

Code-Switching in the Conversation of Salespersons and Customers in Oran Spoken Arabic

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Abstract: *This research looks at the use of code-switching in Algeria. The aim of this study is to provide a complete overview over the phenomenon of code-switching. Our research refers to the characteristics of code-switching in a specific place (Oran) and by specific persons (salespersons and customers). Sociolinguistics is the scope of this research. It sheds light on the functioning and characteristics of code-switching. This research presents why bilinguals mix two languages and switch back and forth between two languages and what triggers them to mix and switch their languages when they speak. To test the hypotheses of this research, a recording is used as a research instrument. The theoretical part has the aim to present concepts concerning code switching and its distinction from other related concepts. The purpose of the practical part is to reinvest the theories exposed in the preceding part through the analysis of our corpus. The result of our study seems to support the hypothesis that code-switching is used as a strategy of communication in Algeria in general and in Oran in particular.*

Key words: *Code-switching, Communication, Code-mixing, Bilingualism, Multilingualism, Diglossia.*

الملخص

يهتم هذا البحث باستخدام التناوب اللغوي في الجزائر. والهدف من هذه الدراسة هو تقديم لمحة كاملة حول ظاهرة التناوب اللغوي. يشير بحثنا إلى خصائص التناوب اللغوي في مكان معين (وهران) وأشخاص معينين (التجار والعملاء). يعتبر علم اللغة الاجتماعي نطاق هذا البحث فهو يسلط الضوء على أداء وخصائص التناوب اللغوي، كما أن هذا البحث يطرح مسألة المزج بين لغتين عند ثنائيي اللغة إلى جانب تبادل اللغة بين تارة و أخرى ، كما أنه يبحث في الأسباب التي تدفعهم لخلط وتبديل لغاتهم عندما يتحدثون. لاختبار فرضيات هذا البحث، يتم استخدام تسجيل كأداة بحثية. فبداية يهدف الجزء النظري إلى تقديم المفاهيم المتعلقة بالتناوب اللغوي وما يميزها عن المفاهيم الأخرى التي لها الصلة به، أما الجزء العملي فالغرض منه إعادة استثمار النظريات التي سلف ذكرها في الجزء السابق و ذلك من خلال تحليل المعلومات التي لدينا، و

كنتيجة فإن دراستنا تدعم الفرضية القائلة بأن التناوب اللغوي يستخدم كاستراتيجية للاتصال في الجزائر بشكل عام وفي وهران على وجه الخصوص.
الكلمات المفتاحية: التناوب اللغوي - الاتصال - الخلط اللغوي - التعددية اللغوية - الثنائية اللغوية - الازدواجية اللغوية.

Introduction

Code-switching is widespread phenomenon in bilingual communities where speakers use their native tongue (L1) and their second language (L2) in different domains. This phenomenon occurs when bilinguals substitute a word or phrase from one language to another language. This is an ordinary phenomenon in the area of bilingualism.

This research deals primary with "Code-Switching", then with other some related concepts such as borrowing, bilingualism, diglossia, and multilingualism. This research tries to discuss more about "how Code-Switching occurs in the conversation of the salespersons and customers in Oran". The study begins by explaining the concept of 'Code-Switching and some other related concepts', then, to obtain a full picture of a language contact phenomenon, which is in our case Code-Switching characteristics in Oran , this research employs one principal method which is recording. It is based on recording natural conversations among salespersons and customers. In fact, a large number of participants were randomly selected from this community. Then this natural language data of the participants were transcribed and analysed. Information gained from these recordings was collected to investigate Code-Switching patterns and other language contact phenomenon observed in this community.

French in Algeria has a very important function. It enjoys a prestigious status. The main research questions that are raised are: Are people who participate in the interaction aware of code-switching? Which type of Code-Switching is more used by salespersons and customers? What is the place of Code-Switching in the commercial conversation? What is the function of Code-Switching in Oran Spoken Arabic (strategy of communication or linguistic handicap, lack of vocabulary in our language?)

All of these can be summarised in only one question which is: What are the different characteristics of code-switching (French, Algerian Arabic) in salespersons and customers' conversation in Oran in stores?

The objective of this study is an attempt to shed light on the characteristics of alternating languages in the commercial context.

Oran is the city where the investigation took place. More precisely, in stores where people (salespeople and customers) are brought into contact with each other.

The tools of research of this study consist of tape-recordings. The recordings were achieved through the use of Samsung Galaxy pocket GT-S5302 mobile. They were collected over approximately two weeks, almost all the data were collected in interactions between salespersons and customers. The speakers were aware that their conversations were tape-recorded. There were twenty recordings in all. The recordings varied in length from forty eight seconds (00: 48) to five minutes and fifty one seconds (5:51).

Experimental Design

Concerning data collection, recordings will be used to collect the data needed as they will provide examples of the way salespersons and customers "code-switch" and instances of the different patterns of code-switching. Then, their speech will be recorded and transcribed. After that, the passages that contain both Arabic and French languages will be collected.

