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A Written Conversation Analysis of a Bilingual Speaker**

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Abstract

Code-switching is a common feature of bilingual speech. It is, however, an umbrella term that encompasses a variety of language features. This study will look at the different types of code-switching that bilingual speakers use and then analyse what features and for what reasons a bilingual speaker, of Japanese and English, uses them; for this study a written conversation from Skype message chat was used. It was found that the speaker primarily used intra-sentential switching and that the bilingual's code-switching occurrences were for emotional display/emphasis, some of which were influenced by the comments made by the other participant; as supported a post-conversation questionnaire.

要約

Code-switching は、バイリンガルによって日常的に使われるものだ。しかしながら、コードスイッチングは特定の物だけでなく、広範囲のカバーを対象に使われる言葉である。これは、コードスイッチングとは何か、そして何故バイリンガルはコードスイッチングを使うのかについての研究だ。この研究にはスカイプでのチャットメッセージが使われている。たいていのバイリンガルは文中コードスイッチング (Intra-sentential switching) を使う。この研究から、bilingual が何故コードスイッチングをするかが二つ分かった。一つ目は、感情の強調によるもの、二つ目は、話し相手による影響からだ。

Keywords : code-switching, bilingual, intra-sentential

キーワード : コードスイッチング、バイリンガル、文中コードスイッチング

1. Introduction

This study will look at a written conversation from Skype chat between a bilingual speaker¹ of Japanese and English and an English speaker who speaks some Japanese was documented. Although the written conversation, that took place online, involves two people, the main focus of analysis will be the bilingual Japanese participant, Momo.

2. Research Aim

The aim of this study is to investigate different features of code-switching made by a bilingual speaker of Japanese and English and investigate why they inter-change between the two languages and why.

The research questions are as follows:

- 2.1 What features of code-switching are present in the participant's responses and why?
- 2.2 Do participant B's comments influence the language used by the bilingual speaker in the conversation?
- 2.3 Does this written conversation accurately reflect what might happen in a spoken context?

These will be analysed and discussed and references made to the relevant literature with the aim of trying to answer all of the research questions. A follow-up question (see appendix 1) will be conducted in order to gain a better understanding of Momo's code-switching and help to answer the questions. To further supplement this, a short, additional interview-style questionnaire (see appendix 2) will be conducted. In this, 8 anonymous bilingual speakers (5 female and 3 male) of Japanese and English will be shown the conversation and asked about their thoughts on the code-switches/code-mixes in the script and if they might have made similar switches.

The participant is a Japanese speaker of English who is 23 years old. She has been studying English (UK mainly but also US and NZ) since she was 10 years old. She annually visits Hawai'i, USA, to stay with family and majored in English Language at her University in Japan. She lived in Britain for over a year during the course of her degree programme. She has also participated, as an interpreter, in a number of volunteer programmes that teach children English in her native Japan over the last few years and has visited several places in the USA, several times for conferences, travelling and training.

3. What is “code-switching”?

Code-switching (Nunan, 1995; Romaine, 1995; Auer, 1998; Muysken, 2001; Grosjean, 2008, and Cárdenas-Claros and Isharyanti, 2009) is a common feature of bilingual speech. Gardner-Chloros (2009: 202) defines it as, *'a general term which refers to the alternate use of two or more languages or language varieties by bilinguals for communicative purposes'*. She then narrows this into further detail and states: *'Code-switching embraces various types of bilingual behaviour such as switching within and between utterances, turns and sentences'* (ibid). Grosjean (2008: 44) explains it at a sentence level by arguing that, *'code-switch is a complete shift to the other language for a word, a phrase, or a sentence'*. Myers-Scotton (1993) explains that code-switching can be broken down into two components that can help explain it in greater detail. The first feature, Inter-sentential code-switching, *'involves switches from one language to another between sentences'* and this means that in a conversation *'a whole sentence (or more than one sentence) is produced entirely in one language before there is a switch to the other language(s) in use'* (ibid, 1993: 3-4). The other feature, Intra-sentential code-switching,

occurs *'within the same sentence or fragment'*. She continues, explaining that these switches produce three distinct elements within a sentence(s) and these are: 'those with material from two languages occurring within the same constituent, those entirely in the ML², or those entirely in the EL³' (ibid: 4).

