

When It's "Cool" to Switch: Morphosyntactic Code-Switching Patterns in Spanish-English Radio Podcast

Since radio conversations about a certain topic often follow a particular "route" or script (Wray & Bloomer 1998), code-switching (the alternation of languages within or between sentences) on the radio may be considered to be not the real kind of code-switching or to be somewhat inferior to code-switching instances found in corpora of spontaneous bilingual speech – especially if it is used to promote bilingualism. Apart from a few researchers who have acknowledged the benefits of analyzing code-switching in the media (Lipski 1985; Dorleijn & Nortier 2012; Guzzardo Tamargo et al. in press), the code-switching literature has either largely ignored the structural aspects of these code-switching instances or has mainly focused on sociolinguistic and pragmatic aspects like construction of identity and style. My paper addresses this scarcity of structural descriptions of code-switching in the media by offering a morphosyntactic analysis of Spanish-English code-switching in the Canadian radio show 360 FM, which presents its language use as "100% Spanglish" and describes it as "cool" (360FM.ca; Itscooltohaveanaccent.com).

Ninety-eight minutes of conversation made available as online podcasts were analyzed morphosyntactically. With an overall number of 190 intersentential and 93 intrasentential switches found in the corpus, the patterns of the intrasentential switches conform with the predictions made for the Matrix Language Frame (MLF) Model (Myers-Scotton 1993). This model assumes that in classic code-switching only one of the participating languages, the matrix language, provides the morphosyntactic frame for a sentence; the other (embedded) language may provide either single lexemes filling morphosyntactic slots in the matrix language or complete constituents, i.e. "Embedded Language islands" (Myers-Scotton 1993, 2012; for alternative analyses see Poplack 1980, Muysken 2000, Deuchar et al. 2007). The results indicate not only that single-lexeme switches (1) and well-formed Embedded Language islands (2) are the most frequent intrasentential switches, but also that single-lexeme switches are mostly found to be embedded with masculine determiners (3). Thus, they seem to follow the masculine default gender trend that has been observed in other analyses of code-switching (e.g. Pfaff 1979; Jake et al. 2002; Clegg & Waltermire 2009).

Furthermore, it was observed that accommodation or speaker alignment may trigger an intra-speaker variation of code-switching patterns. While in a conversation among Spanish-dominant speakers, intrasentential and intersentential switches occurred in almost equal amounts in the data, the presence of an English-dominant speaker in another conversation appears to have prompted Spanish-dominant moderators to increase their amount of intersentential switches. This can be seen as evidence that the speakers tried to mirror the linguistic behavior of the English-dominant moderator, who clearly favored intersentential switches and epitomized the linguistic ideal.

Hence, this analysis demonstrates that code-switching instances in the media, such as Radio stations, may follow the same morphosyntactic patterns predicted for unscripted corpora of classic code-switching (e.g. Myers-Scotton 1993, Treffers-Daller 1994) – even if code-switching is consciously employed to promote a bilingual identity – and that it, as easily accessible data, should not be neglected in future code-switching analyses if this phenomenon is to be analyzed thoroughly.

- (1) y te siente-s *overwhelmed*
and you feel-2SG overwhelmed
'and you feel overwhelmed'

- (2) ya ten-go suficiente on my plate
 already have-1SG enough on my plate
 'I already have enough on my plate.'
- (3) lo llevó-ba-mos impreso en un folder amarillo
 it carry-PST-1PL printed.out in a folder yellow
 'We carried it printed out in a yellow folder.'

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