

Linguistic Dominance in Code Switching and Code Mixing Situations (Case of Study the Bilinguals with Albanian as L1)

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Abstract

Code switching and code mixing are processes, which happen often to bilingual speakers, depending on the linguistic situations in which they find themselves. These two processes are well known and are being studied for a long time. But, in this work we will concentrate on bilinguals with the Albanian language as L1, because there is a substantial lack of studies for the Albanian language and this particular situation. In the center of this work are the concrete examples, studied and analyzed. We will analyze: the effect that linguistic features of L1 have, while code switching and code mixing occur, because the Albanian language has a grammatical which is complex and is different from that of other languages, like English. The displacement that speakers have from one place to the other cause the relations of language use on the day to day basis communication to change, consequently different linguistic situations occur. How does the effect that L1, L2 languages change in relation to the everyday usage level from the speakers? In the code mixing process a code breach of one language occurs as a consequence of the inclusion in the language production of elements from another language. What are the linguistic features of the words which are included in the code mixing? Parts of our study are Albanian speaking subject, who live in Albania and outside, which have been recorded as they communicate in different linguistic situations. Their analysis has been conducted based on the latest linguistic, psycholinguistic, and sociolinguistic literature.

Keywords: Albanian language, code switching, code mixing, linguistic production, linguistic decoding, bilingual.

Introduction

Code switching and code mixing

As we have dealt with the concepts of code switching and code mixing from the psycholinguistic viewpoint, we have initially faced a problem which relates to the terminology and meaning. We have encountered many definitions relating to code switching and code mixing, which often contradict one-another – it isn't clear where one concept ends and where the other concept begins. Many researchers take them as a single occurrence, concepts that are interrelated. In order to not highlight too much this argument, which is not the main purpose of our work, we will use the terms code switching and code mixing based on the perspective of the two researchers Francois Grosjean and Ping Li. Code switching is the inter-exchanging usage of the two languages, which means the speaker makes a full transition to the other language and then returns to the base language [Francois Grosjean and Ping Li ,2013 ,p18]

Code-switching isn't just an occasional behavior, but in fact a well directed process, used as a communication strategy in order to maintain linguistic and social information. The reasons for code-switching are many: using the right word or expression, the completion of a linguistic need, showing group identity, excluding or including someone, increase in status, etc..

Bilingual speakers complete their linguistic communication by obeying two models: monolingual and bilingual. We often face situations where bilinguals use code-switching, code-mixing or borrowing during their communication. The question arises:

How do bilingual people choose which model to use?

Is it a intentional action, well-thought through, or is it a choice the brain gives the speaker as a quicker opportunity for communication, which then appears as involuntary models of the speaker?

Depending on various factors, bilinguals find themselves using L1 or L2. Even though the choosing of the linguistic code seems to be thought beforehand, in fact the speaker manages in a time span shorter than 1 second to make the right choice. This is realized through the dynamic system of processing that bilinguals have and which can act in different conditions of language activation, favored by outer and inner factors.

What does concretely happen with bilinguals when one of the languages is Albanian?

How is the dynamic process of linguistic production realized and which are the influencing factors?

Is there a rule by which code switching occurs?

Researchers have tried to answer this question. Kooststra, Van Hell and Dijkstra have investigated how the limitations that direct code-switching play a role in its production. [Kooststra, Van Hell and Dijkstra, 2010, p. 210-231] The limitation on which they concentrated is known as "the obligation of equivalence" [Poplack, 1980, 581] and it asserts that the code-switching will always tend to happen in points of discourse where the confrontation of the L1 and L2 elements doesn't violate any syntactic rule of each language. In other words, the word order immediately before and after the point of conversion where code-switching takes place must be possible in both languages; if this is not the case, then the exchange cannot take place. Let us focus on the Albanian and English languages and see how their grammatical features affect to code switching.

First, let us present the same sentence in both languages, English and Albanian, and then the actual sentence which includes the code-switching produced by a bilingual.

1. English : I/ told him /that /he/ would bring it/ fast.
2. Albanian: /I tregova atij/ që/ duhet ta sjellë atë/ shpejt.
3. Code-switching: I told him /që duhet ta sjellë atë/ fast.