Other code-switching terms

Code-switching is not the only feature of bilingual speech. This umbrella term can be broken down and some additional aspects which have been identified will be drawn on later in the Analysis section. A major component of code-switching is code-mixing (Auer, 1998; Romaine, 1995; Gardner-Chloros, 2009). Despite being related to code-switching, it can be placed into a separate category of its own. It has been described by Celik (2003, 361) as a process that, *'involves the use of an L1 word in an L2 utterance - a common occurrence in bilingual or immigrant communities'*. Code-mixing is probably one of the more common uses of code-switching and used more often than the other forms. Myers-Scotton argues that code-mixing is an alternative terminology for code-switching and that other people use the term *'to label conversations containing much intra-sentential switching'* (Swigart, 1992, cited in Myers-Scotton, 1993: 24). Cárdenas-Claros and Isharyanti (2009) concluded, after analysing the works of people such as Myers-Scotton and Muysken, that code switching is, in essence, inter-sentential code-alteration and code-mixing is intra-sentential code-alteration.

As Gardner-Chloros (2009: 202) stated, *'code-switching is a general term'* and thus incorporates a much larger field. Alteration, borrowing, insertion, and congruent lexicalisation are all aspects under the umbrella term of code-switching that should be explored before any data analysis is attempted. Alteration is described by Romaine, *'the extent to which the individual alternates between the languages'* (1995: 12). Gardner-Chloros (2009: 201) expands upon this by implying that *'it involves the use of stretches of language from different*

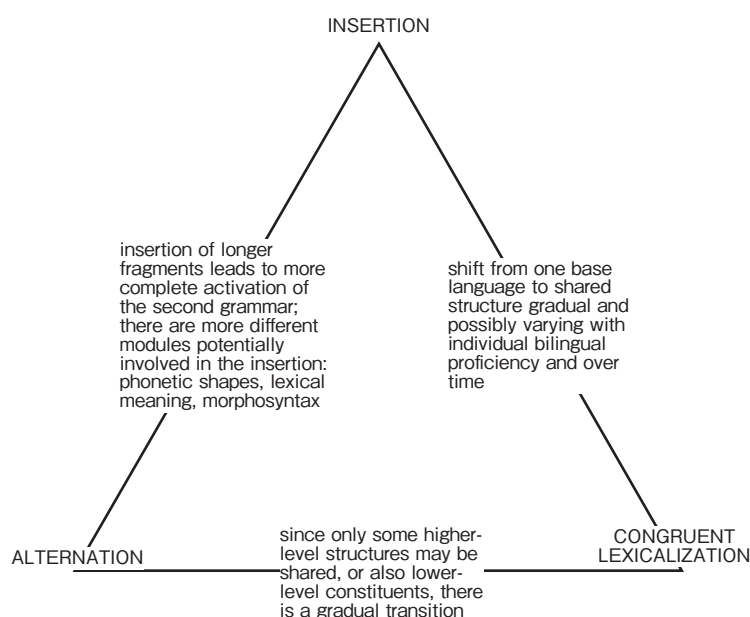


Diagram: Schematic representation of the three main styles of code-mixing and transitions between them (Muysken, 2000: 9).

systems which do not necessarily make up a syntactic constituent'. She then relates alteration to insertion and congruent lexicalisation. She describes Insertion (Moyer in Auer, 1998: 224, Muysken, 2000: 60) as being a process that is akin to borrowing except '*where elements longer than a single word may be inserted*' (ibid: 105).

One of the most common elements common with bilinguals is Borrowing. This '*typically refers to the linguistic forms being taken over by one language or language variety from another*' (Gardner-Chloros, 2009: 105). As outlined by Myers-Scotton (2006:209) this can be in form of lexical or grammatical borrowing. Muysken expands and concludes with this by stating that it is '*the insertion of an alien lexical or phrasal category into a given structure*' (2000: 3); hence its relation to insertion. Another term, Congruent lexicalisation is depicted as a process whereby '*the languages share a grammatical structure but the vocabulary comes from two or more languages*' (Gardner-Chloros, 2009: 105). Moyer (in Auer, 1998) and Muysken (2000: 122) also outline this and describe it in a similar way. Muysken (2000) argues that there are bilingual strategies that a person follows and how they move between them:

As the participants in this study know and use Japanese, an additional process needs to be investigated known as 'script-switching' (Florence, cited in Gardner-Chloros, 2003: 67-68). Japanese is quite a unique language in that it uses three distinct scripts, as opposed to English and most other languages, which use only one. These three scripts are Kanji, Hiragana and Katakana and are all commonly used together in a single sentence and sometimes within a single word. Kanji is the Japanese adaptation of Chinese-derived characters that form the main stem of the language and are used to write nouns, adjectives and verbs. Hiragana and Katakana are both phonetic scripts that are used in completely different ways. Hiragana is used to communicate grammatical functions within a sentence, such as particles, adverbs and verb conjugation/tense. It is also used a method for giving readings of Kanji. Katakana is a system that is used to give a phonetic reading for foreign language words (For example of these, please see 'examples of Japanese' in the appendix). Gardner-Chloros relates script-switching to code-switching as words that are written in Kanji are transcribed into either Hiragana or Katakana. This can be used for effect, emphasis or word play. The same aspect occurs when English words are translated to Japanese script.

Japanese and English code-switching has been researched many times in recent years, however, the main focus has been in regards to child bilingualism (Nakamura, 2005; Namba 2006). McKinley and Sakamoto's research (2007) was particularly useful for the context of this essay as it focused on Adult Japanese studying in University who have spent a great deal of time abroad in an English-speaking country. One of their findings that was of particularly interest is that some of the participants were gearing their thoughts in one language but naturally, without thinking, began to switch between languages (ibid, 2007: 16-19). Although that research was performed orally certain aspects may be similar in a written conversation. Internet-based chat in Japanese and English code switching was investigated by Pasfield-Neofitou (2007), which was one of the inspirations behind this study; the article, however, had more of a focus on Japanese emoticons, text art and expression of emotion rather than utterances.

4. Methodology

Prior to the creation of this study a few forms of data collection were considered. Video or vocal recording was initially considered but, ultimately, not used as the observer's paradox (Labov, 1972; Cukor-Avila, 2000) might interfere too much with the outcome of the results. Code-switching occurs naturally, therefore, having the material as natural as possible is ideal. Recording without one's consent is unethical and, therefore, cannot be done. Consequently, it was decided that a written conversation over Skype would be a useful method for data collection. All written conversations are usually automatically stored for around 10-20 days and, therefore, after a conversation had taken place, the participant was asked if it could be used for a code-switching analysis study, which they agreed to. The conversation was then analysed and the Japanese sections of the scripts were then translated. A written conversation is limited as there is no way to determine the feelings or expressions of what the participants are saying. To help remedy this, a follow-up questionnaire (Dörnyei, 2007) was also conducted in order to get a better understanding as to why the candidate code-switches in the way that she does.

5. Ethics of the Study

The participant has given their full consent for the conversation and materials to be used for this study. Excluding the author, the other participants' full names will not be revealed in order to protect their identities.

6. Analysis and Discussion of the Written Conversation

The conversation was analysed and the various features of code-switching, as described in the literature review, will be used to help answer the research questions.

6.1 What features of code-switching are present in the participant's responses and why?

Throughout the duration of the conversation (6 A4 pages/approx. 1300 words) there were a number of different types of code switching. Of the 22 instances of code-mixing that took place, Momo made 18 of them. She constantly code-mixed and many of the individual words that were used by her and substituted into English sentences were done so for effect and emphasis⁵. For example:

(Segment 1)

Part. B: I am fine, just very busy.

Momo : うん！ I have been 超 busy too!

[Un! I have been chou busy too!]

- Yes! I have been very busy too!

She used the word 超(chou), which in English means "very" or "extremely". This use of code-mixing was

used because this particular word has a much greater emotional emphasis in Japanese than English as it puts additional stress on itself and the following word depending on whether it is a positive or negative connotation. One related feature that occurred throughout the entire conversation was that she regularly switched to Japanese when using adjectives:

(Segment 2)

Part. B: Isn't purikura³ fun? Everyone looks like a film star, don't they?

Momo : Yes its 超楽し~~~~い!!!

[Yes its chou tanoshi~~~~i!!!] [~ implies that she is making it sound longer than it really is]

- Yes its very fun!!!

Initially it was thought that this was so because the Japanese meaning of the words are much deeper with greater emotional attachment -similar to what happened in line 5- and this was confirmed in the follow-up questionnaire.

