

Pragmatic Functions of Code-Switching

Mentos

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Introduction

Details of the Study

- 9 hours of informal speech recorded during summers of '92, '94
- San Sebastián in the Basque Country (Spain)
- 2M, 3F in early twenties; 3M, 1F in early fifties
- Two types of data:
 - narrative data
 - conversational data

Types of Code-Switching

- The author lists three types of code-switching:
 - tag-switching
 - intersentential switching
 - intrasentential watching
- Poplack (1980) defines a code-switch as an item that is *not* phonologically, morphologically and syntactically integrated into the base language.
- This was not always sufficient, however:

(2) “taberna gusto-tan egon behar dira *extintor-es*”

Functions of Code-Switching

Lexical Gaps

- Basque speakers often switch to Spanish when they lack a Basque word.
- This function is usually, but not always, marked by pauses and hesitations.
- This function is partially taken over by borrowing in the case of ILs (e.g. *committee*). However, there are cases where code-switching occurs as well (e.g. *book*).

Lexical Gaps

(3) baino / behintzat / nehiko garbi egoten da / ba / zea / *mosquito* ta / gauza /
hauetaz ezta?

but, at least, it is usually pretty clean, umh..., (of) *mosquitoes* and, those things, no?

(4) elurra ta iten zunen ba / han ez zeon / eskiko / ezer egiten genuen / *tabla*- / ola
batzuk hartu / ola / zahar batzuk

When it snowed, there wasn't anything to sky so, we took *board*-, some boards, some
old boards...

While expressing factual/technical knowledge.

topic: taxes

p: ez baina nik jarri det ehuneko hogeitahamabosta / kutzak ordaintzen duna / ta hori da... *el tipo medio/ ta horrekin kutzak ordaintzen du ba bueno / por hacer sus negocios por... tal tal tal / comisiones de tal / por cada ingreso / treinta y cinco por cien / hacienda / bien / vale /tallerrak/ treinta y cinco por cien de... lo que gana después de facturar / y / descontar los gastos y tal / treinta y cinco por cien a hacienda / muy bien / vale impuestos normativos ez impuestos (...)/ taberna / por su actividad normal / que tiene más decibelios o tiene más abierto por la noche / o más impuestos / vale bueno / impuestos normales / servicio de bebidas al por menor // esto para el gobierno/ bakoitzak bere mailan lana egiten du*

p: no but I paid 35%, that is what the bank pays, and that's... *the regular type, and with that the bank pays for well, well, for running its business, for...so and so and so, commissions, for each income, 35%, for the Treasury Department, well, OK, the garage, gives to the Treasury 35%of what they earn after subtracting what they spend, very well, OK regular taxes, no (...) taxes, the bar, because of its regular activity, which is noisy or which is open until late at night, or more taxes, OK well, regular taxes, it is a facility to serve drinks retail, this (money, taxes) for the government, every one works their way'*

- Often switch to the language we were educated in/ language used at work.
- The speaker's knowledge of Basque might not include this kind of technical language.
- For example, we often switch to English while speaking about technical topics like say Kinematics, something we learnt in schools in English.
- To give his words authority and make them sound serious.

When definitions are involved

p: tabernariak ze obligazio dauka?/ *servicio de bebidas al por menor* / ho- horregatik ordaintzen da / bestea / tallerrak zer dauka?/ *pues arreglo de automóviles o venta de automóviles o ...*

p: what's the obligation of the bar owner? *retail sales of beverages*; that's what you pay for. The other one, the shop, *car repair or car sales ...*

- While mentioning the definitions, the speaker switches to Spanish.
- Example: 'odd even scheme', 'wrong side', 'objection overruled'

For emphasis

topic: bar owners

g: egiten du *mogollón de pasta!*

he makes **loads of money!**

- The Spanish expression conveys an especial emphasis on quantity. It means more than just 'a lot of money', it means 'a huge, an incredible amount of money'.
- this expression is part of the young people's slang, which in the author's opinion, Basque lacks.
- Native language slangs that we have grown up using that we cannot replace with English.

Smooth the negative connotations

topic: the speaker's sister

p: bai bai/ *o sea / oronda y lironda!*

p: right, right, *I mean, a little butter ball!*

- The speaker uses a Spanish idiomatic expression to refer to his sister's weight.
- The basque utterance would have been much stronger and with negative connotations.
- The Spanish idiomatic expression adds a loving tone to what he is saying and makes the other participants laugh.
- We say खाते पीते खांदान की लड़की instead of a fat girl.

To convey humour and irony

(9) topic: the speaker's best friend, who happens to be a journalist

p: *el periodista / tío! / el reportero! / oi ba ni ez nitzan enteratu / vale vale!*

p: *the journalist, man! the reporter!, oh I didn't know, OK OK!*

- speaker uses Spanish to convey humour and irony.
- A lot of times a joke seems funnier in Hindi but when we try to explain the same in English it just loses it's punch.

Contextualised Situations

1. Quoting Hypothetical Conversations

- a. Speakers present possible scenarios/conversations in Spanish.
- b. Dialogues in such cases are **always** done in Spanish.
- c. Code-switching is used when the speaker assumes a role for a dialogue .

2. Quoting Actual Conversations

- a. These conversations may have happened in either Basque or Spanish
- b. A conversation could start in one language and switch midway to another language.

3. Makes speech livelier and more realistic

Hypothetical Conversations

topic: bars

p: harek esan dezake / *yo a ti no te sirvo y a la calle*

p: the bartender can say, *I'm not giving you any drinks so get out of here*

p: bat joaten zaio / *...oye! voy a ir a / mear al bater // no pues / jode tengo la bomba estropeada y no se que*

p: a guy goes to the bartender, *hi! I'm going to use your rest room. No, well, gosh, it's out of order or whatever.*

Avanodu choichalum avan parayam pogunathu ,I don't know I haven't started yet , angenne velathum aayirukum.

