

What is this? Is It Code Switching, Code Mixing or Language Alternating?

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Abstract

Code switching and code mixing are commonly used throughout the world. Both occur when two languages are used spontaneously in one clause or utterance. Code switching is also a complex process, which involves different levels of switching or mixing in accordance to with proficiency in the languages used. The aim of this paper is to explore the use of code switching and code mixing in South African languages, with the focus on African languages. The important question in this paper, is why do people code switch or code mix unconsciously? In my observations, there appears to be a general tendency to code switch or code mix irrespective of their education, age and culture. Types of code switching, such as the intersentential, intrasentential and extrasentential, will be discussed and also be substantiated with examples. The distinction between code switching and language alternation and the reasons as well as the causes of code switching will be discussed. Data, that was collected from my observations, as a researcher, will be analysed. Data has been extracted from my social and professional environments through the mediums of discourse and email correspondence with friends, colleagues and students of the University of South Africa. In this paper, the sole focus will be on orthographic code switching and code mixing.

Keywords: codes, code switching, code mixing, (Poplack, 1980, 2000; Myers-Scotton, 1998; Auer, 1992, 1998; Nguyen, 2008), code-switching, code-mixing (Myers-Scotton, 1993).

1. Introduction

Code switching is a powerful tool for communication between people. Firstly, the following paragraphs will define the word 'code' by various researchers and secondly, discussion on code switching as part of daily language use.

1.1 Various definitions of code

The term 'code' implies a variety of concepts and ideas, depending on the field that it is embedded in. The following definitions emphasise the application of the term and its specific meaning in some of the fields in which it is used:

- **In communications**, a code is a rule for converting a piece of information (e.g, a letter, a word or phrase) into another form or representation not necessarily of the same sort. (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2010:273*)
- In the context of **cryptography**, a code is a method used to transform a message into an obscured form, preventing those not in on the secret from understanding what is actually transmitted (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2010:273*). According to Yaschenko (2002:4), cryptography studies those methods of information transformation that prevent an opponent from extracting information contained in the messages he or she intercepted.
- **In semiotics**, the concept of a code is very important. De Saussure emphasises that signs only acquire meaning and value when they are interpreted in relation to each other. He believed that interpreting signs requires familiarity with the set of conventions or codes currently used to communicate meaning. Every text is a system of signs organized according to codes and subcodes which reflect certain values, attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and practices. Textual codes do not **determine** the meanings of texts but dominant codes do tend to **constrain** them. Social conventions ensure that signs cannot mean whatever an individual wants them to mean. The use of codes helps to guide us towards what Stuart Hall calls "a preferred reading" and away from what Umberto Eco calls "aberrant decoding", though media texts do vary in the extent to which they are open to interpretation (Hall, 1980:134).
- **In computer programming**, the word code refers to instructions to a computer in a programming language. In

this usage, "code" typically stands for source code, and the verb 'to code' means to write source code to program (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2010: 273).

1.2 Introduction of code switching within South African languages

South Africa is a multilingual country, therefore code switching and code mixing functions predominantly among the citizens of this country. It happens consciously and unconsciously depending on the circumstances that the users find themselves in. The aim of this paper is to explore the use of code switching and code mixing within South African languages. There will be a discussion on types of code switching and code mixing and which will be supported with examples. The types of code switching and code mixing will be addressed in this paper and these will be supported with fitting examples. The distinction between code switching and language alternation and the reasons as well as the causes of code switching will also be discussed.

Code switching can be defined as the use of two or more linguistic varieties in the same conversation. Crystal (1987) suggests that code switching or language switching occurs when two bilingual individuals alternate two languages during their speech between them. This kind of language alternation happens generally amongst bilinguals. These alternations can include sentences and/or phrases from both languages in a long and successive sentence or paragraph.

