Frequency of code-switching in Romanian-Spanish bilinguals

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Introduction

- In this paper, I am focusing on a specific bilingual community, namely Romanian-Spanish bilinguals in Spain. Although there is a large community of Romanians in Spain, which leads to prevalent Romanian-Spanish bilingualism, studies on Romanian-Spanish bilinguals in Spain are scarce.
- Code-switching (CS) is a common practice in bilingual communities across the world. In this paper, I am defining CS as the practice of using more than one language or language variety in discourse (see Poplack, 1980).
- Labov' Gender Paradox is a sociolinguistic phenomenon which states that Women conform more closely than men to sociolinguistic norms that are overtly prescribed, but conform less than men when they are not. Women are more likely to use prestige forms and avoid stigmatized variants than men for a majority of linguistic variables, but that they are also more likely to lead language change by using innovative forms of variables. This sociolinguistic phenomenon is important for the present study, given that CS is considered a nonstandardized practice and is, therefore, stigmatized by prescriptive ideologies of language use.

Research Questions

RQ 1. Does gender influence frequency of CS?

RQ 2. Does generation status influence frequency of CS?

RQ 3. Does proficiency in Romanian influence frequency of CS?

Methods

In this section, I report my sample, materials, procedure, and data analysis.

Participants

One hundred eighty seven participants (72 female-identifying) completed this study. Since one of the research questions of this study targets bilinguals' generation status, the participants were further categorized in their respective groups. Specifically, one hundred and two participants belonged to the first generation (G1) group (41 female-identifying) and eighty five formed the second generation (G2) group (54 male-identifying). Generation 1 (G1) bilinguals were born in Romania and immigrated to Spain as adults (i.e., after age 18) and Generation 2 (G2) bilinguals were born to at least one G1 parent. Therefore, G2 bilinguals could have either been born in Spain or born in Romania and immigrated to Spain before age 9 (see Torres & Potowski, 2016).

Descriptive statistics for the sample are offered in Table 1.

Materials

- The short version of the Assessment of Code-Switching Experience Survey (ACSES; Blackburn, 2013) was used to assess participants' CS frequency. After reviewing their results on the ACSES, participants were further categorized as High frequency code-switchers (117 participants; 46 female-identifying; 52 G1) and Low frequency switchers (70 participants; 44 male-identifying; 20 G2).

- Participants' proficiency was assessed via the Boston Naming Test (BNT; Kaplan, Goodglass, and Weintraub, 1983) in Romanian.The BNT contains 60 outline drawings of objects and animals.

- Participants also completed a Language History Questionnaire in order to gather socio-biographical data.

Procedure

Participants first completed the proficiency assessment, followed by the ACSES. The Language History Questionnaire was administered last.

Data analysis

We used R [Version 4.0.3; R Core Team (2020)] and the R-package *papaja* [Version 0.1.0.9997; Aust and Barth (2020)] for all our analyses.

Results

Discussion

References

Aust, F., & Barth, M. (2020). *papaja: Create APA manuscripts with R Markdown.* Retrieved from https://github.com/crsh/papaja

R Core Team. (2020). *R: A language and environment for statistical computing.* Vienna, Austria: R Foundation for Statistical Computing. Retrieved from https://www.R-project.org/

Table 1

Generation	mean_Proficiency	sd_Proficiency	range_Proficiency
1	96.85	1.55	92.50
1	96.85	1.55	100.69
2	83.85	4.43	73.18
2	83.85	4.43	96.03