Even if I ask him he is going to tell something like ,I don't know I haven't started yet.

Quoting Actual Conversations

topic: a trip to the mountains

jm: iriki zun atia ta aiba / inor ez / ez ote dute ematen jaten edo hola? / ta, / bitarte hortan ba emakumia, / ta / *que, no se puede entrar a comer? / y si si ...*

jm: she opened the door and wow, nobody, do they really serve lunch here?, and, in the meantime, he woman (came) and (I said), *so, can we go in and have*

lunch? and (the woman said) yes yes...

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I was just talking to him and he was like “मैं तो यह नहीं कर सकता”

Amma paranjathu “nammukka porathu pogam, we can first get this fixed then we can eat out” enn aanu.

Mother said, “let us go out, we can first get this fixed and then we can eat out.”

Negotiating the Development of the Conversation

1. Restating in Spanish has the effect of reinforcement
 - a. is also used to reject an idea
2. It can also be used to move a discussion ahead

“Structure or organize discourse”

3. Bringing up a new topic into the conversation

Reinforcement / Rejection

topic: the amount of money bar owners make

g: festak egongo ez balira baino askosez gehiago irabazi, / *que es lo que*

cuenta a fin de cuentas

p: asko gehiago / baina askoz gehiago ordaindu ere

g: bai, baino irabazi / *que es lo que cuenta*

g: they make more money than when it's not a holiday, *and that's what is important now*

p: (they make) more money, but they also pay more in taxes

g: yes, but they make money, *that's what is important now*

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He said “bus piddikaandu train eduttaal kooduthal safe aayirikum, pettanum etthum “ ennu avan paranju.

नही यार, I don't think we should do this that way....

Moving the conversation ahead.

topic: the amount of money bar owners make

p: seguro irabazten dula! / dudik gabe! / baina irabazten du asko / ordaintzen du asko / irabazten du gutxi / ordaintzen du gutxi!

e: *bueno venga! / joe segi! / que estais todo el rato con lo mismo!*

p: of course s/he earns money!, no doubt!, but s/he earns a lot, s/he pays a lot; s/he earns little (money), s/he pays little (money)!

e: *oh come on!, gosh continue!, you've been all the time talking about the same thing!*

और बताओ, what's new?

What else? Verre entha nadukkane?

Moving the conversation ahead.

***topic: should bars have restrooms?

p: fabrika baten / ere / da / *un servicio al público* // edo zuen

tallerrean da un servicio al público / ez du esan nahi komuna euki beharra daukatela jendearentzat!

g: *es que un servicio público* daude gauza asko *al servicio del público*

p: a factory is also *a public service* (the speaker is assuming that a

bar is also a public service), or even your garage *is a public service*, but it doesn't mean that you should have rest rooms for the people!

g: *but in a public service* you have many things to serve the public

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“I’m not finished yet!!!!!!”

- Along with moving from a topic to another, speakers also switch to maintain their turn and finish what they have to say.
- The switch seems to have no other reason than to say “I am not done talking!”
 - (this is accompanied with a rising in the speaker’s tone)
- The switch into Spanish allows her to be part of the discussion for longer without being interrupted after which she leaves.

I'm not finished yet!!!!

topic: how much money bar owners earn

g: *vale?* / *ba orduan* / *irabazten dutela* / *diru mordoa* / *argi eta garbi* //

e: *bueno* baino ez da bere [(...)]

p: [ta ordaintzen dutela] diru mordoa/argi eta garbi

topic: should bars have restrooms?

e: baino taberna batean / edaria ematen dizute! / besterik gabe

g: *joe* eta

e: *y si lo ponen más bonito* eta musika polita / jende gehiago juteko! / beraiek diru gehiago irabazteko!

p: *claro!*

g: itxoin,baina joe!

e: eta komuna jartzen dute / jendea ere juteko!

g: bai / komunera juten dan jendea! / jendea juten da edatera / eta edatera / eta edaten dezunean gauza bat gertatzen da

e: baino zu askotan,juten zera taberna batera / egun normal batean / [(...)]

g: [zergatik / joe / zergatik / joe]

e: *joe/es que encima no me escuchan!*

g: OK?, well then it is clear that they make a lot of money

e: well, but that's not his [(...)]

p: [but it is also clear that they pay a lot of taxes]

e: but in a bar they only give you drinks, that's it

g: *gosh!* and

e: *and if they decorate the place* and play good music, is so that people will go there, so that they can make more money!

p: *of course!*

g: wait! but, gosh!

e: and they include a rest room so that people will go to that bar!

g: yes, the people that go to the rest room, people go there to drink and when you drink we all know what happens

e: but many times, you go to a bar in a regular day

g: [(...)] [why?, gosh!, why?, gosh!]

e: *gosh! they won't even listen to me!*

I'm not finished yet!!!!

अरे बोलने दो ना यार, listen to me!!!!

छोडना यार, first let's finish this.

Conclusion

- Code Switching is a common phenomenon amongst bilinguals
- Resort to code switching to fill lexical gaps.
- Resort to it for expressing factual knowledge, for emphasis, and for stating something with authority or seriousness.
- Also because of the different connotational implications of equivalent sentences, especially to smooth negative ones.
- To highlight contextualised situations.
- As a strategy to structure and organise discourse
- Also used to maintain one's speaking turn without interruptions
- We conclude by stating that, situations for code-switching are not dependant on the actual languages involved.

References

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