

## SYNTACTIC ASPECTS OF JORDANIAN ARABIC-ENGLISH INTRA-SENTENTIAL CODE-SWITCHING<sup>[\*]</sup>

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*Abstract.* This study investigates the issue of code-switching, particularly, intra-sentential switches, that is, mixing within an utterance. The corpus providing the database of this study comes from the responses of eight bilingual Jordanian Arabic-English students pursuing their higher education at Arizona State University. Findings show that participants don't accept switching into another language after a grammatical morpheme. The more the morpheme is dependent on the following lexical item, the less language switching is acceptable. The study also reveals that the participant's general attitude towards code-switching and the period of time s/he has been exposed to language switching influence his/her evaluation and acceptance of utterances featuring code-switching.

### 1. Introduction

Bilinguals may, when they communicate, show a tendency to code-switch, or alternate the two languages while speaking. In this sense, code-switching is understood as the process of inserting words or phrases of one language in phrases or sentences of another. Milroy and Muysken (1995: 7) define code-switching as “the alternative use by bilinguals of two or more languages in the same conversation”. Irrespective of the languages involved, it may be generalized that code-switching occurs for different reasons and in many ways. It may be the result of the speaker's encountering a lexical gap in one language so that the speaker switches into the language s/he knows better. It may also be the result of the speaker's attempt to avoid saying something in a more or less frank or polite manner. Whatever the reason is, code-switching is a sign of the speaker's observation of the grammar of the two or more languages involved.

Numerous studies have shown that code-switching does not occur randomly. There are no limits to what languages may alternate roles, but there are constraints on how this may occur. Code-switching may be motivated by social, pure linguistic or syntactic reasons. From a social perspective, it might be used to emphasize one's identity or a social group or class that the speaker wants to be identified with. Meisel (1994: 415) associates code-switching with sociolinguistic factors.

Code-switching is the ability to select the language according to the interlocutor, the situational context, the topic of conversation, and so forth, and to change languages within an

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interactional sequence in accordance with sociolinguistic rules and without violating specific grammatical constraints.

In a study conducted to explore how Hongkongers and Chinese react to bilingual code-switching, Tong et al. (1999: 292–3) illustrate that Hongkongers with strong identity use their in-group language (Cantonese) as a carrier of their social identity and do not favor the speaker's code-switching to the Mainland official language (Putonghua). Safi (1992) provides another example that associates code-switching with social identity. Safi's study, which examines code-switching between Arabic and English in the performance of Saudi Arabic native speakers in the United States, seeks to establish that participants switch to Arabic whenever they want to emphasize shared cultural elements and they switch to English whenever the topic is formal and is businesslike.

In another study conducted on Tunisian Arabic and French code-switching, Lawson and Sachdev (2000) point out that participants have a general negative attitude towards code-switching, and that they tend to use code-switching and the situational features just to maintain in-group relations that exclude outsiders or strangers. In general, these studies discuss the interconnectedness between code-switching and the situation in which it occurs and also the shared cultural background of the speakers. When people code-switch between two languages in the same context, they, in fact, manifest their knowledge of the two languages' structures. Code-switching is likely to occur only where the grammars of the languages involved permit it; it mostly occurs in cases where it does not break the syntactic or semantic unity of a language. Eid (1992: 67) argues that English allows for less switching into Arabic than into English, and that the speakers observe this when using the two languages: "English was found to be more restrictive with respect to switching than Arabic."

In spite of the numerous attempts devoted to exploring code-switching in the performance of Arabic/English bilingual speakers, it is still pretty obvious that many aspects of this sociolinguistic phenomenon have been poorly tackled while some others have even remained unresearched. The present study aims to fill in the gap by addressing the syntactic aspects of Arabic-English intra-sentential code-switching. It shows that Jordanian Arabic speakers do not accept switching between English and Arabic in certain cases. Their evaluation of the sentences presented to them reveals that they see some syntactic units in both Arabic and English as more semantically dependent than others. The meaning of such units is not complete until what modifies them is expressed in the same language. To explore this particular aspect of code-switching, an attempt is made here to employ Jake's (1994) distinction between grammatical morphemes and content morphemes so as to explain this notion further.

## **2. Review of Literature**

Code-switching, which was paid some attention in the 1950s by Weinreich (1953) and Haugen (1956), remained largely neglected in academic literature until the beginning of 1970s. Since then, however, this domain has become a busy field of activity all over the world. Research on this phenomenon distinguishes between two types, namely, inter-sentential and intra-sentential code-switching.

Inter-sentential code-switching refers to the alternative use of two or more languages where the switch occurs between sentence boundaries. Intra-sentential code-switching, on the other hand, refers to instances where the switch occurs between words or phrases (it may also occur within the same word). A close look at the literature devoted to code-switching shows that the majority of studies have been primarily concerned with what code-switching is, systematicity and rules of code-switching, bilingual competence, intra-sentential code-switching and the distinction between code-switching and borrowing (Weinreich 1953; Haugen 1956; Gumperz and Hernandez-Chaves 1975; Timm 1975; Pfaff 1976; Clyne 1987; Jacobson 1990; Myers-Scotton et al. 1996, among others).

