
LANGUAGE SWITCH AND COGNITIVE DISSONANCE: THE EXAMPLE OF YORUBA-ENGLISH BILINGUALS

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Abstract

A bilingual is naturally first exposed to the culture of his native language or mother tongue before other languages and cultures. The thoughts and worldview of the bilingual are thus encoded in his MT or NL (mother tongue or native language), he finds himself, now and then, in a situation that requires him to communicate his thoughts as accurately as possible, based on his proficiency in the languages in his speech repertoire. This research has grown from an interest in how, why and when the use of more than one language takes place in a bilingual's conversation, to how the dissonance between the cognition of the bilingual's two languages necessitates switches during his performance and how it (dissonance) is reflected in the speech of the bilingual whenever he uses the second language.

Key words: multilingual, language switch, bilingual, dissonance, codes.

Introduction

In multilingual societies where languages may be assigned different roles, the alternate use of more than one language becomes a rule rather than an exception. However, the need to alternate from one language to another is influenced by many factors including level of competence, societal acceptance/rating, showing solidarity, switching of role relationship, bridging language gap and the suitability of a language to capture thoughts and feelings being expressed.

English language is very important in the socio-educational and political affairs of Nigerians. It functions as the official language and the language of education right from the primary school up to the university level. In communities where English is used as a second language, (henceforth abbreviated ESL), the first language (L1) has already been mastered to a considerable extent before contact with English (the second language or L2). The bilingual is thus faced with using two different languages, each reflecting different cultures, in communicating thoughts and worldview. Language switch is one of the ways this is achieved.

The concept of language switch (a term, which in this study covers code switching, and mixing) has over the years been extensively researched on by sociolinguists and psycholinguists in attempts to identify those factors that influence the bilinguals, leading them to freely switch codes within a single conversation. (Fishman 1967; Myers 1992; Poplack 1977).

The English bilingual in an African society, brings to the fore two languages that are different in terms of structure, syntax, phonology, morphological rules, as well as the background, education and social network of its users. Studies based on the clash between these two variables (language structure and second language user's cultural background) in the Nigerian context has led scholars to describe the features of the spoken English in Nigeria in an attempt to classify it into varieties (Banjo 1971; Bamgbose,1982; Jowit 1991). Another

major criterion that has been used for investigating the cause of language switch is to regard the phenomenon either as a socio-linguistic tool (i.e. one of the strategies available to a bilingual to convey meaning) or as a means of compensating for some language difficulty that might have arisen as a result of lapses between the two languages.

A myth traditionally associated with language switch is that it is believed that speaking more than one language within a single conversation is indicative of some linguistic leakage hence a sign of incompetence or confusion in learning more than one language. It is also seen as a transitional stage of learning whereby one language starts dominating the other. However, research has shown that language switch is, as a matter of fact, a very powerful linguistic tool which can be employed by bilingual speakers to negotiate, challenge or change different role relationships.

In any community with more than one language, speakers who enter into diverse social situations alternate from one language to another as situations demand. However, the selection of these alternatives is dictated by both personal and situational factors. This study attempts to show the reality of cognitive dissonance among Yoruba-English bilinguals and how it dictates the code choices of the bilinguals. It also reviews how this reality manifests itself as interference in the second language. The study aims at pointing a search light on the issue of language independence and how it relates to the concept of cognitive dissonance between the cognition of the two languages at the resource of the Yoruba/English bilingual and how it influences and reflects in his code choice.

This study is, on the one hand, an attempt to investigate the role that cultural based language difference (i.e. cognitive dissonance) plays in influencing a switch in a bilingual's conversation. On the other hand, back up findings with the characteristic features of such switch that shows cognitive dissonance in either of his code choice, with emphasis on the second language.