Momo script-switched 4 times throughout the conversation. The Japanese word for “spelling” is “tsuzuri” (綴り) yet she decided to both code and script-switch. Instead, she used the English word but then changed into the Katakana script:

(Segment 3)

Momo : You should be careful ... with your スペリング! 分かったあ~~?

[You should be careful ... with your superingu! Wakattaa?]

- You should be careful ... with your spelling! Understand/Got it?

Similarly, at the end of the conversation she writes “bye-bye” (バイバイ) in Japanese (the Japanese word being “sayounara”: さようなら), again script-switching from English to Japanese. This phrase, although accepted as part of the Japanese language as it was borrowed from English, is used more during colloquial speech. As this conversation is between friends she deemed it too formal to use the Japanese words yet felt more comfortable writing them in Katakana as opposed to English. Other instances of script-switching occur on lines 60 when she used Kanji instead of Hiranaga. When asked why, as the Kanji can be seen as more formal, she replied that the fact of receiving a certificate merited a more formal and stronger response:

(Segment 4)

Momo : 良かったね★ (Kanji: Her response)

- よかったね★ (Hiragana: How it is usually written)

[Yokatta ne★]

- That is **great**, isn't it★

Just like the previous example, she script-switched because she said that it looked more friendly and informal whilst also emphasising her response:

(Segment 5)

Part. B: We do not buy cakes for our dogs in Wales or Britain... (..forget England)

Momo: 何で England って言っちゃダメなの～～？ (Katakana Script: Her response)

- 何で England って言っちゃだめなの～～？ (Hiragana Script: How it is usually written)

[Nande England tte iccha dame nano ～～？]

- Why am I **not allowed** to say England?

There were a few instances of congruent lexicalisation; sentences, where both languages share similar grammar were altered and combined:

(Segment 6)

Momo: ところで、haha～ very おかしい！ You made a mistake!! You are 英語の先生！

[Tokorode, haha ～very okashii！ You made a mistake!! You are eigo no sensei！]

- By the way, haha ～very amusing! You made a mistake!! You are an English Teacher！

Despite Japanese grammar generally being completely different to English, the grammar is almost identical in both languages in this particular sentence; therefore, she started it in English, then switched and finished in Japanese. She frequently borrowed and inserted Japanese words into her speech, keeping English as her primary language for communication. However, towards the end of the conversation she switched to Japanese and then began to insert English into her sentences:

(Segment 7)

Part B: Wait I forgot, its 7 pm with you.

Momo: そうだよ～！時差が 8 hours あるからね～(>_<)

[Sou dayo～！ Jisa ga 8 hours aru kara ne～(>_<)]

- That's right～！ That's because there is an 8 hour time difference, you know～(>_<)

This demonstrates alteration between languages as well as congruent lexicalisation.

6.2 Do participant B's comments influence the use of language used in the conversation?

The follow-up questionnaire helped with answering this question. As previously mentioned, she switched between Japanese and English on many occasions for effect. These were, in part, due to what was said by participant B. She did say however that at times English lexis lacked the necessary effect or emotion and, therefore, the switch to Japanese was necessary in order to demonstrate her feelings more accurately:

(Segment 8)

Part. B: I like purikura but it does make men look 女っぽい？ [Onnappoi = Feminie]

Momo: うんうん、めっちゃ女っぽくなるよね！！

[Un un, meccha onnappoku naru yo ne!!]

- Yeah, it makes you become super feminine, doesn't it!!

At the end of the conversation when she switched to Japanese and inserted English words it was to portray a feeling of teasing and emphasis, which, at that time, were directly influenced by what was uttered by participant B. She noted that, it did depend on the situation though and what was said.

6.3 Does this written conversation accurately reflect what might happen in a spoken context?

When asked, during the follow-up questionnaire, if her performance in this written conversation accurately represents how she would act in a spoken context she confirmed that it does. She said that one of her main reasons for inserting Japanese lexis, in place of English, was to express a level of emotion that in English would only be accurately expressed by tone of voice or body language. This is why a number of the adjectives used throughout the conversation were switched to Japanese, as it felt more natural for her. She felt that Japanese lexis carries the same amount of weight in both spoken and written formats; she felt that in English that this was not always true. At times, she said that she did not even notice that she had switched to Japanese, or English, in a sentence until she had finished typing; it felt like it was automated like a “natural switch”.

(Segment 9)

Part. B: Wait! A party for your dog?

Momo: Yes yes!!! i bought a 誕生日ケーキ for dogs!!