Code-switching is sometimes used as a symbol of power. In a study conducted on a 4-year-Chinese child, Bain and Yu (2000) find that the child switches to English as a way of having a certain power in a situation. Similar findings about two children but with French-English code-switching are also reported in Jisa (2000).

Arabic/English code-switching has received a moderate amount of attention over the past few decades. In an attempt to examine how a group of Egyptian-Americans use Arabic-English code-switching in an approximately five-hour recorded conversation, Eid (1992) states that code-switching is constrained by certain syntactic rules; even though speakers code-switch, they show some observance of the syntactic rules of the two languages. For example, when her participants switch within coordinate and subordinate clauses, they do not show examples of using an English conjunction between two Arabic clauses. When they switch within relative clauses, switching occurs before the relative clauses only; they do not use two languages for a relative clause and its marker. Eid also points out that, in pronoun doubling, her participants do not double the subject pronoun if the first one is in English, but they use another English subject pronoun after an Arabic one.

On the basis of examining code-switching among Arabic-English bilinguals, Hussein and Shorrab (1993) provide another piece of evidence in support of the rule-governance notion. According to this study, participants do not accept any type of switching between a pronoun subject and the predicate, regardless of the language used. They also argue that switching does not occur between interrogative elements and the main verb of the sentence in prepositional phrases, or with negation. In another study devoted to investigating the relation between people's level of proficiency in the two languages and the types of code-switching they produce, Saleh (1998) shows that code-switching relies heavily on the participant's level of proficiency in the second language. Drawing on the findings of this study, participants with a low level of proficiency in a second language produce fewer intra-sentential switches and no instances of inter-sentential switches. People with a higher level of proficiency in both languages, on the other hand, produce more types of code-switching. The less proficient in a second language people are, the less they tend to use code-switching.

Jake (1994) elaborates on Eid's study and cites more examples showing code-switching between English and Moroccan Arabic. Jake's participants do not double pronouns after they have started with an English pronoun. This parallels Eid's (1992) study on recorded conversations of Egyptian English speakers. It is not clear why participants choose to avoid code-switching in certain syntactic structures. Is it because such code-switching violates some constraints or is it because they do not use any of these structures in the conversation?

However, what Jake emphasizes is the difference between the grammatical role of pronouns in Arabic and English. She shows that pronoun switching in general is controlled by the way the speakers perceive pronouns more as content words or grammatical words in each language. Jake divides English pronouns into four main categories, discourse emphatic pronouns such as *me*, dummy pronouns such as *it* and *there*, indefinite pronouns such as *one*, and personal pronouns, *he*, *she*, and *it*.

Associating code-switching with several nonlinguistic factors, Bader (1994: 21) argues that switching into English is actually controlled by many factors; area (urban or rural), education, sex and age: "It found out that the factors of region, education, sex and age played a significant role in Code-switching. Thus, it was showed that well-educated, female, young city dwellers used this strategy the most."

In a more recent study on the syntactic constraints and social functions of Arabic English code-switching among Saudi bilinguals living the United States, Al-Enazi (2002) argues that the patterns of Arabic English code-switching examined in his study violate all proposed formal constraints on code-switching. Findings also reveal that code-switching to English is associated with academic terms and precise numbers. Furthermore, the study shows that participant's age influences language preferences.

The present paper focuses on switching after the personal pronouns *he*, *she*, and *it*. Jake (1994: 273) starts her paper arguing that English personal pronouns are considered content morphemes.

The assignment of a personal pronoun to the class of either content morphemes or system morphemes is determined entirely by language-internal principles and requires a morphosyntactic analysis of the personal pronoun system of the language participating in any given code-switching situation. For example, the personal pronouns of English and German are content morphemes.

However, Jake concludes that this fact cannot help determine much about pronoun code-switching. "Variation in the distribution and behavior of pronouns in intra-sentential code-switching suggests that pronouns cannot be simply characterized as members of a functional (vs. content) category." (p. 292). She ends up leaving the discussion open-ended, stressing that placing pronouns in a special category is not that easy, and depends on the context in which the pronoun is used. Contrary to Jake's assumption, this study tends to consider English personal pronouns as more grammatical or functional morphemes, rather than content ones. The data and results of the present study show that such morphemes are treated as semantically dependent on other lexical units in the text; they do not really add to the meaning of the sentence as much as to the grammatical soundness of it.

### 3. Methodology

The present study aims at addressing how Jordanian Arabic native speakers evaluate code-switching between Arabic and English when it occurs between subject pronoun and verb, or between an auxiliary and the rest of the verb phrase components. To this end, a questionnaire was developed and presented to the subjects. Subjects were given the questionnaire with examples of code-switching and were asked to evaluate these sentences and

describe their responses (see Appendix 1). The questionnaire form was adapted from Murray (1993).