As a useful framework, the functional approach to language is used with a view to exploring the purposes that alternating two different languages serve bilinguals and how these purposes are achieved. This framework seeks to use the theory of cognitive dissonance as a guide to explain whether language is shaped and selected by the cognitive realities of the bilingual. The major research questions that will form the basis of its investigation are as follows:

1. Do Yoruba-English bilinguals switch codes during conversation?
2. If they do, what role does cognitive dissonance play in influencing this switch?
3. What are the characteristic features of such language switch that brings the reality of cognitive dissonance to the fore in either of his code choice?

Methodology

The data used in this study was collected from 100 Yoruba-English bilingual undergraduates selected from University of Ibadan and Igbinedion University, Okada. The selection was made from English department and any two department in the humanities from the two institutions. The elicitation instruments in collecting the data required the translation of a text in Yoruba to English language. The text is structured such that it examines how accurately Yoruba – English bilinguals can present cultural thoughts in English with respect to:

- Yoruba greetings

- Yoruba proverbs/adage
- Yoruba morphological and syntactic structures

The rationale behind this is to confirm if cognitive cultural realities presented at these three levels of language use can be expressed in English without altering or adding to its original meaning. In other words, make the 'dissonant cognition of the two languages consonant.

Bilingualism/the bilingual

The concept of bilingualism has been extensively researched by scholars from different perspectives such as the psychological, sociological, linguistics and anthropology all with the aim of ascertaining who exactly is bilingual, the consequences of bilingualism, the societal effects and advantages of being bilingual as well as its function. Being a multidimensional concept, bilingualism refers to several levels of proficiency in two languages, and the non-linguistic dimensions like, competence, cognitive organization, age of acquisition, socio-cultural status and cultural identity (Hamer and Blanc, 1990). Pertinent to this study is the description of bilingualism proposed by Macney (1968:556) who defines bilingualism as behavioral pattern of mutually modifying linguistic practices which varies in *degree*, *function*, *alternation* and *interference*.

The question of "*degree*" deals with how well an individual knows a language; in other words, how bilingual a person is. "*Function*" has to do with what a person uses the languages in his speech repertoire for, i.e. the roles his languages play in his total pattern of linguistic behavior. Macney explained the "*alternation*" of how a bilingual code switches from one language to another and the conditions that guide the change, "*Interference*", that is how well the bilingual keeps his languages apart and how one language influences the other. However, to say that a bilingual is fluent in a second language is like equating his competence in all the components of language (syntax, phonetics, semantics, and morphology) with that of a native speaker.

A bilingual may be coordinate (A bilingual with the ability to speak two different languages differently with the knowledge of the roles each can play), Subordinate- (the bilingual who is fluent or competent in one language but not as fluent in the other), compound -bilingual would have one set of meaning with two linguistic systems tied to them. The coordinate bilingual has two sets of meaning and two linguistic systems tied to them (Weinreich, 1968). Lastly, the Incipient bilingual *is however, at a transitional or elementary stage of learning where communication is highly deficient and with prolonged contact with the second language, proficiency increases, which makes this type of bilingualism transient.*

This coexistence of languages puts languages at rivalry and in conflict with each one favoured or not by various factors such as their usefulness, their prestige and their diffusion. The individual is bilingual; is directed toward making choices between the languages, alternating the languages,(CS) mixing the languages(CM) as well as the languages overlapping each other(Interference) at all levels of language (semantic, linguistic, phonological, syntactic).*These inevitable consequences of bilingualism can occur at both the individual and the community level.*

CS is thus a dynamic linguistic choice, which serves as a mark of skill rather than performance errors where the speaker makes linguistic choices according to linguistic and

social constraints in the society. And a switch in language emphasizes a change in situation or the topic (Bloom and Gumperz: 1982) According to Auer, (1984), By this contrast, speakers are able to construe the conversational context in two ways: (1) they are able to display, as well as ascribe to other participants, language competence and preference; and (2) they are able to accomplish conversational tasks, e.g indicate side remarks, introduce new topics, set off reported speech, mark preferred responses..

