Code-mixing in Class and Communication: A Dimension of Translanguaging at the Tertiary-level in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates tertiary-level students' perceptions, benefits, and challenges of code-mixing, both foreign and domestic. A mixed-methods approach was employed to conduct the research at three private universities in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Using convenience sampling, quantitative data were collected through a survey administered to 100 tertiary-level students. Deploying purposive sampling, qualitative data were collected by semi-structured interviews with 5 domestic and 2 foreign tertiary-level students. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were respectively used for quantitative and qualitative data analysis. 50% agree that code-mixing eases communication, while 54% sometimes encounter challenges understanding class lectures due to code-mixing. The interviews find that the domestic students consider teachers' meshing of Bangla and English conducive to their classroom learning. In contrast, the foreign students perceive code-mixing as curbing their comprehension of class lectures and their learning. This research highlights the need for further exploration of how code-mixing affects classroom learning and English acquisition across departments and disciplines.

Keywords: Code-mixing, Translanguaging, Class, Classroom Communication, Tertiary-level

Introduction

Bangla (L1) is the national language of Bangladesh, while English (L2) is taught to students from the primary through tertiary levels (Ara, 2020; Islam & Hashim, 2019). Bangladeshi tertiary-level students learn English through their academic discourses, as some basic (remedial) English courses are taught at public and private universities to make them proficient in the language (Mahbub-ul-Alam & Quyyum, 2016). They concurrently insert Bangla and English words and phrases into their spoken sentences, both inside and outside the university; that is what code-mixing is (Amin, 2020; Canagarajah, 2011; Hossain & Bar, 2015). Code-mixing is also known as translanguaging (Canagarajah, 2013; Park, 2013). The vastness of code-mixing can be explored by examining students' communication in Bangladesh (Aorny et al., 2022; Hoque et al., 2021; Kabir & Mohiuddin, 2017).

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Saha and Rahman (2022) investigated students' and teachers' perspectives on translanguaging (i.e., mixing of Bangla and English) in EAP (English for Academic Purposes) classes. Mixing Bangla and English was considered beneficial to help students learn new content and build rapport with them. Some teachers, on the contrary, did not find code-mixing worth doing, as they deemed the inclusion of languages to be disadvantageous. However, most students deemed teachers' integration of Bangla and English positive, as it helped them participate and perform in class. They believed teachers could give them feedback in Bangla along with English and incentivize less proficient students to engage in class participation. Thus, they could employ their repertoire of both Bangla and English to parse class lectures and assist peers in class activities. Akhter (2019) leveraged the Linguistic Ethnography approach (LE) to evince the de facto language policy and practice at Dhaka University. In other words, she researched how students chose and employed their known languages during different class activities. Students fused Bangla and English to learn English. They drew on translanguaging to facilitate classroom communication and to understand the meanings of English vocabulary. Also, they used Bangla to carry out tasks given in English.

Although Sultana and Fang (2024) extrapolated that Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction (MMI) embodies a utopian urgency, challenging monolingual ideology and bias, this might not be enacted in Bangladesh anytime soon. Notwithstanding, they remind us that the commencement and cultivation of MMI in class, through the recognition of native languages in linguistic resources, could be a transformative avenue for solidifying decolonial pedagogy and establishing educational equity within the Global South. This research, conducted in the context of Global South (in Bangladesh) in the neoliberal era, is a transformational addition to the reservoir of Southern epistemology in translanguaging, as Hamid et al. (2024) hope Southern applied linguists would decolonize their research envision and engagements by bringing disciplinary demands, modification, and adaptation to produce knowledge in, and reduce the problem in, putting theories in pedagogy/practice (i.e., praxis) depending on Southern context, perspectives, and necessities.

Although a handful of studies examined the types of code-switching observed in students' communication across universities in Bangladesh, they did not specifically and sufficiently report on the extent of use, causes, interlocutors, perceptions, advantages, and challenges of mixing Bangla and English (Hoque et al., 2021). Neither has adequately explored the perspectives, benefits, and challenges of code-mixing among foreign students at private universities in Bangladesh (Biswas, 2019; Fatema, 2024). This research tries to fill the research gap. It provides novel and notable insights for educators and educational policymakers aiming to improve students' content and L2 learning. This research could serve as a springboard for future translanguaging research. Researchers studying translanguaging could draw on the results of this research to more substantively discuss their findings.

Besides, to befit bilingual pedagogy, it is imperative to know students' experiences and perceptions of mixing L1 and L2 in class. Teachers could then be mindful of students' subjective and objective considerations of the affordances of code-mixing for content and target-language learning, which would help them approach teaching and select the language for classroom instruction more informedly (Rahman & Hu, 2025). The implication of this research is therefore far-reaching. It has sought to minimize the gap in understanding the perceptions of foreign and domestic students regarding the use of Bangla and English at Bangladeshi private universities. Also, it interprets the challenges and merits of code-mixing in English language teaching and learning.

This research is sequentially structured. The introduction provides background on code-mixing

in Bangladeshi educational settings. It then pinpoints the research gap, mentioning what previous research overlooked. The literature review critically contextualizes this research with prior studies. The methodology specifies how the research was conducted. The result comprehensively illustrates the findings and answers the research questions. The discussion interprets the key results and analytically connects them with the findings of earlier research. The conclusion summarizes the key findings and provides recommendations.