The present study was conducted in three stages. The first pilot study was completed by three students who were asked to give their immediate responses to the first 14 sentences in the questionnaire. They only had to listen to the sentences read out to them and say whether they thought each one was acceptable for them or not. In the second part of the study, the same three students plus another five were given the questionnaire with the first 20 sentences in it. The first three students had a questionnaire with sentences 15 through 20 only. In this part, the subjects were asked to report whether the sentence was good or not and why; and what they would think if they heard it said by someone else. They also had to answer a question in writing about what they thought about code-switching in general. The third part of the study included the students' responses to the last 10 sentences in the questionnaire, with more examples of code-switching after subject pronouns and negation. Figures 1 through 6 show subjects' responses to the questionnaire; the symbol [—] is used to indicate that no response was provided. The letter *M* is used to express the participant's uncertainty ('maybe').

The study is limited to eight Arabic-English bilingual students pursuing their graduate studies at Arizona State University. The students are five males and three females, and they all speak Jordanian Arabic. They all have been living in the United States for at least two years, but they have been exposed to English as a second language since childhood. Three male subjects are pursuing their higher degrees in math, engineering and education. Two are pursuing a Ph.D. in linguistics. As for the three female subjects, they are all wives and mothers, two of them are working on their masters in education, and the third has just received a masters in French linguistics. Each subject was asked to say whether s/he thinks the expression s/he hears sounds appropriate? Would they say it? What would s/he think if they heard someone else say it? The sentences or phrases presented to them include some examples of code-switching after an auxiliary within the verb phrase or within the whole clause between a subject pronoun and its predicate. See Appendix 1.

#### 4. Questionnaire Analysis

Each subject was presented with thirty sentences in total. Seventeen of these sentences feature code-switching between pronouns and the rest of the sentence, while the other thirteen exemplify code-switching after an auxiliary within the verb phrase. Students' responses varied with the sentence type. Of the seventeen sentences involving subject-predicate switching, eight represent examples of switching into English after an Arabic pronoun subject, and nine sentences are examples of switching into Arabic after an English pronoun: compound subject and compound pronouns.

However, all sentences featuring switching after the auxiliary are examples of switching into Arabic after an English auxiliary. The different English auxiliaries would become affixes in the Arabic verb phrases, so switching into English after the Arabic 'part of the word' is less likely. Such forms have never been found in any conversation that includes examples of code-switching and, thus, are not included in any examples in the questionnaire. Probably

such sentences are so strange that they do not actually exist in the linguistic grammar of any of the subjects.

#### 4.1 Code-switching between a noun and its predicate

The questionnaire includes 17 sentences exemplifying switching languages after subject pronouns. Six of these sentences show switching into English after an Arabic subject pronoun, as shown in Figure 1. As mentioned above, each of the following figures presents subjects' responses to two questions: *Does the sentence sound good to you?* and *Would you say this sentence?*

**Figure 1: Switching between the noun and predicate: Arabic pronoun into English predicate**

	1. <i>ana have</i>		2. <i>hiyya is</i>		4. <i>huwwa is watching</i>		10. <i>inta coming</i>		12. <i>intu coming</i>		23. <i>huwwa has been reading</i>	
	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?
a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
b	×	×	×	M	×	×	×	M*	×	×	×	×
c	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
d	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	✓	×	×	×	×
e	×	×	×	×	×	×	✓	×	×	×	×	×
f	×	—	✓	—	×	—	✓	—	×	—	×	×
g	✓	—	✓	—	✓	—	✓	—	×	—	×	×
h	✓	—	✓	—	×	—	✓	—	✓	—	✓	M
T	3	1	4	1	2	1	5	2	2	1	2	2

Three of the subjects accepted most of these sentences and thought that the sentences sound reasonable. Two of these graduate students are wives and mothers. One mother said that she and her children exchange such sentences all the time. In general, these three students expressed a positive attitude towards code-switching and accepted that it is natural and may occur whenever bilingual people communicate. The third one who reported a positive attitude and accepted four of these sentences is a single male, but a linguist. He stated that people may resort to code-switching because they lack enough competence in one of the languages or because they want to show that they know the two languages, a prestige reason. Whatever the reason is, he remarked that code-switching is a natural phenomenon in bilingual communities. However, another subject said that although one of these sentences sounds good, he would not say it (sentence 10). This student is also a linguist, and has a similar attitude towards many other sentences in the questionnaire.

Slightly more than half the subjects in the study, as shown in Figure 1, do not accept most of these sentences. Three of them found none of the sentences acceptable; one of these three subjects stressed that he might say them (S's 2 and 10), although he does not think they are good. A mother also indicated that she might use 10, although she does not think it sounds good.

Each of the other two subjects accepted different sentences. In general, these five students commented it is not at all acceptable to switch into English when the sentence starts with an Arabic subject pronoun. They believed that such switching might be a sign that the speaker is not comfortable with Arabic, or is seen as a result of a lexical gap; the English pronoun might have just escaped the speaker at that moment. A couple of the subjects stated that such switching is probably the result of a desire to show off, a notion which we relate to a negative attitude towards code-switching more than anything else. In general, the most accepted sentences are 2 and 10, where switching occurs after third person feminine singular and second person masculine singular. It is worth noting that such structures are the least acceptable when the pronoun is doubled, see Figure 3. Does this mean that the more remote the second pronoun is from the first, the more acceptable it is, such that the subjects of the study accepted it as an independent semantic unit that functions as a subject for an English predicate and does not even need to be doubled?

