19-36-CRISS-496-138

CARC Research in Social Sciences 3(2) (2024) 295-300

Content list available at:
https://journals.carc.com.pk/index.php/CRISS/issue/view/9

CARC Research in Social Sciences

Journal homepage : journals.carc.com.pk

Analysing the Dynamics of Language Change in Contact Situation: A Case of Bilingual Speakers

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: May 29, 2024
Revised: June 24, 2024
Accepted: June 24, 2024
Published: June 30, 2024

Keywords:

Balti speakers
Bilingual proficiency
Codeswitching
Language attitude
Script
Self-assessment

ABSTRACT

Weak bilingual proficiency of Balti-English and Eng-Balti have given a new dimention to the current situation of the language. Codeswitching has declared English insertion of nouns in health related talk. Furthermore, strong beleifs and langage motivation were factors responsioble for a need for teaching materials for young Balti speakers. The study investigated bilingualism profile and language dominanace in order to determine language attitudes of Balti speakers. Study used self-assessment Bilingualism profile (BLP) form that is basically a language background questionnaire based on the exposure of the language in different phase of life in different contexts from family to friends and later professionals. Findings revealed that Balti dominance in all aspects despite the fact that English scored higher in the 4th category of language proficiency. Balti speakers have less knowledge of Balti script and they are more proficient in English reading and writing. English has 0% history in the lives of Balti speakers whereas Balti has 28% language use where English stood at 8% only.

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INTRODUCTION

Language contact and code switching has gained popularity in this decade. Researchers are trying to figure out the effects of language contact on grammar as well. Sociolinguistic focuses on social factors which motivate code switching (CS) and its Speaker who adopts code switching. It primarily concerns with switching between two languages at class boundary i.e. inter sentential CS. While grammatical CS focuses on the formal aspects of CS and determines syntactic and morpho syntactic characteristics with the boundaries of a single code switched sentence. Moreover, CS is a grammatical aspect that follows definite grammatical patterns. In early studies, it was considered as un-systematical and ungrammatical practice Bailey (1999) and Labov 1972), latter studies proved it to be grammatical and systematical practice.

However, not a single agreement among the scholars regarding the grammatical patterns has been agreed upon. With the passage of time, many CS models have been proposed that lack theoretical and adequate counter examples. Similarly, due to different social, religious, economic and educational factors, Balti speakers come in contact with other communities. The interaction of Balti speakers with other language speakers results in the form of language contact. During the past few decades, a wide range of research has been done on the use of two languages within a same utterance. The phenomena of Balti/English

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How to Cite:

Zahra, F. T., & Abdullah, F. (2024). Analysing the Dynamics of Language Change in Contact Situation: A Case of Bilingual Speakers. *CARC Research in Social Sciences, 3*(2), 295–300.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.58329/criss.v3i2.138

CS need exploration because there has been done no any linguistic studies in the past. This mechanism of CS can be studied in sociological and syntactical ways. However, in a single attempt both aspects cannot be touched. Therefore, the current research focuses on the syntactic aspect of intra-sentence CS patterns in Balti/English. Such a category further divides into other sub aspects. Conclusively, the main focus surrounds the placement of head and complements in Balti/English intra-sentence CS patterns.

This study aims to study the intra sentential CS patterns of Balti/English sentences. Although both Sociolinguistic and Syntactic aspects are important studies, yet this study deals with the syntactic aspects of intra-sentence Balti/English CS. Apart from theoretical adequacy and empirical importance in the literature on CS patterns, this study is also significant in the sense, that it is the first research on Balti/English on formal aspects of intra-sentential CS. This study will further provide a motivation for researchers to bridge this gap. Balti-Eng bilinguals can serve their community through participating in several language description studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to (Bulock & Torbio, (2009), the term CS has captured wide range of interest as contact phenomena in the field of linguistics. However, it is hard to distinguish in specific term due to wide reasons factually, "The existence of precise characterization of CS and Classified verities of language contact notion provides sufficient literature." (Bullock and Toribio (2009). Grammarian offers different perspectives; one major concern in CS research is the participation of two different rules in mixing two systems of grammar. During mixing of two grammatical systems the positioning of constituent element is essentially required in order to get the hierachal structure within the language.