Code switching and code mixing are phenomena which occur regularly in multilingual communities reflecting social group memberships. There are many reasons why people code switch and one of the reasons may be what the participants want to project in order to identify themselves as members of certain social groups and to negotiate their position in interpersonal relations.

Northern Sotho (one of South Africa's eleven (11) official languages) is in contact with the other ten official languages. In addition, Northern Sotho is in contact with its own dialectal varieties. The use of code switching and code mixing between Northern Sotho speakers and other African languages will be discussed in this paper.

2. Code Switching and Code Mixing

Many scholars have attempted to define code switching and code mixing. Among them are Amuda (1989), Atoye (1994) and Belly (1976). Hymes (1971) defines code switching as "a common term for alternative use of two or more languages, varieties of a language or even speech styles", while Bokamba (1989:278) defines both concepts as follows: "Code switching is the mixing of words, phrases and sentences from distinct grammatical (sub)systems across sentence boundaries within the same speech event...code mixing is the embedding of various linguistic units such as affixes (bound morphemes), words (unbound morphemes), phrases and clauses from cooperative activity where the participants, in order to infer what is intended, must reconcile what they hear with what they understand."

Auer (1998:1) defines **code switching** as the "alternating use of two or more codes within one conversational episode". In this case, "codes" refer to distinct language varieties or dialect. Although code switching is a common linguistic outcome in situations of language contact, prevailing ideologies of linguistic purity discredit the practice in most bilingual communities. It is considered a chaotic practice and it is seen by other research linguists as a sign of lack of mastery of either or both languages.

Weinreich (1953:73) a leading researcher on bilingualism has claimed that "the ideal bilingual is someone who is able to switch between languages when required to do so by changes in the situation but does not switch when the speech situation is unchanged and 'certainly not within a single sentence.'" Specialists in code switching, however, recognize code switching as a functional practice and as a sign of bilingual competence. Competence in this paper has a twofold meaning: it can mean the ability to speak two or more languages fluently and the ability to understand two or more languages fully but not necessarily being able to speak them fluently. It is clear that code switching is a verbal skill requiring a large degree of competence in more than one language, rather than a defect arising from insufficient knowledge of one or the other language" (Poplack: 2000).

Wardhaugh (2000:100) suggests the following: "People are usually required to select a particular set of codes whenever they choose to speak. They also decide to switch from one code to another or mix codes even within sometimes every utterance and thereby create a new code."

According to Myers-Scotton (1993:47) code switching refers to the "use of two or more languages in the same conversation, usually within the same conversational turn, or even within the same sentence of that turn." **Code switching** is the shifting by a speaker from language A to language B.

2.1 Myers-Scotton's model

Code switching is a socially motivated strategy that is employed for producing a sequence of unmarked choices, to establish itself as the marked choice. Speakers sometimes switch when they started a conversation in an unmarked choice.

In Myers-Scotton's (1998: 4) markedness model, markedness relates to the choice of one linguistic variety over other possible varieties. Myers-Scotton (1993) classified code switching into four different types: marked, unmarked, sequential, and exploratory code switching. The markedness model will now be dealt with in more detail.

2.1.1 Code switching as a marked choice

Marked code switching directs speakers to make a marked code choice which is not in the unmarked index of the unmarked rights and obligations (RO) set in an interaction. RO is a theoretical construction upon which speakers can base expectations in a given interactional setting in their community (Myers-Scotton 1998:23). RO accounts for codes of behaviour and norms that are established and then maintained in social communities. Such a choice is made when a speaker wishes to establish a new RO set as unmarked for the current exchange.

In code switching as a marked choice, a speaker wants to distance himself or herself from the expected RO set (Myers-Scotton, 1993:131). Marked choice normally takes place in a formal conversation for which an unmarked language choice of each participant is expected. The choices that are made clearly indicate the appropriate RO set in that social context. Marked choices can be said to be the negotiation against the unmarked RO set. Myers-Scotton (1993:132) emphasises that there is one general motive for making marked choices. The one motive is that the speakers engage in a marked code switching to indicate a range of emotions from anger to affection, as well as negotiating outcomes ranging from demonstrations of authority to assertion of ethnic identity.

