Reasons and Motivations for

Code-Mixing and Code-Switching

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This paper presents why bilinguals mix two languages and switch back and forth between two languages and what triggers them to mix and switch their languages when they speak. These bilingual phenomena are called ‘code-mixing’ and ‘code-switching’ and these are ordinary phenomena in the area of bilingualism. According to Hamers and Blanc (2000), ‘Code-mixing’ and ‘code-switching’ were considered as signs of incompetence. However, Khnert, Yim, Nett, Kan, and Duran (2005) remark that an alternative view is to recognize the cultural, social, and communicative validity of the mixing of two traditionally isolated linguistic codes as a third legitimate code. As mentioned, these phenomena may influence bilingual’s language positively. The purpose of this paper is to indicate the positive factors of code-mixing and code-switching for language education by discussing societal factors related to the reasons and motivations for these phenomena.

I. Introduction

Most countries have been globalizing and it will continue to happen. Recently, it is easy to find bilinguals in such traditionally monolingual countries as Korea as well on account of this globalization. Also, it is noticeable for them to speak different languages at the same time. That is, they speak mixed language and they also switch back and forth between two languages. In order to understand the process of their utterances, it is necessary to study code-mixing and code-switching in the area of bilingualism. Code-mixing and code-switching are widespread phenomena in bilingual communities.
where speakers use their native tongue (L1) and their second language (L2) in different domains. However, it is not always the case where each distinct language is exclusively used in one particular domain. Instead, what tends to happen is that a mixture of the two languages in question is used (Celik, 2003). Grumperz (1982) notes that when bilinguals are made aware of their mixed speech, they blame a “lapse of attention” for their “poor” linguistic performance and promise improvement by the elimination of language mixing and switching. However, Khnert, Yim, Nett, Kan, and Duran (2005) state that code-switching is an effective communication mode available to proficient bilingual speakers for interactions with other individuals who share both languages. According to Faltis (1989), as the culturally and linguistically diverse child engages in communication with others, she or he is often faced with the predicament of which language to use to best communicate with family, peers, and teachers in school. One way of overcoming this communication and language predicament is for these children to alternate between two languages. In order to help bilingual kids not to be confused with two languages and not to be alienated in monolingual societies, it is very critical to make both bilinguals and monolinguals familiar with code-switching and code-mixing. It would be much better for other people to know about certain bilingual phenomena and try to accept the bilingual phenomena naturally, so that they could see how much social and cultural aspects affect bilinguals’ language and learn how bilinguals and their monolingual interlocutors should lead to smooth conversation. As a result, it would help monolinguals to understand bilinguals’ utterances and help bilinguals to relieve their difficulty in communicating with other people in both of the cultures. In addition, it would be better for teachers to try to teach students both a native language and a second language so that the student could be familiar with bilingual people and societies.

II. Theoretical Background

2.1 Code-Mixing and Code-Switching

Muysken (2000) defines code-mixing as all cases where lexical items and
grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentence. In terms of the definition from Bhatia and Ritchie (2004), code-mixing refers to the mixing of various linguistic units (morphemes, words, modifiers, phrases, clauses and sentences) primarily from two participating grammatical systems within a sentence. More specifically, code-mixing is intrasentential and is constrained by grammatical principles. It may also be motivated by social-psychological factors. Despite these definitions, many people may have difficulty using the terminologies since many researchers use different terminology for code-mixing. For instance, Pfaff (1979) employs the term “mixing” as a neutral cover term for both code-mixing and borrowing while Beardsome (1991) rejects the use of the term code-mixing “since it appears to be the least-favored designation and the most unclear for referring to any form of non-monoglot norm-based speech patterns.” Yet others use the term “code-mixing” to refer to other related phenomena such as borrowing interference, transfer, or switching (McClaughin, 1984).

In fact, some people have difficulty distinguishing between code-switching and code-mixing. Code-mixing transfers elements of all linguistic levels and units ranging from a lexical item to a sentence, so that it is not always easy to distinguish code-switching from code-mixing (Grosjean, 1982). Code-switching is defined as the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence, or constituent. Intersentential alternations occur when the switch is made across sentence boundaries (Grosjean, 1982; Torres, 1989). DiPietro (1977) defines it as “the use of more than one language by communicants in the execution of a speech act.” (as cited in Grosjean, 1982: 145). Poplack (2000) states that code-switching is the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence or constituent. According to Clyne (2000), code-switching is the alternative use of two languages either within a sentence or between sentences. Also, this contrasts with transference, where a single item is transferred from languages B to A (or vice versa), whether integrated into the grammatical and /or phonological system of the recipient language or not.

