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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### FACTORS MOTIVATING CODE-MIXING AMONG PALESTINIAN BILINGUAL POST GRADUATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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#### Abstract

This study aimed at identifying the main factors that motivate Code-mixing among the M.A. students and graduates who chose Applied Linguistics as their major at An-Najah National University. It also aimed at finding out the differences between the participants' responses with respect to the selected variables including age, gender, workplace, student status and years of experience. The selected sample consisted of 32 M.A. regular students and another 22 students who already graduated from the same program. They are either employed for different institutions or have no work at least within the period of distributing the questionnaire. The researchers used an 18-item questionnaire as a tool of the study. The responses elicited from participants were manipulated through using the SPSS package to deduce frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, degrees and significant values. Findings of the study showed that the most frequent motivational factors that stand behind code-mixing were mainly related to speech emphasis, raised topics conformation, addressees' understanding of the speech. As for the variables of the study, no statistically significant differences in the means of the participants' responses attributed to gender or students status were found. Nevertheless, statistically significant differences attributed to age of the graduate students were found in favor of those above 45 years old.

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#### Introduction:-

In most new areas of research, terms labeling can always be confusing and disconcerting since many linguists refer to this phenomenon using code mixing, code switching or code alternation. Therefore, a clear-cut border is nearly impossible to be drawn between these interrelated terms. Being interested in keeping readers focused as for which is more appropriate, the researchers determined to use code alternation and code mixing interchangeably. Code alternation and code mixing are linguistic behaviors adopted by interlocutors to successfully communicate in a specific social context or domain. Therefore, the core concern of both partners is dedicated to conveying the message regardless of phonological, morphological or even syntactic violations. Poplack (1980) defined code alternation as the process in which two varieties are mixed together within a single discourse, sentence or their constituents. On the other hand, Bhatia & Ritchie (2004) refer to code mixing as the linguistic behavior in which speakers mix varied linguistic units such as morphemes, words, modifiers, phrases, clauses within the same

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sentence. In other words, code mixing is considered to be intarsentential while code alternation is intersentential alternations. However, as mentioned above these two terms will be used interchangeably throughout this study.

Lexical borrowing is another linguistic behavior that is confused with code mixing and code alternation. Holmes (2013:43) stated that lexical borrowing is triggered by lack of vocabulary and motivated by lexical need that involves single words mainly nouns. Holmes also emphasized that *"borrowed words are usually adapted to the speakers first language, they are pronounced and used grammatically as if they were part of the speaker's first language"* (p.43). Moreover, in code alternation, speakers have a genuine freedom to select words or phrases from multiple options while in lexical borrowing this privilege is not available. Bilinguals always tend to use different varieties in diverse social contexts for multiple factors some of which are expressions of solidarity with intimates or sharing ethnicity with addressees. This study hopes to provide the reader with the main factors that stand behind code alternation through reviewing the theoretical background and the relevant studies. It also expected to enrich the field with additional results. The main focus of this study is to explore the main factors that motivate code-mixing among the M.A. holders and students.

## **Literature Review:-**

### **Theoretical framework:**

Code switching (CS henceforth) and Code-Mixing (CM henceforth) are some of crucial linguistic behaviors in bilingualism research. As stated by Hijazi (2013), some researchers have got interested in CS and CM as psychological phenomenon while others have got interested in them as a linguistic one. She explains in her research different factors that affect the two linguistic behaviors (CS & CM). These factors include education, age, gender, topic, solidarity, intimacy, distancing others, ethnicity and setting. Other researchers, however, consider other factors that are more important than the previous ones like situation, function and the interlocutors. Others like Kanakri & Lonescu (2010) stated that the relationship between interlocutors influence CS and CM. In this current study, CS will be investigated in relation to the communicative functions that the graduate and non-graduate M.A. students from An-najah National University use while communicating with others.

