

Factors Motivating Code Switching Within the Social Contact of Hausa Bilinguals

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Abstract: *The study reported in this paper centers on the factors motivating code switching within the social contact of Hausa bilingual speakers studying at University Utara Malaysia. Information for the survey was collected using questionnaire sets distributed to 80 bilinguals, who completed them. The data were examined within the sketch of Holmes (2013) social factors and social dimensions of language use. The result of the investigation established that alternating between two languages is a discourse strategy use by bilinguals to communicate effectively, which is mostly influenced by certain social variables and morphosyntactic structures of the languages.*

I. Introduction

Hausa is the most widely spoken language in West Africa and Africa apart from Kiswahili. The language is categorized as a member of a Chadic group of languages within the Afroasiatic language families. The language is closely related to Arabic and Hebrew more than any other language of the Afroasiatic phylum in Sub-Saharan Africa (Jaggar, 2011). It is largely established in the Northern part of Nigeria and the Republic of Niger. Recently, Hausa language has been estimated the mother tongue (first language) of approximately eighty to one hundred million people, and relatively over one hundred million non-native speakers who demonstrate a varying degree of aptitude in the language (Yusuf, 2011). Actually, Languages must come into contact with one another, since language cannot grow in isolation. Through this interaction one language usually exercised its influence over another. By coming into terms with other languages, Ahmed and Daura (1970) named the language as classical Hausa and modern Hausa. *The classical Hausa* represents the Hausa language and literary styles which have been prominently influenced by Arabic and Islamic faith; contrary to *the modern Hausa*, which have been evidently inclined to western civilization and values via the activity of the English language.

In the same way, the multilingual setting of the present Nigeria, the status of English in the teaching and learning environment, as well as the growing trend in globalization and technology is contributing immensely in the impact of English language over Hausa language. In due course, a number of language contact phenomena such as borrowing, diagglossia, interference, code switching are constantly establishing within the speech exchanges of Hausa bilinguals in Nigeria and in the diaspora to the extent that they (bilinguals) can hardly maintain a conversation without shifting back and forth between Hausa, English and other languages.

On the other hand, code switching is the most widely studied language contact phenomena (Lin & Li, 2012). Because the phenomena is vigorously appears in various formal and informal contexts within a single speech or utterance. Such social backgrounds comprise of official meetings, religious sermon, classroom interaction, and commonly during conversation between peers or at times among family members. Bilinguals who are proficient in two or more language varieties usually switch between the languages in a single sentence or statement to share communicative meanings then to effectively express their intent. Though, the bilingual speakers at times may not conscious that they recurrently switch between the access codes within their statements (Milroy & Gordon, 2003). As they may not possibly recount the code they have selected in a series of communicative exchange (Wardhaugh, 2011). Concisely, code switching can be detailed as the ability to mix more than one language within the same statement or speech. Other linguistic meanings of code switching given by linguists are: Auer (2010), Woolard (2004), Li (2000), Gal (1988), Heller (1988), and Gumperz (1982).

II. Literature Review

2.1. Code switching as Language Contact Phenomena

Linguistic studies throughout the 1940s and 1950s unanimously viewed the act of code switching as a sub-standard practice of language (Weinreich, 1983). Nevertheless, contemporary linguistic findings revealed code switching as systematic and meaningful pattern of language use. Essien (2000); and Jagero & Odongo (2011) upheld that code switching is a normal bilingual behavior. In the same vein, Obiamalu & Mbagwu

(2009) regarded code switching as natural language contact phenomena. The bilingual performance has been observed as subconscious behavior (Li (2000); Woolard (2004); Auer (2010)). In contrary, Yusuf (2012) disputed that code switching is a conscious practice that usually appears in the course of conversation between bilinguals. To sum it up, alternating use of two or more languages manifested subconsciously and naturally during speech exchange of bilingual speakers.

Bilingual speakers use code switching to express social and linguistic meanings during conversation (Gumperz, 1983). In addition, Bollinger (1975) enlightened that bilinguals use code switching as conversational tactics to lessen communication difficulties that may ascend during conversation. Just as bilingual speakers may engage in code switching purposely to misinform, disguise, or brag to the listener outside the dialogue. However, Essien (2000) specified that code switching amid bilinguals or multilingual such as Nigerians has to be viewed as a normal linguistic phenomenon around the people where varieties of languages and dialects are spoken. Furthermore, Ariffen and Rafik-Galea (2009) clarified code switching as discourse stratagems employ by bilinguals to communicate their intent efficiently.