The boundaries represented by the lines in the monolingual sentences are the points where conversion is allowed and, as can be seen from the third sentence where code switching takes place, the movement from one language to the other happens there. In the English sentence we have a boundary after the pronoun I, while the sentence in Albanian isn't expressed using the pronoun I, thus there is no chance of code switching. Usually, inside a grammatically and semantically correct sentence there are two axes: the subject, which represents the person which completes the action and is expressed by noun, pronoun, number or noun groups and the second axis, which is the predicate and is expressed by a verb or a verb group. But languages which have as their feature verb conjugation and the suffix system for each person, like the Albanian language, have as part of their grammatical norm the structure in which the verb plays the role of the predicate and the subject at the same time. For example the first person singular, as in our Albanian language example, clearly indicates who completes the action by suffix *-va-* (tregova). In the Albanian languages there are sentences in which, inside the verb there are two concepts at the same time: subject and predicate, while the English language doesn't have this feature because it does not have verbal suffixes for every person. This grammatical distinction between the Albanian and English languages causes the lack of code switching in these syntagma. Because that in the English segment 'told him' we cannot have a separation, there is no code switching after 'told'. This is the case for 'would bring it' as well, where the equivalence obligation doesn't accept a code switching after 'would' and after 'bring'. On the other side, in the segment /fast/ there can be a code switching with /shpejt/ because there is no special grammatical rule. As in the Albanian language,

in the English language as well, in the case of the given sentence the adverb is placed after the verb and indicates the circumstance in which the action expressed by the verb is committed. That is the reason why in that case the code switching can take place. In the examples below we have another grammatical situation which conditions the area where code switching can be made:

English : I/ will always remember/ you/ with love/

Albanian: Do te te kujtoj/ gjithmonë/ me dashuri /

Code switching : I/ will always remember/ you/ me dashuri/

In the given examples we have cases where exactly at the connection verb-adverb there cannot be a code switching. In these cases the placement of the adverb in the sentence changes from the Albanian to the English, in the cases where we have a modal verb as well. Another distinction between these two languages are phrasal verbs, which in English are often present, while in the Albanian language do not exist. This distinction causes the code switching to be determined from this feature.

Model 1

English : She/ puts on/ her slippers /

Albanian: Ajo/ veshi/ pantoflat e saj/

Code switching : Ajo /puts on/ pantoflat e saj/

Model 2

English: He/ is taking off/ his coat/.

Albanian: Ai /është duke hequr/ pallton e tij/.

Code switching: Ai/ is taking off/ pallton e tij/

Model 3

English: Please, /turn down the radio

Albanian: Të lutem, /ulja zërin/ radios/

Code switching: Të lutem, /turn down/ the radio

Model 4

English: Took /her bag/ and/ than /she /got off/ the bus/

Albanian: Mori/ çantën e saj/ dhe /pastaj/ zbriti/ nga autobusi/

Code switching: Mori/ her bag / dhe pastaj / got off/ autobusin/

The examples given, which are taken from subject observations, show the boundaries which define the movements in code switching which are related to the distinctions between the Albanian language and the English language regarding phrasal verbs. Concretely, we have boundaries at /puts on/, /is taking off/, /turn down/, /got off/ which remain because of the phrasal verbs. As we analyze the models where the code switching movements take place in the speech of our subjects, we see that the boundaries these movements define, are also conditioned by the distinction between the two languages in regards to the placement of determinant words in relation to nouns, for example in Albanian we have : *një djalë i mirë, vajza e tij* (*noun + adjective, noun + pronoun*); in English : *a good boy, his daughter*.

As can be seen, we have different placements of the noun in relation to the adjective and the pronoun. This difference becomes a condition which defines code switching. In the sentences above we have the examples /her bag/, /his coat/, /çantën e saj/, /pallton e tij/ and we observed that inside these boundaries there is no code switching. The boundaries in code switching are also very conditioned from the grammatical structure of the sentences and the differences that exist

between languages where these changes take place. Kooststra, Van Hell and Dijkstra – who have worked on the limitations of the equivalency in code switching in the Dutch and English language - have written about this phenomenon as well.

We have worked on the comparison between the Albanian and English language. In English there is only one possible word order (SVO: Subject-Verb-Object), but in the Albanian language, even though the most used order is the SVO, other orders like SVO, SOV and VSO are also grammatically correct, depending on the context of the sentence. So, in the next three examples the sentence in English has the order SVO, while in Albanian there are different orders used:

Model 1

English SVO: He called Mary and then left.

Albanian SVO: Ai telefonoi Merin pastaj u largua.

Model 2

English SVO: He called Mary and then left.

Albanian OVS: Merin telefonoi ai pastaj u largua.

Model 3

English SVO: He called Mary and then left.

Albanian VSO: Telefoni (ai) Merin pastaj u largua

The limitation of the equivalences predicts that bilinguals of the Albanian and English language will avoid code switching when they produce sentences with the structures SOV or VSO: Code switching must be limited mainly to sentences with (common) structure SVO.

(model1).

Conclusions

The linguistic processes that happen in the brains of bilingual speakers while they realize the communication in one of the languages they know are very complex. The goal of this work was to analyze the way the linguistic features of the languages which are interchanged in code switching affect the way the code switching is made. In this work we have focused on speakers with the Albanian language as L1 and the English language as L2, or guest language, we have identified the moments when code switching happens and linguistically analyzed why do the linguistic processes happen under those exact conditions. We have reached the conclusion that the linguistic features of the L1 and L2 languages condition the completion of the code switching.

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