LIGN177: Multilingualism

October 13, 2009

Code-switching – social context

Code-switching

- The use of two or more languages within the same conversation
- Speakers are bilingual or multilingual
- Code-switching is common in multilingual communities
- **Code-switching is not <u>permanent</u>**

Code-switching example

Swahili-French

Hakuweza kumtumia *toutes les choses* alimuomba kwa sababu alimu*surprendre* wagati alikua na*preparer voyage* ya kwenda Bulaye.

'He could not send her all the things she asked for, because her request came as a surprise to him at a time when he was preparing a trip to Europe'

Borrowing vs. code-switching

- Word switches are temporary for individual speakers
- Borrowed words are used by larger groups and either
  - a) do not exist in host language or
  - b) convey a different concept – culture-specific such as food, technical terms

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Borrowing

- English speakers living in Montreal:
- 'I'm going to the *dep*'
  < French word *dépanneur*
- French speakers in Montreal:
- 'Je sors avec mes <u>chums</u> à soir'
  (I go out with my <u>friends</u> in the evenings)
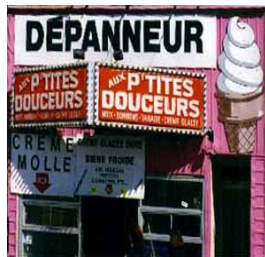
Code-switching –social issues

- Code-switching is viewed as a means to negotiate social context in a discourse
- expresses status, identity, language competence
- same factors that influence style-shifting or dialect-shifting in monolinguals trigger code-switching in bi/multilinguals
- domain, topic, function

Code-switching – social reasons

- Domain-oriented
  - Social setting may trigger switch

- Topic-oriented
  - Some topics trigger a switch to the other language, ex. school/work vs. home topics

Domain – public vs. private setting

- A: Your boyfriend, *anakijua Kiswahili vizuri (does he speak Swahili well)*?
- B. Yeah, *anajua (he does)*. He even stayed at the coast for some time. I don't know, *akiamka (he wakes up)* on the wrong side, *naanza kusikia (he starts saying things like)* "can you speak in English and stop mixing?" Like in the plane, I can speak to him in Swahili but he will never answer in Swahili.

Code-switching – social reasons

- Affective
  - Express attitudes of speakers:
    - Primary: Signal group identity or solidarity
    - Secondary: Assert power or distance

Fluency/'right expression' issues

- Speakers may not be fluent enough in one of the languages and switch in search of right word
- Other language provides better expression
- Malay:
  Saya difahamkan bahawa OKS jarang minum, hanya seorang <u>social drinker</u>
  [I understand that OKS seldom drinks, he is only a social drinker]

Right expression < culture

- Card game in U.S. Italian community

01	Lino:	Have you got a *briscola*? [trump]
02	Dave:	No *briscola*. [trump]
03	Lino:	Have you got a *carico*? [high trump]
04	Franco:	*Io c'ho quelli là.*[I have those]
05	Lino:	Let's take a chance.
06	John:	*Ah accidenti*![9] [Oh damn!]

Metalinguistic awareness

- 'Mais je te gage par exemple que…excuse mon anglais, mais les odds sont là'
  (But I bet you that..excuse my English, but the odds are there)
- 'Oh, sa miksim gagek' (Buang/Tok Pisin)
  (Oh, I'm mixing languages)

Constance (Konstanz), Germany

Auer study

- Italian migrants in Constance, Germany
- Weak community cohesion
- Use of dialectal Italian and dialectal German

Triggers of switch: Auer's questions

- Is the switch due to structure?
- Is the switch due to conversational point?
- Is the switch providing info on the structure of the discourse?
- Is the switch providing info about the participants?

Participant-centered switching

- Participants are not fluent enough in one language, so switch to another
- Preferences – speakers prefer to use one language rather than another (may be related to fluency) → transfers

Transfer vs. code-switching

- Transfer involves words or phrases that are inserted into other language
- Sometimes labeled 'word switches'
- More common with less fluent speakers

Italian-German community

- German-dominant children
- Switches are predominantly from Italian to German
- Transfers come from German into Italian
- Typical of im(migrant) communities

Patterns of switching

- <u>Tag questions, transfers</u> → one language dominant: He is in Japan *yo*
- Intersentential switching → good competence in both, one favored
- 'We've got all these kids here right now. Los que estan ya criados aquí, no los que estan recien venidos de Mexico. They all understood English.' (those that have been born here,not the ones that have just arrived from Mexico)
- <u>Intrasentential</u> → fully competent in both
- 'Mə apni language learn kərni 'I want to learn my own language' (Panjabi/English)

Patterns in immigrant communities

- Results replicated for Turkish/Dutch bilinguals:
- First generation: came to Netherlands as adults
- Intermediate generation: came between 5-12 years old
- Second generation: born in Netherlands

	First	Intermediate	Second
Turkish	79%	22%	16%
Dutch	5%	31%	61%
Mixed	16%	46%	23%
	Transfers	Intra Sentential	Inter sentential

Nuyorican (Puerto Rican-New York)

- Three kinds of *Nuyorican* speakers (Poplack's research):
- Tag questions, interjections: mainly Spanish, with tags such as 'you know' in English or vice versa
- Intersentential switching: more comfortable in Spanish
- Intrasentential switching: full bilinguals

Structure of discourse

- Code-switching used to change topic, signal end of one topic in discourse
- A: my uncle lives in Wollmatingen
- B: do you go and see him now and then?
- A: mhh, sometimes
- HERE THE AIR COMES OUT

Code-switching

- Attitudes of outsiders towards code-switching are not always positive: Spanglish, Franglais, Tex-Mex, Chinglish
- Code-switchers themselves may view code-switching positively or negatively
- Positive – pride in use of both languages
- Negative – language use is not 'pure'