2.2. Factors Motivating Code switching

Gumperz (1982) described the social meaning of code switching in an attempt to classify the conversational functions of code switching between the following language pairs: Slovenian-German, Hindi-English, and Spanish-English. He upheld that code switching is a conversational device predominantly used by bilinguals to express social meanings in response to the situation and other social variables. Basically, certain linguistic constraints and social aspects are usually the motivating factors in the bilingual acts of selecting a particular language variety hence code switching.

Linguistic factors refer to the grammatical structure and constraints of the languages that usually determine the patterns of code-switching. Since code switching can occur within sentences (intrasentential); between sentences (intersentential) or on extrasentential level, which signifies an incidence in which a bilingual may attach a tag from one language code into a statement in another code, alternatively known as tag switching (cf. Poplack (1980); Romaine (1993); and Hoffmann (1991)). In this regard, Bokamba (1989) defined code switching as the mixing of words, phrases or sentences from two different grammatical structures across sentence boundaries in a single statement.

Social factors and social dimensions too are the determinant elements for the choice of a particular language code rather than another. They are useful and also the basic mechanisms in recounting and examining utterances of all types of social interactions (Holmes, 2013). Such factors involve the influence of the participants, social context, topic, formality, and status, purposes of the discussion as well as functional use of the language. Holmes (2013) further highlighted that the way people speak is influenced by certain social aspects and social scopes in which they are speaking. This all depends on where they are speaking, who can hear what they are talking, and what are their outlooks and purposes during the speech exchange? Normally, people express the same message somewhat difference to quite different audiences. Similarly, Hausa bilinguals alternate between the two different codes in their repertoire to express their mind and interactive meaning during usual conversation. In order to examine the factors motivating code switching between Hausa and English bilinguals, the research will discuss the social factors and the way language is used to convey social information and meanings within certain range.

2.2.1. Social Factors

Social aspects like the context, participants, the topic and purposes are important factors in explaining various sociolinguistic phenomena such as borrowing, diagglossia, code switching, register, style, and interference (Holmes, 2013).

The participants: are the speakers or language users, who involve in particular interactions or conversation which consist of who is/are speaking, and who are they speaking to? Therefore, choice of a particular code rather than another is determine by the participants involve in the course of a particular interaction.

Social Context: Context is another determinant factor in language choice (Wardhaugh, 2011). The context here refers to any social setting or background where the interaction is taking place between the participants. This covers where they (participants) are speaking at the moment of the conversation, which can be in or outside a classroom, office or official meeting, or at home.

The Topic: Topic here refers to the subject matter that is being spoken about or discussed in the very moment of the conversation between the participants. A topic may be a religious sermon, formal speech, news casting, or exchange of pleasantries between peers. Thus, selection of a code is mostly determined by the topic of discussion.

The purposes: This denotes interactive goals that the individual participants aim at achieving during or after the conversation. The purpose of any communicating exchange between speakers is the expression of oneself socially.

2.2.2. Social Dimensions

Social dimensions are status, solidarity, formality and functions, which are very significant aspects in describing language choice or alternation between speakers that shared or used more than one language of communication within a particular context.

Status: involves typical roles relationship that exists between or social position of the participants within a particular background. The social role of each speaker is important in determining which code is expected to be used in a particular situation. That is, same person may speak different code subjected to the listener (s), context, role and educational/career background in a given situations.

Solidarity: refers to the social distance between the participants, which involves the relationship that exists between the speakers. Are they friends, host-stranger, instructor-students, preacher-audiences, doctor-patient, news caster-listeners, etc.?

Formality: as well is another causal factor in determining switching between language varieties in a certain situation. Formal situations like public lectures, official meetings, and classroom instructions require a formal variety of language irrespective of the participants. While in an informal dealings such as discussion between students outside classrooms or between peers, an informal variety of languages is definitely expected to be in session throughout the communicative exchange.

Functions: Language functions involve a part that language play in a certain circumstance in a particular discourse. Why is the language being used for? Are the participants in questions and answers sessions, giving directives, seeking for an apology, exchanging greeting or jokes and so on? The functions may have the referential meaning or an affective meaning.