2.1.2 Code switching as an unmarked choice

The unmarked code switching choice directs the speaker to speak in a certain way depending on the situation. In many multilingual communities, the unmarked choice of code switching occurs when two languages are spoken within one conversation. The conditions that promote unmarked code switching differ from one multilingual country to another (Myers-Scotton, 1993:20). In African countries, code switching is done between colonial languages and indigenous languages. Africans speak their own common first language with their ethnic peers and English or Afrikaans with other Africans. This is even done in South Africa especially in the case of people who come from rural areas and know their mother tongue only, and English or Afrikaans. Political and economic factors contribute towards code switching. The matrix or base language of the local conversations is normally not English or Afrikaans but their mother tongue.

2.1.3 Code switching as an exploratory choice

A speaker can use the/an exploratory choice when an unmarked code choice is not clear. This type of code switching occurs when the speakers themselves are unsure of the expected or optimal communicative intent or RO set. Exploratory code switching is uncommon and is not often used as the unmarked choice is usually clear (Myers-Scotton, 1993:142).

2.2 Examples of code mixing and code switching

Code mixing is expressions in which a mixture of the grammar of one language and another language is used without altering the grammar of the first language used. According to Wardhaugh (1992:107-108), "conversational code-mixing involves the deliberate mixing of two languages without an associated topic change". He indicates that *code-mixing* is usually used as a solidarity marker in multilingual communities and in this paper it seems to be true when one considers the following examples:

Example 1: E-mail (a conversation between colleagues)

Person 1:

(1a) Ek voel nie lekker nie en het vir **Boss** gevra of ek maar kan huis toe gaan. Ek gaan **10 o'clock** loop, so sal jy sorg vir die **allocations** asseblief.

Thanks!!

(I don't feel well and I asked the Boss if I can go home. I'm going to leave at 10 o'clock, so will you please do the allocations?)

(Thanks!)

Person 2:

(1b) Mmotse gore a dire **diallocations** tseo pele a tsamaya. A kere o kgopetse **Boss? Or** botsisa **Boss** gore **diallocations** di tlo dira ke mang?

(Tell her she must do the allocations before she leaves. Didn't she said she had asked the Boss for permission to leave? Or ask the Boss who is going to do the allocations?)

Person 3:

(1c) **Boss** ga a yo... **she has a Management Training** ya matsatsi a **three** a a latelang.

(The Boss is not there...She has Management Training for the next three days.)

Example 2: E-mail (conversation between partners)

(2a) Mothaka : what is your star baby ke se go balele?

(Mothaka: What is your star Baby so that I can read it for you?)

(2b) Baby : ga ke itse,

(Baby: I do not know,)

(2c) Mothaka : OK birthday ya gago ke eng?

(Mothaka: OK, when is your birthday?)

(2d) Baby : e ka July,

(Baby: in July)

(2e) Mothaka : star sa gago ke **CANCER** dear,

(Mothaka: Your star is **CANCER** dear.)

(2f) Baby : a wena oka itumela ha nkare star sa gago ke **HIV**?

(Baby: Will you be happy if I say your star is **HIV**?)

In this paper the term **code switching** is used to indicate intersentential and intrasentential code **mixing** as well as code **switches** between longer stretches of text, but not borrowing of the kind where a foreign word has been integrated into the lexical system of another language. Hamers and Blanc (2000:259) suggest the following position:

Borrowing and code-switching are phenomena at either end of a continuum: an established loan-word is a historically transmitted word that has been integrated with the recipient language, while code switching is [a] more or less spontaneous, bounded switch from sentences of one language to sentences of another, affecting all levels of linguistic structure simultaneously. Borrowings may look like code-switches in that they retain the foreign status (especially phonology), while code-switches often resemble borrowings in brevity and in being fitted into the syntax of another language.