Theory of cognitive dissonance

Cognitive dissonance theory developed by Leon Festinger(1957), is concerned with the relationships among cognitions. Cognition, for the purpose of this research, may be regarded as a piece of knowledge. Such knowledge may be an attitude, behaviour or a value. For instance, the knowledge that I like the colour pink, is cognition and the knowledge that my uncle is also my father, is cognition. Since people hold a multitude of cognitions simultaneously, these cognitions thus form *irrelevant consonant and dissonant relationships* with one another.

Cognitions are said to be irrelevant when they have nothing to do with each other; they are consonant when they follow or fit into the others. Two cognitions are said to be dissonant if they follow the opposite of each other or they are in disagreement. What then happens when people discover they have dissonant cognitions? The answer to this question forms the basis of Festinger's theory. He states that a person who has discrepant/dissonant cognitions is said to be under a psychological tension that is like a drive for water or food, only that it cannot be satisfied that easily. Festinger (1957) went on to identify four factors that affect the magnitude of dissonant cognition.

First, dissonance increases as the degree of discrepancy among cognitions increases. Secondly, dissonance decreases as the number of discrepant cognitions decreases. Thirdly, dissonance is inversely proportional to the number of consonant cognitions held by the individual. Lastly, the relative weight or importance given to consonant/dissonant cognition is readjusted by the importance in the mind of the individual. Are there then solutions to dissonant cognitions? Festinger proposes that when there are dissonant cognitions, one of the following is bound to occur in the individual:

- a) **Changing cognition:** If two cognitions are discrepant, we can simply change one and make it consistent with the other, or we can change the cognition in the direction of another.
- b) **Adding cognition:** The magnitude of dissonance can be reduced by adding to it one or more consonant cognitions.
- c) **Altering importance:** The dissonant cognitions are weighed by importance to suit situational and individual needs.

Relating Festinger's theory to language, changing cognitions (i.e. making discrepant cognitions consistent with one another) reveals itself as INTERFERENCE- a re-arrangement of patterns that result from the introduction of a foreign element into the domains of morphology, syntax, phonemic system, vocabulary and discourse of the first language. For instance, in an attempt of the Yoruba-English bilingual to speak the English language, the system of the Yoruba language, which is in dissonance with that of English language at the levels of grammar, lexis, phonology and semantics, are transferred into that of English.

Phonic interference suggests transfer of rules guiding the sound of a dominant language to the subordinate or target language which occurs at the phonemic (i.e. sounds ;) stress, syllable and the intonation levels.

Grammatical interference: In this, the grammatical system of the mother tongue intrudes into that of the target language. This depends solely on the level of competence of the speaker involved (i.e. mastery of the structural rules of the target language.) **Discourse Interference:** This exhibits itself basically at the level of greeting, which for instance is brief and straight to the point in English, but extended in the Yoruba Language. Using English for extended native greetings exhibits this interference.

Lexical Interference: caused by linguistic and cultural factors. Lexical interference was viewed under the following headings:

- i. **Semantic contrast:** Items in Nigerian English (NE) that have equivalent items in native English but express different meanings.
- ii. **Semantic Extension:** Items that have equivalence in native English but express wider meaning in NE.
- iii. **Semantic transfer:** Some items present in NE but the concept they express here are absent in the British English.
- iv. **Loan creations:** Certain items present in NE denote NE experiences, which are also present in Native English but expressed differently.

Back to Festinger's theory, *Adding cognition* (i.e. reducing dissonance between cognitions by adding one or more consonant cognitions) may exhibit itself in language as **BORROWING** that is occasional use of items from one language in utterances of another language. (Akindele and Adegbite, 1999) used the term "domestication" which connotes "made native" or "adopted and tamed to suit the Nigerian environment" to describe the phenomenon of *adding cognition*. Domestication of language is an attempt to resolve the dissonance between the native language and English. He identified domestication at all the levels but the lexical level best explains adding cognition. They identified the types as *Hybridization*; whereby a word in the indigenous language is combined with a word or sense of a word in English e.g. Kiakia Bus. *Coinages or Neologism*, which occurs where entirely new terms are created for new experiences e.g. *cash madam, go slow, senior brothers wife*. Transfers of culture or sense of meaning from native language to English e.g. *take in* (becomes pregnant) *drop* (alight) He also identified direct translation or transliteration e.g. *bush meat*. (eran igbe)

Lastly, *Altering importance*, in which discrepant cognitions are weighed by importance to suit individual needs, manifests in language as **code-switching** and its types which have been extensively discussed in the previous section.