2.2 Different Process of Code-Mixing
2.2.1 Insertion
The concept of insertion is defined as insertion of material such as lexical items or entire constituents from one language into a structure from the other language. According to Muysken (2000), approaches that depart from the notion of insertion view the constraints in terms of the structural properties of some base or matrix structure. Here the process of code-mixing is conceived as something akin to borrowing: the insertion of an alien lexical or phrasal category into a given structure. The difference would simply be the size and type of element inserted, e.g. noun versus noun phrase. Muysken (2000) mentions that insertion is frequent in colonial settings and recent migrant communities, where there is a considerable asymmetry in the speakers’ proficiency in the two languages. A language dominance shift, e.g. between the first and third generation in an immigrant setting, may be reflected in a shift in directionality of the insertion of elements: from insertion into the language of the country of origin to the presence of originally native items in the language of the host country.

2.2.2 Alternation
Approaches departing from alternation (associated with the Poplack (1980)) view the constraints on mixing in terms of the compatibility or equivalence of the languages involved at the switch point (Muysken, 2000). Conjunctions and appositions are incorporated through adjunction rather than insertion (2000). Verbs are often incorporated through adjunction to a helping verb. Language alternation is a normal, common, and important aspect of bilingualism (Grosjean, 1982; Pennington, 1995). According to Muysken (2000), the process of alternation is particularly frequent in stable bilingual communities with a tradition of language separation, but occurs in many other communities as well. It is a frequent and structurally intrusive type of code-mixing.

2.2.3 Congruent Lexicalization
The notion of congruent lexicalization underlies the study of style shifting
and dialect/standard variation, as in the work of Labov (1972) and Trudgill (1986), rather than bilingual language use proper (Muysken, 2000). Congruent lexicalization is akin to language variation and style shifting: switching is grammatically unconstrained and can be characterized in terms of alternative lexical insertions. Linguistic convergence feeds into congruent lexicalization and the two processes may reinforce each other. Some cases of word-internal mixing can be viewed as congruent lexicalization (2000: 221). The exception is the bilingual research by Michael Clyne (1967) on German and Dutch immigrants in Australia. This comes closest to an approach to bilingual language use from the perspective of congruent lexicalization. According to Muysken (2000), congruent lexicalization may be particularly associated with second generation migrant groups, dialect/standard and post-creole continua, and bilingual speakers of closely related languages with roughly equal prestige and no tradition of overt language separation.

2.3 Reasons and Motivation for Code-Mixing and Code-switching

When bilinguals switch or mix two languages, there might be motivation and reasons for code-switching and code-mixing. Grosjean (1982) suggests some reasons for code-switching. For example, some bilinguals mix two languages when they cannot find proper words or expressions or when there is no appropriate translation for the language being used. Also, their interlocutors, situations, messages, attitudes, and emotions generate code-mixing. According to Grosjean (1982), code-switching can also be used for many other reasons, such as quoting what someone has said (and thereby emphasizing one’s group identity), specifying the addressee (switching to the usual language of a particular person in a group will show that one is addressing that person), qualifying that has been said, or talking about past events. On the basis of a number of factors such as with whom (participants: their backgrounds and relationships), about what (topic, content), and when and where a speech act occurs, bilinguals make their language choice (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2004).

2.3.1 Participant Roles and Relationship
Bhatia and Ritchie (2004) remark that participant roles and relationships play a very critical role in bilinguals’ unconscious agreement and disagreement on language choice. That is, whether bilinguals code-mix or not depends on whom they talk to. Grosjean (1982) presents some interviews about how interlocutors affect bilinguals’ languages. The interviewee who is a Greek-English bilingual remarked, “I find myself code-switching with my friends who are all Greek... they know English so well and nobody gets offended with code-switching... I don’t switch with my parents as I do with my friends.” (p. 149). Another interviewee who is a French-English bilingual said, “I tend to use both English and French within the same conversation, within the same sentence, when I’m with Francos who are obviously bilingual, but also with Francos with whom I am at ease.” (p. 149). As these two bilinguals, interlocutors and their relationship with interlocutors affect their code-mixing.