The following illustrate borrowing that has been used and adapted permanently in Northern Sotho:

(3a) Sekotlelo > borrowed and adapted from Afrikaans **skottel**

(3b) Pirinki > borrowed and adapted from Afrikaans **piering**

(3c) Komiki > borrowed and adapted from Afrikaans **koppie**

(3d) Poleiti > borrowed and adapted from English **plate**

(3e) Foroko > borrowed and adapted from both Afrikaans **vrk** and English **fork, etc.**

This general description was selected as it is not the intent in this paper, but to rather explain the situation that exists in the multilingual society of South Africa, where code switching is mostly the unmarked choice for members of the community.

2.3 Types of code switching as distinguished by Poplack

Poplack (2000) distinguishes three types of code switching: extrasentential, intersentential, and intrasentential. Extrasentential switching is the insertion of tag elements from one language into a monolingual discourse in another language. Tag elements are words or phrases from another language which are inserted at the end of a sentence or utterance boundary. The switch occurs outside the sentences or phrase as explained prior. In most cases they are not in the same base language as the entire sentence. Examples of extrasentential code switching include the addition of "okay", "well" or "you know" to a normal monolingual Northern Sotho discourse. Intersentential switching refers to switching at the sentence or utterance boundary, whereas intrasentential switching is characterized by a switch from one language to another language within a single utterance.

2.3.1 Extrasentential code switching

Extrasentential switching is the insertion of tag elements from one language into a monolingual discourse in another language. The examples below indicate the use of English language tags in a monolingual Northern Sotho discourse.

Examples

- (4a) *Bana ba lehono ga ba na mekgwa, right?*
(Today's children do not have manners.)
(4b) *Ge ke etla mošomong ka mehla, monna yo o ntšhala morago, you know!*
(When I come to work every day, this man follows me.)
(4c) *Ke tla go nokelela tšhelete ka pankeng, okay?*
(I will deposit money in your bank account.)

The examples above indicate tagging where certain English language words are inserted into a monolingual discourse which is Northern Sotho.

2.3.2 Intersentential code switching

The intersentential code switching where switching occurs at the sentence boundary. The base language is Northern Sotho and it is followed by English.

Examples

- (5a) *Ngwana wa rakgadi o sepela bošego and she doesn't want to be reprimanded.*
(My aunt's child likes going out during the night and she doesn't want to be called to order.)
(5b) *Hlogo ya sekolo sa rena e kgethela bana dithuto, she will choose subjects that learners don't want to learn.*
(Our principal chooses subjects for the learners, of which she will choose subjects that learners don't want to learn.)
(5c) *Morena Matlala ke mogogi wa kereke ya rena gomme he is such a gentle person.*
(Mr Matlala is our church leader and he is a gentle person.)

2.3.3 Intrasentential code switching

The intrasentential code switching is characterized by a switch from one language to another language within a single utterance. The examples below show the speakers switching or mixing languages from English to Northern Sotho and vice-versa.

Examples

- (6a) *Mmule: Matšatši a chentsitse (changed) banna le bona ba a reipiwa (raped), ga go sa le motho yo a lego safe. We are all the same, we are exposed to violence and rape. Ditsotsi di gaketše, they are out of control. Ba dirwa ke gore ba na le more rights than anybody else. Ga go fair gore bona ge ba swarwa ba protect ke molao.*
(Mmule: Nowadays things have changed, men are also being raped, and there is no place where a person is safe. We are all the same. We are exposed to violence and rape. Tsotsis (thugs) are ruthless, and they are out of control. The problem is that they have more rights than anybody else. It is not fair because when they are arrested they are protected by the law.)
(6b) *Matlakala: It is true mogwera, ga re safe. Government e swanetše go dira something ka taba ye, but it seems, ba bangwe ba di law enforcers ga ba na taba. Ba itirela security ko dintlong tša bona, what about us who cannot afford those security walls?*
(Matlakala: It is true my friend, we are not safe. Government must do something about this, but it seems some of the law enforcers do not care. They make their own security for their houses, what about us who cannot afford those security walls?)
(6c) *Mmule: It is sad my friend, ga go na seo re ka se dirago, ge e se fela to trust and hope gore one day they will do something.*
(Mmule: It is sad my friend, there is nothing that we can do, but we should only trust and hope that one day they will do something.)