Various researches around the globe have investigated the bilingual behavior of code switching, especially between English and other language (s). This usually replicates the widespread of English in the educational settings, the background of the researchers as well as the prevalence status of the language as a second or third language in numerous countries all over the world (Swann and Sinka, 2007). In spite of the topical prominence of code switching as distinctive features of the bilingual speech, researches on code switching between Hausa and English in an educational context, be it inside or outside a classroom setting seems very limited based on the investigator's information. For that reason, this survey aimed at identifying certain factors motivating the occurrence of code switching between Hausa-English bilinguals studying at University Utara Malaysia, where a number of Hausa bilinguals are pursuing postgraduate studies and a few undergraduates in various colleges.

III. Research Design and Methodology

Gumperz (1982) maintained that a close examination of a briefly linguistic data is essential in the process of describing the determinants and functions of code switching. Accordingly, the present sociolinguistic study employ quantitative technique for collection and interpretation of the data towards analyzing certain factors motivating code switching between Hausa bilinguals. While most of the bilinguals shared the same residence halls, some also study similar courses at various colleges in the university. Therefore, this condition mostly triggered a recurrent manifestation of code switching in their discourses outside classroom context.

3.1. Theoretical Framework

The collected data used in the present study were analyzed within the framework of Homes (2013) social factors and social dimensions of language use that usually influences bilingual code switching. Although, there are linguistics or grammatical aspects of the two or more languages that normally motivate the occurrence of code switching. But the study mainly focuses on social factors due to the fact that the study is sociolinguistic oriented investigation of code switching.

3.2. Data Collection and analysis

As the researcher set out in issuing the questionnaires to the participants, in the same way took charge in collecting the completed copies. There are no definite criteria in disseminating the questionnaires to the nominated Hausa-English bilinguals since they nearly have same linguistic ability of alternating between both languages during dialogue. Since any respondent in the sample frame is proficient in representing the focused population. The investigator distributed 90 questionnaires to virtually all the reachable bilinguals within the research site who filled them and returned 80 back to him in December 2013.

After accumulating the necessary information, descriptive breakdown was used for the analysis of the data in answering the proposed research questions. According to Creswell (2014), the descriptive analysis is a systematic interpretation of individuals' attitudes in a particular context. The gathered data were used in a descriptive manner by identifying the factors motivating code switching in conversation between Hausa

bilinguals. Some interrelated phases were run in arranging and shaping the data for analysis as endorsed by Creswell. In the beginning, the researcher ordered the collected hard copies of the questionnaires in figures from 1-80, before recording the scores of each questionnaire into the computer software (SPSS Version 18), and used simple percentage in scoring the result of each participants' responses from the questionnaire.

3.3 The Respondents

The sample used in this study involved 80 respondents. 68 males and 12 females respectively, fluctuating in age between 19 to 54 years. The participants were judiciously selected to represent the Hausa bilingual populace (Noor, 2011). They were purposefully selected based on the outlining features of the subdivision members of Hausa-English bilingual speakers (Creswell, 2014). Nearly all the bilinguals play parts in the study are very competent in the two languages. The respondents come from the main Hausa dialect groups in Nigeria: Guddiranci, Katsinanci Kanonci, Sakkwatanci, Zazzaganci, and Bausanci to broadly examine the phenomena beyond an average Hausa bilingual speaker.

3.4 The Instrument

Questionnaire as a survey tool which presents the participants with sequence of questions to which they are needed to respond is used as the main instrument in the study. The investigator traces and adapted a questionnaire used by Van Dulm (2007) while investigating the manifestation of English-Afrikaans code switching in South Africa under the sketch of feature checking theory. Hence, four sections questionnaire which contains twenty seven (27) questions was prepared. Section A contains ten demographic questions. Section B also entails four questions which intended to evaluate the aptitude of the bilinguals in both the languages. Section C covers eight questions which symbolize specific functions of code switching. Further, section D presents five questions, which were meant to collect information concerning the attitude of the respondents in practicing code switching, as well as factors motivating the act of code switching between Hausa and English bilinguals. The reliability of the survey instrument was piloted as pretest, main test and also use in post-test stage to fix its consistency by the developer (Van Dam). As well, the modified questionnaire was piloted with 30 bilingual respondents before conducting the main project. Findings in the table 1 and figure 2 in section 4 show a convergent validity of the questionnaire.

