Social Motivations Factors that Determine the Matrix Language Concept in Code Switching Instances in a Multilingual Society

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Abstract

This paper centers on the social motivations factors that determine the Matrix Language Concept in Code Switching within the social contact of language in a multilingual society, that is, Mwea East Sub-County, Kirinyaga County Kenya where eight languages are spoken. Information for the survey was collected using questionnaire sets distributed to 300 multilingual participants, who completed them. Audio tapes were also used to describe the patterns and the Linguistic motivation of CS phenomena in language varieties. The data were examined within the sketch of Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model that deals with social motivations for Code Switching. The result of the investigation established that alternating between two languages is a discourse strategy use by bilinguals and multilinguals to communicate effectively, which is mostly influenced by certain social variables and morphosyntactic structures of the languages. This study hopes to provide insights on the code-switching phenomenon in a multilingual society. Additionally, the findings of this study will be of value for the development of code-switching studies in the sociolinguistic area.
Keywords: Code Switching, Social Motivations, Matrix Language, Multilingualism

Introduction

Mwea East Sub County is a multilingual society where eight languages are spoken. The languages are; Gikuyu, Kikamba, Kimberee, Kiembu, Kimeru, Kiswahili, English and a local pidgin called *Githungu kia nguku*. The presence of eight codes in Mwea East Sub County therefore makes the concept of Matrix Language a complex matter. In Mwea East all these languages come into contact with one another since they cannot grow in isolation. Through

this interaction one language usually exercise its influence over another by coming into terms with other languages. Code Switching (CS henceforth) is the most widely studied language contact phenomena (Li, 2000). CS is viewed as a bilingual/multilingual practice that is used not only as a conversational tool, but also as a way to establish, maintain and delineate ethnic boundaries and identities. Most researchers in language research use the term 'bilingual' for users of two languages, and 'multilingual' for three or more (e.g. McArthur, 1998). A bi-multilingual has the resources of two or more languages at their disposal. However, this situation requires speakers to have linguistic communicative competence. The term CS is used to refer to this utilization of language resources in multilinguals' speech. Heller (1988) notes that as a social process, CS has been understood to provide multilinguals with a resource for indexing situationally salient aspects of context in speakers attempts to accomplish interactional goals.

The earliest definition of CS dates back to Weinreich (1953), who defines bilingual people as individuals who switch "from one language to the other according to appropriate changes in speech situation". McClure (1977) uses the term CS to cover code-changing and code-mixing. In McClure's definition, Code-changing is the alternation of languages at the level of the major constituents (e.g. NP, VP, S). Importantly, McClure sees code -changing as involving a complete shift to another language system, in that all function words, morphology and syntax are abruptly changed. CS is defined by Auer (1984) as —language alternation at a certain point in conversation without a structurally determined (and therefore predictable) return into the first language, whereas —transfer is defined as language alternation for a certain unit with a structurally provided point of return into the first language.

For Myers-Scotton (1993) CS does not necessarily involve a complete switch to the other language. In her Matrix Language Frame Model (henceforth MLF model), one of the two languages generally takes a more predominant role in CS in that it determines the grammatical frame of the utterance. This language is considered to be the Matrix Language (ML) (or base 'language) of the interaction, and the other is the embedded or guest language (Crystal, 1987). In a CS instance there is one matrix language only but there can be one or more embedded languages. ML is the language that determines the syntax of a CS instance and its presence is obligatory in the instance. The embedded language in the CS instance can be one or more and is the code of a lesser degree of contribution in the CS instance.

Researchers have established that in all situations where languages come in contact, though they may have different forms of syntax, only one language determines the syntax of the CS instance (Auer, 1984, 1998; Heller, 1988; Myers Scotton, 1993). Naturally, therefore, CS is the practice of moving back and forth between two languages and it is a widespread phenomenon in bilingual speech. It is therefore not surprising that a great proportion of research on bilingualism focuses on CS (Riehhl, 2005). CS is a quite normal form of bilingual interaction, requiring a great deal of bilingual competence (Muysken, 1995). Although the notion of CS has been investigated by many other scholars such as Algeo (2010); Auer (1984); Gumperz (1982); Fishman (1986); Pier (1972); Muysken (2004); Riehl (2005) there are still some gaps in the ML study. The literature reviewed shows that ML exists in all CS instances, is obligatory and that it dominates CS instance. Blom and Gumperz (1972) analyzed patterns of alternation in different language varieties, namely between standard language and dialect in a Norwegian village. They demonstrated that CS is not the result of an imperfect acquisition of the two

languages but it is a strategy adopted by speakers to signal aspects of their ethnic and social identity.