3. Code Switching and Language Alternation

The distinction between language alternation and code switching is owed to linguists such as Gumperz (1982, 1992), Auer (Auer & Di Luzo 1992, Auer 1998) Alvarez (1998, 2000), Nilep (2006, 2010) and many others. One can regard language alternation and code switching as two different ways of thinking as language alternation may relate to grammatical form while code switching is related to communicative function. There are utterances that contain features of language alternation. Nilep (2010:2) defines code switching "as the use of language alternation or of code choice in order to contextualize an utterance". He regards this as a matter of code choice where a speaker chooses to speak one language rather than the other. Gumperz (1982) refers to contextualization as a description of the ways in which speakers give cues about how to understand an utterance. These cues can be signals of the formality of the situation, the relationship between the speakers or other elements of context.

The change of language form (language alternation) may signal a change in context of which the practice may be called code switching. Code switching can also be used without switching languages but switching registers. The following examples will highlight this point:

Depending on the situation and the addressees, a teenage boy may use different kinds of language to express the following statement:

He may use this kind of language when talking to his parents:

(7) *Ke nyaka mošomo wa lebakanyana ge dikolo di tswaletše gore ke kgone go patela dieta tšeo ke d i rekilego Silverkous.*

(I am looking for a temporary job to do over the holidays so I can pay for the shoes that I bought at Silverkous.)

He may use this kind of language when addressing his peers:

(8) *Ke batla go kereya spane ka diholiday gore the kgone go patela off dibhathu tše ke di bayileng ko Silverkous.*

(I am looking for a temporary job to do over the holidays so I can pay for the shoes that I bought at Silverkous.)

From the above examples one is able to identify switching of registers. This commonly occurs when individuals wish to express a sense of belonging with a particular social group. The context, relationship and the situation are clearly indicated. It has been observed that monolinguals code switch when they move from an informal regional speech to a formal, standardized one.

The following example is what Myers-Scotton (1993) calls "code switching as unmarked choice":

Setting: Entrance to the Volkswagen motor manufacturing plant in the Eastern Cape. The visitor is from Limpopo and he approaches a security guard who happens to speak Northern Sotho fluently. The conversation between the visitor and the security guard begins in Northern Sotho after establishing where the visitor came from:

(9a) *Security guard (Northern Sotho): Thobela Mohlomphegi!*

(Hallo, sir!)

(9b) *Visitor (Northern Sotho): Thobela Morena.*

(Hallo, sir)

(9c) *Security guard (Northern Sotho): Nka le thuša, mohlomphegi?*

(Can I help you, sir?)

(9d) *Visitor (Northern Sotho): Ee, ke na le kopano le Morena Swart ka iri ya lesome.*

(Yes, I have a meeting with Mr. Swart at ten.)

(9e) *Security guard (Northern Sotho): Gona e re ke mo leletše mogala goba le a mo tseba?*

(Should I phone him or do you know him?)

(9f) *Visitor (Northern Sotho): Aowa ga ke mo tsebe sefahlego, eupša ke boletše le yena ka mogala.*

(No, I do not know him. We only spoke on the phone.)

(9g) *Security guard (Northern Sotho): Gona go lokile ke tla mmitša gore a tle go le tšea. Nka se kgone go tloga mo.*

(It's okay then, I will call him to come and fetch you. I cannot leave this place.)