Sankof & Poplack (1981), declared that grammatical system of each language takes crucial part in their mixing. Syntactic notions do not agree upon a single idea whether bilinguals CS are a random process or sequential process. Some studies in the last periods of third quarter of nineteenth century hypothesized that CS does not follow any grammar and base on random process. Labov (1971) concludes Code switching as an irregular combination of two different grammatical systems in addition, Lance (1975) says that possibility of no syntactic boundaries found to occur in CS, (from Di Sciullo et al., (1986:2). However, a sharp distinction has been proposed against the claim made by Labov (1971) and Lance (1975), that intra-sentential CS follows specific agreement structurally and rejects the irregularity in CS Phenomenon.

Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

- To what extent bilingualism and language dominance positively effect language learning attitudes?
- What is the frequency of EL constituents in Balti-Eng data sets and to what extent they confirm morpheme order principle of MLF model?
- How well bilingual teaching materials can address the need of younger Balti speakers?

Delimitation

This study is delimited to the selection of well-educated Balti natives with sound knowledge and proficiency in English language. Data for the evaluation of the model will only be taken from Balti bilinguals belonging to Baltistan region.

METHODOLOGY

A total of 17 Balti-Eng bilinguals were selected for participation in a talk on Covid-19. They were all between the ages of 18-25All male. Ten were identified as dominant in Balti. This classification was based on their self-assessment Bilingualism profile (BLP) form that is basically a language background questionnaire based on the exposure of the language in different phase of life in different contexts from family to friends and later professionals. This questionnaire was extensively used to document language dominance patterns. This tool is helpful in generalizing general profile of bilingualism and determine a certain dominance score depending on their responses. Participants attempted prompts from four major areas: History, use, proficiency and attitudes.

Their self-reported data provided an insight on both languages. Through this researcher can derive sum of values of all modules and get an index for language orientation. This index is for each language and one-score per module formula is applied here. Finally, final dominance score is obtained through comparing both languages. Two-non-overlapping groups are thus formed through the data. All Balti-Eng speakers had sound knowledge and proficiency of both languages and had familiarity through an early acquisition. It is observed that both languages were acquired in different time periods but almost all participants had Balti exposure since birth and Eng in school and later in higher education.

Balti speakers seem to notice that despite the fact that they grew in Balti-speaking homes, learnt it first and had a very positive attitude towards their language, they had no proficiency in Balti reading and writing. The data reported that participants had a higher ration of the use of (and a more positive attitude towards) Balti than of the foreign language, English. Self-reports suggest a similarly high level of proficiency in English reading and writing as compared to the native language. This proficiency scale can further lead researchers towards sociopolitical stance of the area where language of education is different than the native language of the community.

Data Analysis

Data was prepared for statistical exploration and comparison of Balti-English speakers through BLP forms generated through google e-forms. Demographics confirm participation of 1 female participant among 16 young male Balti native speakers. Youngest speaker was of 19 whereas the oldest was of 25 years of age. BLP results were further compared with other studies as well. After identifying BLP of Balti speakers and their current morphological patterns in language code an eight-week intervention with Balti speaking families will take place. Learners will use talking/picture dictionary + counting each day. Researchers explained that the broad aim of the research was to see how families used the digital dictionary to learn Balti. Participat-

ing families were interviewed and the focus of the project was language use.

Participants' conversations were reviewed transcribed using MLF model.Using qualitative discourse analysis techniques standard within research on family language policy (King & Fogle, 2013), the focus was on the range of ways in which parents and children communicate to perform various functions. After realizing the need for a digital tool of teaching Balti, researcher tested a picture dictionary on young children. Initially 20 nouns were used along with the objects for numbers 1-20. This tool was further field tested and revised. Concerns and perceived challenges were also addressed during the field test. Such data sets of two or more languages can be very helpful in determining code switching patterns as well. MLF model along with 4 M model is extensively used in many studies. Zahra et al. (2020).

