

LIGN177: Multilingualism

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Code-switching – linguistic constraints

Linguistic constraints

- If two languages have different grammars, how do you negotiate switching between them? → LINGUISTIC RISK!!
- Are there linguistic constraints on code-switching?

Poplack 1980

- Code-switching is not random, but highly constrained.
- Based on study of Spanish/English code-switching
- Two fundamental rules:
 - Free-morpheme constraint
 - Equivalence constraint

Free-morpheme constraint

- no switching at a bound morpheme boundary
- Bound morpheme = a piece of a word that cannot stand alone, like a prefix, suffix
- *EAT-IENDO, HABLA-ED

* = ungrammatical

Equivalence constraint

- no switching within a constituent generated by different rules within the languages.

- English rule Noun phrase → Det Adj Noun
- Spanish rule Noun phrase → Det Noun Adj

English	Spanish
■ Det + N the house	Det + N la casa
■ Adj + N white house	N + Adj casa blanca
■ Det + Adj + N the white house	Det+N+Adj la casa blanca

Equivalence constraint

Code-switching:

✓ Eng DET + Sp N	the agua
✓ Sp DET + Eng N	la water
*Eng Adj + Sp N	* cold agua
*Sp N + Eng Adj	* agua cold
*Eng N + Sp Adj	* water fría
*Sp Adj + Eng N	* fría water

Poplack's constraints

- These constraints turned out not to be true
- African languages such as Swahili exhibit English or French stems with Swahili morphology in a code-switched utterance *without the stem being permanently borrowed*
- Word order constraints are violated

Code-switching grammar

- There is a single grammar which is the convergence of the two grammars
- Predicts that languages which are more similar structurally will have higher levels of intrasentential code-switching

Code-switching - constraints

Swahili/English

Kweli *beer* *anaitake* kwa *hours* tano
'Truly, he was drinking beer for five hours'

anaitake – violates free morpheme constraint, but 'take' is not permanently borrowed word

hours tano – violates equivalence constraint

Word switches

- Defendants of the linguistic constraints argue that violations are *transfer* effects or word switches → borrowed words, not real code-switching
- One way of telling is the phonological integration of the word – is it pronounced like a native Swahili or French word?

Compensation issues

- Dutch:
- *Dan maak ik di bedden and dan doe ik de afwas*

- CS:
Dan make the beds and then I do the washing up

Absence of pronoun

Compensation issues

- Yoruba:
 - *ò dara pupo* 'it was very nice'
- Code-switch:
 - *ò wa* very nice 'it was very nice'

Yoruba does not use verb 'to be' with predicate adjectives, but English does, so the Yoruba verb 'wa' is inserted in CS sentence

Matrix language framework

- Carol Myers-Scotten's work on African code-switching argued that one language serves as the 'matrix' language while the other(s) serve as 'embedded' language'
- Switching respects 'matrix' language –
- The grammar of the matrix language dominates – the grammar of the other language is subordinate to it

Matrix language framework

Kweli *beer* anaitake kwa *hours* tano

Swahili is *matrix* and English is *embedded* – respects matrix language word order and morphology

Swahili order is N Adj, English is Adj N
Switch of Swahili N - English Adj is acceptable as Swahili (matrix) order is followed

Matrix language framework

Morpheme order principle

- The morpheme order must not violate matrix language morpheme order

System morpheme principle

- All syntactically relevant system morphemes must come from the matrix language

Matrix language framework

- This would mean that matrix/embedded can sanction N/Adj or Adj/N orders rejected by the equivalence constraint

There's nothing like cold *agua* on a hot day

*There's nothing like *agua* cold on a hot day

Embedded language - constituent insertion

- Embedded language inserts 'constituents': Noun Phrase, Prepositional Phrase, clauses
- French/English: it was the joke *à la table*
 'it was the joke at the table'

Embedded language – single words or islands

- Single word or 'island' (noun modifier) embedded in ML

Turkish/Dutch

- ondan sonra *lauw water*-nan yikayınca
 then after lukewarm water-with wash-while
'and then, when you wash it with lukewarm water..'

Problems with the matrix language framework

- Is there always a matrix language?
- ‘*There was a guy, you know, que [that] he se montó [got up]. He started playing with congas, you know, and se montó y se empezó bricar*’ [he got up and started jumping]