2.3.2 Situational Factors

Bhatia and Ritchie (2004) state that some languages are viewed as more suited to particular participant/social groups, settings or topics than others. They also postulate that social variables such as class, religion, gender, and age can influence the pattern of language mixing and switching both qualitatively and quantitatively. With regard to gender, one of the social variables, Bhatia and Ritchie (2004) state that in many traditional societies, where gender roles are clearly demarcated, i.e. men work outside the home and women are engaged in domestic activities, language mixing and switching in women is qualitatively different from that in men. Gel (1979) writes: “Among the various attributes of speakers it is neither their status as peasants nor the nature of their social networks that correlates most closely with language use. It is their ages.” (p.136). Pedraza, Attinasia, and Hoffman (1980) also state that the Puerto Ricans in New York primarily engage in code-mixing as adolescents; when they have turned into ‘responsible’ adults they keep their languages more apart.

2.3.3 Message-Intrinsic Factors
Some reasons and motivations are also highly related to messages alone. According to Bhatia and Ritche (2004), there are some factors which generate code-mixing such as quotations, reiteration, topic-comment/relative clauses, hedging, interjections and idioms and deep-rooted cultural wisdom. Direct quotation or reported speech triggers language mixing/switching among bilinguals cross-linguistically. Gumperz (1982) presents the example of a Spanish-English bilingual who mixes two languages through a quotation. Also, Bhatia and Ritche (2004) state that reiteration or paraphrasing marks another function of mixing and topic-comment function makes bilinguals mix languages. Nishimura (1989) conducted research about it with Japanese-English bilinguals and found that language mixing and switching revealed when the topic is introduced in Japanese (formally marked with う) and the comment is given in English. In addition, code-mixing and switching serves an important function in hedging (Bhatia & Ritche, 2004). That is, when bilinguals do not want to give interlocutors a clear answer, they usually code-mix or switch. The other function of language mixing and switching is to add an interjection or sentence filler. For example, Singaporeans usually put ‘la’ at the end of sentences (Tay, 1989) since the Chinese that Singaporeans speak usually has a ‘la’ sound at the end of sentences.

2.3.4 Language Attitudes, Dominance, and Security
Language attitudes, dominance, and security determine the qualitative and quantitative properties of language mixing (Bhatia & Ritche, 2004). As for the attitudes, the frequency of code-mixing from bilinguals depends on whether a society considers code-mixing positively or negatively. Poplack (1980) and Nortier (1990) postulate that speakers who code-mix fluently and easily tend to be quite proficient bilingually, whereas Weinreich (1953) thought that intra-sentential code-mixing was a sign of the lack of bilinguals proficiency and interference (as cited in Muysken, 2000). As mentioned, dominance also affects code-mixing. Genesee, Nicoladis and Paradis (1995: 615) view dominance in terms of relative proficiency and predict “a general tendency for bilingual children to mix elements from their dominant language when using their non-dominant language, rather than vice versa, because
many of the linguistic structures for communication are lacking in the non-dominant language”. Also, bilinguals' security has to do with code-mixing. As reported in Grosjeans’ (1982) study, a Russian-English bilingual states, “When I speak to another Russian-English bilingual, I don’t speak as carefully and often the languages blend. This also happens when I am tired or excited or angry.” (p.150) That is, when bilinguals do not feel secure, they tend to mix languages more.

2.4 Bilinguals’ Perception of Code-Mixing and Code-switching
According to Bhatia and Ritchie (2004), the vast majority of bilinguals themselves hold a negative view of code-mixed speech. They consider language mixing/switching to be a sign of “laziness”, an “inadvertent” speech act, an “impurity,” and instance of linguistic decadence and a potential danger to their own linguistic performance. However, Zentella (1999) claims that code switching is more common during informal interpersonal interactions, including those that take place between family members in natural contexts.

