



English-Arabic Code Switching and Identity in Bilingual Saudis Living in Saudi Arabia: A Comparative Study between Large and Small Cities

Kais Sultan Mousa Alowidha^{1*}

^{1*}English Department, College of Arts, Jouf University, Saudi Arabia

Citation: Kais Sultan Mousa Alowidha, (2024), English-Arabic Code Switching and Identity in Bilingual Saudis Living in Saudi Arabia: A Comparative Study between Large and Small Cities, *Educational Administration: Theory And Practice*, 30(5), 4713-4722
Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i5.3689

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Code-switching between Arabic and English is a very common phenomenon in Saudi Arabia today. Some studies suggested that code-switching between English and Arabic can distort the Saudi identity or the Arabic and Islamic identity in general. They also suggest that it is a tendency towards westernisation. Small cities, on the other hand, tend to have less code-switchers as the majority of residents are usually monolingual Arabic speakers. However, professional settings in large as well as small cities always require the use of professional English terms. The findings of this study highlighted that there is no correlation between gender and the frequency of code-switching. Moreover, English Saudi bilinguals believe that they identify with English as well as Arabic and they less likely to believe that communicating in English discard their Saudi identity or distort it. To sum it up, this current study found that it is natural for capitals or large cities to highlight the importance of code-switching with the availability of non-Arabic speakers in open places as well as professional settings.

Key words: Saudi EFL learners; Identity; Code mixing; Bilingualism; Code switching.

1. Introduction

This section will put the subject in the right context in order to provide the sufficient background about code-switching and identity. It will start with some general information as well as key concepts and approaches related to bilingualism and code-switching. In addition, there will be a presentation of the aims and objectives of the study. Later, the introduction will introduce the problem as well as the structure of the study. It is hoped that the research will fill the gap in literature and will be able to link theory with practice.

Code Switching can be defined as the action of choosing linguistic elements or changing them in order to fit a specific situation or interaction (Nilep, 2006). This study will examine English and Arabic code-switching among bilingual speakers in Saudi Arabia. It will compare bilingual speakers according to the variable of region, small cities vs large cities. Further, it will take into consideration the gender of the participant and will attempt to find out whether gender is a determiner in the frequency and the attitude of code-switching among Saudi bilinguals. The study will be conducted through the use of interviews with Bilingual Saudis who are residents of Saudi Arabia living in small and large cities.

It is important to put the phenomenon of code-switching between English and Arabic in Saudi Arabia in its historical context. In fact, English was first introduced in Saudi Arabia in 1936 (Qayoom, 2017). It was introduced to the educational system in 1958 and is taught today in public as well as private schools. Further, English is the means of communication in major organisations such as Saudi Airlines, Saudi Aramco and the Telecommunication Company (Mahboob and Elyas, 2014). On the one hand, English is considered an essential language in the Saudi Education as Saudi Arabia largely depends on foreign companies which have a major role in the economic development of the country (Mahboob and Elyas, 2014). It also has a prestigious position in the Saudi society (Qayoom, 2017). On the other hand, English in Saudi Arabia cannot be described as a “neutral” language. In fact, there are some political, religious as well as economic implications and there is some controversy about it. As the effects of the policies of globalisation and modernisation, which Saudi Arabia follows, have made the use of English more frequent, there is also some resistance to it with questioning its

validity in addition to attempts to make some changes in the language in order to meet the local attitudes and practices (Mahboob and Elyas, 2014). In other words, the education system in Saudi Arabia is heavily dependent on the Islamic values. Thus, there is normally some resistance to learning foreign languages of the west as this can affect the respect to culture and nationalism (Qayoom, 2017).

Theoretically speaking, there are mainly three approaches to Code-switching (CS): the structural approach, the sociolinguistic approach and the psycholinguistic approach. The structural approach mainly focuses on the grammatical aspects of code-switching and it tends to detect the syntactic and morphosyntactic constraints in code switching. On the other hand, the sociolinguistic approach mainly views CS as a discourse phenomenon which concentrates on issues like the way social meaning is generated and the type of discourse functions it fulfils (Boztepe, 2003). The psycholinguistic approach studies code switching in order to have a better comprehension of the cognitive procedures which are implied in the bilingual production, perception and acquisition (Bullock and Toribio, 2009). Some studies which tackled code-switching with regard to the structural approach, the sociolinguistic approach and the psycholinguistic approach are Kootstra (2015) and Stell and Yakpo, (2015).

Furthermore, the clash between the macro and micro sociolinguistic dimensions of CS has changed the route of studying the social aspects of code choice. Breitborde (1983) suggested that the social meaning of code-switching cannot ignore the societal regularity and the social relationships which are at the macro level, which probably give meaning to individual choices (Boztepe, 2003). Tabouret-Keller (1983) indicates that when predictability of code choice is high, the act of switching becomes a shape of societal pattern conformation (Boztepe, 2003). For example, when the language teacher switches for the local dialect while teaching, this indicates that there is an implied social regularity rather than an individual's strategy to redefine the social situation (Boztepe, 2003).