Participants may speak a language that is associated with a high class because communication in it (language) will make him or her have some favour in the assessment of the listener (Herbert and Eve, 1977; Popkin, 1981; Mougeon and Beniak, 1991). CS is also used for emphasis purposes (Andy, 1995; Bhats and Chengappa, 2003). Romain, (1982); Neil (2002) share the view that ML is motivated by certain factors all intended to achieve certain gains. Heller (1988) shows interplay between language and ethnic identity. In Heller's work, CS is viewed from a socio-political perspective, as a political strategy, especially one for ethnic mobilization; it is a way people shape language in order to pursue their goals. Crystal (1997) argues that people may choose to use two different codes for many reasons covering both social and economic domains. Social domains include the use of languages for interaction without the hope for any material gain. Economic domains focus on language use for material gains. Grosgean (1995; 1997) points out that in the society where different languages are used, speakers may use two or more different languages which they may not know equally well. The use of different languages creates motivation for the language known better than the other one to be used optimally.

CS is a very intriguing linguistic phenomenon. Although much of the previous century's research indicated that it occurred chaotically, the modern opinions of linguistics and ethnographers argue for the systematic nature of CS in natural contexts. Having observed the linguistic environment of Mwea East Sub-County, the researchers noticed the area includes a large percentage of native speakers of a variety of other languages (8 languages), whose share in the population periodically increases due to Socio-economic activities. Thus the aspect of CS is bound to occur to enhance interaction. However as much as CS is quite normal form of bilingualism and bilingual interaction, it requires a great deal of bilingual competence. This study therefore was set to explore the aspect of linguistic motivation in a multilingual society such as Mwea East Sub-County. This study will add knowledge to the existing literature on CS, specifically on natural setting conversation in multilingual societies. This research, therefore, has important implication on effective communication in the society where there are different ethnic societies and in different linguistic domains.

Theoretical Framework
Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model
The Markedness Model deals with social motivations for CS, it sheds light on social identities and for this reason it is very relevant to the current research. Myers-Scotton (1998) presented a model which explains variations in linguistic code choice; the general point of departure of the theory is that CS occurs because at least one of the interlocutors involved in the conversation wishes to move to a different social arena and redefine the interaction, therefore there is a relationship between linguistic code and social meaning of the interaction. The model is based on markedness and unmarkedness of code choices, the use of a particular code is seen as marked or unmarked, in other words, what community norms would predict is unmarked, in contrast what is unexpected and not predicted is marked. This is possible because all linguistic codes or varieties have some social and psychological associations in the speech community where they are used. Such associations are identified as rights and obligations which function as norms or code of behavior that are established by a certain social group and so they represent what participants can expect when they interact in their

community. In Social Motivations for CS, Myers-Scotton (1993) emphasizes the fact that there is only a single general motivation for making marked choices: "to negotiate a change in the expected social distance holding between participants, either increasing or decreasing it" (p.132); then, it is added that such CS occurs in all communities and at all linguistic levels. This makes marked choices the most universal type of CS. Additionally, she describes some uses of marked CS including: to increase social distance via authority/anger, use of marked code-switching as an ethnically-based exclusion strategy, as highlighting the message ("the message is the medium", p.138), for aesthetic effect, marked choices as echoic (irony), to conclude and structural flagging.

Research Methodology
Research Design
A Descriptive survey research design was used to guide the current study that is concerned with describing characteristics of a problem (Creswell, 2003; 2014; Stange et al., 2006). This research has a purpose to examine the social motivations for Matrix language concept in CS instances in Mwea East sub-county, Kirinyaga County, Kenya, as a case study. The issue explored therefore is motivation for Matrix language in a multilingual society. The study is guided by the following question:

i)   What are the social motivations factors that determine the Matrix Language Concept in Code Switching instances in a Multilingual Society?

Source of Data
The data analyzed here were collected through Audio tapes and questionnaire. 300 participants participated in the current study. 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 questionnaire had questions on demographic questions; questions which intended to evaluate the aptitude of the multilinguals in both the languages, questions which symbolize specific functions of code switching and 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 CS between the eight codes of languages. In order to describe the patterns and the social motivations of CS phenomena in language varieties, data was also gathered though a large sample of informal conversations which was collected through audio recording and observation. 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 (Creswell, 2014). The language domains examined were primarily the home setting domains (Family, Marriage, Wedding, *Ngumbato* (Village welfare gathering) and external domains (School, market, court, horticultural, church, youth).