Figure (2) presents seven instances of switching into Arabic after an English subject pronoun.

**Figure 2: Switching between the noun and predicate: English Pronouns into Arabic predicates**

	5. I <i>baqra'</i> <i>fiih</i>		8. We <i>rah</i> <i>nshuuf</i>		15. You and Mary <i>btuktubu</i>		16. Ahmad and I <i>jaayiin</i>		21. You and I <i>rah</i>		24. You and he <i>kuntu</i>		26. She and I <i>tfarrajna</i>	
	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?
a	×	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	M	M	×	×	×	×
b	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	M
c	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
d	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
e	×	×	×	×	✓	×	✓	×	✓	M	×	×	×	×
f	×	—	×	—	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	M	✓	✓
g	×	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
h	×	—	×	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×
T	0	0	1	0	4	3	5	4	4	4	2	2	2	3

Out of the eight subjects, only one student accepted one of the two sentences that have only a singular subject pronoun (5 and 16). However, four of them accepted switching into Arabic after a compound English subject consisting of a pronoun and a noun, a name in these cases, e.g. “You and Mary”, “Ahmad and I”; they claimed that such forms sound good and may occur in their conversations. What we think to be interesting is that five students out of the eight accepted sentence 16, in which one of the two parts of the compound subject is an Arabic name, while four students accepted 15, in which an English name is used. One student of the eight, who happened to be one of the two linguists, believed that sentences 15, 16 and 21 sound good and acceptable, but doubted that he would say any of them.

The subjects also stated that their attitudes have nothing to do with the kind of predicate used; the issue is that they do not switch languages between English pronouns and Arabic predicates. Another interesting thing is that two subjects stated that they would accept

switching into Arabic after an English pronoun but if, and only if, the predicate is very short. Otherwise, they do not switch or they pause between the pronoun and the predicate. It appears that English pronouns are, in general, in need of more ‘weight’ than Arabic ones, either through using them with English predicates as well, or through giving them more time before switching into Arabic.

Three sentences, 21, 24 and 26, are examples of switching into Arabic after English compound pronouns. These sentences were added in the third part of the questionnaire to measure how the subjects would react to them compared to their reaction to one-pronoun subjects or compound subjects in general. Only two students accepted all of them. The other students stated that such forms do not sound good although they might occur in some conversations; these students stressed that such forms are wrong or not natural. However, these students are the people who have a less positive attitude towards code-switching in general. The most acceptable sentence among these three is sentence 21, in which the two pronouns were ‘you and I’. Sentence 26 has ‘she and I’ as the pronoun subject, and it appears that the students became less comfortable with any structure that refers to a third person – someone who is not there at the moment. In general, sentences that exemplify switching into Arabic after a third person singular English pronoun – even as part of compound subject pronoun as in 24 and 26 – are the least acceptable. However, a more positive attitude was reported when the sentence starts with the Arabic first person singular, using their native language to refer to their own identities, as in sentences 1 and 27.

Switching languages between a subject pronoun and its predicate is not generally acceptable. Students stated that they do not like to have these two elements expressed in two different languages. However, it seems that some students accept switching into English after a singular Arabic subject pronoun, but not switching into Arabic after a singular English subject pronoun. English pronouns might not be acceptable as independent representatives of noun phrases in a sentence when the rest of the sentence is in Arabic. Most students indicated that English pronouns do not represent a complete semantic unit functioning for an Arabic predicate. Moreover, it looks as if Arabic pronouns are more acceptable as representing an independent meaningful unit in the sentence regardless of code-switching. A question that is worth asking here is whether Arabic speakers perceive Arabic pronouns this way because Arabic is their native language and they are very used to these words and their meanings. One thing to be pointed out here is that Arabic pronouns are marked for number and gender, a fact which does not apply to all English pronouns. Thus, the form of the Arabic pronoun reveals more information about the subject, and so renders it a more semantically independent unit. Unlike Arabic, some English pronouns are marked for neither number, nor gender such as ‘*you*’. Other pronouns, on the other hand, are marked for number, but not gender (e.g. ‘*we*’ and ‘*they*’).

Another question is whether syllable structure has anything to do with students’ judgments. English pronouns are short monosyllabic words. Does this mean that these small words do not represent a complete semantic unit of some kind without the help of the rest of the sentence? This might explain why students accept switching after longer English subjects, as shown in Figure 2. Although the total number of sentences accepted by the eight students is almost the same in the two types of switching, those who have less positive attitudes towards code-switching accepted more switching after longer English NPs subjects and shorter Arabic ones. They also accepted less switching after English pronouns



in general, both singular and compounds. Does this mean that long English noun phrases constitute more independent semantic units because they are longer than singular pronouns? Are singular English pronouns not accepted as an independent semantic unit because they are “shorter” than both Arabic singulars and English compound NPs?

There are, however, four sentences in the questionnaire that have double pronouns; two start with Arabic pronouns while the others start with English pronouns.