IV. Results and Discussions

As previously talk about, the objective of the survey is to identify the factors motivation the occurrence of code switching during conversations of Hausa bilinguals. In spite of the persistent manifestation of the phenomena in several social dealings of Hausa bilinguals in Nigeria and overseas, there is little or no any study that focuses on the factors motivating code switching among the bilinguals. In order to survey such factors, the study attempts to answer the following research question: *What are the factors motivating the occurrence of code switching between Hausa Bilinguals?*

4.1 profiles of participants

The results presented at this section are based on demographic questions (1-10) in the questionnaire. The section proposed to collect information regarding biographical information of the bilingual members such as age, gender, first and second language, years and place of second language learning, occupation as well as present level of education of the bilinguals. As already stated, 80 completed questionnaires were received from the bilinguals and used in the survey.

Table 1 the Profiles of the Respondents

Demographic variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage%
Age	19-36 Years	53	67.9
	37- Above	25	32.1
Gender	Male	68	85.0
	Female	12	15.5
Place of Birth	North West	49	72.1
	North East	11	16.2
	North Central	8	11.8
First Language (L1)	Hausa	77	96.3

	Others	3	3.8
Second Language (L2)	English	77	96.3
	Hausa	3	3.8
Age of L2 Learning	Before 5 Years	20	25.0
	After 5 Years	60	75.0
L2 Learning Place	At Home	10	12.5
	At School	70	87.5
Occupation	Teacher	55	69.6
	Students	18	22.8
	Others	6	7.6
Level of Education	Ph. D	18	22.5
	Masters	46	57.5
	Others	16	20.0
Regular language	Hausa	60	75.0
	English	20	25.0

As establish in the table 1, most of the participants were middle-age. Whereby 53 (66.7%) of the 80 respondents descent between 19-36 years old, but 25 (32.1%) respondents fall between the age of 37-55 years. Concerning the gender distribution of the participants, it is found that 68 (85.0%) of the respondents were male; and 12 (15.0%) female. The majority of bilinguals 49 (61.3%) emerged from the northwest, where the main Hausa dialect groups are located; such as Zamfaranci, Sakkwatanci, Kanonci, Zazzaganci, Katsinanci, etc. The northeast (Bausanci, Guddiranci) scores 11 (13.8%), while the north central has only 8 (10.0%) respondents.

Concerning vernaculars of the respondents, it is found that 77 (96.3%) of the respondents spoke Hausa as a first language (L1), while 3 (3.8%) out of them spoke Hausa as a second language (L2) in an everyday interaction. Equally, 77 (93.3%) spoke English as second language, whereby 3 (3.8%) of the bilingual participants spoke the language as third language respectively. Nevertheless, 20 (25.0%) of the bilinguals started acquiring the English language before the age of 5, while 60 (75.0%) of respondents began learning the second language after 5 years. It is also revealed that many bilinguals started learning the second language right from elementary school. Since 70 (87.5%) respondents learned the language at school, while 10 (12.5%) participants began acquiring the language at home between family members.

Furthermore, it is found that certain number of the bilinguals were civil servants. As 55 (68.8%) drop to the working class clique or lecturers, 18 (22.5%) respondents argued of being students. And only 6 (7.5%) descend to the category of others as well. Still, a large number of the bilinguals have master degree or are at this time pursuing the program, as 46 (57.5%) revealed masters as their present academic qualification, whereas 18 (46%) of them have a doctorate degree or are now hunting and 16 (20%) fall within others, i.e. most of them are pursuing undergraduate study and a small number of them indicate a diploma or its equivalent as the qualification they obtained. In turn, the Hausa bilinguals replied that they regularly spoke their native language in a day to day interaction, because 60 (75.0%) of them prepare to spoke Hausa over English on regular basis, and 20 (25.0%) claimed that they frequently spoke English instead of the first language.

4.2 Determinant Factors for Code Switching between Hausa Bilinguals

Holmes (2013) emphasized that the way people speak is subjective to some social aspects and social scopes in which they are speaking, which all depends on where they are speaking, who can hear what they are talking, and what are their attitudes and motivations in the speech exchange? Usually speakers may express the same message at some extent differently to quite different addressees. Therefore, such determinant elements are the drives for the choice of a particular language code rather than another, because they are useful in examining various utterances of all types of social dealings. Such factors involve the influence of the participants, social context, topic, formality, and status, purposes of the discussion as well as functional use of language. On the other hand, linguistic factors stand for to the syntactic constraints of the two languages that regulate the patterns of code-switching. As code switching can occur within sentences, between sentences, or on extrasentential level (tag switching).