III. Discussion
3.1 Introduction
In monolingual societies, people may think that code-switching and code-mixing are very unnatural. However, it is inevitable to notice that people usually switch and mix their languages in bilingual and/or multilingual societies. Grosjean (1982) states that in bilingual communities, it is very common for speakers to code-switch and code-mix. With regard to the reasons of code-switching and code-mixing, bilinguals usually explain that the reason why they code-switch and code-mix is that they lack facility in one language when talking about a particular topic. They report that they switch when they cannot find an appropriate word or expression or when the language being used does not have the items or appropriate translations for the vocabulary needed (Grosjean, 1982). Also, some bilinguals remark that they usually code-switch and code-mix when they are tired, lazy, or angry (Grosjean, 1982). However, Gutierrez-Clellen (1999) claims that instances of
code-switching behavior should not be interpreted as lack of language skill. Children who are bilingual may code-switch within and between utterances depending on multiple factors such as pragmatic, sociolinguistic, priming effects, etc., and not necessarily because of relative lack of proficiency across the two languages or because of parental use of code-switching. According to Grosjean (1982), code-switching is often used as a communicative strategy to convey linguistic and social information. He also states that code-switching not only fills a momentary linguistic need, it is also a very useful communication resource (1982). Auer (2000) also finds that code-switching serves important purposes in the ongoing negotiation of footing in bilingual interaction. In addition, Greene and Walker (2004) state that code-switching is not random or meaningless. It has a role, a function, facets and characteristics. It is a linguistic tool and a sign of the participants’ awareness of alternative communicative conventions. That is, in terms of the researchers who have positive points of view about code-switching and code-mixing, the fundamental reason why bilinguals switch and mix their languages is not because they lack language skills but because they try to make their utterance more easily understandable and meaningful.

With the positive points of view about code-switching and code-mixing, it is necessary to examine more specific reasons and motivations about these bilingual phenomena. There are some factors which affect code-switching and code-mixing such as grammatical, lexical, and societal factors. Among these factors, societal factors would be the most influential factors for the reasons why bilinguals switch and mix their languages. Arnfast and Jorgensen (2003) state that code-switching becomes a sociolinguistic phenomenon. Fishman (2000) also finds that the choice of language among bilingual speakers is determined by factors such as participants, situation, or topic, i.e. factors which are outside the speaker. In certain circumstances the speakers will speak one language, and if the circumstances change, it may lead them to switch into the other languages. In addition, Auer (1998) states that one of the reasons why people code-switch is because of macro sociolinguistic paradigm. It focuses on the influence on language use exerted by the general sociolinguistic context. According to Wei (2005),
sociolinguistic and socio-pragmatic studies of code-switching have taken an ‘ideological’ turn. Concepts such as ‘power, ‘authority’, prestige’, and ‘gender’ are all invoked in explaining why and how bilinguals switch from one language to another. As many researchers state, code-switching and code-mixing are quite influenced by societal factors.

3.2 Societal factors for Code-Switching and Code-Mixing
Societal factors seem to be the most influential of the factors which trigger bilinguals’ code-switching and code-mixing. Romaine (1995) states that a speaker may switch for a variety of reasons. They may switch two languages back and forth in order to redefine the interaction as appropriate to a different social arena, or to avoid, through continual code-switching, defining the interaction in terms of any social arena. The latter function of avoidance is an important one because it recognized that code-switching often serves as a strategy of neutrality or as a means to explore which code is most appropriate and acceptable in a particular situation. In many government offices in Canada, it is customary for employees to answer the telephone by saying ‘Bonjour, hello’ in order to give the caller the option of choosing either language to continue the conversation. Like Romaine mentions (1995), a social situation is a very important factor to explain the reasons and motivations for code-switching and code-mixing. It is not too much to say that situational factors are the most realistic and plausible reasons and motivations for code-switching and code-mixing. Hamers and Blanc (2000) state that many situational variables seem to affect the type and frequency of code-switching: the topic of conversation, the participants, the setting, the affective aspect of the message and so on. It also seems that ‘because of its reliance on universalized shared understanding, code-switching is typical of the communicative conventions of closed network situations’ (Gumperz, 1982). The notion of situational switching assumes a direct relationship between language and the social situation (Blom & Gumperz, 2000). That is, the relationship between language and social situation is inevitable. The linguistic forms employed are critical features of the event in the sense that any violation of selection rules changes members’ perception of the event. A
further regulating factor is recognized via the concept of situation (Fishman, 2000).