Cultures, language and knowledge

Culture, as defined by E.B. Taylor is, "an inventory of discrete, equally important phenomena, which include knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society". Hudson Richards () defined culture as knowledge or cognition, which is learnt from other people either as direct instruction, or by watching their behaviour. He went further to distinguish three types of knowledge: **Cultural Knowledge**, which is learnt from other people; **Shared non-cultural**

knowledge, shared between people within the same community but not learnt and **non shared cultural knowledge**, which is unique to the individual.

Based on the notion that linguistic items are concepts used in analyzing our experience, Hudson identified four points at which language makes contact with knowledge.

1. **Linguistic items are concepts:** As concepts, each lexical item represents a combination of phonological and semantic property; just the same way the concept of “fruit” represents a combination of properties related to the object e.g. eaten, sweet/savoury and so on.
2. **Meanings are concepts:** There is a widespread agreement that the meaning of a linguistic item is its sense (i.e. what is permanent about it to the world), it is safe to identify the sense of an item with the concept to which it is related in the speaker’s memory,(e.g. the sense of the word *cat* is the concept *cat*.)
3. **Linguistically relevant social categories are concepts:** People categorize speakers and circumstances in terms of concepts based on prototypes. He explains that this means that people try to locate themselves in a multi-dimensional space relation to the rest of their society and locate each action of speaking relative to the rest of their social life. Each of these dimensions (space and act) is defined by the concept of a typical speaker or situation. This phenomenon, he noted, is called in socio-linguistics as metaphorical code switch.
4. **Sentence-meanings are proposition:** In this regard, linguistic items that are stored in memory have concepts as their meanings but the sentences formed by combining those express propositions.

Hudson concluded by stating that what is stored as a language system is a set of remembered concepts, which are items of language. Together the concept/proposition that constitute meanings, define the social distribution. He states further that when we speak or listen, we make use of concepts we already know to infer proposition (meaning of sentences) and also to infer social categories, which in turn is defined by terms of concepts. Using a diagram, Hudson further draws the link between language and culture, establishing that society’s language is an aspect of its culture.

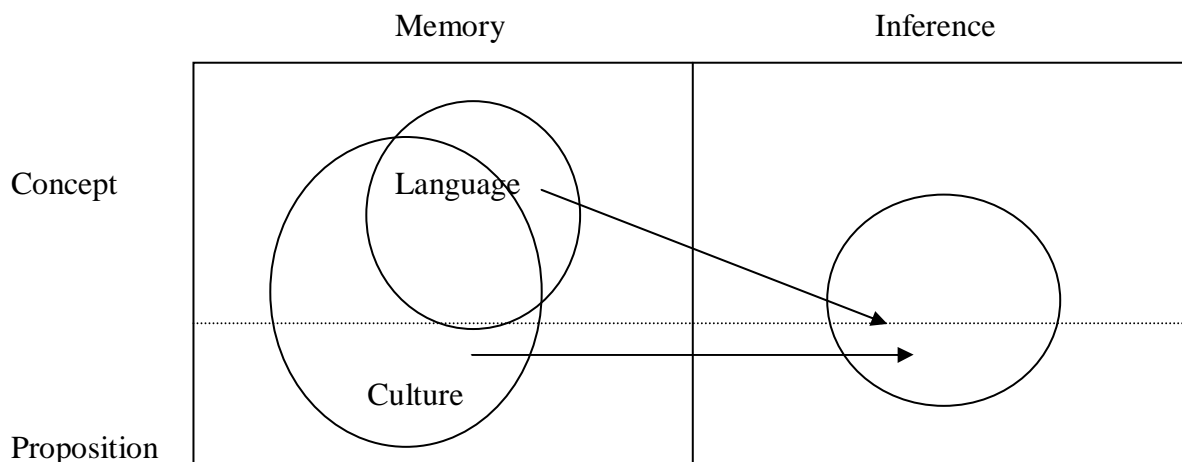


Diagram showing inter-relatedness of thought, culture, cognition, language and speech.