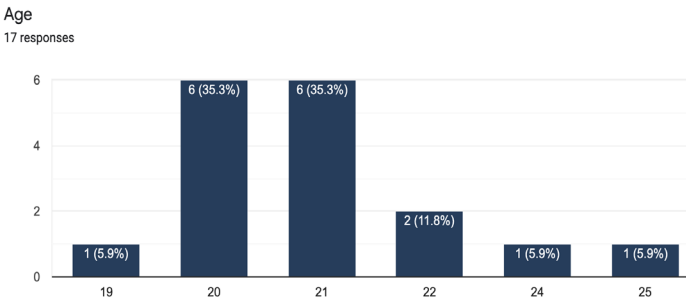

Fig. 1a: Age

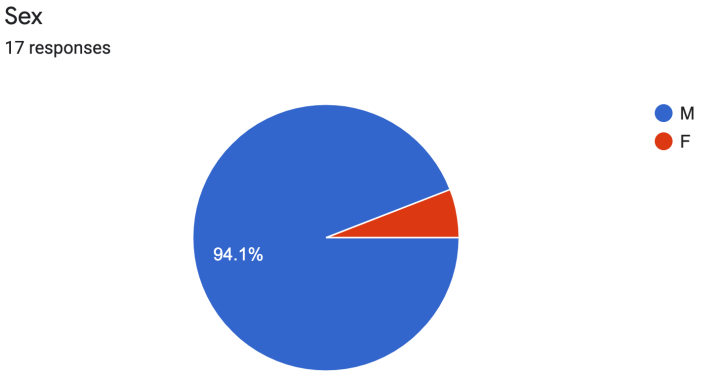

Fig. 1b: Sex

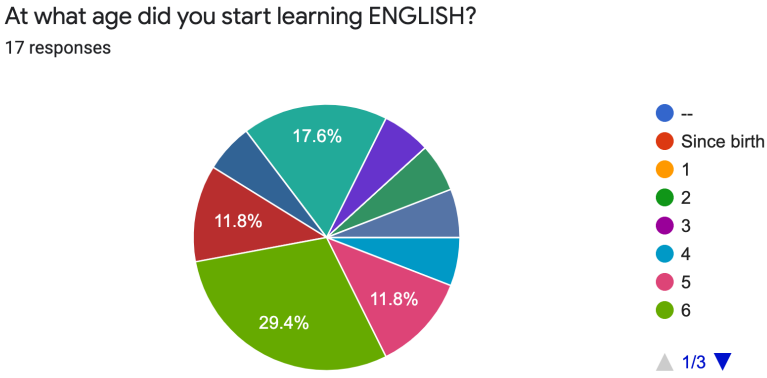

Fig. 2a: Language history

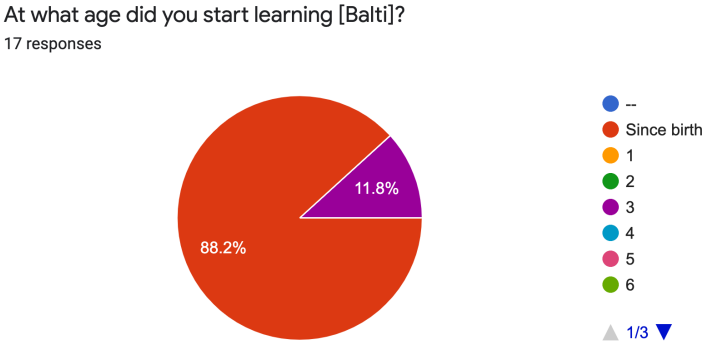

Fig. 2b: Language history

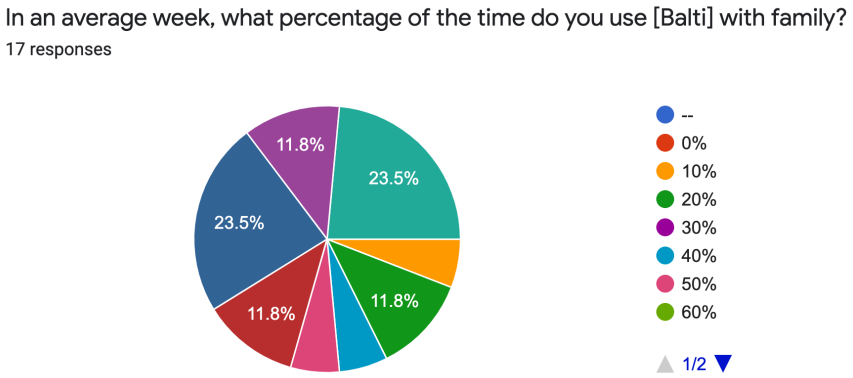

Fig. 3a: Language use

Figure shows that speakers use their native language with their family and not a single instance of the data shows that Balti was not used during family communications. Lowest percentage is 10% and the highest is 60% and our data confirms that around 11.8% of the participants confirm their maximum talk in Balti language.