Data Analysis
Social Motivations Factors that Determine Matrix Language Concept in CS
The purpose of the study was to investigate the social motivation factors that determine Matrix Language Concept in CS instances. The study found out that Matrix language concept is motivated by different socio-factors and social domain factors. This section discusses survey answers and the audio recorded data

Emphasis and to Persuade the Audience

The first motivation for CS in the village domain was emphasis and to persuade the audience. Holmes (2000) defines the term metaphorical switching as, 'code-switching for rhetorical reasons'. CS is often used in speech and rhetoric, on purpose in order to attract attention and to persuade an audience. The reason is because the language switch does give special stress or importance to something and to highlight a specific concept. In the responses referring to the category of emphasis, amongst the more recurrent ones are found: "Gikuyu was used to reinforce the concept" in cases where it was not ML. Gikuyu and Kiswahili languages are agglutinative languages that is words may contain different morphemes to determine their meaning, but each of these morphemes has a different meaning as shown below:

(i)   *Mimi nilitaka mambo hayo* **yathire** *ona uvoro ucu* [I wanted those issues to end]

The codes involved are Kiswahili, Gikuyu and Kimbeere. The ML is Kiswahili as shown in '**yathire**' instead of '**mathire**'. 'ya' is a Kiswahili word meaning 'many' while '**mathire**' is a Gikuyu word meaning the same.

(ii)   **Wanjiru arathire gu**KATIVIT**anga makwareini** [Wanjiru went to cultivate in makwareini] ML – motivation – higher morphemic count

Gikuyu has more morphemes and as shown in '**gu**KATIVIT**anga**' is controlling syntax and so it's the ML. The instance involves Gikuyu and English

(iii)   … **muti uria wa muthima.** *PLEASE CUT CUT IT A LITTLE* **nigetha muthenya wa** MUTWAANO **ndukahingice ngari**.

[Please cut the Muthima tree a little bit so that it may not interrupt the vehicles on the occasion of the wedding]. Gikuyu, English and Kikamba are the codes involved. Gikuyu which has more morphemes is controlling syntax. Gikuyu has even made English to fit in a reduplicational behavour. ML motivation – higher morphemic count.

These findings were in line with Nerghes (2011) who comments on the effect of CS in persuasion and its ability to grab the attention of the audience by saying, 'code-switching will draw the participant's attention and will enhance their motivation to carefully scrutinize the message presented'. Thus, when a speaker uses code switching in persuasion and rhetoric, they will be more capable of reaching their goal and in persuading their audience since CS grabs attention, and reflects a certain socioeconomic identity which can give the speaker more credibility and reliability.

Discourse Topic

Another linguistic motivation that determined the ML and EL was discourse 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. Bublitz (1988) points out that the discourse topic establishes a connection between the contributions of the participants thus making the conversation coherent. This is relevant for this study considering participants are always "talking about something", thus, focusing on the "description of the topic" will answer directly what is the topic of the conversation. For instance in cases where Gikuyu language was ML the topic of discussion motivated the switch to another language as shown below:

i)   **Nindiraku**RAIKIRE **muno** [I liked you very much] (Gikuyu and English) ML – Gikuyu

ii)   **Arendaga gu**TAIMA WATERFLOW

         [He/She wanted to time …] (Gikuyu and English) ML Gikuyu

iii)   **maai mara**FLOW**aga**

[… how the water was flowing] (Gikuyu and English) ML – Gikuyu

Code switches also occurred in instances of wh-questions as shown below:

i)   MIIO YAKWA **IGIRO IKO**?

[Where were my lugagges kept?] (Kikamba and Githungu kia nguku) ML - Kikamba

ii)   ATUMIA NA IVETI CIA *mucii maeku*?

[Where are men and women of the family] (Kikamba and Kimbeere) ML - Kikamba

The following data was collected in an open air Gospel preaching domain that illustrates how topic determines the CS instance. The researcher visited three different sessions of this domain in different places.

(i)   *Uvoro ucu ni wa JESUS . Onanie nimendete* Jesu *KOS* **niwe watumbire ithuothe niundu wa** *LOVE*.