2. Literature Review

People who speak two languages (or more) code-switch if they mix words or phrases from the two languages they speak during their speech or writing. A code can be defined as the language or variety such as a dialect. Thus, code-switching (CS) is a change of words or phrases in the two languages or dialects that takes place among people who speak the same two languages (Bista, 2010). Further, code-switching is also determined by other factors such as preserving privacy, an easier way to express one's self in one language than the other or simply to avoid misunderstanding (Bista, 2010). In addition, code switching has been studied in different fields of linguistics and scholars have many definitions of it (Nilep, 2006). Code-switching occurs among many communities such as immigrants, regional minorities and native multilinguals (Gardner-Chloros, 2009). Giacalone Ramat (1995) suggested that code-switching also occurs when well-built bilingualism exists in a community and when speakers can equally use two languages (Gardner-Chloros, 2009). This is the case of the current study as it focuses on bilingual Saudis who have very good proficiency in English and they code-switch for a number of reasons. These potential reasons will be discussed in this section and the practical and actual and practical reasons will be discussed and analysed in the findings. This section will tackle a number of concepts related to code-switching and identity. It will explain bilingualism and code-switching in general in addition to explanation of the history of these phenomena in Saudi Arabia. Further, there will be an explanation of language choice, the Markedness Model and code-mixing in relation to bilingualism. Finally, there will be some literature review of code-switching in large and small cities as well as gender's correlation with code-switching.

Bilingualism

Bilingualism and multilingualism are both significant phenomena in social sciences. They represent ethnic groups, communities as well as regions (Edwards, 2013). Bilingualism refers to the state of speaking or understanding two languages (Wei and Li, 2000). It is not a phenomenon of language. It is rather an aspect of its use, as speakers would use a code for a specific situation. It also belongs to the domain of parole rather than langue (Mackey, 2000). Generally speaking, people who grow up in a monolingual or unicultural society think that the norm is being monolingual and thus being bilingual is an exception. However, a third of the world's population uses two or more languages. Still, determining who is and is not bilingual is not very easy (Wei and Li, 2000). It emerges due to contact. Its spread in a community or group relies on the context of its growth. In other words, the attitude of individuals towards the languages involved as well as bilingualism itself can determine how much bilingualism can spread. In Europe, for example, attitudes towards bilingualism can be promoting, as in bilingual counties, or allowing some parts of the country to use the local language, as in Catalan, for example (Hoffmann, 2014). Furthermore, since bilingualism emerges due to contact, individual attitude and community attitude towards bilingualism itself as well as the involved languages can also affect bilingualism by either promoting it or hindering it (Hoffmann, 2014).

There can be two distinct types of bilingualism: societal and individual. Societal bilingualism has three types: having two monolingual groups in a society and a few bilingual individuals handle the intergroup communication, or some people of the society are bilingual as in African countries or India or having one monolingual group and the other bilingual. Individual bilingualism, on the other hand, as described by

Weinreich (1953:5), refers to a person who is able to speak two languages and uses these two languages in alternation (Weinreich, 1953 as cited in Appel and Muysken, 2005). Individual bilingualism was previously thought to cause problems in a child's achievement and intelligence test. Further, it was thought to have been the main reason for the inability of minority to assimilate in the society (Hoffmann, 2014). Similarly, societal bilingualism can also be considered an obstacle if it is generally believed that language can generate conflict (Hoffmann, 2014).

In the same way, it was previously thought that bilingualism could cause a break in the finite cognitive abilities or a decrease in the intellectual abilities of bilinguals. Research, however, showed that bilingualism does not cause loss. It rather fosters augmentation of the linguistic repertoire which is associated with intensified sensitivity, high cultural awareness and strong cognitive flexibility (Edwards, 2009). Further, when children are exposed to two languages, this can raise their potential of becoming more creative and open and having an enhanced mental capacity (Al Saud, 2016). Other studies such as Chang and Burns (2005) showed that there is a strong correlation between creative skills and school performance (Al Saud, 2016). On the other hand, scholars such as Miller (1987) argued that creativity is simply an instrument of knowledge which has no effect on improving creativity. Lindholm (1980) argues that bilingualism is one of the issues that has not received enough examination at the time. Consequently, its effect on the cognitive development is not determined (Al Saud, 2016). Still, the second language which the learner acquires could be influenced by a number of factors. These factors can be classified into three groups. First the individual factors such as the age, goals, attitude, language proficiency and individual differences. Second, the sociolinguistic factors including the learning context, exposure, and language prestige. Third, the linguistic and psycholinguistic factors such as language level, typological resemblance and developmental factors (Pavlenko, 2004). Furthermore, with long exposure and advanced levels of second language proficiency, the influence of the first language can still be spotted in competence, performance and processing regardless of the L2 levels. In fact, the influences are in phonology, morphosyntax, lexis, semantics, pragmatics and rhetoric (Pavlenko, 2004).

However, as age can play a fundamental role in determining the dominance of a language over another the critical period hypothesis was proposed by Lenneberg (CPH). This hypothesis means that language is primarily acquired until the critical age. This age starts from early childhood to puberty. After this age, it is difficult to consider an individual bilingual. In fact, Age of Acquisition (AoA) is an element that can determine which language of the two that a bilingual speaks is the dominant language (Birdsong, 2014). It is true that the best time for acquiring a language is best before puberty. Still, the evidence of this hypothesis was dependent on the relearning of weak L1 skills rather than acquiring the second language in a normal context (Abello-Contesse, 2009). Despite the fact that the age factor is generally agreed upon, there are still discussions on the CPH and its relation to L2. Literature on the subject such as Bialystok (1997) and Richards and Schmidt (2002) have found that there is more than one critical period. This depends on the language component. The studies also suggested that there is no one or more critical periods for second language acquisition in contrast with first language acquisition. Further, they found that this period is sensitive but not exactly critical. Finally, there is a slow continuous decrease from childhood to adulthood (Abello-Contesse, 2009).