In his investigation of bilingualism, Grosjean define Code- Switching as "the alternate use of two languages, that is, the speaker makes a complete shift to another language for a word, phrase, or sentence and then reverse back to the base language (2012:51). The well known linguist Scotton, however, provide a more general definition stating that Code-Switching is the use of two language varieties in the same conversation. A distinction between code switching and other cognitive aspects of bilingualism (namely borrowing) should be made. Whereas CS involves mixing other words, phrases or sentences from other language, borrowing is the "integration of one language into another". This includes borrowing a word or short expression from another language and adapting it morphologically into the base language. (Grosjean. 2010:58).

### **Code-Mixing in the Palestinian Context:**

CM is a well-known phenomenon existed mainly among Palestinians dwelling in Jerusalem and West Bank. Palestinian society is characterized by diversity of governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in which different languages are being used. Since Palestinians start learning the English language from the first grade until they graduate from the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, the researchers target only CM between Arabic and English language. However, most Palestinians speak Hebrew language as a means of livelihood since a high percentage of the population is employed as labors in the historical occupied Palestine. Other languages such as French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish etc. are widely used in Palestine especially in NGOs. The focus will be on code-mixing between Arabic and English as a foreign language taught to Palestinian students for 12 years, and it is the language of most subjects taught at Palestinian universities. This need has been derived from the fact that the English language has become the first foreign language in Palestine.

### **Degrees of Code-mixing:**

Linguists have identified three main degrees of code-mixing. Romaine (1995:122) referred to Poplack (1980) who identified three main types by which code-mixing occurs. According to the later, code-mixing could occur in three forms; tag-switching, inter-sentential and intra-sentential. Tag-switching involves the insertion of a tag in one language into an utterance which is otherwise entirely in the other language. A good illustration for this is the words we use in the daily code-mixing such as "is it ok, "see you", "yes man"... etc." According to Romaine such tags are easy to insert in the speech as they are subject to minimal syntactic restrictions. The second type, inter-sentential

switching, involves a switch at a clause or sentence boundary, where each clause or sentence is in one language or another. The third type which is intra-sentential switching occurs within the clause or sentence boundary (ibid).

As reported in Ayeomoni (2006), Bokamba (1989) defines CM to be the embedding of different linguistic units such as words (unbound morphemes), affixes (bound morphemes), clauses and phrases in a co-operative activity of two participants. Bokamba (1989) states that code-switching is the mixing of words, phrases and sentences from two grammatical (sub) systems across sentence boundaries within the same speech event while CM is the embedding of various linguistic units such as words within a sentence. Ayeomoni (2006) claims that CM versus CS distinction is poorly motivated because both of them can occur as part of the same conversational turn, and both can serve the social function. As it is mentioned in Kim's study (2006), Muysken (2000) defines code-mixing as all cases where grammatical features and lexical items from two languages appear in one sentence. Bhatia and Ritchie (2004) state that code-mixing refers to the mixing of various linguistic units (words, morphemes, phrases, modifiers, clauses and sentences) primarily from two participating grammatical systems within a sentence. Wahdani (2008) states that Code mixing takes place without a change of topic and can involve different levels of language like morphology and lexical items.

**Pertinent studies:**

Abuzienah D. (2017) conducted a study entitled "Code-mixing in a trilingual context: The case of Minor French for English Majors at Hebron University". The researcher used the mixed-approach (a questionnaire, interviews and observations). The analysis showed that students code mix for the following reasons: compensating the lack of knowledge (lack of vocabulary), emphasizing understanding their teacher, and clarifying or emphasizing something they want to say and when they did not find the suitable expression they needed in French during sessions. Results also showed that French learners' ignorance of the syntactic rules of the French sentences is motivated by their desire to confirm meaning in order to make sure that others understand them.