Literature review

Theoretical Perspectives on Code-mixing and Translanguaging

Code-mixing refers to the use of multiple languages in oral and written communication (Nagy, 2018; Poplock, 1980; Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021). Williams (1994), however, coined 'translanguaging', referring to the planned and systematized usage of two languages for a particular lesson at educational institutions. Translanguaging, also known as code-switching/ code-meshing, or translingual practice, is just one term that refers to the use of students' whole linguistic resources (Canagarajah, 2011, 2013). On the other hand, it is argued that translanguaging is a more systematic approach to using the unified features of multiple languages than code-switching, which is simply switching between two languages' grammatical rules or linguistic systems (García and Wei, 2014). Although code-switching studies grapple with the ontological (i.e., existential) tension in the studies of multilingualism, the translanguaging lens does not dislodge (or remove) the existence and employment of code-switching (Seals, 2020). In other words, code-switching/mixing is a common component of and a necessity for translanguaging (Bhat & Bolonyai, 2019; Heugh, 2021). They share identical meanings and mechanics, as they emerge through translation and borrowing, drawing on L1 and L2 (MacSwan, 2017, 2022; MacSwan & Rolstad, 2024).

There are two types of translanguaging: universal translanguaging and classroom translanguaging (Lewis et al., 2012). Bilinguals deploy the former to communicate in their daily lives, switching/meshing between named languages, e.g., L1 (Bangla) and L2 (English); the latter, used by teachers, needs ponderation, planning, preparation, and pedagogical intervention. Classroom translanguaging enables multilingual students to tap into their L1+L2 as a unified, unitary linguistic resource (known as 'single mental grammar') (Grosjean, 2010; García & Wei, 2014). As a result, they can better comprehend and learn content (Canagarajah, 2015; Islam & Melo-Pfeifer, 2023; Otheguy et al., 2015). The process undertaken by multilinguals to mix one language with another is a structure-governed and creative creation, that presupposes linguistic instinct and intuition as well as linguistic capability and creativity, emanating from pragmatism or (un)precedented pragmatic deployment of a repertoire of languages (Chomsky, 1968; Grosjean, 1982; Pinker, 1994).

Pedagogical Implications of Translanguaging and Code-mixing

Content learning is cardinal for students' academic education. So is the ability to articulate and write correctly and critically as well as daily and deeply in L1 and L2 (Datta, 2025; Pinker, 2014). Students who are good at thinking and writing in L1 are apparently the same at doing so in L2, and they leverage their L1 to make meaning and write in L2 (Shamsuzzaman et al., 2018). Therefore, L1 and L2 synergy can be leveraged to bolster multilingual students' writing (and thinking) through translation and meaning transfer between L1 and L2 (Ulum, 2024).

Code-mixing is perceived as a helpful tool for language learning. According to sociocultural theory, children's interaction with elder person(s) (e.g., father, mother, and grandparents) by a

mixture of L1 and L2 is important for their language learning and cognitive development; for children can well learn L1 and L2 by social and cultural exposure, involvement, and interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). Likewise, Cummins (1979) put forward the 'Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis.' The hypothesis suggests that advances in learning and using L2 depend on sufficient development of L1 skills. As language learners (children in particular) begin to receive adequate and immersive L2 input, their L2 learning and acquisition improve, a result of a developmental process already available in their L1. Hence, he recommends that education in both L1 and L2 is necessary, and that this should be emphasized and implemented through an additive type of bilingualism by the school authority, when the objective is to achieve an ideal improvement in the intellectual and academic abilities of minority-language children.

Systematized translanguaging could lower university course dropout rates (Rafi, 2023). Through translingual pedagogy, teachers may nurture students who are yet to be competent in English and who confront linguistic impediments to do well (and even pass) in academic subjects (Beiler & Castro, 2025; Islam & Rahman, 2019; Javaid et al., 2025). It is, however, important that multilingual students become competent (and then proficient) in English, given the language's necessity in higher education, employability, and globalization (Maranan et al., 2025). Therefore, students should master using L1 and the English language through conscious, continuous effort. The sooner they do so, the better (Karim et al., 2023; Rahman & Singh, 2021). Moreover, translingual pedagogy requires teachers (here, teacher education is essential to equip them) to appropriate students' whole repertoire made of L1 (Bangla), L2 (English), and L3 (if available), so students fully comprehend and learn content(s) (Canagarajah, 2006; Rahman, 2020; Shahed & Rahman, 2022).

Research Gaps in Translanguaging and Code-mixing

Previous research has not sufficiently illuminated foreign students' perspectives on code-mixing (Ferdous et al., 2024; Javed et al., 2021). Research on tertiary-level institutional policies regarding code-mixing and bilingualism is still limited (Rafi, 2024). Little is known about whether the mixture of local language(s) and English positively or negatively impacts students' and teachers' classroom learning, communication, cognition, and language acquisition (Mulyani et al., 2024; Natsir & Aliah, 2024).

Hasan and Snigdha (2024) found that foreign students at a Bangladeshi public university encountered difficulties in communicating, understanding lectures, improving academic writing, and interacting with society due to language and cultural gaps. However, a research gap remains in exploring how Bangladeshi domestic and foreign students perceive code-mixing and the benefits and obstacles they encounter when combining Bangla and English at private universities (Hoque et al., 2021). This research, therefore, not only reports how they perceive code-mixing in class and communication but also explores what benefits and challenges they respectively earn and encounter from code-mixing.