Research Questions

The research will seek answering four questions:

1. Do Saudis think that code-switching makes them appear more professional and prestigious?
2. Do bilingual Saudis identify differently with English and Arabic?
3. To what extent do Saudis associate language with identity?
4. Do bilinguals living in larger and smaller cities have different views about language identification?

Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1:

If Saudis believe that there is a link between code-switching and sounding more prestigious and professional, Saudi Bilinguals will attempt to use more code-switching in their speech.

Hypothesis 2:

If there is a link between language and identity, then Saudis will identify with speakers differently based on their language use/choice

Hypothesis 3:

If language and identity are affected by each other, code-switching will always receive negative attitude from Saudis.

Hypothesis 4:

If there is a difference between English and Arabic regarding language identification, this is due to the fact that English is less used in smaller cities than in larger cities.

3. Methodology

There are mainly two methodologies used in research. This section will present these methodologies and their use in addition to the justifications for choosing the qualitative method over the quantitative one.

The two main forms of methodology are the qualitative methodology and the quantitative methodology (Tuli, 2010). Debbs (1982) differentiated between qualitative and quantitative research. He stated that although they are not completely distinct, in general, the quantitative research is given more respect and the public tend to believe that science is linked to numbers and that this method means generating more accurate data. However, qualitative methods take more time and need better clarity (Debbs, 1982 as cited in Lune and Berg, 2016). Still, social scientists study variant and complex issues. Consequently, as they need to discuss, scrutinise and comprehend all these phenomena, they have to use different methodologies which are mainly qualitative or quantitative (Tuli, 2010). There have been many arguments on the philosophical issues and related advantages of qualitative and quantitative research. Berg (1995) suggested that a quantitative research is concerned with the amounts and measures.

On the other hand, Tesch (1992) suggested that a qualitative research mainly or entirely depends on words as data. In accordance with this, the current research has chosen the qualitative method as it will depend on the verbal responses of participants to later analyse the data. While a quantitative research is dependent on the collection of facts and highlights the fundamentality of valid and reliable measurements, a qualitative research follows a naturalistic approach which focuses on preserving loyalty to the real world. It also highlights the significance of social reality in the understanding of subjects about their environment (Gray and Densten, 1998). The current research will collect the data from the participants as they are in the real world and will also attempt to understand the subjects in their environments, the Saudi society. Hence, the main difference between the two approaches is regarding the way the social reality is examined. There is a general inclination among writers, such as Filstead (1979) and Guba and Lincoln (1982), to view quantitative and qualitative researches as contrasting approaches causing some exaggeration about the differences between the two approaches (Gray and Densten, 1998). According to Grotjahn's (1987) classification of research, a research can be categorised in relation to data collection methods (experimental or non-experimental), data types (qualitative or quantitative), and data analysis (statistical or interpretive) (Brown, 2004).

Qualitative researchers, as Patton (2015 p.13) suggests, consider the world complicated, changing, interdependent, patterned, variant, unpredictable and comprehended via anecdotes. They also have no trust in generalisations and they prefer to be involved in the specifications of time and place (Azungah, 2018). In the end, a qualitative research is the type of research which generates findings which could be reached by the statistical procedures of the quantification (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 17 as cited in Golafshani, 2003). Accordingly, this research will be a qualitative, non-experimental, observational interpretive study. It will aim at collecting the qualitative data of the participants without intending to manipulate variables for the sake of an experiment. It will only interpret and explain the outcomes from a realistic philosophical perspective.

The qualitative method has been chosen since the chosen subject is sociolinguistic problem which necessitates the collection of verbal responses from participants in order to be analysed. Further, the problem of code-switching and identity is a subjective issue which is changing, interdependent and variant among individuals and the quantitative method would not be the best choice for such an issue.

Qualitative Data Analysis

There are many ways to analyse qualitative data. Miles and Huberman (1994) explain three approaches: interpretative, social anthropological and collaborative social. The interpretative approaches, as in this research, view the human action as a collection of symbols which have underlying meanings. Interviews or surveys are later transcribed into texts in order to be analysed (Lune and Berg, 2017). This approach also allows the discovery of practical comprehension of meanings and actions. Interpretive approaches tend to believe that content, including, interviews and short stories were generated for the sake of communication. A careful and methodical analysis can identify this data as external, internal and intent meanings (Lune and Berg, 2017).

Sampling

As for the sampling procedure which this research aimed to follow, was snowball sampling. This procedure is generally used when the researcher reaches subjects via other contact information provided by other informants. As informants refer the researcher to other informants and these informants, in turn, also refer the researcher to other informants, the snowball effect starts to take place (Noy, 2008).