Al Hayek (2016) investigates the linguistic phenomenon of code-mixing by students at three public universities in North Jordan. The study aimed at documenting the perspectives of Jordanian university students on Arabic-English code-mixing. The study utilizes qualitative and quantitative research methods adopting the mixed-method approach (a questionnaire and interviews). Results of the study showed that male students code mix English and Arabic for linguistic reasons while female students do this for social reasons. English is more frequently used by urban criticisms than their counterparts in rural areas are.

Mohammad, M. & Alkhresheh, A. (2015) investigated the use of Code-switching and mixing of English and Arabic. The objectives of this study were to show whether Arab students at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) code-switch and mix to English in their daily contacts or not. Besides the study explored why Arab students at AMU code switch and mix to English. One hundred Arab students of different educational levels, nationalities and ages were the sample of the study. They are chosen from three levels of education: Bachelors, Masters and Ph.D. at AMU. A questionnaire was used as a tool of the study. Results showed that most of Arab students at AMU do code-switch and mix to English in their conversations which was motivated by the lack of knowledge in English.

Fakeye (2012) conducted a study to explore why bilinguals (Students of Colleges of Education) mix two languages and switch back and forth between two languages and what triggers them to mix and switch their languages when they speak. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to indicate the motivational factors for code-mixing and code switching among the pre-service teachers verbal communication. Questionnaires were used to elicit responses from pre-services teachers. Findings of this research showed that pre-service teachers code mix and code-switch for various reasons such as the physical setting, the topics and functions of discourse, the style employed, language attitude dominance, social status and age.

**Statement of the Problem:**

Since 2000, Palestinian students have been studying the English Language from the first grade. Before joining universities, they had spent 12 years at schools in which they have been trained on the four main skills of English language. Upon the completion of this long period of studying the English language, most students fail to communicate appropriately and continuously using English without shifting to L1. Code-mixing between Arabic and English has become a common phenomenon that blocks fluency of the language during students' performance. To remedy any dilemma, diagnosing should be the first step. Therefore, researchers decided to find out more factors and reasons that enhance code-mixing.

**Purpose of the study:**

A quick review of the literature shows that the factors and reasons behind this phenomenon are varied. Accordingly, the current study is an attempt to investigate this linguistic phenomenon through identifying the most frequent factors that motivate code-mixing. The study also aims at finding out the differences between the subjects' responses with respect to the selected factors. Hence, the differences among the participants' responses that can be attributed to age, gender, workplace, student status and years of experience are also investigated.

**Research Questions:-**

The study aims to find an answer to the following questions:

1. What are the most frequent factors that stand behind **Code-mixing** in a bilingual context?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences at  $\alpha \leq (0.05)$  in **Code-mixing** between M.A. graduates and students of An-Najah National University.
3. Are there any statistically significant differences at  $\alpha \leq (0.05)$  in **Code-mixing** that can be attributed to gender, age or years of experience.

**Importance of the Study:**

The importance of this study springs from the fact that students and teachers will be more aware of the key factors and reasons that stand behind code-mixing. Being probably the sole study conducted in this setting, the study aims to have those in the field better understand why participants code-mix in their speech. It also opens the horizon for further studies that may tackle this noticeable yet important phenomenon. It may also help teachers and students of English language to become more aware of the negative impact of this linguistic phenomenon on students' competence and performance. Teachers may also make use of the results of the study by predicting areas of code-mixing and prepare the appropriate solutions in advance. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, rare studies have been conducted on university setting a long with workplace setting in Palestine.

**Limitations of the study:**

The study was restricted to a sample from An-Najah M.A. holders and students. The data was collected in March 2019. The topic of the study targets only the factors that motivate code-mixing. The study was limited to the following aspects:

**Locative limitation:**

The study was conducted at one Palestinian university: An-Najah National University.

**Temporal limitation:**

The study was carried out in spring 2019.

**Topical limitation:**

The topic of the study targets only the factors that motivate code-mixing.

**Human limitations:**

The sample of the study was restricted to M.A. applied linguistics students and graduates of An-Najah National University.