(9h) *Visitor (Northern Sotho): Ke a leboga.*

(Thank you.)

The above example can be regarded as an unmarked instance of code switching which is a formal conversation between a security guard and a visitor.

4. Code Switching in South Africa

In South Africa with its multilingual and multicultural society, code switching is not regarded as a useful linguistic tool.

Instead, it is stigmatized and teachers who use code switching in their classrooms are made to feel guilty about this practice (Adendorff, 1996:263). Code switching occurs mostly in education and a lot of research has been done around code switching as an educational tool. Finlayson and Slabbert (1997) examined code switching outside of the educational context. They examined the functional aspects of code switching in a South African township. They concentrated on the social function of code switching as a form of accommodation in a particular South African township while this paper will concentrate on the spontaneous use of code switching in general among the citizens in South Africa.

McCormick (2002) focused on the linguistic aspects of code switching, code mixing and convergence in Cape Town, more specifically in District Six. Her study was aimed at highlighting the forms and functions of code switching in the District Six community. McCormick (2002:217) defines code mixing as "speech in which the alternation involves shorter elements, often a single word" and codeswitching as "the alternation of elements longer than one word from two different languages."

Finlayson and Slabbert (1997: 419) observe "...CS (code switching) is unlikely to enjoy official blessing from all language authority purists. This is simply because any one language group would not like [to] openly concede that the use of a rival language in an accommodation situation would enhance not only communication but also the bridging of language separation". Code switching can be explored as a teaching strategy in immersion and/or bilingual classrooms without compromising students', teachers' and parents' expectations of education (Van der Walt, Mabule and De Beer, 2001). Code switching is like letting L1 in at the back door, as discussed by Van der Walt et al (2001).

Code switching is strongly determined by social circumstances, and the language being switched to or from may be intended to say something about the speaker's social stance to indicate solidarity or identification with a specific group (as is the case with young adults), or rejection of a specific group (often a rejection of the rural, traditional people's way of speaking) Van der Walt and Mabule, 2001:298).

According to Van der Walt and Mabule (2001), code switching, of whatever kind, seems to have at least two characteristics that must be highlighted in the context of this article:

- Code switching is a natural phenomenon in bilingual and multilingual communities. It is not a sign of language decay or corruption but it is quite the opposite. It is a sign of the dynamic nature of language and the way in which people make language to serve their needs. One could go so far as to say that persistent and continued code switching is probably the first sign of an incipient, new language.
- Code switching shows a high degree of cognitive and affective control over the grammatical, syntactic and semantic elements of various languages **simultaneously**, specifically in inter-sentential code switching.

5. Code Switching and Code Mixing in the Case of Northern Sotho

Code switching in Northern Sotho occurs in various situations or places. Those institutions include government offices, restaurants and shops, informal conversations and in order to emphasise a statement.

The following are examples of code switching in **government offices**:

(10a) *Government officer: Abošene tatane na mmame Baloyi! Minjhani?*

(Good day Mr. and Mrs. Baloyi! How are you?)

(10b) *Mr. and Mrs. Baloyi: Ahee mofumakadi, Mikona*

(Good day mam, we are fine.)

These greetings are informal, but suddenly the officer switches to Northern Sotho as shown below:

(10c) *Government officer: Nka le thuša ka eng Ntate Baloyi le Mme Baloyi?*

(How can I help you Mr. and Mrs. Baloyi?)

(10d) *Mr. Baloyi: Re tlile go rephota diphaepe tša meetse, tšeo di phulegilego. Di dutliša meetse ka mo ntlong, then e ba a mess.*

(We are here to report burst water pipes. They are dripping water in the house and it is a mess.)

The officer will switch to Tsonga if she is a Tsonga speaker and the whole conversation will be in Tsonga, but in this case it can only mean that the officer is a Northern Sotho speaker. This is the reason why she switched to the language that is regarded as the business language or the language that she feels comfortable with.