As for the participants of the research, they were all Saudi English-Arabic bilinguals who live in Saudi Arabia and who code-switch between Arabic and English. The research aimed to receive responses from about 10 participants (5 males and 5 females) with an average age of 29. However, the researcher attempted to take the contact information of about 20 participants who have variant residencies in big and small cities. 10 of them living in large cities and the other 10 live in smaller cities. The research was conducted following snowballing starting with friends and acquaintances. There were four available participants who were ready to participate in the research. These participants were also ready to refer to other informants that can meet the interests of this research. 10 participants were finally interviewed (5 males and 5 females). 4 of the participants lived in small cities and 6 of them lived in larger cities. The interviews did not take more than 30 minutes of the participant's time. Questions were related to how participants feel about the fact that they code-switch and what language they feel more comfortable with in different settings. They also included questions about their thoughts regarding the way others perceive them. The structure of the interview was divided into two main

parts: open questions with follow-up questions and then statements to agree or disagree with and explain the degree of agreement or disagreement. The participants were asked to give as much elaboration as possible for their choices. Further, it was done over the phone as the aimed participants live in Saudi Arabia. The data was recorded, transcribed and later analysed through qualitative thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis (TA) is generally used to identify, organise and provide understanding of patterns systematically through themes. This type of analysis lets the researcher comprehend and understand the shared aspects among the subjects. In fact, thematic analysis is an accessible, flexible and very popular procedure in the qualitative data analysis (Braun, Clarke and Terry, 2014). Accordingly, the findings were compared between larger and smaller cities and an analysis of the attitudes of male and female participants. The research found out whether the effect of code-switching on identity is viewed differently in larger and smaller cities. The purpose of the research is to determine to what extent the attitude of bilingual Saudis can be similar and to spot the similarities and differences between them.

Ethical Considerations

Before the start of the research, an ethical approval was needed and gained in order to contact the participants in Saudi Arabia who meet the interests of the research. During the course of the research, and even after the end of the research, there were a number of ethical issues that the research was required to preserve. This research attempted to adhere to all the following ethical considerations. First, informed consent. It means that the participants are aware what the research is about and they are informed with the aims and objectives of the research and they agree to that (Somekh and Lewin, 2005). The participants were sent an email informing them about the research and its aims and purposes. This email was sent two weeks before the expected time of the interview so the participants would have had enough time to make a decision whether to take part or not. The other ethical consideration which this research aimed to preserve was the confidentiality of the research. This ethical consideration means that the names and identities of participants are not revealed, which allows them to speak more freely (Lune and Berg, 2016). This dissertation used numbers instead of names in order to preserve this ethical issue. Further, the research attempted to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. It also avoided distressing and offending them in the sense that the content of the interview was not harmful and did not discuss daily issues which are not thought to, or intended to harm or bother the participants. Further, as the participants were informed about the aims and interests of the research, there were hardly any risks that the research can potentially trigger. In the end, the participants were given a one-week period to think whether they were interested in the research. Later 10 of them eventually signed the informed consent form.

4. Results & Findings

The Data Collection Procedure:

During the collection of the data, the researcher believed that although literature included many theories and positions regarding the relationship between code-switching and identity, it was still important to take the objective data directly from the participants. The participants were interviewed individually. There were 5 males and 5 females and 6 of the participants live in large cities and 4 of them live in small cities. The average age of the participants was 29. The oldest was 38 and the youngest was 26. Each interview lasted for approximately 30 minutes. The interviews were recorded on a mobile phone and was later transcribed. The participants were given the option to respond in English or Arabic or code-switch between the two. The questions were clear for the participants and there were some clarifications in cases of confusion.

Data Analysis

Since this research depended on thematic analysis to analyse the data, the themes were generated inductively. After conducting the interviews, codes were classified and themes were later generated depending on the code in these interviews. Although the researcher already had expectations of the themes, the actual generation of themes was completely dependent on the response of the participants. The research had interesting findings related to the themes of formality, identity, gender and city size. The theme of formality included two codes: professional settings and casual settings. The theme of identity included the codes of attitude towards English and Arabic, prestige, background and education, distanced Saudi identity and language classification. Gender had the codes of male and female. As for the theme of city size, it included two codes: large cities and small cities.

It has to be noted that question 4 was perceived differently by different participants and I did not attempt to control their answers in order to get the true attitudes of the participants. Some of them understood the question as whether speaking the two languages gives them better self-esteem. Others perceived it as whether they see themselves different as they speak two languages. Therefore, in the analysis, I attempted to include the answers as supporting ideas to the codes of attitude towards languages, background and identity. Another issue that has to be noted is that the ages of the participants were close ranging between 26 and 36. They were all young bilinguals. As for the gender of the participants, they were 5 males and 5 females. The answers did

not seem to be affected by gender. Further, since the participants also came from larger and smaller cities, the responses did not seem to be affected by city size either.

The following findings will be described according to the aforementioned themes and codes. The answers of the participants will be grouped accordingly in order to meet and answer the questions of the research.