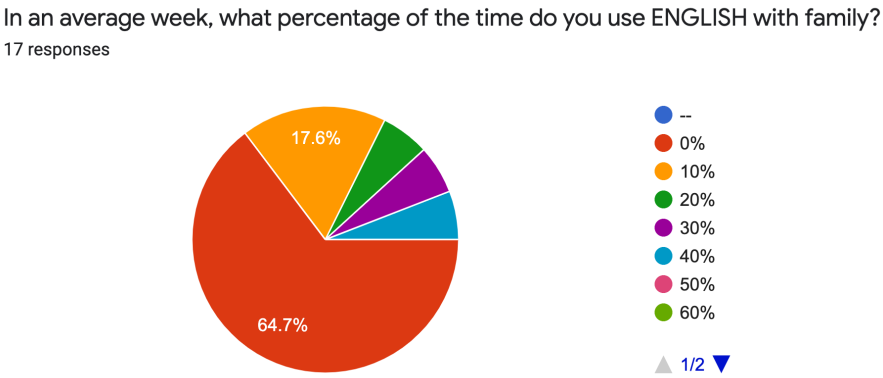

Fig. 3b: Language use

Data shows that a small fraction of participants use English in their family conversations whereas most of the participants prefer not to use English in their family communications.

II. Language History		III. Language Use		IV. Language Proficiency		V. Language Attitudes	
Balti	Eng	Balti	Eng	Balti	English	Balti	English
22.246		28.34	8.72	29.51	38.59	49.94	27.24

Fig. 4: Final report

Final report confirms Balti dominance in all aspects despite the fact that English scored higher in the 4th category of language proficiency. Balti speakers have less knowledge of Balti script and they are more proficient in English reading and writing. English has 0% history in the lives of Balti speakers whereas Balti has 28% language use where English stood at 8% only. At the same time, Language attitudes are covering 49.9% of Balti where English remain at 27.24%. Though this sample of young fellows have a strong tendency towards their mother tongue, another sample with older speakers might yield new dimensions of the current situation.

Perceptual accuracy and were no in line with language proficiency score. This low proficiency is hard to fit in any case. In sum, bilingual dominance scores were found to be related to the current bilingual profile of the speakers. Balti is less commonly taught language and this has given ride to the low proficiency in reading and writing where students need to perform in higher education. This data is aligned with the studies of other endangered languages. Code switching data further confirmed intra-sentential patterns in the data sets. Balti-English bilinguals provided corpus for the analysis.

Data was further recorded and transcribed in Roman script. Analysis of the data sets further revealed that noun insertions are embedded in Balti frame. Data indicates that the placement of nouns in following grammatical rules of matrix language. Naturalistic Data provides various instances of noun placements.

Table 1
Number of interactions

	Particulars	Number
1	No of participants	15
2	No of interactions	40
3	No of participants in each interaction	2
4	Total number of sentences	50
5	Total number of mixed sentences	25
6	Total number of unmixed sentences	17

The gathered data is described orthographically for better understanding of the subject. Moreover, the Roman alphabetic method is adopted as that is considered the cornerstone with multi morphemic glosses and similar grammatical data tools from Balti. Following the rule, the sampling has been kept Bold-faced. First of all, the orthographically-transcribed tactic is utilized to comprehend the scheme and brought them in the form of list according to the naturally-occurring Balti/English CS-data.

Khuda xtrongsay yadshik gangma

God protection being all

God protect us all

This sentence shows no insertion and it comes in the beginning of the conversation. It confirms Balti word order and grammatical arrangements.

Bas doctor chona khuda strongsay yadchk

Well doctor from. God protection

God protect us from doctors .

Lay do virus-coni alamat in hai

Listen this virus of sign is

This virus is a sign.

China-ju cases chi lagi na ishin ongma riqsat ta

Well cases more. Coming

More and more cases are coming.