[That is the news of Jesus. I also love Jesus because He is the one who created us because of…]

(ii)   *Muvunjia atwirire twikare ndari ya Jesu tondu enavinya wa kuDIVITI CAITANI.*

[The preacher told us to be with Jesus because he has ability to defeat the devil]

The above findings concur with Holmes (2000) who says on the issue of code-switching according to the topic, 'people may switch code within a speech event to discuss a particular topic'. In many situations, a bilingual may tend to talk about one certain topic in a language rather than another.

Equivalence Constraint

Equivalence constraint predicts the occurrence of CS points where elements of both languages are equivalent, that is, they map on to each other in surface trees (Poplack, 1980). Thus, the juxtaposition of these elements will not violate a syntactic rule of any of the languages, and there will be points where code-switching is permissible. For instance the occurrence of Gikuyu element in Kikamba structure did not affect the syntax of Kikamba language.

The example is given below

(i)   …JUMAMOSI **gugakoro na** MUTWA**rano wa** Kasyoka NA CHAI SUKURUNI

[On Saturday there will be Kasyoki's wedding and then reception at school]

The codes involved in the instance are Kikamba and Gikuyu

MUTWA**rano** in Gikuyu means taking something somewhere. MUTWAANO in Kikamba means wedding.

The above instance involved Gikuyu and Kikamba by a speaker with Gikuyu as his L1. The participant made Kikamba word Kiima (hill) has the morpheme 'ini' – for insideness which is a Gikuyu morpheme. The morpheme **'ini'** is attached to 'kiima' because Gikuyu allows so. MII**go** also shows a combination of Kikamba and Gikuyu.

Self-censorship

The next example shows the aspect of self-censorship as the motivation to CS used in order to mitigate meaning and avoid using vulgar expressions. Such category is found when the *boda boda* participant, rather consciously, is trying to mitigate the meaning of the switched part of the discourse.

(i)   "…NAKWA NIMUCEO MUNO. **Coka coka na thutha hanini niundu** WA IVETI

[…I am alright. Reverse a little bit because of the women]

The speaker has Kikamba as his L1 but avoided a taboo word and so used the word **'thutha'** realized as'**thuthaini**" and by so doing made the Kikamba (his L1) fit in Gikuyu syntax for socialization purposes. Taboo words and topics are often codes-witched so as to avoid to be expressed in the speaker's native language' (Leung, 2006). Speakers in the Mwea society tend to discuss sexual topics and emotional topics in English or Kiswahili since it will make them more comfortable to discuss those issues which have always been labelled as 'taboos' in a language different than their community's one.

Rapidity

The market domain CS was used to explain the aspect of ML and EL as motivated by rapidity of speech. Participants were asked to write down, in the text entry space provided, the motivation for CS according to their personal opinion. The participant reported to use switches spontaneously. Linguistically this discourse function is called rapidity.   Rapidity is probably the most characteristic one of code-switching, it is the most spontaneous option, the first word the speaker, or the writer, thinks of as shown in the examples below:

Examples of the code switched instances collected include:

(i)   **tu**b*USHI* t**utu ni tuingi kanithaini.**

[These bushes in the church are so many.]

(ii)   **ara*EXPLAIN*ire ndeto ya jesu** *vizuri muno*.

[He/She explained the issue of Jesus so well.]

(iii)   TUMIIO TWAKE *situzuri.*

[His luggages are not good.]

Rapidity occurs due to usual or habitual use of a certain word in a language. This results to spontaneous use then of that specific word also when speaking another language, just because that is the first word that comes to one's mind as shown further in the examples below

 (iv)   **Ungi*LAV* muiritu noumuhikie.**

[If you love a girl, you can marry her.]

(v)   *PASTOR* **auga kigongona ki*WARM* tucoke tuke.**

[Pastor has said that we wait for the service to warm up and then we come.]

Metalinguistic Skills

The following data was collected from a public holiday celebration venue (Wang'uru Stadium). The researcher sought to research on the aspect of meta-linguistic skills in public holiday domain. Metalinguistic skills involve the awareness and control of linguistic components of language. The name Meta-linguistic was given because the word recurs in the answers collected and it explains the behavior of wanting to brag, to show others that the speaker is able to speak another language and is integrated in the hosting culture. Meta-linguistic is a behavioral aspect, it is the tendency of some people to seek for approval and admiration from others and they look for such approval showing their skills and their superiority. Therefore, meta-linguistic in CS is the linguistic behavior used as a social marker by some categories of people, such as experts, to expose their identity and their linguistic skills or their social class.

(i)   **Niatia riu** *MY GOOD MAN*?