For instance, the predisposition or cognition of the Yoruba/English bilingual towards extended family and communal life relates to why words like ‘Uncle, father’ are used both as mark of respect and relationship to people other than biological ones, is parallel to that of the native speaker. This goes to prove a vital point that different languages project different worldviews:

| | | |
|---------|---|------------------------------|
| English | - | Westernized worldview |
| Yoruba- | | African indigenous worldview |

Studies have also established that CS is often evident in bilingual communities, because of the inability of one language to accurately express speakers’ worldview in certain social context.

Hudson added that there are some items in some languages, which express meaning not expressed in others. This he observes is seen in difficulties of translating between languages that are associated with different cultures. When such need arises, however, there are two solutions as prescribed by Hudson:

(i) The language can be changed, introducing a new one or word to carry the desired meaning (code switching) or (ii) the existing language can be used to unpack the meaning expressed. For example, the word ‘university’ might be expressed with equivalent of “a place where people go to learn difficult things when they are above 18”.

He further states that linguistic items are closely associated with the culture of the people and two different linguistic items might be associated with/or may activate different sets of beliefs and values. Concluding, Hudson noted that ideas shape language, and ideas are overall, an independent process relative to language, hence the universe is directed along the lines laid down by communicative and cognitive needs.

Vygotsky(1978) in his study that relates the theory of cognitive dissonance to language observed that the bilingual is placed in an unpleasant state of inconsistency in his attitude and behaviour. This dissonance, he observes, motivates the bilingual to re- arrange language in order to re-establish consistency when the communicative behaviour is no longer effective enough. He also noted that this does not only happen to bilinguals with poor knowledge of the L2, but also those who have mastered it but are unfamiliar with the various functions of language in another culture. He added that knowledge of a foreign language is inefficient for true intercultural competence, the ability to decipher critical information encoded in verbal signals and values, which is often hindered by the incompatibility of the two languages.

Reinforcing this, Hudson describes a bilingual as a bicultural person who has found himself on the cross- roads of two different cultures with actions and reasoning being guided by customary value. Wilson, however, added that a true bilingual can only be bicultural if he entered into the two cultures at a very tender age; hence the two languages are acquired early. The bilingual can thus flirt easily between two tongues in term of structure, pattern and belief). Seelye(1993) adding to Hudson’s contribution, noted that to maintain adequate language communication, the bilingual must not only learn to speak like the native speaker but to think like him. Seelye observed that language is “*to a great extent conditioned by mastering all the cultural baggage accompanying its use*” – (43)

Language switch and dissonance in the Yoruba greeting system

E kaaro eyin akekoo owon. Se daadaa ni mo baa yin. Awon ara ile nko?

All the respondents translated this first sentence of the text. This is an example of the elaborate greeting system, which is a major feature in the Yoruba language. Akindele and Adegbite (1999) mentioned that this manifests itself in English language as discourse interference. The respondents hence transferred this elaborate greeting-system cognition directly into English hence we had examples like:

Text

Translation

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Ekaaro, eyin akeko owon. | Good morning, my dear students. Good morning precious students. Good morning my students. |
| Se dada ni mo baa yin? | Hope I met you well? Hope you are in good health? Did I meet you all well? |
| Awon ara ile nko? | How is everybody at home? How are people at home? How is home and your siblings? |

All these are examples of the elaborate greeting system in the cognitive reality of the Yoruba/English bilinguals, which is a major feature of the Yoruba culture, transferred into English language in a bid to express the cognition that is in dissonance with the greeting system of English language, which would simply have been a single greeting and response:

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Good day students | - Good day sir |
| Hello students | - Hello sir |
| How are you? | -Fine, thank you. |

The bilingual does what Festinger calls *changing cognition* i.e. he changes his cognition to make it consistent with the other. Thus he does what one can say to be “greeting the Yoruba way in English”. This manifests itself as interference: “discourse interference” as Akindele and Adegbite call it.