The following is an example of code switching or code mixing in a **restaurant and/or shop**:

In most restaurants and/or shops, the waiter or the shop assistant will greet the customer and use the language that will make the customer feel at ease. In these situations, the response from the customer sometimes dictates the base language:

- (11a) Shop assistant: Good day, mam! Can I help you?
(Good day, mam! Can I help you?)
- (11b) Customer: Thobela kgarebe. Ee le ka nthuša. Ke nyaka moo le rekišago diwatch.
(Good day lady. Yes, you can help me. I want a place where they sell watches.)
- (11c) Shop assistant: Angazi ukuthi o thini? Can you repeat what you said in English?
(I don't understand you? Can you repeat what you said in English?)
- (11d) Customer: Oh! You are speaking Zulu? My Zulu is rotten but ngiza ku zama. Ngi funa la ku thengiswa khona iwatch.
(Oh! You're speaking Zulu? My Zulu is bad, but I will try. I want a place where they sell watches.)
- (11e) Shop assistant: Oh! Ngisa gu bonisa e section ya khona. Uza ngibiza ma ufuni ucedo?
(Oh! I will show you that section. You will call me when you want help?)
- (11f) Customer: gulungile. Ngiyabonga.
(It's okay. Thank you.)

In this example, the customer is prepared to sacrifice her language in order to get the best possible assistance. The two examples of code switching above can be regarded as a formal and an informal conversation respectively.

An example below shows code switching used to **emphasize a point**:

- (12) Izinto azi hambe kahle la emkhandlweni, ke mathata fela. Baya lwana, go lwelwa ditulo.
(Things are not right in the organization, there are only problems. They are fighting; they are fighting for positions.)

The expression of dissatisfaction or pressure of some sort can result in code switching from one language to the other. The following example is of a woman who is Northern Sotho. She is married to a Tsonga man and expresses her frustrations in both languages, but she uses her mother tongue and English to emphasise her frustrations.

For example:

- (13) Hamba loko va ka ntirho wa hosi a wu karharisim lo wu impela muntu a ngaza a karhala. Le ge bare motho ga a swanela go lapa go šomela kgoši, tše tšona, aowa, nka se ke ka di kgona, aowa! This is too much!
(Although it is said one should not get tired of doing the master's work, this is too much. I won't tolerate this.)

6. Causes and Functions of Code Switching in Northern Sotho

The importance of communication in a multilingual country like South Africa contributes to the use of code switching and code mixing. The following are some of the causes and functions of code switching and code mixing:

6.1 Lack of proper or equivalent terminology

The causes of code switching can be explained as a result of the language varieties and different settings in which codes are used. An example below is a conversation between nurses who tend to discuss nursing matters in Northern Sotho and then switch to English in the course of their conversation. In this case the reason for code switching is that most of their terminology and medical concepts lack equivalent words in Northern Sotho.

Examples:

- (14) Ke ya off duty ya six weeks ka ge ke tlo kopanya beke ye le next week's day off.
(I am going to be off duty for six nights as I will be combining this week and next week's days off.)
Another example used on national television:
(15) Oli e tala ya brent
(Brent crude oil)

The word "oli" comes from both English 'oil' and Afrikaans "olie" but "brent" is left as it is in English to show that even paraphrasing will not clearly explain the term.

6.2 Acceptance

The other cause of code switching is social identity and linguistic integration. This is done in order for someone to feel accepted by a particular society. The issue of social acceptability tends to influence people to borrow words by switching

to a more socially acceptable form of expression.

Examples:

A parents meeting that I once attended made me realise that I have lost touch with teaching learners in a classroom. Most teachers were members of a particular union and they used a particular lingo that identified them amongst us. This is what they once said:

(16a) Comrade M, o a standa, nna ga ke stande because ke transferetswe head office.

(Comrade M, are you available for nomination? I am not available for nominations (standing, I am not standing) because I have been transferred to head office.)