In addition, naturally occurring Balti-English Cs data states that Balti has maintained its word order in the frame. This also confirms morpheme order principle and system order principle of MLF model. Another similar study also confirmed such patterns Zahra, F. et al., (2020) and Zahra, F. et al., (2021).

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

The current outcomes show that language dominance is not predicting language proficiency. Balti speakers have strong affiliation with the language in terms of speech but when it come so writing, they find themselves helpless. The results were not aligned with the results of previous studies using BLP. Language dominance and bilingualism were predicted to be in the favour of Balti language. Constant activation of Balti and English required extensive knowledge and is disadvantageous for language proficiency. Bialystok and Martin (2004), Bialystok et. al. (2005) and Adesope et. al. (2010) show that bilinguals benefit from the constant activation of two languages, Michael and Gollan (2005) and Kroll and Bialystok (2013) on the contrary argue that their ability to make use of two languages negatively affects Language Learning Achievement.

Bilingualism and langaughe dominanace both indicate that native speakers of indigenous language are helpless in the hands of language planning authorities and these authorities decide language in education and language in social and professional contexts. Here an unequal score of Balti proficiency is an indicator of powerlessness and sociopolitical situation of the minority language. The results show that Balti speakers do not have any alternative when it comes to health related issues. English insertions of Covid-19 discourse along with embedded related vocabulary is comfortably adjusted in sentences. Nevertheless the additional analysis indicate that Balti suffixes are added to El constituents. This corresponds with the findings that showed that positive mindset and bilingualism positively effects speakers attitudes towards learning language. Ane other study confirmed that the maximum integer seem to occur at word level. The maximum integer occurred on word level as proposed by Shaista Jabeen. (2018).

Another research highlights that common nouns are followed by proper nouns, adjectives and verbs.Thus, this study suggests that CS is used to facilitate the comprehension and participation of the bilingual learners. Younas, M., et.al (2020). The main analysis show significant results of the morphological change in ML EL islands. MLF model was used to analyse morpheme order of both ML and EL. The significant use of English constituenst is due to the lack of health and science related vocabulary. Another explanation could be that this pandemic has brough speakers of different languaes closer together in terms of global discussions on covid-19. Additionally, Covid-19 discourse is largely produced in the dominant language of news and media. Additionally, there is less produced in indigenous langauges when it comes to the global issues. Furthermore language dominanace indicated that speakers speech fluency is not very helpful for them in global context where written expressions and translations are widely available for interpretations. The results are largely in line with other studies as well.

Future Implications

This study requests follow-up research. Further research on both mono and bilingual speakers can be very helpful in bridging the gap. Language dominanace contributed in determining current situation of bilingualism in Balti com-

munity.Conducting reserch on a different sample may yield more interesting results. Including Balti literature in schools can be very helpful for the improvement in proficiency level of Balti native speakers. Further studies on the language teaching aspects can be very helpful in covering this gap.

CONCLUSION

Weak BLP of Balti-English and Eng-Balti have given a new dimention to the current situation of the language. Codeswitching has declared English insertion of nouns in health related talk. Furthermore, strong beleifs and langage motivation were factors responsioble for a need for teaching materials for young Balti speakers. The study investigated bilingualism profile and language dominanace in order to determine language attitudes of Balti speakers. First question is answered in BLp scores and dasta presentation where Balti is close to the hearts of the speakers but somehow they find themselves crippled when they are unale to relate language in cognition with any sort of letters and numbers in their lexicon.

Despite the fact that Balti speakers desire to revitalize their language and language dominance in speech is very strong, writing inefficiency has put language in danger. Second question confirms that Balti speakers have adjusted EL constituents in Balti sentences. Analysis of data sets identified morphological patterns of Balti-Eng. As Balti proficiency seem to be low, bilingual teaching materials, tested with families has been successful and it addresses the third question. Additionally the results point out the direction of the third dimention where digital teaching materials are introduced to the community with a huge amount of positive feedback. Due to lack of teaching materials,it can be implied that language documentation and revitatlization for Balti is of great significance and such projects can be very helpful in preserving cluture and heritage of Balti community. Balti picture dictionary served as a digital resource and reserchers can develop more materials taking this into consideration.

Conflict of Interests

The authors has declared that no competing interests exist.

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