Language switch and dissonance in proverbs

Proverb 1

Ori Okere koko lawo ti a ba wi fun omo eni, o ye ko gbo.

At this stage, most of the respondents found it difficult to translate the proverbs into English. In the case of those who attempted, we find cases of direct translation (i.e. transliteration) from Yoruba to English. E.g.

“The head of the rodent is not small in the plate, if we speak to our children let them listen.”

“A proverb says rabbit head hard on plates if a child is cautioned let him take heed”

The translations above are almost meaningless to a native speaker of English who does not have any knowledge of Yoruba language. Some respondents however, omitted the “A” part, as they could not find an equivalent in English language. e.g:

... when we advise our child he is supposed to listen.

As the theory of cognitive dissonance postulates, there were also cases of *adding cognition* reducing the magnitude of the dissonance by adding a more consonant cognition. Adegbija(1989) describes this as “domestication” or made native: the bilingual in this instance (more often the case) combines the sense of the world in the Yoruba language with that of English language. For instance, some other respondents simply recaptured the meaning of the proverb with another English proverb e.g.

a. *To be fore- warned is to be fore armed*

b. *Obedience is better than sacrifice*

c. *A word is enough for the wise.*

This however leaves out the first half of the proverb, which actually gives it its weight as a mark of warning in Yoruba language.

Again, if we attempt to translate a – c back to Yoruba, we find that the meaning changes out rightly. B for instance when translated into Yoruba;

“Iboran san ju ebo riru lo”

Obedience is better than sacrifice

This is obviously different from the translated text. Weinreich described this as lexical interference i.e. using indigenous words with conformity to its foreign models (52). As the cognition of the Yoruba person is different from that of an English one, the phenomenon familiar to him is classified differently in the target language. In a bid to capture African specifics in his L2, he runs into a case of semantic interference. This problem led some of the respondents to **code mix** as we have in the following examples:

a. The head of *okere koko lawo*, when we speak to our children, may they listen.

- b. The head of a rodent *koko lawo*, a child should always take instructions.
- c. *Ori okere koko lawo*, when we speak to our children they should listen.

We also observed this trend in the translation of the second proverb.

Proverb II

To; *amukun, won ni eru re, wo, o ni atisale ni ki won ti wo o.*

Cases of direct translation:

- a. Well, a lame man is told his load is not straight, he told them it is from below.
- b. To someone that has k – leg they said your load is bent he said they should look at his leg
- c. Now, considering the person with rickets one will start to look at the person from his leg.

Using indigenous words in conformity with foreign models:

- a. Sincerely speaking, there is no smoke without fire.
- b. Problems must be examined from its roots
- c. The problem lies with the upbringing.

30% of the respondents dealt with the dissonant cognition by simply *altering its importance* (weighing the dissonant cognition by importance and picking the one which best suits situational/individual need). They wrote out the proverbs in Yoruba in inverted comma.

- a. As the Yoruba people say, “*To; amukun, won ni eru re wo, o ni atisale ni ki won ti wo*”
- b. As a Yoruba adage goes, “*Ori Okere koko lawo, ti a ba wi fun omo eni oye ko gbo*”

Cases of Language switch:

- a. *Amukun* was told his load is bent, he said they should *wo lati sale*.
- b. *Amukun* was told his load is not balanced, he said it is because of his leg.
- c. Well, when *amukun* was told *eru re wo*, he says *isale ni ke wo*.

Language switch and dissonance in morphological and syntactic structures

Respondents’ translation of clauses, phrases and words are dealt with here. Examples at this level are carefully selected such that they can give individual meanings.