Formality: Professional Settings

P10 thought that the use of English at work allows the speaker to get more attention and that they feel they are "taken more seriously". In a similar way, P9 believed that using English, especially at work, raises the chances of having better opportunities in life. P10 also thought that since they received their education in English, they feel more comfortable to use it in professional settings. P1 found using Arabic at work a weak point. They felt that it shows less professionalism than using English. P1 believed that using English at work is a sign of professionalism in contrast with Arabic which they considered a weak point. All participants found that English was easier and more practical than Arabic when speaking about work-related topics. P1 and P6 thought that the use of Arabic in professional settings is a sign of lack of professionalism since communication is all done in English, and there is no point in using Arabic. P2, P5 and P10 agreed that English is better to be used in professional settings but they noted that it cannot be a criterion to determine professionalism. P10 specified that professionalism has nothing to do with languages. On the other hand, P3, P4, P7, P8 and P9 thought that English has to be used in professional settings but the use of Arabic in such settings does not necessitate lack of professionalism. All participants agreed that depending on English with the occasional use of Arabic words, where needed, was the best option in formal conversations, such as at work. P2 justified that through the fact that professional settings usually need formal register and the formal register in Arabic or the standard Arabic 'Fus-ha' is not used in speaking, so 'English makes more sense in these situations'. Still, P2 thought, if the work setting does not require English or English is not expected or needed, then, speaking Arabic is fine. P4 justified using English in professional settings with the fact that there are people who come from different parts of the world and they feel that it does not sound natural to mix or use Arabic. However, if the work setting uses Arabic and there are many people who speak Arabic, it is normal to mix. This can be contrasted with other work places which depend on English as previously explained. P5 justified preferring English in professional settings with the fact that they prefer experiencing things in their original language and therefore using English sounds more right. They added that mixing the two languages where mixing is appropriate would make a bilingual sound more professional. They clarified that appropriate mixing can take place when the Arabic equivalent is not precise or when the workplace itself largely depends on English. P6 also added that using Arabic words in an English setting could also mean that the person simply does not know the English equivalent. As for P7, they believed that the language of business is English so everything should be done in English and a person cannot be professional if they do not use the universal terms which are mainly in English. They added that although they might code-switch when they talk to co-workers, talking to their boss or sending emails is always in English. This consequently means that English might be the used language of power. P8 also thought that English is the language of work and education and that it is important to speak English and it is also easier. They added that it was the global language that everyone understands.

Casual Settings

P1 found Arabic easier, quicker and more natural to use than English in casual settings. P3, P6, P7 and P9 agreed with P1 that their mother-tongue, Arabic, is easier in casual conversations. P7 specified that when other people mix the two languages when they talk, the participant would prefer to do the same. They also added that it is very normal for people to use it and that even monolingual Arabic speakers who know some individual words in English try to insert them in their speech. Further, they added that although they prefer to use Arabic in casual settings, they code-switch between the two languages unconsciously and other people might think, as all participants agree, they are trying to sound more prestigious. P4 and P5, however, thought that English was much easier to use in casual conversations and they feel more comfortable to use it and they believe that Arabic on social media and electronic devices, for example, is strange and does not sound right. Still, P5 uses both languages on social media according to the topic. In addition, P2, P4 and P10 agreed that they feel most comfortable when they code-switch between the two languages according to the topic. Similarly, P2 feels more comfortable using English when the topic is related to films or sport such as "football". Further, they also prefer it on electronic devices and social media. In the same way, P3 believed that the Arabic version of sites like Facebook sound 'silly'. All the participants who prefer English on electronic devices and social media justified that with the fact that usually anything you use on electronic devices is made in English and that they would prefer the original language of anything. P8 thought that there are terms and expressions that are best understood and expressed in English and translating them is not very practical. P10 described the Arabic translation of social media sites as 'strange and funny', adding that the translation is so literal that the meaning is lost.

This means that P1, P3, P7, P8 and P9 preferred English at work and Arabic in casual settings. P2, P4, P5, P6 and P10 preferred English at work and Arabic in casual settings but they would code-switch between Arabic and English when the topic requires so.

5. Discussion

The collected data revealed that all participants would code-switch because it is easier for them to use a specific word in one of the languages. This especially occurs in professional settings as the participants tend to use English words or, more often, entirely speak English. This is similar to Bista's (2010) study, which revealed that code-switching can occur when the speaker finds one language easier to use than the other in specific situations, and Masrahi's study (2016), which suggested that bilinguals can code-switch to make an idea clearer or simpler. The same idea is also shared, to an extent, by Bentahila and Davies (1995). However, their study added that code-switching is a sign of carelessness. In fact, the current study does not find this negative attitude towards code-switching and does not describe code-switchers as careless. The participants simply find it easier to use one language rather than the other or mixing them together in specific situations. Further, Bista's (2010) study also revealed that code-switching can occur when the speaker wants to avoid misunderstanding. This is quite similar to the findings of this study as some participants thought that using English instead of Arabic can make their intended meaning clearer. The participants of the current study also thought that Arabic translations of English words or expressions in professional settings or online can make the intended meaning vague. They also thought that translations are often inaccurate. Similar to Masrahi (2016), the current study found that Saudi bilinguals would code-switch for prestigious reasons or to find the right word that fits the intended meaning. Omar and Ilyas (2018) had similar findings that bilinguals code-switch when they are unable to find the right word in the other language. Masrahi (2016), Söderberg Arnfast, and Jørgensen (2003) and Wei and Li (2000) also thought that Saudi bilinguals code-switch for social reasons and when they cannot find the Arabic word for the idea they intend to express. Another idea in this research that is similar to the study conducted by Söderberg Arnfast, and Jørgensen (2003), is that both studies found that bilinguals are not always aware that they are code-switching.