1. Theoretical Background

1.1 Code-Switching

It is the practice of moving back and forth between two languages or between two dialects or registers of the same language. Code-Switching occurs far more often in conversation than in writing. Based on David C.S. Li (2008) the term of 'Code-Switching' (CS) refers to the alternate use of two or more languages in an extended stretch of discourse, where the switch takes place at sentence or clause boundaries.

We can summarise code-switching in three main points which are: the use of two or more varieties in one conversation, in addition to the skillful use of both languages, and the last point is that grammar and pronunciation of both languages are preserved. Code-Switching has three forms, the first form is called Inter-sentential switching, it occurs *outside* the sentence or the clause level (i.e. at sentence or clause boundaries). It is sometimes called "extra-sentential" switching. The second form is called Intra-sentential switching, it occurs *within* a sentence or a clause. The last third form is called Tag-switching, it is the switching of either a tag phrase or a word, or both, from language-B to language-A.

1.2 Typology

Situational and Conversational Code-Switching are two types of Code-Switching.

Situational Code-Switching is when two or more languages exist in a community, speakers frequently choose between them according to the situation they are in. In fact, they have to take many considerations. The first thing to be taken into account is which language will be understood by addressee. Of course speakers choose the language that the participant can understand.

Conversational Code-Switching can be defined as case where bilingual speakers talking to other bilinguals and change their language without any change in the situation. It is a type of switching which takes place with the same conversation participants, situation and sometimes even the topic. This switching has stylistic or textual functions as signalling a quotation, marking emphasis, changing a tone from the serious to the chronic.

The motivations behind Code-Switching can be summarized as follows:

- A meaningful discourse strategy: a word or phrase has no straightforward equivalent in LX
- To express a concept or thought that is not available in one's own language
- Speakers may code switch simply because such linguistic units are associated with prestige.
- For historical reasons.

1.2 Code-Mixing

Code-Mixing is applying the grammar or structure of one language to the vocabulary of another language. It is the use of a word from one language with suffixes from the other language.

Code-Switching is simply switching back and forth between languages, often in the same sentence. In code-mixing, the switch is intrasententially (within sentences). That is why there are some writers who reject the distinction between code-switching and code-mixing. Hill and Hill (1980:122) for example use the terms interchangeably without seeing any difference between them. They claim that "*There is no satisfactory way to draw a neat boundary between the two phenomena (code-switching and code-changing)*".

2. Manifestations

2.1 Borrowing

Another way in which different languages may become mixed up with each other is through the process of borrowing. People may use words from another language in their everyday conversation to describe a concept or idea because there are not available words in their mother tongue.

Borrowing must be distinguished from code-switching because the former involves mixing the systems themselves i.e. an item is borrowed from one language to become part of another one while the second involved mixing languages in speech (Hudson, 1999:55).

Myers-Scotton (1993:182-183) rejects the distinction between code-switching and borrowing since she sees them as quite related processes i.e., she states that *“borrowed forms may be the result of words introduced into a host language through code-switching after an indefinite period of time and frequency of use.”*

The case in Arabic: Arabic has flooded the vocabularies of Persian and Turkish for centuries. Yet it received little in return . Arabic words in Persian are estimated at 50%. French influence on English: Because of the Norman invasion of England in the 11th. Century, the French nobility held all the important positions in the country. Thus, many French words were borrowed, for instance: *baron, baroness, count, countess, duke, duchess; prince, princess, noble, royal*. For example, since the upper class set the standard in fashion and dress, many French words penetrated the English language:- boots, robe, veil, gown - brown, blue – diamond, pearl, costal, ruby.

Arabic Influence on English: By 11th and 12th centuries, Arabic civilization had fully spread through Spain. This Muslim conquest of the mainland influenced medieval European scholars who began to take an interest in Arabic learning, most notably in mathematics chemistry and astronomy, e.g., algebra.

2.2 Borrowing in Modern Standard Arabic

In general, the influence of French is evident in the domains of furniture, art, cars and fashion; (villa فيلا - salon صالون - Jeans جينز - motor موتور - Casual كاجوال - Jacket جاكيت)

2.2 Bilingualism

People use the term “Bilingualism” in different ways. For some, it means an equal ability to communicate in two languages. For others, it simply means the ability to communicate in two languages, but with greater skills in one language. In fact, it is more common for bilingual people, even those who have been bilingual since birth, to be somewhat "dominant" in one language.

2.3 Diglossia

It is a situation in which two languages (or two varieties of the same language) are used under different conditions within a community, often by the same speakers. The term is usually applied to languages with distinct ‘high’ and ‘low’ (colloquial) varieties, such as Arabic. It is a sociolinguistic phenomenon in which complementary social functions are distributed between a prestigious or formal variety and a common or colloquial variety of a language, as in Greek, Tamil, or Scottish English.

2.4 Multilingualism

A multilingual person, in a broad definition, is one who can communicate in more than one language; the terms bilingual and trilingual are used to describe comparable situations in which two or three languages are involved.

3. Findings

This study is based on recording natural conversations among salespersons and customers in stores. The passages that contain both Arabic and French languages will be collected applying the following steps:

- Extract languages that exist in these passages (which language is dominant, which language comes first: whether sentences start in Algerian Arabic or French),
- State the grammatical function of code-switched patterns,
- Make their phonetic transcription, translate them into English, and extract language contact phenomena that exist.