13. *inta* You are coming tonight?  
you
27. *ana* I thought about it.  
I
22. I *ana raayeh*.  
am going
28. He *huwwa haka ma'i*  
he talked with me

Jake argues that an English double of an Arabic ‘topic’ pronoun is possible, but the opposite is not. If the speaker starts with an Arabic pronoun, followed by an English sentence, English being the matrix language here, then doubling is possible. “If English is the ML, pronoun doubling occurs, but if Arabic is the ML, no pronoun doubling occurs” (Jake 1994: 281). Eid (1992) also states that there were no occurrences of an Arabic double following an English pronoun in her study.

**Figure 3: Double pronouns**

	13. <i>Inta you are</i>		27. <i>anna I thought</i>		22. <i>I ana raayeh</i>		28. <i>He huwwa haka ma'i</i>	
	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?
<b>a</b>	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
<b>b</b>	×	×	×	×	✓	✓	×	×
<b>c</b>	×	×	×	M	×	×	×	×
<b>d</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	×
<b>e</b>	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×
<b>f</b>	×	—	✓	✓	×	×	×	×
<b>g</b>	×	—	×	×	×	×	×	×
<b>h</b>	×	—	✓	✓	×	×	×	×
<b>T</b>	2	2	3	3	1	1	0	0

Only one student accepted two of these sentences. Three students did not like any of them, however. The other four students accepted four different sentences, one each; one of these students actually stated that although he might use such a form, it still does not sound good to him. The others stated that they do not use two pronouns, even in two languages, to refer to the same entity in one sentence. In fact, this is surprising for the researchers because we have always considered it acceptable to double a pronoun, and this is also indicated in Eid (1992). The students stated that pronoun doubling, in general, sounds weird, unnatural,

and that there is no need to use two words in two languages to refer to the same identity. However, the most accepted sentence among these is 27, where ‘I’ is doubled, being used first in Arabic, then in English. This is one form we have repeatedly heard people use when they switch languages. Three subjects stated that such a form is OK or sounds good to them. It is obvious that Jordanian Arabic speakers are more comfortable with such a form because the speaker simply starts by using the first person singular, talking about himself/herself, and using his/her first language. It simply indicates that the subjects become more confident when they start referring to themselves using their native language and then switch into English. The Arabic ‘I’ here is not really referring, as much as initiating the in-group code, after which the second language becomes more acceptable. The other three sentences in the questionnaire start with either an English pronoun or a second- or third-person Arabic pronoun, both relating to someone other than the speaker or a language other than his native tongue; such forms seem to make the speakers less comfortable, and are the least accepted. Figures 1 and 2 show that English pronouns are less accepted as subjects of Arabic predicates in general, and that Arabic pronouns, other than the first singular, are more accepted as independent semantic units, such that they do not even need to be doubled.

## 4.2 Code-switching within the verb phrase

### 4.2.1 Switching after the verb ‘to be’

Five sentences in the questionnaire show examples of switching into Arabic after an English auxiliary ‘to be’, as shown in Figure 4. Only one student accepted all of these sentences. Another three students accepted two, three or four sentences and one student accepted only one sentence. All these five students agreed that the sentences are good and may occur in their speech. Two students did not find any of them acceptable.

**Figure 4: Switching within the verb phrase (after aux. ‘to be’)**

	6. John is <i>bishtaghil</i>		7. Mary is <i>sakneh</i>		9. You are <i>btuktub</i>		19. Mary is <i>mabso<sup>h</sup>ah</i>		20. All the students are <i>fee</i>	
	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?
a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
b	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	M
c	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
d	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	M
e	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
f	✗	—	✗	—	✗	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
g	✓	—	✓	—	✗	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
h	✗	—	✓	—	✗	—	✓	✓	✗	✓
T	2	1	3	1	2	1	4	4	3	6

The most accepted sentences here are 19 and 20, in which verb ‘to be’ is a linking verb rather than an auxiliary.

19. Mary is *mabsouta hunak*.  
happy there
20. All the students are *fee nafs el-şaff*.  
in the same class

Another sentence that was also relatively acceptable is 7, in which the participle following the verb ‘to be’ more describes a state than a continuous action, i.e., ‘living far away’. Two students were not sure about sentence 20; they both stated that although it does not sound good, it might still occur in their conversations.

What is noticeable here is that although students in general did not have a very positive attitude towards such forms, their responses showed that the sentences in which the verb ‘to be’ is independent from what follows in the sentence are more acceptable than other sentences. Sentences like 6 and 9, in which the auxiliary ‘to be’ is part of a continuous verb form, are the least acceptable.

6. John is *bishtaghil bisherka hai*  
working for this company
9. You are *btuktub `an elmowdou`*.  
writing about the subject

One student accepted them both. The linguists accepted one each. One of them stated clearly that sentence 9 sounds good, but he would not use it. Students in general stated that they omitted the form of the verb ‘to be’, which is *is* in the sentence. They stated clearly that an *-ing* form and its auxiliary cannot be expressed in different languages. ‘Working’ and ‘writing’ are referring to actions taking place and thus are highly dependant on their helping auxiliaries.