Further, as the participants of this study stated that they tend to code-switch in professional settings and rarely code-switch in casual settings unless the topic requires so. This is coherent with Omar and Ilyas's (2018) study, Sebba and Wootton's (1998) study, and Blom and Gumperz's (1972) study. Their studies showed that there are two codes or a dichotomy in speech: the 'us' code and the 'them' code, the 'we' code and the 'they' code. The 'us' or 'we' code is used in informal conversations and the 'them' or 'they' code is used in formal conversations. Although the participants of this study were not aware of the academic terms of the idea, they were able to express it. Since they use English at work, where the environment is usually international and where there are terms to be used in English, this can be the 'they-code'. On the other hand, with friends they prefer Arabic, which is the 'we-code'.

Implications and Conclusion

In conclusion, this study showed that the Arabic identity is not affected by code-switching into English in bilingual Saudis. The study was a significant addition to literature as most of the literature on code-switching between English and Arabic in relation to identity revealed that the relation is negative and that code-switching and seriously damage the Arabic identity. In fact, this study challenges previous studies and adds questions that can be further studied in future researches. Furthermore, the study also made a comparison that has hardly ever been tackled in previous literature on Arabic-English code-switching. The comparison between large and small cities in Saudi Arabia is an innovative one and which can be researched more profoundly in future studies. The comparison of the current study showed that although code-switching into English does not affect the identity of Saudi bilinguals, it does not seem an essential need in smaller cities. The findings were reached through the attempt to analyse the responses of 10 Saudi bilinguals (5 males and 5 females) who code-switch between English and Arabic. The participants came from larger and smaller cities and the answers were compared accordingly. However, the answers of the participants did not change according to the size of the city nor the gender of the participants and the responses were generally coherent. The responses revealed that Saudi bilinguals believe that they do not generally code-switch on purpose. They rather do that unconsciously and the action is spontaneous. Although bilinguals do not clearly state that they feel prestigious about their ability, the analysis of the answers showed that since they feel good about it and they think that speaking English is an advantage in professional settings, it can be said that code-switching is sometimes used for prestigious reasons in professional settings rather than casual settings. The findings also revealed that code-switching is definitely linked to professionalism. In some cases, it was for a better image and presentation, for better opportunities and because it is needed in some situations. In other words, some terms are best said in English. In other cases, code-switching was seen as a natural consequence of education, training and learning, since professional education usually takes place in English. In fact, this is what was meant by prestige in professional settings. When a person shows their linguistic abilities, this means that have received the right education and training.

This research has local as well as international implications. The study implies that there should be more future research done on code-switching between English and Arabic, especially in Saudi Arabia. In fact, the available literature on the subject did not sufficiently focus on Saudi Arabia. In addition, the studies which focused on Saudi Arabia were not all very up-to-date. Further, there is hardly any research found in literature about large and small cities with regard to code-switching in Saudi Arabia. There should be much more research done on

the subject since Saudi Arabia hosts many foreigners from different parts of the world and English is gaining a more significant role in everyday life in the country. In addition, as globalisation has changed the course of language development and as the way current Arabic is used is different from standard Arabic, future research need to take into consideration that the spoken Arabic today is largely affected by English as a global language. It is also worth mentioning that the education system in Saudi Arabia also has an influence on the way Saudis use Arabic in the present day and have made code-switching more common among Saudis. Consequently, similar to the suggestions raised by Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi (2017), the education system needs to take that into consideration and make sure that the identity of Saudis is not affected on the long term. This can take place via the more detailed and profound research done on the subject. Furthermore, this research focused on code-switching and the use of language rather than the way English is learnt in the educational system. In the end, this research aims to be a starting point for future researches which are more profound and extended. This means that there should be further research on the attitude of bilinguals, in general, and bilingual Saudis, in specific, towards code-switching and its influence on identity. In addition, it is worth mentioning that the findings of this research are expected to be generalised on other countries and languages.

Moreover, one of the strengths of this research is that it followed a comparative method in order to collect the information. It also depended on the answers of participants of both genders. Another strength is that although language and identity is a very common subject in the literature of sociolinguist, this research was able to construct a bridge for a subject that has not been tackled in the literature of sociolinguistics today, which is code-switching between larger and smaller cities in Saudi Arabia. Another strength is that this study challenged all literature done on code-switching between English and Arabic, which almost all agree that code-switching into English can distort the Arabic identity. This new perspective started a long course of studies that should be conducted in the future for the confirmation or questioning of the findings of the current study. One final strength is that this study can also be applied on other languages too. It is not restricted on Arabic or Saudi Arabia.

On the other hand, this research also has some limitations. One of the limitations of this research is that it collected data from a small number of participants, 10 participants. The number of participants was not really enough to gain completely reliable data. However, this research is still the starting point for further and more extended future research. Another limitation is that this research used only two variables, city size and gender. The variable of gender, however, did not seriously affect the findings as the responses were not affected by gender. Although there were other variables which could have been used, such as age, bilinguals of Saudi Arabia are generally relatively young. Older Saudi are not usually bilinguals and do not have a positive attitude about code-switching from the first place. Still, utilising the variable of age could have provided more reliable data. For that reason, future studies can use more variables such as age and education level in addition to city size and gender. In addition, the variable of urban-rural can also be effective for a comparison.