Research Questions

Keeping the research objectives in mind, the researcher conducted the study using a mixed-methods approach across three private universities in Dhaka, where the medium of instruction (MOI) was English. The researcher posed four critical questions to carry out the research:

1) How do domestic and foreign students perceive code-mixing during communication at private universities?

2) How do domestic and foreign students perceive teachers' code-mixing during lectures at private universities?

3) What are the benefits of code-mixing for domestic and foreign students in class and communication?

4) What are the challenges of domestic and foreign students in code-mixing in class and communication?

Methods

Research Design

The researcher employed a mixed-methods design. In other words, the researcher applied both quantitative and qualitative methods. Doyle et al. (2009) stated that a mixed-methods research design can be used when neither quantitative nor qualitative methods alone is sufficient to collect adequate data.

The researcher, nonetheless, accumulated data from tertiary-level students at three private universities in Dhaka, Bangladesh. A survey questionnaire comprising closed-ended questions was designed in Google Forms. It was then distributed to 100 participants to collect quantitative data. No framework was followed in formulating the questionnaire; it was developed based on the research questions. At the beginning of the survey, the definition of code-mixing with examples was provided, and it was stated that participation was completely voluntary. In section A of the survey, there were questions about participants' age, gender, L1 and L2, and academic discipline. Thus, the researcher collected the participants' demographic information. Section B consisted of closed-ended multiple-choice and Likert scale questions. In section B, there were questions about whether participants mixed Bangla and English at their universities; with whom and why they code-mixed; whether they faced problems understanding lectures due to code-mixing; and whether they considered code-mixing detrimental to their English language learning.

To collect qualitative data, the researcher used a semi-structured approach and interviewed 5 Bangladeshi domestic and 2 foreign students. The semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow the researcher to pose follow-up questions and collect descriptive data limited to responses to the survey questionnaire. Qualitative data offer deeper insights that collected quantitative data cannot provide (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Therefore, quantitative data from 100 survey participants, along with qualitative data from 2 foreign and 5 domestic students, were necessary for the researcher to answer the research questions comprehensively.

Participants of the Survey

A total of 100 students at three private universities in Dhaka, where the Medium of Instruction (MOI) was English, participated in the survey. To ensure confidentiality, the participants' identities were de-identified. The participants' ages ranged from 19 to 24 years. The participants were students of Economics, Electrical Engineering, Architecture, Journalism, Philosophy, Mathematics, Business Administration, English Literature and Linguistics, and Computer Science. Of the 100 students, 58 were male, and 42 were female. The participants' native language (L1) was Bangla, while their second language (L2) was English.

The researcher deployed convenience sampling for quantitative data collection. Due to financial constraints, convenience sampling was the most appropriate method for the researcher to select participants and collect data. As the researcher amassed data from a total of 100 students, it was thus apparently possible for him to control bias; Golzar et al. (2022) as well as Skowronek and Duerr (2009) averred that the inclusion of a moderately large number of participants, from separate settings of a particular research, is worthwhile with a view to controlling bias in data

collection.

Participants of the Interview

The researcher also interviewed 5 Bangladeshi domestic students at the same three private universities in Dhaka where the research setting took place. Their pseudonyms were DS1, DS2, DS3, DS4, and DS5; they were respectively studying Electrical Engineering, Finance, English Linguistics, Economics, and English Literature. The researcher deliberately chose interviewees with educational backgrounds in Humanities, Science, and Commerce. Their L1 was Bangla and L2 was English. Additionally, the researcher interviewed 2 foreign students from one of the universities where the research was conducted. Their pseudonyms were FS1 and FS2. They were from India and Kenya, pursuing an MA in ELT (English Language Teaching). FS1's L1 was Hindi, while FS2's L1 was Swahili. They could speak Bangla to some extent. The researcher leveraged purposive sampling to select domestic (Bangladeshi) and foreign students for qualitative data collection. Such a sampling system is fruitful for conducting research with information-enriched participants relevant to the research focus (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Instrument and Data Collection

The researcher used two instruments, i.e., a survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview, to collect quantitative and qualitative data, respectively. For quantitative data collection, the survey questionnaire was distributed online to the students. Furthermore, the researcher informed the interviewees about the interview's schedule. Each interview lasted about 15-20 minutes and was audio-recorded on Google Meet with the interviewee's permission. During the interview, along with probing questions, the researcher asked them if they used to do code-mixing on their campuses, with whom and why they did code-mixing, how they perceived code-mixing, if they found mixing of Bangla and English beneficial or disadvantageous to their understanding of class lectures and English language learning, and whether they faced challenges in comprehending teachers' lectures for code-mixing.

Data Collection and Confidentiality

The researcher obtained oral consent from all interviewees to audio-record the interviews. A written consent form, which included details on the research's purpose, interview modalities, associated risks and benefits, and the data-sharing process, was explained to each interviewee in detail. The interviewees were given adequate time to decide whether they would participate in the research. They were made aware that they could question the steps and stages of the interview before and after consenting, and that they could withdraw from the research at any time. All the interviewees, however, verbally consented to participate in the interview. The researcher recorded verbal consent at the beginning of the interview. Furthermore, only the researcher had access to the collected data. The researcher then de-identified the participants' identities to maintain confidentiality. The researcher gave the interviewees pseudonyms, concealing their actual names. The researcher did not mention the names of the participants' universities either. Thus, the participants' identifying information was kept confidential.