[How are you …?]. The speaker has more competence in Gikuyu which is the ML.

(ii)   FINE, **nogweterera atongoria tugi***KATIVIT***aga nyeki.**
[We are waiting for leaders as we cultivate grass.]
The speaker has competence in Gikuyu which is the ML.
(iii)   **Njiira**, HOW WAS THE DEAL?
[Tell me …?]
Speaker's competence was in Gikuyu which is the ML.
(iv)   OVEREMPHASIS ON mwana wa msichana…[… girl child.]
Metalinguistic code -switching is usually employed when the speaker makes direct/indirect comments on the languages used in conversation, usually to "impress the other participants with a show of linguistic skills" (Appel & Muysken, 2006). Furthermore, it can be argued that participants in interaction appear as "rational actors" who additionally "engage in CS as an intentional act to achieve certain social ends. The above discussions also show how sometimes, speakers tend to use different languages to imply a certain social status or to distinguish themselves from other social classes or to sound elitist or classy. Thus, some of the switching codes were as a way to reflect one's social class. Speakers who can code-switch imply that he is a well-educated person who is competent in two languages or even more. Thus, code-switching can be looked upon as a way to distinguish oneself.

Role Relations
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 rather than another, because they are useful in examining various utterances of all types of social dealings. Holmes scenario was shown in family domain where participants influenced a CS instance. Fishman argues that "multilingualism often begins in the family" (Fishman, 1986). Furthermore, he stresses that the importance of role relations rather than just an individual's preference of the code, extending it to the fact that specific language behaviors in linguistic communities are "expected to (if not required) of particular individuals vis-à-vis each other" (Fishman, 2000). Using questionnaires and oral interviews, the following data was collected in a Home' domain and is here presented in the form of labeled conversations: The researcher visited five different families that were multilingual.
Home (a)   R- Researcher   H – Husband   W – wife

R: **Nyiri no heho na** *mvua sana.*
[In Nyeri there is cold and a lot of rain.]
H: **Mbura na heho ni mundu** na *BROTHER* yake.
[Rains and cold are like a man and his…]
    W: NAKWA NA*thungumuza lugha ya* **Gikuyu naingi**.
[I speak Gikuyu and others].
H: *HOW ABOUT* **mucemanio wa** *LEADERS*?
[… meeting of …?]
W: **Atongorie no maguka** KIIMANI .
[Leaders are to come to Kiima.]
H: **Atongoria acio aitu marutaga** *Kazi kubwa sana .*

[Our leaders do a lot of work.]

W: MAUUTA**ga wira na** VITII **muno**.

[They work with a lot of zeal.]

Applied to the data in the study, it is evident that that the role relation plays an important part on the language choice. The above conversation in family domain shows how the aspect of power is reflected in CS. Bhatia and Ritchie (2004) remark that participant roles and relationships play a very critical role in bilinguals' unconscious agreement and disagreement on language choice. That is, whether bilinguals code-mix or not depends on whom they talk to. Grosjean (1982) presents some interviews about how interlocutors affect bilinguals' languages. Gross (2000) argues that "individuals negotiate positions of power through their linguistic choices. How they do this is not necessarily a conscious act, but what emerges from such interactions is a social hierarchy that depends on the interaction between the participants' personal statuses and linguistic skills.

Conclusion

In this study, the phenomenon of CS in a multilingual society was by speakers in Mwea East Sub-County which were analyzed using Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model of CS. This study demonstrates that many users employ CS as a tool to enhance their interaction in a multilingual society. CS was also used as a strategy to communicate and negotiate meanings effectively. The users' manipulation of either of the language serves them well to achieve both their communicative goals. Therefore, when the users switch due to any of the aforementioned functions, they are suggesting their competence in using both any of the eight languages. This corresponds to Blom and Gumperz (1972) that CS requires speakers to be fully competent in the two languages. Therefore, it can be concluded that CS is a natural phenomenon that occurs in bi-multi-linguals' speech. The study also shows that there are many reasons why CS takes place in particular social situations. The ability of the interlocutors who are able to speak more than one language fluently plays an important role during their interaction. The study also found that the factors influencing the recurrent occurrence of CS between bi-Multilingual speakers cannot be overstated, but the study established that CS is a conversational strategy normally used by bi-multi-linguals to effectively share social meanings. The result of the investigation established that alternating between the two or three languages is a discourse strategy use by bi-multilinguals to communicate efficiently, which is mostly influenced by some social variables and morphosyntactic construction of the two or more languages.

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