**Research Design:**

The researchers used the descriptive analysis method as it suits such types of studies. So the design is considered adequate to collect the needed data for the purpose of the study.

**Population and Sample:**

The population of the study constituted from regular and postgraduate university students of An-Najah National University .54 M.A. students and postgraduate employees in different institutions were selected to constitute the sample of the present study. Table (1) below shows the demographic characteristics of the sample.

**Table (1):-** Demographic characteristics of the sample.

Variable	Characteristics of variables	Frequencies	Percentage
	21- 26 years	23	42.6%

	27- 32 years	20	37%
	33- 38 years	4	7.4%
	39- 44 years	5	9.3%
	More than 45 years	2	3.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	15	27.8%
	Female	39	72.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Work place</b>	Teacher (MOE, Private School, Universities, KG)	28	51.8%
	NGOs Sector	3	5.5%
	No Work	19	35.2%
	Others	4	7.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Years of work experience</b>	1- 5 Year	19	35.2%
	6- 10 Year	8	14.8%
	11- 15 Year	5	9.3%
	More then 16	4	7.4%
	Missing	18	33.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Academic level</b>	MA Students	32	59.3%
	MA Graduates	22	40.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Instrumentation:**

A self-constructed questionnaire was used to gather the data of the study. The questionnaire consists of 18 items. The items require the respondents to indicate their opinion towards the reasons of CM by choosing one of the following options: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree. The questionnaire was distributed to 54 M.A. students and graduates of the Applied Linguistics and Translation program at An-Najah National University. The questionnaire had (0.87) reliability coefficient index before it was used in the study.

**Data analysis:**

Means, standard deviations, T-tests and Anova tests were used to analyze the data of the study.

**Findings and Discussion:-**

Research Question One: **What are the most frequent factors that stand behind Code-mixing in a bilingual context?**

To answer this question, researchers calculated means, standard deviations and degrees of each item. Table (2) shows the most frequent factors that motivate code -mixing among bilingual speakers. The researchers adopted the following scale to identify the degrees of items.

Low degree: 1.00-2.33

Medium degree: 2.34-3.66

High degree: 3.67-5.00

**Table (2):-** Mean, Std. Deviation and degrees of the items that motivate code-mixing.

NO.	Items	M	SD	Degree
<b>Subjects of the study code-mix to.....</b>				
12	Respond to those using code-mixing.	4.11	0.883	High
7	Emphasize my speech.	3.80	0.898	High
16	Conform to the raised topic.	3.78	0.664	High
5	Increase the understanding of the addressees.	3.76	0.930	High
11	Talk about western societies and culture.	3.69	1.025	High

6	Compensate for the lack of vocabulary repertoire.	3.61	1.054	Medium
17	Show my knowledge of technological and cultural advancement.	3.35	1.084	Medium
8	Impact others.	3.31	1.006	Medium
9	Show happiness and excitement.	3.19	1.183	Medium
13	Show that I am educated and have ability to use the English language	3.15	1.156	Medium
1	Show my linguistic background and capacity.	3.00	1.166	Medium
18	Exclude a person from the conversation.	2.94	1.379	Medium
15	Show solidarity.	2.93	1.061	Medium
4	Follow the modern trend or fashion in the community.	2.87	1.198	Medium
10	Show anger.	2.83	1.314	Medium
2	Show that I belong to a certain social status or community.	2.72	1.156	Medium
14	Show that I am civilized.	2.69	1.286	Medium
3	Prove that I belong to a certain ethnicity or nationality.	2.30	1.039	Low
Total		3.26	Medium	

As seen in table (2), the total degree of the subjects' responses was medium. The item "Respond to those using it" got the highest degree. This finding may result from the fact that bilingual speakers naturally tend to react and communicate similarly in a given dialogue. They communicate in either Arabic or English or code-mix between them. An Arabic-English bilingual speaker would say, for example, "God willing" when replying to another speaker asking him to meet again. Here the first interlocutor would never utter the Arabic counterpart "inshallah" in such dialogue. This is actually related to psychological reasons where the second speaker tends to respond with the same language maintaining his prestige and showing off his competency.