Data Analysis Process

Quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive statistics. In other words, the researcher used pie charts to display the percentage distributions of survey responses. The researcher found that the central tendency of percentage distributions best depicts the most representative value. To find the mean score (M), numerical values were assigned to the responses on the Likert scale. The mode was found by finding the most frequent response.

Further, thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), inductive thematic analysis is effective and efficient for exploring appropriate themes from interviews. The data collected from the interviews were manually and minutely read, coded, and categorized to garner themes. To do so, the researcher first identified the recurring responses from the interviews to find the codes. The explored codes were then categorized into several themes.

Results/Findings

Research Question 1: How do domestic and foreign students perceive code-mixing during communication at private universities?

Domestic and Foreign Students' Perception of Code-mixing

Chart 1.

The percentage of mixing Bangla and English

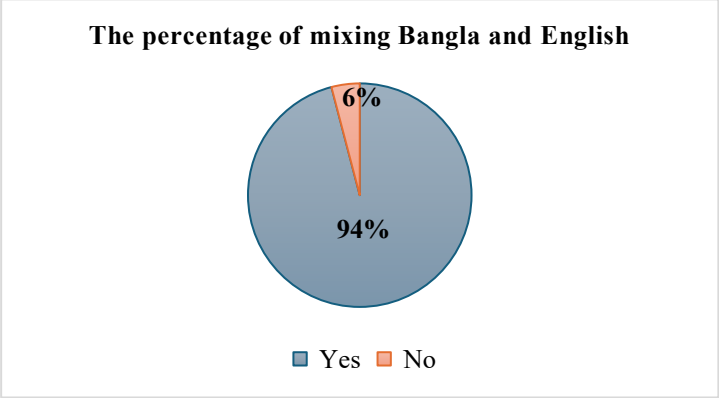

Chart 1 shows that 94% of 100 students mix Bangla and English in their communication at their universities; on the other hand, 6% do not. The highest percentage (94%) denotes that most students mix Bangla and English while communicating. The central tendency, which emerges from the mean score M = 0.94, and the mode is '*Yes'* (as '*Yes'* is the most common answer), suggests that most students merge Bangla and English at their universities.

Chart 2.

Perceived reasons for mixing Bangla and English

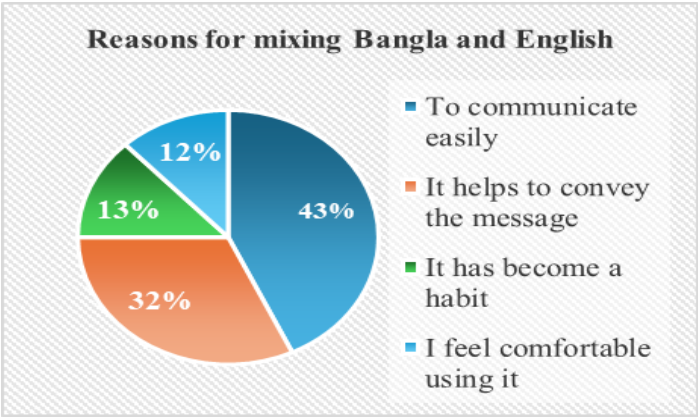

Chart 2 shows that 43% of the students mix Bangla and English to communicate easily, whilst

13% do code-mixing as it has become their habit, and 32% use code-mixing because it helps them convey their messages. Conversely, 12% employ code-mixing because they feel comfortable with it. The mode is 'To Communicate Easily', which is the most frequent answer, reflecting the highest percentage of students who code-mix to communicate more conveniently.

DS3 and DS5 stated that they used to mix Bangla and English at their university. When DS3 could not find a specific English word, she would mix Bangla words. DS5 emphasized the need to use Bangla and English words in communication.

In this regard, DS3 mentioned,

> I am required to mix Bangla and English both inside and outside the campus. Yes, I firmly believe code-mixing makes perception so obvious to others. Code-mixing is sometimes essential because I need to express myself in a way that's understandable. I do not always get the exact vocabulary in English. It can smooth out our daily and academic communication. Though it is not always necessary. [DS3].

FS1 commented,

> You know both Bangla and Hindi have come from Sanskrit. Hindi isn't helping me, as Bangla sounds a bit like Hindi. I mix Bangla and English. My teachers are very impressed. I learn Bangla from vendors, bus drivers, and rickshaw pullers. I am challenging the challenge. Though it is challenging for me to learn Bangla, I am trying to learn Bangla. I think translation is important.

DS5 said,

> It is time-consuming to search for uncommon words in either Bangla or English. To save time, I mix English words with Bangla and vice versa in the same utterance. I use English words that are likely known to those with whom I communicate. [DS5, Male, age 19].

DS2 said,

> Yes, I do mix Bangla and English on my campus. When I talk to my classmates, I use it. At that time, I used more code-mixing. But whenever I talk and respond in my class lecture, I do, but very rarely, since the language of instruction is English. That is why we are always supposed to speak in English in academic communication. [DS2, Female, age 22].