Table 1 Morphological structure: Words

| Words | Translation | Comments |
|--------------|--|---|
| Faari | Show off Sakara Parades Proud | Metaphoric translation Language switch |
| Aibikita | Careless i-don't care moral decadence lackadaisical nonchalant | Literal translation |

Table 2 Syntactic Structures: Phrases

| Phrases | Translation | <i>Comments</i> |
|----------------|--|----------------------------|
| Omo ode isinyi | Children of today Youths of nowadays Nowadays children | <i>Literal translation</i> |
| Oro mi do ri | My word is on ... My talk is... My topic is... My word heads at... My main talk... | <i>Direct translation</i> |

Table 3 Syntactic structure: Clauses

| Clauses | Translation | <i>Comments</i> |
|-------------------|--|-----------------------|
| A n laju s'odi. . | Negative civilization Wrongly civilized | Semantic interference |

| | | |
|-----------------|--|--|
| | Seen the other side of fashion Wrong side of fashion Opened eyes to fashion Fraternizing with modernity | Direct translation |
| A nf' oyinbo se | Now tokunbo Oyinbo made English way/style Foreign/modern method | Language switch Language switch Direct translation |

Discussion and findings

In sociolinguistic studies, it has always been of interest to focus on languages co-existing in a bilingual individual, the influence exerted by one language on the other: interference, code switching and mixing. Again, sociolinguistics has also been facing the current themes of answering such questions relating to the functions being served by languages, setting and situations considered appropriate by the speakers. With these corollaries, Mackney (1968) notes that the behavioral pattern modifying linguistic practices varies with region, degree of function, alternation and interference. With these interrelated areas of study, findings of this study have shown the interrelationship between code choice and the bilingual's cognition.

No doubt code switching and code mixing have become common features of the Nigerian bilingual behaviour. It was observed that a change in code results in communication encounter so as to ensure minimum effort. Therefore, the *cognitions of the interlocutors play* a dominant role in the maintenance of the language chosen by the interlocutors.

The Yoruba English bilingual *undergraduates find themselves* in a defined formal setting where technical issues and terms are discussed. Also, the language of wider majority becomes the order of the day. Akindele and Adegbite refer to this as a metaphorical switch when code is chosen both to accurately communicate the topic of "learning" and to all the "learners". Among the undergraduates in this research therefore, English is the language of formal education. Using Myers Scottons Markedness model, code-switch among the Yoruba-English bilinguals serves both as a "marked choice" and to make a "marked choice".

The bilinguals used in this study are compound bilinguals. It is therefore established that the first language, its rules and functioning have been acquired before learning the second language. This creates what Festinger described as dissonant/inconsistent cognition. Dissonant cognition manifests itself as interference at all the levels of language. Bilinguals manifest interference at some or all the levels i.e. phonic, semantic, lexical, grammatical, and discourse levels. To align cognitions, the language is then "domesticated". Hudson asserts that some language items express meanings, not expressed in others and ideas/belief closely related to the people, language is then "unpacked" to suit use and people.

The reality of interference in a bilingual's use of the second language is a strong proof that cognitive differences abound between not only Yoruba language and English language alone, but also other languages of the world. As reinforced by findings in this research, the reordering of language (interference) is necessitated by the different cultures and different languages.

The bilingual's cognition/knowledge provides accurate and profound reflection of realities since linguistic items are so closely related to the culture of the people that two different linguistic *items activate different* sets of beliefs and values. We also observe that this is the reason for the difficulty of translating from one language to another that is not associated with culture. These differences result from parallel cognitive differences existing in languages.

The disposition of a Yoruba man to the extended family and communal life for instance, explains why the English word "father" covers for both the biological father and all men old enough to father him. Hence there is a clash between the African indigenous worldview and the western worldview portrayed by the English language. Our findings about the greeting system and proverbs of the Yoruba also reinforce this, hence our hypothesis is upheld.