References

1. Abello-Contesse, C. (2009). Age and the critical period hypothesis. *ELT journal*, 63(2), 170-172.
2. Al Saud, A. J. F. (2016). The Impact of Bilingualism on the Creative Capabilities of Kindergarten Children in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. *International Education Studies*, 9(10), 263-275.
3. Alotaibi, W. J. (2018). *Teacher-student phonological transference in a Saudi Arabian EFL context: a case study of phonological and attitudinal influences* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Southampton).
4. Al-Qaysi, N., & Al-Emran, M. (2017). Code-switching usage in social media: a case study from Oman. *International Journal of Information Technology and Language Studies*, 1(1), 25-38.
5. Appel, R., & Muysken, P. (2005). *Language contact and bilingualism*. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press.
6. Auer, P. (2005). A postscript: Code-switching and social identity. *Journal of pragmatics*, 37(3), 403-410.
7. Auer, P. (2010). Code-switching/mixing. *The SAGE handbook of sociolinguistics*, 460-478.
8. Auer, P. (Ed.). (2013). *Code-switching in conversation: Language, interaction and identity*. Abingdon, the UK: Routledge.
9. Ayeomoni, M. O. (2006). Code-switching and code-mixing: Style of language use in childhood in Yoruba speech community. *Nordic journal of African studies*, 15(1).
10. Azungah, T. (2018). Qualitative research: deductive and inductive approaches to data analysis. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 18(4), 383-400.
11. Azungah, T. (2018). Qualitative research: deductive and inductive approaches to data analysis. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 18(4), 383-400.
12. Badir, Y. (1995). Code-switching to English in daily conversations in Jordan: Factors and attitudes. *Yarmouk University*, 13(2), 9-27.
13. Barnawi, O. Z., & Al-Hawsawi, S. (2017). English education policy in Saudi Arabia: English language education policy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Current trends, issues and challenges. In *English language education policy in the Middle East and North Africa* (pp. 199-222). Springer, Cham.
14. Bentahila, A., & Davies, E. E. (1995). Patterns of code-switching and patterns of language contact. *Lingua*, 96(2-3), 75-93.

15. Birdsong, D. (2014). Dominance and age in bilingualism. *Applied Linguistics*, 35(4), 374-392.
16. Bista, K. (2010). Factors of Code Switching among Bilingual English Students in the University Classroom: A Survey. *Online Submission*, 9(29), 1-19.
17. Boztepe, E. (2003). Issues in code-switching: competing theories and models. *Studies in Applied Linguistics and TESOL*, 3(2).
18. Braun, V., Clarke, V., & Terry, G. (2014). Thematic Analysis. *Qualitative Research in Clinical and Health Psychology*, 95.
19. Brown, J. D. (2004). 19 Research Methods for Applied Linguistics: Scope, Characteristics, and Standards. *The handbook of applied linguistics*, 476.
20. Bucholtz, M., & Hall, K. (2004). Language and identity. *A companion to linguistic anthropology*, 1, 369-394.
21. Bullock, B. E., & Toribio, A. J. (2009). Themes in the study of code-switching. *Cambridge handbooks in linguistics. The Cambridge handbook of linguistic code-switching* (p. 1-17). Cambridge, the UK: Cambridge University Press.
22. Cheshire, J., & Gardner-Chloros, P. (1998). Code-switching and the sociolinguistic gender pattern. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 129(1), 5-34.
23. Davies, E. E., & Bentahila, A. (2008). Code switching as a poetic device: Examples from rai lyrics. *Language & Communication*, 28(1), 1-20.
24. Doody, O., & Noonan, M. (2013). Preparing and conducting interviews to collect data. *Nurse researcher*, 20(5).
25. Edwards, J. (2009). *Language and identity: An introduction*. Cambridge, the UK: Cambridge University Press.
26. Edwards, J. (2013). Bilingualism and multilingualism: Some central concepts. *The handbook of bilingualism and multilingualism*, 5-25.
27. Elyas, T., & Picard, M. (2010). Saudi Arabian educational history: Impacts on English language teaching. *Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues*, 3(2), 136-145.
28. Findlow, S. (2006). Higher education and linguistic dualism in the Arab Gulf. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 27(1), 19-36.
29. Gafaranga, J. (2005). Demythologising language alternation studies: Conversational structure vs. social structure in bilingual interaction. *Journal of pragmatics*, 37(3), 281-300.
30. Gardner-Chloros, P. (2009). *Code-switching*. Cambridge, the UK: Cambridge University Press.
31. Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The qualitative report*, 8(4), 597-607.
32. Gray, J. H., & Densten, I. L. (1998). Integrating quantitative and qualitative analysis using latent and manifest variables. *Quality and Quantity*, 32(4), 419-431.
33. Gross, S. (2000). Intentionality and the markedness model in literary codeswitching. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 32(9), 1283-1303.
34. Hall, K., & Nlep, C. (2015). 28 Code-Switching, Identity, and Globalization. *Discourse Analysis*, 597.
35. HAQ, F. A. A., & Smadi, O. (1996). Spread of English and westernization in Saudi Arabia. *World Englishes*, 15(3), 307-317.
36. Heller, M. (1992). The politics of codeswitching and language choice. *Journal of Multilingual & Multicultural Development*, 13(1-2), 123-142.
37. Hoffmann, C. (2014). *Introduction to bilingualism*. Abingdon, the UK: Routledge.
38. Holes, C. D. (2011). Language and identity in the Arabian Gulf. *Journal of Arabian Studies*, 1(2), 129-145.
39. Hopkyns, S. (2014). The effect of global English on culture and identity in the UAE: a double-edged sword. *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives*, 11(2).
40. Ismail, M. A. (2015). The Sociolinguistic Dimensions of code-switching between Arabic and English by Saudis. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 5(5), 99.
41. Joseph, J. (2004). *Language and identity: National, ethnic, religious*. New York, the USA: Springer.
42. King, K., & Ganuza, N. (2005). Language, identity, education, and transmigration: Chilean adolescents in Sweden. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 4(3), 179-199.
43. Kootstra, G. J. (2015). A psycholinguistic perspective on code-switching: Lexical, structural, and socio-interactive processes. *Code-switching between structural and sociolinguistic perspectives*, 39-64.
44. Liang, X. (2006). Identity and language functions: High school Chinese immigrant students' code-switching dilemmas in ESL classes. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 5(2), 143-167.
45. Lune, H., & Berg, B. L. (2016). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. New York, the USA: Pearson Higher Ed.
46. Lune, H., & Berg, B. L. (2017). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. New York, the USA: Pearson.
47. Mabule, D. R. (2015). What is this? Is it code switching, code mixing or language alternating?. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 5(1), 339.
48. Mackey, W. F. (2000). The description of bilingualism. *The bilingualism reader*, 26-54.