DS4 mentioned,

> Code-mixing occurs during communication at my university. Subconsciously or out of concern, I sometimes insert English words into a Bangla sentence. Also, I insert Bangla words into English sentences. Even though I try to speak English in my class, most of my classmates prefer to talk to me in Bangla. So, I can't continue speaking English. I need to switch to Bangla at that time [DS4, Male, age 22].

Code-mixing is recursively irresistible at the three private universities; most of the interviewed students mix Bangla and English. DS4 stated he was required to switch from English to Bangla to communicate with his classmates. It is thus apparently facile to fathom why an interlocutor, in this case, a Bangladeshi multilingual student, is not left with an option other than answering in the language (e.g., Bangla) in which he has been asked a question by the other interlocutor, even if both interlocutors know English. In Bangladesh, Kamal and Roy (2024) found that both undergraduate and graduate students were accustomed to inserting English words — and for

them, the fusion of Bangla and English words was a disposition and necessity — into communication; it was further found that a graduate participant altered languages between ten to fifteen times in class. Ahmad et al. (2024) state that students use flamboyantly fancy words from English, Hindi, and Bangla, and are keen to code-mix for three reasons: translanguaging, social media, and the use of entertainment platforms from other countries.

Research question 2. How do domestic and foreign students perceive teachers' code-mixing during lectures at private universities?

Perceptions of Domestic and Foreign Students on Teachers' Code-mixing

DS1 recounted in this regard,

> I think teachers may speak in Bangla because some topics in class might be new to their students. Teachers can teach students in Bangla as well as in English. It is a helpful strategy. Although it should be used to some extent. [DS1, Male 23, age 23].

With respect to that, FS1 said,

> I do not mix Bangla and English while talking to my teachers. But when my classmates and teachers were asking and answering questions in Bangla, I struggled to understand them. I could understand a few words of what they said. I could understand 30-40% of what they were saying. The amount of English is low when teachers communicate only in English outside the classroom. So, we need to speak English as much as possible in the classroom. [FS1, Male, age 19]

FS2 said,

> English is an easy language for me. I can understand the maximum in English. It is difficult to understand the concept in class if my teachers speak in Bangla. I can't read or write Bangla. So, reading and writing in English are convenient for me [FS2, Male, age 26].

Likewise, DS3, DS4, and DS5 claimed that code-mixing should not occur when a foreign student is in class. Foreign students enroll in different departments at DS3's university. And DS3 and DS4 had foreign classmates who hardly knew Bangla. DS5 suggests that English classes should be taken in English.

DS3 said,

> In our academic context, code-mixing is not necessary to understand teachers' lectures. Some students in our classes are from other countries. They hardly know Bangla in a tertiary-level class. If our teachers and we communicate with them in code-switching, it would be difficult for the foreign students, and they deserve to be considered part of the whole class. It is their right. If there are no foreigners, code-mixing may perhaps help.

DS4 mentioned,

> It depends on the institution in which students are. We have foreign students, so we should speak English at that moment. Most of us will be willing to have Bangla in class. But we cannot deprive ourselves of English to learn better. As we have foreign students, we also want our teachers to speak English.

DS5 said,

> It would be difficult for some foreign students to understand the lecture. Without code-

> mixing, classes can be conducted; if there are foreign students, code-mixing should be avoided in class lectures, and English classes should be in English.

According to the interviewees, although code-mixing helps domestic students understand difficult topics, it impedes foreign students' comprehension of the class and communication. So, the interviewees suggest that, if there is a foreign student, lectures should be in English in the classroom. Odhiambo (2021) stated that L2 English is used effectively and primarily in Kenya when foreigners participate in communication, thereby reducing the use of vernacular dialects. Ennin and Manariyo (2023) found that the blending of two languages (i.e., Gujarati and Hindi) diverted foreign students' attention from class and hindered learning. Because of the language gap, as English was used slightly inside and outside class, the foreign students could not completely comprehend lectures, nor could they communicate in class. They could not function in the host community either. Thus, their academic attainment and social adaptability were not at all impressive.

Research question 3. What are the benefits of code-mixing for domestic and foreign students in class and communication?

Domestic and Foreign Students' Benefits of Code-mixing

Chart 3.

Students' opinions on whether code-mixing eases communication

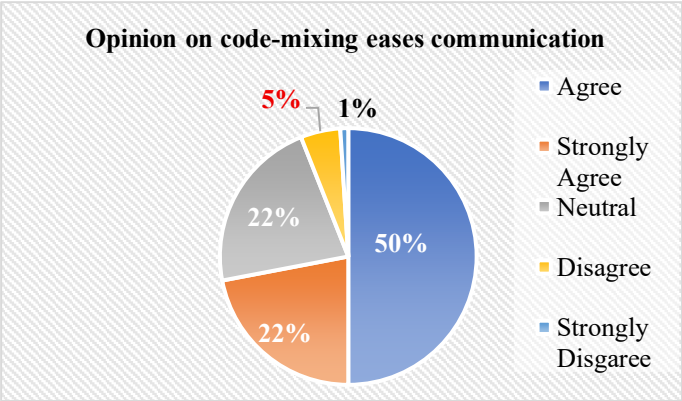

Chart 3 shows that, of 100 students, 50% agree and 22% strongly agree that code-mixing eases communication. Furthermore, 5% disagree that code-mixing makes communication easier, in comparison to 1% who strongly disagree, while 22% remain neutral. 50% of students agree that code-mixing eases communication. The mean score (M) is 3.87. This mean score suggests that, on average, students agree and remain neutral when asked whether code-mixing eases communication. Here, the mode is '*Agree'* because it is the most common response among the majority of students.