Our findings show that language switch is often motivated by role relationship, prestige, solidarity and situation. Cognition plays a great role in the determination of language choice. Language choice is based on the consideration of both the extra individual and extra linguistic purposes or social needs of the bilingual. The objectives are further upheld by the findings of Rudson who found that when cognitive dissonance arises, language can be changed introducing a new one that carries the desired meaning i.e. language switch.

Implication of study

The data used have shown that cognitive dissonance truly exists between two languages and it is one of the many reasons why bilinguals switch codes. In this study, two languages are involved – English and Yoruba, each with its own rules and referents depicting the cultural and social cognition of the speakers. The cultural realities of each language are presented using linguistic items which expose shared concepts, beliefs and ideas.

This has opened our eyes to the phenomenon of interference not merely as a consequence of bilingualism or transference of features of one language to another, but also as an instance of cultural knowledge clash between two languages. Since two languages with different worldviews are in contact, language switch thus seeks to present a more accurate and encompassing expression with elements from either language. This study has established that since language switch and interference both come under the umbrella of the inherent consequences of bilingualism, interference can be looked at as a consequence of cognitive dissonance which in turn results in language switch.

Field of discourse has also been found to have great influence on language switch especially where technical or cultural issues are discussed. In terms of the nature of dissonance resulting from bilingual switch, English words are used when features best described in English are being presented and vice versa. The two languages are merged into the prosodic features of the dominant language of main discussion. There are cases of nominal, adjective, and verbal modification. This makes it possible for the English items to occur in Yoruba language and vice-versa "as long as the syntactic rules are held inviolate".

The fact remains however, that at the points of cognitive dissonance, with or without the conscious effort of the bilinguals, the cognitive equivalent of the word would have crept in imperceptibly into the language bearing the desired cognitive reality contending with the other for control. In the same vein, we looked at the socio-linguistic implication of language switch among Yoruba-English bilingual undergraduates. We discovered that since the subjects have the same linguistic background, language switch serves more as a means of maintaining bilingualism and effective communication other than negotiation, social relationship and solidarity.

Conclusion

As it has already been explained, the transfer of elements of a language into another language mostly from the MT to the target language characterizes language switch. Language switch and borrowing are thus seen as strategies of a bilingual speaker to make up for gaps created by cognitive discrepancies in the two languages. Often times, the phenomenon of language switch expresses a seemingly lack of the needed word equivalent in the base language or target language to accurately express a thought. The bilingual thus immediately selects appropriate lexical item from either the base or second language that serves as a compensation for such lack.

This paper has also revealed the inevitability of cognitive dissonance in human speech and the characteristic effects of the setting and topic serving as socio-linguistic content, which dictates the code used by the speaker. This research shows that in the university system, English language is used. This high rate of English usage indicates the dissonance between the cognition of literacy, civilization and modern technology inherent in the English language, which is absent in the Yoruba Language.

However, the dominance of the English language exists more at the level of usage. In practice, most bilinguals still see, think and speak their thoughts in their first language. This explains why the level of interference is relatively high for better communicative purposes. The result of this study seems to suggest that when there is language switch, it is often a device by the speaker to make him better understood.

Language switch is therefore a function of audience, topic and setting of conversation; the phenomena can both be conscious or subconscious. Also, it is a combination of socio-cultural cognitive factor that derives from the dominance or subordination of either of the languages that have come in contact. This aligns with some language acquisition theory which believes that bilinguals' view the world in the first language and attempt to present it in another.

It is therefore recommended that:

1. The indigenous languages should be developed, modernized and standardized so as to widen their cognitive frames.
2. Language switch should be seen and treated as rich and a veritable communicative tool because of its role in the process of communication.
3. The status of the indigenous language should be brought at par with English language so that it will no longer be seen as the language of the less educated.
4. Each language should be seen as completely rich and capable of presenting realities not viewed or experienced in other languages.

5. Borrowing should be encouraged as a means of preserving cultural items missing in other languages.

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