The Items "Emphasize my speech" and 'Conform to the raised topic' with means of (3.80) & (3.78) came in the second placerespectively. Generally speaking, most of the items got a medium degree. The only item that scored a low degree is item number three "Prove that I belong to a certain ethnicity or nationality" with a mean of (2.30). In fact, this is because all respondents belong to the Palestinian nationality with no significant differences among them with regards to the culture and traditions. Besides, all respondents are well-educated (being postgraduates) and pay no attention to such issue when communication with their counterpart. Accordingly, it is very normal that this item scored the lowest degree.

#### Research Question Two:

Are there any statistically significant differences at  $\alpha \leq (0.05)$  in **Code-mixing** between M.A. graduates and M.A. students of An-Najah National University.

To answer this question, researchers used the t-test that shows means, standard deviations and level of significance as seen in table (3).

**Table (3):-** T-test results of the participants' academic level.

Students' academic level	NO.	M	SD	F	Sig
M.A. students	32	3.29	.733	0.229	0.652
M.A. graduates	22	3.25	.682		

Table (3) shows no statistically significant differences between both respondents' academic levels since the significance level is (0.6) which is above  $\alpha \leq (0.05)$ . It is clear that the academic level has nothing to do with code mixing. The researchers assume that since the respondents have their first degree in one of English language fields, they surely have the ability to code-mix whenever they want and whoever they are regardless to their level.

Research Question Three: **Are there any statistically significant differences at  $\alpha \leq (0.05)$  in Code-mixing that can be attributed to gender, age or years of experience?**

**A. Are there any statistically significant differences at  $\alpha \leq (0.05)$  in Code-mixing attributed to gender?**

T-test was used to find out whether there were any statistically significant differences between males and females. Table (4) below shows the results of the T-test.

**Table (4):-** Results of T-test for two independent variables.

Gender	#	M	SD	F	Sig
Male	15	3.22	0.653	0.474	0.509
Female	39	3.29	0.577		

A quick review of table (4) reveals that T-test scores show no statistically significant differences  $\alpha \leq (0.05)$  between males and females. Accordingly, both male and female bilingual respondents tend to code-mix alike, at least in this study. Such a result is considered a surprise to the researchers. It is assumed that females do care more about the language use. As a matter of fact, they tend to use language in a prestigious way. The finding of this study, however, was the opposite. Both male and female respondents code-mix with no significant difference.

**B. Are there any statistically significant differences at  $\alpha \leq (0.05)$  in Code-mixing attributed to participants' age?**

Distribution of sample's age was stated in table (5), means and standard deviations, and then ANOVA test that appear in table (6) were calculated to find out whether there were any statistically significant differences that might be attributed to sample's age.

**Table (5):-** Distribution of sample's age.

Age	Frequencies	M	SD
22- 26 years	23	3.39	.419
27- 32 years	20	3.15	.468
33-38 years	4	2.83	.619
39- 44 years	5	3.34	.504
More than 45 years	2	3.63	1.414
Total	54	3.26	.515

**Table (6):-** Numbers, means and standard deviations of the age variable.

Age	#	Mean	Std. dev
21- 26 years	23	3.39	.419
27- 32 years	20	3.15	.468
33- 38 years	4	2.83	.619
39- 44 years	5	3.34	.504
More than 45 years	2	3.63	1.414

To verify if the differences in means scores are statistically significant, ANOVA test was used.

**Table (7):-** Results of ANOVA test for the age variable.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.222	19	.433	2.615	.007
Within Groups	5.672	34	.165		
Total	13.804	53			

As seen in table (7), the significance level (.007) is statistically significant in favor of those who are above 45 years old. A fact that may be attributed to the high level of language competency the aged respondents enjoy. It goes without saying that the more aged the language users are, the more competent in language they will be. The respondents aging 45 years old and above, therefore, are surely confident enough to code mix between English and Arabic.