(16b) Hao, comrade why o sa re botsa? Gape rena re be re lobiya wena gore o se kotame setulo sa bochairman.

(Oh, comrade, why did you not tell us? We were lobbying for you to be a chairman.)

6.3 Social and identity function

Code switching is often seen as functional when participants in a conversation are being social. A father will often code switch while having a social conversation with his teenage sons, yet it can be considered as a marked code switching because even if the relationship and the socialization are relaxed, they are not in the same social group, because of age difference. The function of code switching to establish a form of identity is often noted between teenagers, who are able to understand one another and the code switches that they make. The following example in Northern Sotho will substantiate:

(17a) Father: Banenyana ba le ga se ba maemo a lena. Ga go bjalo?

(Father: Those girls are not of your social level. Is that so?)

(17b) Teenage son 1: Ee tate, e be e le ba maemo a godimo.

(Teenage son 1: Yes daddy, they were of a high standard.)

(17c) Father: Moloko o be a float ka biri ya gagwe ka sekhutlwaneng, o be a nagana gore I can't see him.

(Father: Moloko was floating with his beer in the corner. He thought that I did not see him.)

Teenage son 2: Aowa tate, ga se ke float ka biri mo lefelong leo throughout. Ke be ke na le Mokgadi.

(17d) (Teenage son 2: No daddy, I did not float with my beer at that place throughout. I was with Mokgadi.)

The word "floating" in this context means going around with a bottle of beer in his hand.

6.4 Code switching for confirmation

This type of code switching occurs when someone is seeking some form of confirmation. The following example shows a conversation between colleagues whereby one seeks for a confirmation of what was said in a meeting about the due dates for submission of certain documents:

(18a) MS: I was not in a meeting yesterday ene ke utlwa ba re re swanetše go nokela dikleimi tša rena before the 28th tša kgwedi ye.

(I was not in a meeting yesterday and I heard that we should submit our claims before the 28th of this month.)

(18b) RR: Yes, it is true. Ge o ka se dire bjalo ba ka se go patele. E bile ga ba sa nyaka to issue cheques. Ba re di costly for the university.

(Yes, it is true. If you don't do that they won't pay you. They no longer want to issue cheques. They say it is too costly for the university.)

This code switching conversation serves as some form of confirmation of what should be done. MS wants to confirm what she has heard about submission of certain claim forms.

6.5 Expansion

Code switching can be used to expand on a fact that, in another language, may be understood better by the recipient. For example:

(19) Batho ga ba kwešiše ge motho a ratana le motho wa bong bja go swana le bja gagwe. Se se ra gore gay ge e le banna and lesbian ge e le basadi.

(People don't understand when one is in love with someone of the same sex. This means gay if they are men and lesbians if they are women.)

6.6 Exclusion or to show expertise

People code switch to exclude others in a conversation that is regarded for the ears of those who understand the lingua franca used at that point in time. In a multilingual society like South Africa, a certain group of people will code switch in order to exclude other people in their conversation.

For example:

(20) *Die bra o nagana gore ke bhari, ge a sa nyake go ngaya my nyoko. Ke a notšha gore o a rola.*
(This gentleman thinks I am a fool, when he does not want to pay me. I am aware that he is rich).

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, there are many functions and reasons why people code switch or code mix. The following are some of the functions and reasons discussed in this paper:

- to bridge the gap in or lack of an appropriate terminology;
- to make communication possible between different cultures and language groups;
- for effective communication and to accommodate other language use in conversations with different people at different levels;
- to explain a point or yourself in another language as certain words or phrases are more suited in a specific language;
- to affirm one's identity and sometimes social status;
- to emphasise or confirm something.

Based on these points, it can be said that the use of code switching daily by many people consciously and unconsciously, still raise the question of what is code switching, because some people say it is code mixing while others say it is language alternation.

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Other Sources

Emails from different people.