It is also crucial for bilinguals to learn communication strategies in order to have a smooth relationship with each different society by using appropriate choice of languages. Bilingual children develop typical strategies for dealing with bilingual situations, learning how to adapt their language to the situation, the roles and the interlocutors, to the extent of playing the role of interpreters between monolingual speakers of different language (Swain, 1972). Also, their interlocutors should know that bilinguals are very sensitive about situational factors. According to Hamers and Blanc (2000), it should be stressed that a bilingual’s communication strategies vary within an interactional situation and therefore a code that is optimal at one point may cease to be so later as a result of changes in the situation, the topic, role relations, etc.

There are some situational factors related to a society such as interlocutors, physical setting, other social variables like social status, race, age, etc., affect people’s utterance considerably. Firstly, participants and social groups are one of the situational factors which make code-switching and code-mixing. That is, bilinguals may speak differently depending on whom and which groups they are talking to. For example, if Korean-English bilinguals talk to a Korean person, they probably start talking to them in Korean. However, if they talk with people from one of the English speaking countries, they would speak to them in English. Fishman (2000) states that one of the first controlling factors in language choice is group membership. This factor must be viewed not only in a purportedly objective sense, i.e, in terms of physiological, sociological criteria (e.g., age, sex, race, religion, etc.), but also, and primarily, in the subjective socio-psychological sense of reference group membership. Interlocutors are also related to bilinguals’ identities since a language a bilingual speaks presents his/her identity. According to Auer (2005), there is quite a different way of looking at code-switching as an index of social identity. This perspective considers mixing and switching itself into a style which indexes different types of social membership beyond the memberships indexed by the monolingual varieties
involved. Auer (1984) also calls for an approach to code-switching as a language style itself which indexes some kind of social membership beyond the membership indexed by the monolingual varieties involved in the language alternation. By using two codes in two different turns, the speaker has also been able to encode two identities and the breadth of experience associated with them. For this reason, participants may find it socially useful to treat certain speech events as non-conventionalized exchange, if it is at all possible (Myers-Scotton, 2000).

Secondly, physical situations (settings) play a significant role which triggers code-switching and code-mixing. Bilinguals may switch and mix their languages in accordance with a variety of situations. Ervin (1964) observes that various situations (settings) may be restricted with respect to the participants who may be present, the physical setting, the topics and functions of discourse and the style employed. In terms of what he states, a physical setting is one of the situational factors. For instance, a Korean – English bilingual who learned how to play the piano in English may speak English when he/she talks while playing the piano. However, he/she may speak Korean when they are shopping at a Korean grocery store. Another example about this case is that a French computer technician trained in the United States can talk about his job only in English, or in French with a lot of code-switching (Grosjean, 1982). Poplack (1985) reports on a study of French/English code-switching in Ottawa, where French is the minority language, and in Hull, where English is the minority language. Speakers of French tended to switch three to four times more frequently in Ottawa than in Hull, which reflects the norms and values for the use of the two languages in these two settings. Li (1996) found that code-mixing usually occurs when the discourse of informal genres touches upon certain domains, such as computing, business, food, fashion, showbiz (film and music), and Hong Kong lifestyle. Also, Schweda (1980) reports an interesting trend in northern Maine, where the inhabitants of the St. John Valley cross the border between New Brunswick and Maine quite freely. When asked which language they would speak at a party, some said that at a party on the American side of the border they would speak English, but at a party in Canada, they would speak
French. Others said it would depend on the particular town on the American side: French in Frenchville, English in Fort Kent, and both languages in Madawaska.

Thirdly, topic of discourse would motivate bilinguals to code-switch and code-mix. According to Grosjean (1982), in some instances, members of a community are reported to code-switch regularly when a particular topic is discussed. For example, a Korean – English bilingual talks about memories in Korea, he/she may talk about the memories in Korean since his/her experiences with Korean society trigger him/her to speak Korean. Fishman (2000) remarks that some topics are better handled in one language than another, either because the bilingual has learned to deal with a topic in a particular language, the other language lacks specialized terms for a topic, or because it would be considered strange or inappropriate to discuss a topic in that language. That is, certain topics may make bilinguals switch their codes more than others. Also, Grosjean (1982) presents an interview about code-switching and code-mixing by topics, one of the situational factors with a Kurdish-Arabic bilingual. The Kurdish-Arabic bilingual said that he finds when he speaks about politics, science, or other specialized topics, he will mix languages, especially the nouns. Fantini (1985) mentions bilingual children’s code-switching by topics. What he states is that some topics related to experiences in English, often produced increases lexical borrowing or interference although not a complete code-switch. Topical switching became a fairly well established procedure when discussing other school topics, including science, mathematics and the like. He (1985) also states that technical discussions of the stroke caused bilingual kids to switch codes. It became obvious that both academic topics and technically complex ones began to play a significant part in their code-switching behaviour.