**C. Are there any statistically significant differences at  $\alpha \leq (0.05)$  in Code-mixing that can be attributed to years of experience?**

To answer this question, the researchers used One-Way ANOVA test.

**Table (8):-** Work experience, frequencies, means and standard deviations.

Experience	Frequencies	M	SD
1- 5 Year	19	3.14	.399
6- 10 Year	8	3.10	.461
11- 15 Year	5	3.85	.470
More then 16	4	3.66	.865
Total	36	3.15	.506

As seen in table(8), there are different means. To make sure whether any of these means is significant or not, researchers used the One-Way ANOVA (table: 9)

**Table (9):-** ANOVA test for work experience.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.498	3	.499	2.137	0.115
Within Groups	7.477	32	.234		
Total	8.976	35			

Table (9) shows no statistically significant differences ( $\alpha = (0.115)$ ) that can be attributed to years of experience. The respondents' professions included teachers (at the MoE, private schools or KGs), university instructors and employees at NGOs sector. Other respondents, however, stated that they either work at other places or haven't joined the workplace yet. It is not surprising that the years of experience has nothing to do with the the use of code mixing. As stated above all respondents enjoy high level of competency in both languages. They can code mix at workplace, home or anywhere regardless to the nature of their work and the years of experience. The accumulative years seemingly haven't neither affected the respondent's language proficiency nor their usage of code mixing.

### Conclusions and Recommendations:-

Because Palestine is a bilingual country where English is a foreign language, speakers may mix English and Arabic in certain situations. There are some reasons that led to mixing English with Arabic. This investigation included CM phenomenon among post graduate students who are either enrolling for the M.A. degree or M.A. holders employed for different non-governmental organizations. The study also included some unemployed M.A. holders.

The findings of this research proved that CM among subjects of the study was not random. They aimed at achieving specific functions and had their own motives to do so. The findings showed that they mainly aimed at responding to those using code-mixing, emphasizing their speech, conforming to the raised topic, increasing the understanding of the addressees or talking about western societies and culture. The next frequent factors that motivated code-mixing were compensating for vocabulary repertoire shortage, showing their knowledge of technological and cultural advancement, impact others, showing happiness and excitement, showing that they are educated and have the ability to use the English language or showing their linguistic background and capacity.

Researchers concluded that CM is a universal linguistic cognitive behavior. Speakers of English language tend to recourse to this phenomenon either to compensate for their weakness in English language or to show solidarity with others in specific social situations. They may also code-mix to save time or when they feel that the equivalent word in the English language is not so accurate. All in all, these results were in line with Abuzienah D. (2017), Al Hayek (2016) Mohammad, M. & Alkhreshah, A. (2015) and David O. Fakeye (2012).

Results of the study showed no statistically significant differences among subjects of the study that can be attributed to gender or work place. However, there were statistically significant differences attributed to age in favor of those above 45 years old. This might be attributed to the fact that aged persons feel more confident while code-mixing Arabic and English language without being embarrassed. This also might be attributed to their high competencies in both languages.



This study hopefully encourages further research on CM in EFL/ FFL contexts. It is highly recommended to conduct similar studies, both qualitative and quantitative, to reveal more about the reasons and the motives that cause Code-Mixing in varied contexts and settings. When considering future research, it is suggested that the following points will be taken into consideration:

1. Studying other aspects of Code-Mixing such as the phonological and syntactic ones.
2. Studying the Code-Mixing practices of other Palestinian learners, (who have the same level of competency), at other different Palestinian universities.
3. Studying Code-Mixing of undergraduate English majors.
4. Studying Arabic/ Hebrew Code-Mixing especially among labors and merchants.

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