items are simple to understand and they do not bring complexity so far as the understanding is concern.

5. The code switched items in Hindi language is used as pun. This really adds interest to the overall reading of the magazine e.g., '**_Ghai_** *mat karo'* (Ghai as a name of a person well known as music director and *Ghai* as hurry in English, or '**_Rai_** *ka pahad'* (Rai as a name of actress Aishwarya Rai and *Rai* as a part of a idiom in Hindi meaning making too much of a small thing). Such kind of code switched expressions need the referential knowledge.

6. Few code switched items are also translated in English so as to reinforce the statement or clear the meaning more accurately e.g., '*Jab bhi hum milte the to sher-o-shairi ka daur chalta tha. Ab who daur tham gaya'* (Whenever we used to meet, we used to indulge in impromptu poetry sessions, now such meetings won't take place). Or 'His first reaction to my songs invariably would be, *Arre yeh kya leke aa gaya?'* (Now what have you brought?)

7. Rules of English grammar for code switched items in Hindi are observed e.g. '*a* hatke' i.e. use of indefinite article before noun and the use of 's' to form the plural as in 'abhinetr*is*'.

The present study has the potential of facilitating further research in CS in other film magazines. It might add a new dimension to the field of socio-linguistics as well. Further research might be initiated to view the function of CS in Russian, German, French and Italian languages used in magazines. The findings in studying the impact of CS on the reader might help the editors of such magazines to decide whether to use CS in their magazines or not. One might work on the study of CS from the pragmatic/semantic perspective. Such study might come up with the conclusion that CS itself is an essential characteristic of the Indian English (Speaker). It is also possible to study CS from commercial perspective and has potential of opening the new avenues for further research in marketing.

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