Fourthly, other social variables such as social status, race, age, etc. would cause bilingual people to switch their utterances and/or mix their languages. The socioeconomic status of the participants is an important factor. In East Jana, the higher status person switches into Ngoko or plain Krama level of Jananese from Indonesian while the lower status person uses Krama with honorific terms if he/she is able to, or continues in Indonesian (Soeseno,
That is, people in the East Java switch languages depending on their interlocutors’ social status. Race also affects language switching and mixing. According to Greene and Walker (2004), African Americans develop the ability to code-switch in order to manage in a society in which they are a racial minority. They also state that code-switching is a strategy at negotiating power for the speaker and it reflects culture and identity and promotes solidarity (2004: 436). One of the social variables that motivate bilinguals to code-switch and code-mix is age. Wald (1974) reports that in coastal Kenya, the young use both Swahili and the local language when speaking to one another, but never use Swahili when talking to the elders, who would consider it an affront, even though they, too, are bilingual.

IV. Conclusion

With regard to the point of view of code-mixing and code-switching, people used to think about code-mixing and code-switching negatively. According to Hamers and Blanc (2000: 258), ‘Code-switching’ and ‘code-mixing’ were considered as signs of incompetence. Even such informed linguists as Hugen (1950) and Weinreich (1953) saw them as abnormal oversights on the part of bilingual speakers. These opinions might make bilinguals feel they have a lack of both languages and they are not included in both cultures either. However, code-mixing and Code-switching may influence bilinguals’ languages positively. Khnert, Yim, Nett, Kan, and Duran (2005) remark that an alternative view is to recognize the cultural, social, and communicative validity of the mixing of two traditionally isolated linguistic codes as a third legitimate code. It is necessary for both monolinguals and bilinguals to understand those factors which make code-mixing and code-switching and change their negative point of view. In order to make it happen, it is better for language teachers to introduce bilingual education into their classroom and try to teach students two languages.

More specifically, in the case of Korea, it would be more effective to teach English to students both in Korean and English. Many Korean parents tend to prefer only native English teachers because they want their kids to
receive only English input. They believe that it is the best way for language acquisition. Hence, they would not like the idea of bilingual education. However, there are many studies which present beneficial points about bilingual education. Schwarzer (2004) suggests that the use of L1 might function as a learning strategy to enhance communicative competence in the foreign language. In another study, Polio and Duff (1994) found that teachers code-switched from the target language to English in order to maintain classroom order, to create solidarity or empathy, to cover lack of experience or strategies, to rephrase or modify their speech. Camillery (1996) also presents bilingual education in Malta and describes that they used code-switching to distinguish between talk about lesson content and talk related to the negotiating of the social relations of the classroom, like building a rapport with students or asserting the teachers’ authority. The code-switching provided a crucial means of accomplishing lessons across the curriculum and managing the problems of working with texts that are mostly written in English. According to Celik (2003), code-mixing can be applied to vocabulary teaching in EFL/ESL classes and this study has shown that careful and judicious use of code-mixing can lead to appropriate successful teaching and learning of new vocabulary in speaking classes. As the studies show, bilingual education may lead to more effective and meaningful language learning. It is important for Korean parents to have this positive point of view about bilingual education. Also it is necessary for them to realize that some of their children might get pressure about leaning English from not being able to talk any Korean in the classroom and they might learn some English words that they are never going to use in society because of some cultural difference. As mentioned before, the reasons why bilinguals switch their utterance and mix their languages is not because of their lack of language skills but because they try to deliver better meaning related to the society that they belong to. Therefore, making students use only English in Korea does not necessarily make learners learn the language effectively as we apply this idea to English education in Korea. Also, it is important to remember that code-mixing and code-switching contribute to effective language learning and communication.
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