Arabic-English Codeswitching among Doctors and Nurses in Jordanian Hospitals Work Setting: Motivations and Attitudes

By
Mohammed S. Al-Hamwan
B.A (English Language and Literature) Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan. 1999

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Linguistics, Department of English Language and Literature, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan

June, 2015

Approved by:
Dr. Mohammed Badarin (Chairman)
Associate professor of linguistics, Yarmouk University

Prof. Abdullah Shunnaq (Member)
Professor of Translation, Yarmouk University

Prof. Yousef Bader (Member)
Professor of linguistics, Yarmouk University
Abstract


The present study has examined the phenomenon of code-switching among doctors and nurses in Jordanian hospitals work setting and attempted to investigate their motivations and attitudes towards this linguistic behavior. Moreover, it explored the most frequently switched and borrowed English items that are used by doctors and nurses. The study investigated whether certain factors such as age, sex, profession, education, and place of residence play a significant role in the motivations and attitudes towards code-switching between Arabic and English. For the purpose of this study, live observations were done by the researcher to collect live data through documenting a number of conversations among doctors and nurses at three main hospitals in three main cities in Jordan. In addition, a four-section questionnaire was developed on the basis of some previous studies and the data which were collected. The questionnaire was distributed to 150 doctors and nurses at the three hospitals under study. The results of the study unveiled a high frequency of Arabic-English code-switching among doctors and nurses during work hours at hospitals. The most frequent English items they use are related to diseases and symptoms, body parts and organs, medicine and treatment, tools and equipments, and actions and procedures. Participants were found highly motivated to switching to English while interacting with each other at work regardless of age, sex, profession, education and place of residence. The study revealed some motivations behind their linguistic behavior such as: technical need: when Arabic doesn't have the appropriate equivalent or when they convey confidential information, social needs: when they seek prestige or avoid an embarrassing situation, repetition for emphasizing and enhancing communication among each other. Most of the participants showed a positive attitude towards switching between Arabic and English. Most of them disagree with the assumption that associating themselves with the western culture is a motivation behind switching to English in conversations among each other in the medical field.