[Yes yes!!! i bought a *tanjyoubi keeki* for dogs!!]

- Yes yes!!! i bought a *birthday cake* for dogs!!

She said that this would most definitely occur naturally in spoken speech, should she be conversing with another bilingual in English and Japanese (more so with a non-Japanese person). Her final comment, however, was that at the start of the conversation she was thinking more towards English as she knew that she was going to be conversing with a native English speaker. This quickly ended as she began borrowing Japanese words and switching between languages to express emotion; hence the “natural switch”.

In the additional interview-style questionnaire (see appendix 2), 8 bilingual speakers of Japanese and English looked over the conversation. The 9 segments, which were discussed above, were also highlighted for them to see. Out of the 5 female participants 4 agreed that they would have made similar switches (including script-switches) in a written conversation and feel that they would also do so in normal speech with other Japanese/English bilingual speakers. They thus shared similar feelings with Momo in that it seems more natural to code-switch in conversations with a bilingual speaker; again more so with a non-Japanese person.

The other participants (1 female and 3 male) noted that although they might only code-switch if absolutely necessary and would ultimately prefer not to; they all admitted that they do occasionally code-switch/mix. They all mentioned that they would not script-switch as it is unnecessary. 3 of the remaining participants (1 female and 2 male) mentioned that they would aim to avoid using English with a Japanese bilingual speaker and would do the same with Japanese to an English bilingual speaker. The other male participated noted that he would see what another speaker would do and act accordingly. They all did

however note that the written conversation script did look natural and that code-switching sometimes did feel natural in speech but stressed that they try to avoid doing it.

7. Conclusion

It was found that the participant used a large variety of code-switches throughout the conversation. Most of these switches were produced in order to display/emphasise emotion and many were also directly influenced by what was said by participant B. It seemed that those remarks acted as prompts that encouraged a response that borrowed elements from both languages in order to convey, or emphasise, emotion. Many of her responses and reasons for different code-switches seem to relate to what Muysken (2000: 9) depicted in his diagram. Throughout the conversation her responses primarily made use of intra-sentential code-alteration. This was then confirmed when she stated that she inserted words, phrases or Japanese grammar into an English sentence (i.e. code-mixing, borrowing, alteration) rather than just using one language before switching to another, as in Inter-sentential code-alteration. She naturally, without realising, began to code-switch despite not intending to. She believes that her responses, and code-mixes, insertions, alterations and borrowings, accurately reflects how she would have acted in a spoken conversation.

Despite a small group (8 people), half of them (4 females) shared Momo's feelings that code-switching the looked natural -they would have made similar choices- and the written script accurately reflects how they themselves might act in a spoken conversation with other bilingual speakers of Japanese and English. 1 female and all male participants, however, remarked that they would avoid code-switching/mixing and do it only if necessary. This study also showed that there may be different attitudes towards code-switching/mixing among gender; female bilinguals of Japanese and English prefer to code-switch/mix more than male speakers. The additional questionnaire added some interesting data to this study but ultimately raised additional questions that, although did not damage the validity of this study, raised further questions for future research.

8. Notes

- ¹ A bilingual speaker is a person who is able to read, write and speak in two languages (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2013)
- ² ML = matrix language is the dominant language, i.e. the user's L1
- ³ EL = embedded language, i.e. the user's L2
- ⁴ A special photo booth where the photo can be altered - written on, icons added (stars, hearts, etc.) - before printing.
- ⁵ The examples that were taken from the conversation script were copied exactly. This means that any spelling, grammatical and/or punctuation errors have been left intact.

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Appendix 2

Additional Questionnaire

(Have Participant look at the conversation and ask following questions; analysed segments of the conversation have been highlighted)

- 1st - explain what code-switching/code-mixing and script-switching is.
- 2nd - show them the conversation.
- 3rd - when they have finished draw attention to the highlighted segments.

1. What do you think of the switches in this conversation?
2. Please look at the highlighted segments. Would you have made similar switches in this context? Why?
3. Do you think that another speaker's comments would influence you to code-switch/mix? Why?
(Would Script-switch (Y N) Code-mix/switch (Y N))
4. Do you think that this conversation looks natural and why?
5. Would you switch like this in spoken speech when talking with another bilingual speaker?
(Mentioned non-Japanese speaker (Y N))
6. Are there any other comments that you would like to make?

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