DS1 stated,

> My teachers use some code-mixing when explaining a critical idea. Also, it helped me to communicate and understand class lectures at the very beginning of my undergraduate studies. There are many students at my university whose background was Bangla medium. Code-mixing helped me learn my topic from my teacher.

DS5 said,

> Unless students can comprehend English, then using Bangla helps them understand the

> lecture. Sometimes a teacher needs to use code-mixing to help students understand their lecture. It depends on the topic and the students, but teachers and students need to speak English in class. However, in some cases, teachers may use Bangla to help students understand some complicated topics. A difficult lesson can be easily explained through code-mixing. Sometimes our teachers use technical terms that can be new and difficult for us. Then, teachers can explain new terms through code-mixing.

DS3 mentioned,

> Students mix Bangla and English during academic communication to make their communication happen. I think it depends, yes, it depends. On one hand, no because code-mixing is not necessary for academic communication and class lectures, but it depends on the context. If the subject matter requires code-mixing, then it is necessary for correct communication. Students and teachers both may take help from it as long as they use it carefully. Some of my teachers make class understandable by using code-mixing. It helps students to understand a lesson if they are not competent in English.

FS1 expressed,

> I can listen to and speak a little Bangla. I sometimes intentionally mix Bangla and English with my classmates. And even I mix Bangla, Hindi, and English as well. My intention is to learn a new language. I am in a new setting, so I should be the one who learns Bangla. I ask my classmates to speak Bangla with me and to help me understand what you are saying. I think translation is important. If we can understand Bangla and Hindi, we can easily translate the message into English. Code-mixing itself has several components. We have Bangla, Hindi, and English.

FS2 conveyed,

> In terms of understanding the topic, students will understand it better in their mother language. My point is that the mother tongue can be used in class. But it should be used minimally.

The interviewees' opinions mirror the perceptions of the teachers and students interviewed by Maqsood et al. (2022). The integration of Bangla and English is beneficial for classroom learning and improves communication clarity and smoothness (Begum et al., 2024). Teachers mixed Bangla and English to help their students understand lectures and build rapport with multilingual students (Anderson, 2022). Thus, translanguaging leads students to learn content, making the classroom a linguistic-and-cultural egalitarian ground, where almost all students apparently can communicate and collaborate through participation, by the synergism of their full mental grammar comprised of L1+L2 (+ L3+L4) (Canagarajah, 2009; Cenoz & Gortor, 2021; Case, 2024).

Research question 4. What are the challenges of domestic and foreign students in code-mixing in class and communication?

Domestic and Foreign Students' Challenges of Code-mixing

Chart 4.

Challenges of mixing Bangla and English in understanding class lectures

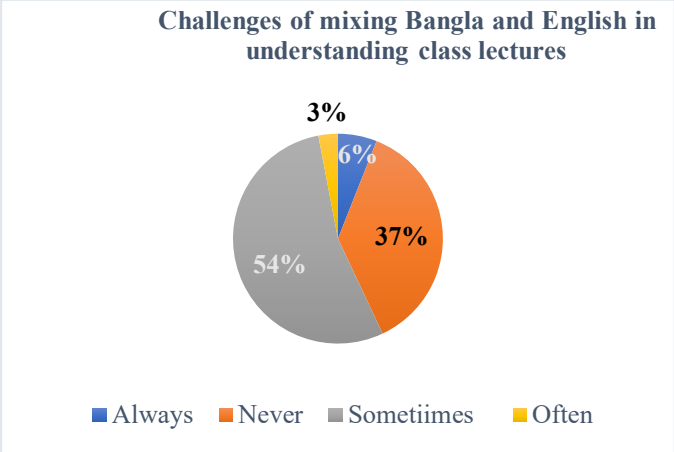

Chart 4 shows that 3% of students often face challenges understanding class lectures when Bangla and English are mixed. Conversely, 6%, 37%, and 54% of respondents always, never, and sometimes face problems in comprehending class lectures due to the mixture of Bangla and English. The highest percentage, 54%, suggests that most students sometimes face challenges understanding class lectures due to code-mixing. The mode is '*Sometimes'* because it is the most frequent answer among students. The mean score (M) is 1.78, which indicates that, on average, students sometimes and never face challenges in comprehending class lectures due to code-mixing.

FS1 and FS2 used to face hurdles in understanding class lectures and communicating with their teachers and classmates due to code-mixing. FS1 and FS2 stated that it was difficult for them to comprehend Bangla.

FS1 mentioned,

> In my first semester, I faced a lot of challenges in understanding Bangla. I even used to ask my classmates the meanings of Bangla words and sentences my teachers used.

FS 2 said,

> When someone speaks in different dialects of Bangla, I have trouble understanding the message. Classes should be in English because our university has students from diverse backgrounds, including non-Bengalis.

Chart 5.