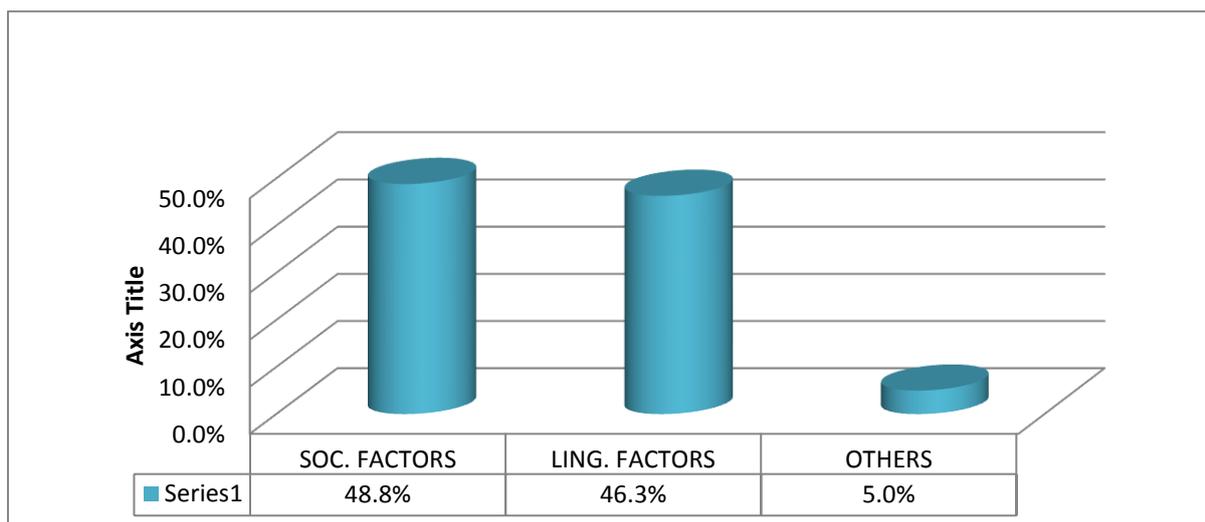


Figure 1 Bar Chart Showing Factors Motivating Hausa-English code switching

The bilingual respondents were questioned concerning the factors they perceived as the contributing factors behind the frequent appearances and use of code switching during spontaneous conversation. Based on the outcome from the questionnaire, it is found that social factors influence the manifestation of code switching. As 39 (48.8%) of the respondents believed that there were mostly influenced by social factors in code switching between Hausa-English within informal conversation. While 37 (46.3%) of the respondents argued that there are motivated by linguistic factors in alternating between the language varieties at their disposal. Only 4 (5.0%) of the respondents claimed that other factors influencing them to use code switching. This shows that social aspects are the dominant factors in the occurrence of Hausa-English code switching between bilingual speakers. Therefore, the factors motivating the switching between Hausa and English bilinguals are mainly social and linguistic factors. Therefore, the relationship between the participants within a conversational context, the status of the speakers, the formality of the social setting, the functions of the language in use and the purpose of the conversation usually influence the code switching act.

V. Conclusion

The factors influencing the recurrent occurrence of code switching between bilingual speakers cannot be overstated, but the study establish that code switching is a conversational strategy normally use by bilinguals to effectively share social meanings. The result of the investigation established that alternating between the two languages is a discourse strategy use by bilinguals to communicate efficiently, which is mostly influence by some social variables and morphosyntactic construction of the two or more languages.

5.1 Limitation

Although, the study has discusses drives of code switching acts between Hausa-English bilinguals, but it crosses certain restraint. The limitation that the researcher encountered during conducting the investigation is with the methodology and time constraints, especially in the process of data collection. Initially, the study was designed qualitatively to use multiple approaches of interviews, observation and recordings. While seeing the scope of the study, labor intensive and time factor, a quantitatively methodology was suggested more suitable. Therefore, the earlier qualitative procedure was replaced with quantitative instrument (Questionnaire) to reach the target in time.

5.2 Recommendation

Despite the fact that the study discusses certain determinant factors of code switching among Hausa bilinguals, still there is need for investigating the syntactic constraints of the two languages in the occurrence of code switching. Secondly there is need for extending code switching study to Hausa bilinguals in English as a foreign or second language classroom. Other future researchers may also follow qualitative procedures to observe and do a man to man interview with same participants and site or other Hausa bilingual speakers somewhere to deeply examine the manifestation of the phenomena during the social dealings of Hausa-English bilinguals.

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