Three students out of eight accepted 19 and 20, and a fourth one indicated that she would use both of them although she omitted *are* from sentence 20. Two of these four students are mothers who use and hear such forms while communicating with their kids. The auxiliaries in sentences 19 and 20 were viewed as relational stative verbs rather than present progressive helping forms. Perhaps, students treat these auxiliaries and what follows them as two independent semantic units, and thus switch languages between them; ‘living’, ‘happy’ and the pronominal phrases in sentences 7, 19 and 20 describe a state rather than a continuous action; the words after the auxiliaries in 7 and 19 may be understood as adjectives, rather than verbs. This may provide an explanation for why some students cannot separate such verbs from what follows, using two languages.

#### 4.2.2 Switching after ‘have’

Three sentences in the questionnaire feature switching after ‘have’. Figure 5 shows that these forms are almost all rejected by the subjects.

Only two of the students accepted switching within the verb phrase when it includes a *have + past participle*, and with one sentence only, in which the subject happens to be the English first person singular. One student, a mother, reported that her children use forms a lot which involve English *have* and an Arabic past participle form. The other students

did not accept any separation between the auxiliary and its verb complement. This is another example of the difference between what ‘conscious’ adults say they do, and how spontaneous children may respond, without thinking.

**Figure 5: Switching within the verb phrase (after aux “have”)**

	3. I have <i>kammalet</i>		17. He has <i>kammal ...</i>		18. We all have <i>kamala ...</i>	
	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?
a	×	×	×	×	×	×
b	×	×	×	×	×	×
c	×	×	×	×	×	×
d	×	×	×	×	×	×
e	×	×	×	×	×	×
f	✓	—	×	×	×	×
g	×	—	×	×	×	×
h	✓	—	×	×	×	×
T	2	0	0	0	0	0

#### 4.2.3 Switching with negation

Five sentences show examples of switching between subjects and verbs or within the verb phrase with negation. Figure 6 presents these findings.

**Figure 6: Switching within the verb phrase (negation)**

	11. <i>ana mish</i> going		14. <i>Ahmd is mish</i>		25. <i>They are mish</i>		29. <i>He said he mish</i>		30. <i>All the students mish</i>	
	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?	Sound good?	Say it?
a	×	×	×	×	✓	M	✓	M	M	M
b	×	×	×	×	×	M	×	M	×	M
c	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
d	×	×	×	×	×	M	×	×	×	×
e	✓	×	×	×	✓	M	×	×	✓	✓
f	×	—	×	—	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓
g	×	—	×	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
h	×	—	×	—	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓
T	1	0	0	0	4	6	3	4	5	6

The general attitude towards such forms is not positive. Three students did not accept any of these sentences as sounding good, but two of them stated that they might still use such forms, although they are not considered good or acceptable forms. The more acceptable sentences are actually the ones in which negation does not come between a verb and its

helping auxiliary. In other words, switching languages with ‘not’ is acceptable as long as a helping auxiliary does not precede it and/or a progressive form does not follow. Again, relational auxiliaries in the acceptable sentences are treated as more independent semantic units. Subjects do not accept switching when there is negation between an auxiliary and its verb complement.

14. Ahmad is *mish raayeh*.  
not going
11. *ana mish* going.  
I am not

Only one student said that one of the above two, sentence 11, is acceptable, considering this a result of native language interference. However, he stressed that he would not use it. Drawing on these findings, we find that such sentences are not usually used or accepted. The student who tried to justify them is a linguist and admitted that he analyzed what was happening. Displaying a more spontaneous reaction, the rest of the subjects did not accept such switching within the verb phrase. They indicated that *not* cannot be separated from the rest of the verb phrase, whatever the language is.

## 5. Discussion and Implications

The questionnaire used in this study aims at testing two major hypotheses. First, it investigates how much switching between a pronoun and the rest of the sentence will be tolerated. For example, will Arabic pronouns function as independent meaningful subjects for English predicates? Second, it examines, conversely, the extent to which English pronouns are acceptable as subjects for Arabic predicates.

Based on some previous studies on code-switching, i.e. Eid (1992), we have noted that bilinguals simply do not switch within certain linguistic forms. Eid states that her subjects do not switch within certain forms of coordinate and subordinate clauses. Hussein and Shorrab (1993) provide a concrete piece of evidence showing that code-switching is actually constrained by certain linguistic rules. Speakers in their study reject any example of switching between subject pronouns and verbs, and consider it ‘impossible’, regardless of the language used. The present study, however, reveals that there is some acceptance of such forms. This study also indicates that 26 out of 81 responses for sentences exemplifying switching between an Arabic pronoun and an English predicate are positive. Although most of the subjects who participated in this study revealed that they neither accepted, nor used such forms, there are some who did not find such examples ‘impossible’. This is not in agreement with Hussein and Shorrab’s results. On the other hand, the subjects of this study accepted an English singular subject pronoun functioning as a subject for Arabic predicate much less. Only one response out of the 26 available is positive. However, the subjects in the study were more inclined to accept three examples of sentence switching into Arabic after English compound subject pronouns and noun phrases, though with a higher percentage of acceptance of compound noun phrases. This presents various questions relating to the semantic and phonological structure of pronouns in the two languages.