Algerian Arabic is the dominant language. So that it can be said that French has a secondary role. Its intervention in the interactions is translated by the presence of:

Noun

1-tli:q mʕa jupe maʕi mʕa sarwa:l. (In clothing store)

(It suits skirts, not trousers.)

2- kima hak la table? (In home furniture shop)

(Is it the same table?)

3- wa:ʃ man couleur? (referring to a curtain)

(Which colour do you want?)

Noun preceded by an article

4- kajan des imprimantes fa lħanu:t. (In hardware store)

(There are some printer machines in my shop.)

5- Hija gadha fi la taille. (In clothing store)

(She has her same size.)

Verbal group

6- Je crois ha:di tli:k. (referring to a sheet)

(I think this one suits you.)

7- waʃra:ki ça vas ?

(How are you?)

Verb

8- su:ma nriɣlouk ma:ʃi mujkal (referring to a stereo)

(As well as the price is concerned, I will help you, no problem).

9- maniʃ rayħa nssayé. (In shoe store)

(I am not going to try it.)

Adjective

10- Rajħa taʃri:ha rouge? (Referring to a waistcoat.)

(Are you going to buy the red one?)

11- ʃandhum noir. (In home furniture shop)

(They have the dark colour.)

Adverb

12- Normalement, hada jʃi:k. (In jewellery)

(This one normally suits you.)

13. Même ʃarwa:l majʃi:haʃ. (In clothing stores)

(The trousers also do not fit him.)

We further note that the French preposition “dans” is replaced by “fa” (In) when proceeds French nouns. The table below will clearly illustrate the phenomenon

Patterns	French	English
Fa domain	Dans le domaine	In the domain
Fa la veste lrouge	Dans la veste rouge	In the red waistcoat
Fa lgrande taille	Dans la grande taille	In the big size
Fa lbleu	Dans le bleu	In the blue color
Fa noir	Dans le noir	In the dark color
Fa lrouge	Dans le rouge	In the red color

Table 1: French nouns preceded by the AA preposition "fa"

Although, we have all the colors names in Algerian Arabic, people in market prefer to use the French ones as it is shown in the table below:

French	Algerian Arabic	English
Noir	kḥal	Dark
Rouge	ḥmar	Red
Jaune	ṣfar	Yellow
Vert	xdar	Green
Bleu	zrag	Bleu
Blanc	bjad	White
Marron	qahwi	Brown

Table 2: Salespersons and customers' use of French colors

The phenomenon of using French numbers is also observed.

For example:

- Trois couleurs.
(Three colors)
- Quatre couleurs.
(Four colors.)

These recordings are mainly characterized by the use of two languages which are Algerian Arabic and French.

-We can declare the existence of code switching in all the conversations.

-We can notice from these recordings the following:

-Almost all the sentences in these dialogues start in AA, and then they are intervented by words and sentences from French.

-In fact, there are some sentences that start in French. For instance,

1. Soldina fi:hum .
(We lowered their prices .)
2. Elle est très belle.
(It is very nice.)
3. L'essentiel lmondiale.
(The most important thing is the world cup.)

We can deduce that despite the fact all the words in the recordings including colors, sizes, and numbers, have their equivalences in Algerian Arabic people use the French ones. This of course proves the fact that there is no linguistic handicap in our language.

French code switched elements consist of single words and very rare sentences. This of course leads to different forms of code switching.

Tag switching

qi:si a xti matadi:ʃ normal.
(You can try it even if you do not take it.)

Inter-sentential switching

ha:di hija sRira. J'ai pas de chance

Intra-sentential switching

We observe that these conversations are full of this type of code switching. For instance:

ha:da fa lgrande taille jdi:ru 3800 DA. (Referring to trousers.)
(The big size in this one is 3800 DA.)

ʃħa:l les chaises ha:du ?
(How much are these chairs)

Conclusion

In order to describe the phenomenon of code-switching, it was necessary to collect some theoretical elements concerning code-switching within the community under study. This theory is completed by empirical findings resulted from the analysis of the data. The phenomenon of Arabic-French alternation takes mainly two forms. The first is code switching in which unassimilated words are introduced into the Algerians mother tongue. The other is borrowing in which French items are inserted fully or partially into spoken Algerian Arabic. Thus code switching and borrowing are two common processes among salespersons and customers. Furthermore, the majority of code switched elements involve single words, phrases, adjectives, and very few adverbs and verbs.

We can state that code-switching is an original form of expression and the obtainable results allow us to confirm our hypothesis. In fact, this phenomenon is the result of languages in contact, bilingualism, and thus becomes a natural and vital practice in the Algerian society. That is the prolonged contract between Algerian Arabic and French conducts people in the market to code switch and borrow words from this language (French) and so produce a distinctive linguistic means that remains a proper code of this social group.

Finally, the results reveal that salespersons and customers code-switch not because of a lack of vocabulary since all the French items have

their equivalences either in Algerian Arabic or in Modern Standard Arabic; in contrast because they consider it as a strategy of communication.

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