Perceived negative impacts of code-mixing on the English language learning

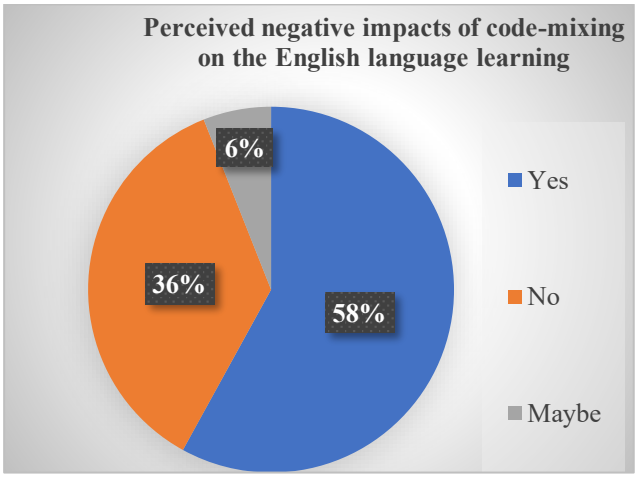

Chart 5 shows that 58% of students believe code-mixing has negative impacts on their English language learning, while 36% do not. However, 6% think code-mixing may negatively influence their English language learning. The highest percentage, 58%, indicates that the majority perceive code-mixing as negatively affecting their English language learning. Therefore, the mode is '*Yes'*, as it is the most common response, selected by most students.

DS1, DS2, DS3, DS4, DS5, FS1, and FS2 are concerned that colossal code-mixing may be prejudicial to their L2 acquisition and learning, for they might get so snug in deploying Bangla substantially and English marginally; as a result, the paucity in linguistic inputs of English may mar their (sub)conscious English acquisition. According to DS3, code-mixing should be used sparingly. DS3 remarked,

> Code-mixing may lead to a scarcity of English. So, it will have a bad impact on students' speaking skills. And in formal situations like teaching, teachers and students should be aware of this code-mixing issue. Classes can be conducted without code-mixing. We use it because we are habituated to it. But mixing too much code might be problematic, in my opinion; it would be bad practice.

DS5 said,

> If we do it excessively and continuously, it will hamper our 2nd-language acquisition. If we are habituated to it, we are likely to lose our fluency in English. I think code-mixing is not necessary in class. We use it because it is easier to express our feelings and opinions in Bangla. It feels so easy to express something by code-mixing.

FS1 commented,

> Only communicating in English and Bangla outside the classroom is not enough. If we use Bangla more, it would not be as beneficial as if we included more English in the classroom. Some repetitive phrases and sentences often appear in communication between students and teachers, for example, "How are you?" "You should soon submit the assignment." "Send me an email." But if classes are taught entirely in English, students will learn more vocabulary, sentence structures, and phrases. Students will receive more input in English, which will help them acquire the language.

FS2 said,

> Where will students use English if they always communicate in their mother tongue in

> academic settings? Outside academic settings, we may speak in several languages. But for English language learning, we need to speak, listen, write, and read in English. Since Bangla is my lesser-known language, I find it harder to understand lectures when my teacher mixes Bangla while teaching. It is expected. In this way, my exposure to English is limited. If exposure to English is limited, I believe learning is also limited.

In the ESL context, although code-mixing positively influences language teaching and learning, it may hinder mutual comprehension when students interact with foreigners (Ezeh et al., 2022). This parallels the results of this research, as FS1 and FS2 reported difficulties in grasping teachers' classroom talks when Bangla and English were mixed. Moreover, the surveyed and interviewed students consider excessive code-mixing harmful to the development of English language proficiency. This finding aligns with the research by Spice (2018), which interviewed 13 multilingual English language learners and an English teacher; they acknowledged that excessive code-mixing slows L2 acquisition and leads learners to use it as a crutch, ultimately losing the ability to construct L2 sentences. Similarly, participants in earlier research consider exceeding code-mixing detrimental to the development of English language application and acquisition (Ezemba et al., 2022; Kaushanskaya & Crespo, 2019; Tarigan & Girsang, 2025).

Discussion

This section interprets key results, relates them to convergences and divergences in earlier research, specifies the novel contribution, addresses the research's limitations, and provides suggestions for future research.

The participants, who find code-mixing both beneficial and disadvantageous, use Bangla (L1) and English (L2) to a greater degree; they code-mix mostly with their classmates because it eases communication. They find code-mixing conducive to their classroom learning as their teachers make them understand tough topics by mixing Bangla and English. On the other hand, they consider code-mixing as disadvantageous to international/foreign students' comprehension of class lectures, and most participants think code-mixing has negative impacts on their English language learning. These findings are in line with previous research on code-mixing and translanguaging (Fatema, 2024; Mekuria & Mohammed, 2025; Rafi & Morgan, 2022a).

Participants find code-mixing worth doing not only because it makes communication facile and functional but because — it entails and embodies a speaker's acuity and aptitude to eloquently and efficiently speak in two languages (Bangla and English, e.g.), and — the participants feel cozy combining languages in communication (Awan et al., 2025; Taş & Mirici, 2025; Trinh, 2025). In the same vein, Ali (2024) explored that his research participants deployed translanguaging by translating and paraphrasing words to assist their fellows with low proficiency in English. DS1, DS2, and DS3 also emphasized the necessity of code-mixing to make a class comprehensible when students cannot understand English.