Regarding English pronouns, to what extent are they acceptable as representing an independent semantic unit in a sentence? Do the students in the study not accept them as subjects of Arabic predicates because they don't usually function without their English predicates or because the students do not know much about their semantic functions compared to Arabic pronouns? Are the longer compound pronouns and noun phrases more acceptable as independent semantic units functioning as subjects? To answer these questions, further research should be conducted on code-switching with English pronouns in different languages, other than Arabic. This may also help in figuring out whether the forms of the words representing the English pronouns affect the semantic perception of them. Unlike Arabic pronouns, which are all at least bisyllabic, English pronouns are short monosyllabic words. Are similar pronouns in other languages acceptable as subjects of English predicates in the same way as Arabic pronouns are?

One interesting thing that the results of the study show is that the students, in general, became more comfortable and more willing to accept switching when a first person singular is part of the noun phrase, as long as it is not the only English word in the subject phrase. Four positive responses were reported for switching after a subject consisting only of an Arabic first person singular, as in sentence 1. Twenty-two responses out of 48 were positive when the English first person singular was part of a compound noun subject phrase or compound pronoun subject. The students even accepted the doubling of the Arabic pronoun with an English one in an English sentence. Two out of 32 positive responses, on the other hand, were reported for sentence 5 and 22 in which 'I' was the only English word in the sentence. It seems reasonable to argue here that students are more comfortable with phrases in which the first person English pronoun is part of a compound pronoun because it allows them to talk about themselves, while still sharing the action with another entity, either by adding another noun or pronoun, or by using the Arabic first person singular pronoun as a double. However, the students became more cautious with the Arabic first person singular pronoun. They accepted it as a subject for an English predicate, as in sentence 1; and they also used it as an initiating Arabic word for a complete English sentence, as in 27. Are they treating it as a more independent, less doubted identity? It seems that students are more self conscious when they deal with the Arabic first person singular pronoun; they are quite careful about what its referent is and how it is expressed in the sentence, insisting on treating it as an independent identity. However, they are more at ease with the English first person singular pronoun, allowing it to be accompanied by other pronouns and ignoring it completely when it is the only English word in the phrase. In general, sentences with the English first person singular pronoun as part of a compound pronoun or noun phrase are more accepted than sentences with the Arabic first person singular pronoun. For better generalizations, further research should be done on how Jordanian Arabic speakers perceive the identity of 'I', in addition to the identities of third and second person in the two languages, and how this is related to the phonological structure of the word itself.

A number of students in this study reported a positive attitude towards code-switching in general. They stated that some forms may be used, regardless of how correct or good they are. It appears that students who have had significant contact with English reported such attitudes. Although all of the subjects of the study are students pursuing graduate level degrees in the United States, the most positive attitudes towards and greatest familiarity with switching were reported by mothers, or linguists, who are constantly working with

linguistic issues, and who often recognize that they might use switching in a way which wouldn't be perceived as 'good'. Two mothers out of the three who participated in the study reported particularly positive responses. Two male linguists showed an interest in justifying the switched forms linguistically even though they did not accept some of them. This accords with Saleh (1998), who shows that code-switching requires high competence in the two languages involved. Subjects who reported the strongest negative attitude are two out of three males, pursuing studies in engineering and math. Interestingly, both of them are fathers of two children each. The third engineering student who reported a less negative attitude is a single young man, but working with students on and off campus. The third mother who reported a less positive attitude specializes in French linguistics, and is the one who has the least contact with English. In general, the results of the study imply that attitude towards code-switching has less to do with the proficiency in English, the second language, than with the type of contact people have with it, since all of the students have been living in the United States for a long time and have manifest proficiency in the language. This agrees partially with Saleh's results in that there is a relation between the proficiency in a second language and types of code-switching that might occur, if we are to consider constant contact with everyday life English a sign of a higher level of proficiency. The present study, however, reveals that there might be a positive correlation between the general attitude towards switching and the length of the period of time of exposure to the second language, either through work, or through constant contact with students or children, regardless of the degree of proficiency or competence in English. The highest numbers of positive responses were reported by mothers who experience code-switching all the time, linguists, students who work in teaching English, or who have constant contact with native speakers of English outside academic life. The least number of positive responses were reported by students whose contact with native speakers of English off campus is the least, or by those who have very little contact with daily, non-academic English, whether on or off campus.

One other hypothesis that the present study has attempted to test is that code-switching within the English verb phrase might not be acceptable. Let us point out here that the Arabic verb phrase usually consists of one word – the verb – with all the inflectional affixes that show tense, gender, number, and sometimes the subject and object being marked on it. A whole sentence in Arabic may be expressed in one word only. So, language switching here might not be considered. In English, however, a number of words may represent the one verb phrase, and thus switching among these words might be possible; but is it acceptable? The results of the study show that switching with perfect forms is not acceptable, while switching with other 'be' forms is more acceptable. However, switching with other 'be' forms becomes even much more acceptable when the participle refers to an adjective rather than an action.