49. MacSwan, J. (2000). The architecture of the bilingual language faculty: Evidence from intrasentential code switching. *Bilingualism: language and cognition*, 3(1), 37-54.
50. Mahboob, A., & Elyas, T. (2014). English in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *World Englishes*, 33(1), 128-142.
51. Mahdi, H. H., Saadoon, M. M., & Al-Azzawi, Q. O. (2018). Code switching and code mixing: A sociolinguistic study of Senegalese international students in Iraqi colleges. *Journal of University of Babylon*, 26(3), 112-122.
52. Mashood, N., Verhoeven, H., & Chansarkar, B. (2009, April). Emiratisation, Omanisation and Saudisation—common causes: common solutions. In *Proceedings of the 10th International Business Research Conference* (pp. 1-36).
53. Masrahi, N. (2016). Causes of Code Switching by Low Level EFL Learners at Jazan University, Saudi Arabia: A Teachers' Perspective. *Journal of Language, Linguistics and Literature*, 2(4), 24-31.
54. Milroy, L., & Margrain, S. (1980). Vernacular language loyalty and social network. *Language in Society*, 43-70.
55. Myers-Scotton, C. (1993). Common and uncommon ground: Social and structural factors in codeswitching. *Language in Society*, 22(4), 475-503.
56. Myers-Scotton, C., & Bolonyai, A. (2001). Calculating speakers: Codeswitching in a rational choice model. *Language in society*, 30(1), 1-28.
57. Nilep, C. (2006). "Code switching" in sociocultural linguistics. *Colorado research in linguistics*, 19(1), 1.
58. Noy, C. (2008). Sampling knowledge: The hermeneutics of snowball sampling in qualitative research. *International Journal of social research methodology*, 11(4), 327-344.
59. Ochs, E. (1993). Constructing social identity: A language socialization perspective. *Research on language and social interaction*, 26(3), 287-306.
60. Omar, A., & Ilyas, M. (2018). The Sociolinguistic Significance of the Attitudes towards Code-Switching in Saudi Arabia Academia. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 8(3), 79-91.
61. Pavlenko, A. (2004). in adult bilingualism. *First language attrition: Interdisciplinary perspectives on methodological issues*, 28, 47.
62. Poplack, S. (2000). Sometimes I'll start a sentence in Spanish y termino en español: Toward a typology of code-switching. *The bilingualism reader*, 18(2), 221-256.
63. Qayoom, N. (2017). Present Status and the Problems of Teaching English in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Research Journal of English Language and Literature*, 5(4), 273-378.
64. Reini, J. (2008). The functions of teachers' language choice and code-switching in EFL classroom discourse.
65. Sipra, M. (2013). Contribution of bilingualism in language teaching. *English Language Teaching*, 6(1).
66. Söderberg Arnfast, J., & Jørgensen, J. N. (2003). Code-switching as a communication, learning, and social negotiation strategy in first-year learners of Danish. *International journal of applied linguistics*, 13(1), 23-53.
67. Stell, G., & Yakpo, K. (2015). *Code-switching between structural and sociolinguistic perspectives* (p. 328). De Gruyter.
68. Tay, M. W. (1989). Code switching and code mixing as a communicative strategy in multilingual discourse. *World Englishes*, 8(3), 407-417.
69. Toribio, A. J. (2001). On the emergence of bilingual code-switching competence. *Bilingualism: language and cognition*, 4(3), 203-231.
70. Tuli, F. (2010). The basis of distinction between qualitative and quantitative research in social science: Reflection on ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives. *Ethiopian Journal of Education and Sciences*, 6(1).
71. Wei, L. (2005). "How can you tell?": Towards a common sense explanation of conversational code-switching. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 37(3), 375-389.
72. Wei, L., & Li, W. (Eds.). (2000). *The bilingualism reader*. London, the UK: Routledge Press.
73. Woiceshyn, J., & Daellenbach, U. (2018). Evaluating inductive vs deductive research in management studies. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 13(2), 183-195.
74. Yaghan, M. A. (2008). "Arabizi": A contemporary style of Arabic Slang. *Design issues*, 24(2), 39-52.