According to Sultana (2014), however, young adults are marginalized through the colonial construction and the continued dominance of English. Two participants in her research were Mac and Nikita. Mac mixed such English words as 'class' and 'mouse' with — whilst Nikita added the words 'sir', 'rat', and the phrase 'after all' to Bangla sentences. Hence, Sultana claimed that young adult students are irresistibly innovative, pragmatic, and systematic mixers of linguistic and semantic features of Bangla and English with new metalinguistic methods. Przymus (2023) stated that both translanguaging and code-switching — the former a metonym, the latter a metaphor — are cognitive and communicative components of verbal interaction,

vital to the study of human communication and language education. Similarly, domestic students regard code-mixing as vital and effective for comprehending new topics and fostering content learning. Therefore, it is academically acknowledged that teachers can integrate languages, which is an effective way to address the difficulties of content and target-language learning (Biswas, 2019; Fuster & Bardel, 2024; Li & Wang, 2024).

This research shows that the interviewees are wary because students might be habituated to code-mixing, which could be insidious to the improvement of their English language skills. 58% of survey participants deem code-mixing to negatively impact their English language learning. Similarly, prior studies addressed that excessive employment of L1 and L2 could be problematically consequential, and there should be a cap be put on unconscionably exceeding code-mixing, as it could create a scarcity of linguistic inputs of a language, causing a setback to learners' second language acquisition and learning (Datta & Roy, 2024; Nteziyaremye et al., 2024; Tam & Chi, 2024).

However, this research shows that 54% of the surveyed students sometimes face challenges understanding lectures due to code-mixing. Similarly, FS1 and FS2 used to encounter challenges in comprehending lectures if Bangla and English were used. These results align with the research findings of Luqman et al. (2021), who argue that international students' communication barriers should be addressed to maximize learning and succeed in their academic environments. Ennin and Manariyo (2023) suggested that lectures should be in English to support foreign students' comprehension and learning.

The novelty of this research is that, unlike previous research, it did not overlook how foreign students perceive code-mixing. Thus, exploring foreign students' perceptions of code-mixing enabled the researcher to identify the challenges they face in L2 learning and in classroom settings. This research has important implications. The findings will make institutional authorities aware of foreign students' difficulties in grasping lectures due to code-mixing. Teaching and learning can be conducted in English if foreign students, who do not adequately understand the local language, are present in class (Masum et al., 2025).

Nonetheless, pedagogical translanguaging warrants informed teacher education, in which pre-service and in-service teachers learn the ins and outs of translanguaging (Magadan et al., 2025; Nahiyan et al., 2025; Permana & Rohmah, 2024). Educational institutions may offer pedagogical training to teachers so that they can draw on translanguaging to maximize content learning, minimizing the loss of English language learning, use, acquisition, and advancement (Cummins, 1981; Cummins, 2019; Cenoz & Gortor, 2022). In the backdrop of bilingual education in Bangladesh, among educators and policymakers, discussion and deliberation should take place on the effective enactment and examination of the extent to which and how translanguaging can be applied in the classroom (Rafi & Morgan, 2022b; Rafi & Morgan, 2022c; Rafi & Morgan, 2022d).

Future research should investigate how code-mixing influences the English language learning, use, and acquisition of both foreign and domestic students. Because of code-mixing, what types of challenges foreign students face should be researched. Further, researchers could research with a large and randomized sample size. Random selection, along with a large sample size, will improve the generalizability of research by minimizing sampling bias and maximizing its transferability and applicability. The findings from a large, randomly selected sample of participants will help researchers depict a broad picture of code-mixing usage, experiences, effects, and perceptions.

Conclusion & Recommendation

This research has found that most participants engage in significant code-mixing at their universities, regardless of its advantages and disadvantages. Code-mixing helps them continue their communication. Although they find code-mixing necessary to communicate conveniently and to absorb classroom content, they deem excessive code-mixing with trepidation about not being able to acquire English to its fullest. The concern is not merely about the jeopardy of their English acquisition and learning, but about the hindrance to foreign students' comprehension of class lectures. Thus, among the participants, there is a prevalent worry about the loss of their classroom learning, English language use and learning, and the acquisition of code-mixing.

Ongoing advancement in L1 and L2 is vital and viable in enabling students to use their full linguistic resources. Teaching and learning, however, may be conducted in English if foreign students are present in the classroom so they can fully comprehend the lectures. To equip foreign students to function socially within and beyond their institutions, universities should offer courses on communication skills in the local language.

Limitation

This research may have been affected by sampling bias, as convenience sampling was used: participants were selected based on availability rather than randomly. The findings may not generalize the extent to which students at other Bangladeshi public and private universities mix Bangla and English, as it was conducted only at three private universities in Dhaka. And the number of interviewees was small. So was the number of survey participants. Participants may not represent the broader research population, which may have more diverse perceptions and experiences of and with code-mixing at public universities in Bangladesh.

Direction for Future Studies

Research should be conducted to examine and describe the state of content, target (English), and local-language learning among international students at both public and private universities. This research underscores the need for further investigation into how foreign students perceive — and what challenges they face with — code-mixing. The earlier such an apparent concern is investigated, the better, because international students' comprehension of lectures (where the language of instruction is used effectively) is a linchpin to the success of their studies. Domestic and foreign students' academic accomplishments through classroom learning are among the indicators of a country's educational progression and prestige. Further, future research should investigate the long-term effects of translanguaging in the classroom on students' English proficiency. The applicability of translanguaging should be researched to explore how the effectiveness of code-mixing differs across departments and disciplines.

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