It is pretty obvious that the *-ing* form is more connected with its auxiliary, but code-switching between them becomes acceptable when the verb is stative and thus comprehended as an adjective. With perfect tense, however, two out of eight students switched into Arabic after the English *have*, and in one sentence only. This indicates that they might have found a way to relate the Arabic past tense form to the English perfect auxiliary *have*. The one thing to be pointed out here is that, in Arabic, the distinction between simple past and present perfect is essentially lacking. Thus, there is no one specific verb form, whether

bound or free, to replace the English *have*. It is relatively clear that the subjects accepted *have* because they do not find a substitute for it. This may also suggest that *have* is more likely capable of representing an independent semantic unit in English than *be* with a participle *is*. The helping auxiliary *be* is accepted only with its English progressive form. Otherwise, if the predicate is in Arabic, some students stated that they omitted the verb *be* from the whole verb phrase.

The students in the present study, however, did not accept switching between the negative word and the auxiliary of the sentence. Only one positive response out of 26 available was reported, while 28 positive ones out of 48 responses were reported when the negative element was independent from the verb of the sentence. This confirms Hussein and Shorab's results, but it should be pointed out here that positive responses were generally reported by the same people who expressed a positive attitude towards switching throughout the study.

## Conclusion

Delineating how Jordanian Arabic native speakers evaluate code-switching between Arabic and English when it occurs between subject pronoun and verb, or between an auxiliary and the rest of the verb phrase components has been the primary goal of this study. It is relatively clear from the findings reported above that several constraints block intra-sentential code-switching between Arabic and English from taking place. As such, incurring a violation of one or more of such constraints explains the subjects' rejection or disfavor of a number of utterances exemplified throughout this study. Also, it is fairly clear from the findings above that the longer the subjects have been in the United States, and the more contact they have with English, through family or friends, the more tolerant they are of switching in general.

## Appendix I

### Questionnaire

What is your attitude towards switching between English and Arabic when speaking? Do you do it often? What do you feel or think when you hear others do it? How would you explain why speakers do this?

1. *ana have already finished.*  
**I**
  - a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?
  - b) Would you say this sentence?
  - c) What would you think if someone else did?
  
2. *hiyyi is trying hard.*  
**she**
  - a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?
  - b) Would you say this sentence?
  - c) What would you think if someone else did?



3. **I have** *kammalet el shughul kulluh*  
**finished all the work**
  - a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?
  - b) Would you say this sentence?
  - c) What would you think if someone else did?
  
4. *huwa is watching it now but I don't think it is interesting.*  
**He**
  - a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?
  - b) Would you say this sentence?
  - c) What would you think if someone else did?
  
5. **I** *baqra` fih hassa*  
**am reading in it now**
  - a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?
  - b) Would you say this sentence?
  - c) What would you think if someone else did?
  
6. **John is** *bishtaghil bishisherka hai*  
**working for this company**
  - a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?
  - b) Would you say this sentence?
  - c) What would you think if someone else did?
  
7. **Mary is** *saakneh far away from here.*  
**living**
  - a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?
  - b) Would you say this sentence?
  - c) What would you think if someone else did?
  
8. **We** *rah nshoof*  
**will see**
  - a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?
  - b) Would you say this sentence?
  - c) What would you think if someone else did?
  
9. **You are** *btuktub an elmawdou`.*  
**writing about the subject**
  - a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?
  - b) Would you say this sentence?
  - c) What would you think if someone else did?
  
10. *Inta coming tonight ?*  
**You**
  - a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?
  - b) Would you say this sentence?
  - c) What would you think if someone else did?

11. *ana mish going.*  
**I am not**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?
12. *Into are coming tonight?*  
**You**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?
13. *Inta You are coming tonight?*  
**You**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?
14. **Ahmad is *mish raayeh.***  
**not going**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?
15. **You and Mary *btuktubu 'an elmawdou'?***  
**are writing about the subject?**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?
16. **Ahmad and I *jayyeen ma' ba'd.***  
**are coming together**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?
17. **He has *kammal qistu.***  
**finished his story**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?
18. **We all have *kammalna shughulna***  
**finished our work**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?

19. **Mary is** *mabsouṭa hunaak*  
**happy there**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?
20. **All the students are** *fee nafs el-ṣaff.*  
**in the same class**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?
21. **You and I** *raḥ nishtaghil ma' ba'd.*  
**will work together**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?
22. **I** *anna raayeh.*  
**am going**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?
23. *huwa* **has been reading all morning.**  
**He**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?
24. **You and he** *kuntu mawjoodeen*  
**were there**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?
25. **They are** *mish mihtammeen*  
**not interested**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?
26. **She and I** *tfarrajna 'alfilm*  
**watched the movie**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?

27. *anna I thought about it.*  
**I**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?
28. **He** *huwwa haka ma 'i.*  
**he talked with me**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?
29. **He said he** *mish jay.*  
**is not coming**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?
30. **All the students** *mish fee nafs el-saff*  
**are not in the same class**  
a) Does this sentence sound good to you? If not, what is the problem?  
b) Would you say this sentence?  
c) What would you think if someone else did?

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