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THE PHENOMENON OF BORROWING IN BILINGUAL SPEECH

This paper focuses on the types of borrowings that appear in bilingual speech, as well as on the factors that are likely to determine their quality and quantity. They include, among other things, identification with another (L2) culture, perceived proficiency in both languages and overall amount of contact with the languages concerned. The data presented in the paper encompass the findings of a questionnaire administered to Polish students of English at university level.

Introduction

The term bilingualism implies knowledge and use of two languages. Such an understanding of bilingualism is compatible with Weinreich's (1968) definition of this phenomenon, which describes it as the practice of alternatively using two languages. Moreover, the fact that bilinguals have two languages at their disposal makes it possible for them to use both of their languages as resources while communicating. Research findings (Hoffman 1991) show that the influence of the bilingual's other language may be subconscious and/or involuntary or s/he may consciously choose to fall back on the other language to enhance communication. This can be achieved by the use of word borrowing and code-switching.

Researchers disagree on how to define borrowing. According to Reyes (1974, cited in Grosjean 1982), borrowing involves only single words that are either morphologically adapted or not adapted at all. Haugen (1969) and Hasselmo (1970) stress the fact that an item has to be adapted to the morphological and phonological pattern of the language being spoken. Only then can we speak of borrowing. Their position on borrowing is shared by Grosjean (1982:314), who also defines word borrowings as words or short expressions that are adapted phonologically and morphologically to the language being used. It is the Grosjean definition of borrowing that will be used throughout this paper to refer to the phenomenon concerned.

According to Haugen (1969, cited in Grosjean 1982:313), borrowing may take the form of either loanwords or loanshifts. The **loanword** is *imported in part or whole from the other language and adapted phonetically and morphologically into the language being spoken*. Loanwords (Haugen 1969) can be further subdivided into pure loanwords and

loanblends. The latter category includes words in which one part is borrowed and the other belongs to the recipient language; for example: *gumbaum* in Australian German is made up of the English word *gum* and the German word *baum* (tree).

As was said earlier, loanwords are adapted into the language being spoken. Interestingly, the adaptation strategies employed do not seem to be sporadic or chaotic. On the contrary, according to McMahon (1994:207) bilinguals generally adhere to specific methods of borrowing, which she calls routines. They can be defined as *productive processes by which speakers with at least some bilingual competence introduce new borrowings from L2 into L1*. For example, in languages which mark nouns for gender, loanwords have to be assigned gender according to the rules typical of the recipient language. Clyne (1967, cited in Grosjean 1982:315) mentions three factors, which determine the assignment of gender to English nouns in Australian German. They are the following:

- the word is given the gender of its German equivalent;
- the suffix of the word determines its gender, i.e. *-er* is characteristic of masculine nouns in German, which is why *settler* was allocated the same gender;
- the word may be given its natural gender, masculine for males, feminine for females.

Pluralisation follows the rules of the base language for pluralisation, although some languages may have special rules for borrowed words. As far as loaned verbs are concerned, they usually find themselves in the largest, most common verb category by adopting a particular native suffix. Sometimes, borrowed verbs may be nativised by means of an auxiliary. For example, Turkish borrows Arabic nouns and makes them verbal by adding the verb *etmek*. The resultant coinage *tesekkur etmek* (to make) conforms to the syntactic rules of the recipient language (Heath 1984, cited in McMahon 1994).

The second type of borrowing, the **loanshift**, can be defined as semantic extension of a meaning of an item or expression in one language to cover a new concept in the other (Haugen 1969). The term covers semantic extensions proper, as well as calques. The former consist in extending the meaning of a word in the language being spoken so that it includes the meaning of a similar-sounding word in the other/second language. For instance, a speaker of both French and English may produce sentences such as **But where my father went, it was not an **experience***, where the word concerned is given one of the meanings of the French word **experience**, that of experiment (Grosjean 1982 : 303). The latter, by contrast, involve rearranging words in the language being spoken so that they correspond to a pattern in the donor language. In other words, they are literal translations into the recipient language. This explains why a German-English bilingual is likely to come up with a coinage such as *Winter is before the door*, which is based on the German expression *Winter steht vor der Tür*. The equivalent English expression is *Winter is around the corner* (Grosjean 1982:304). What becomes apparent at this point is that in the case of loanshifts the influence of the other language is solely semantic and not phonetic.

The reason for using loanshifts seems to be pragmatic in nature. The bilingual may choose to resort to the use of loanshifts because it may seem to be the only way to convey an idea or distinction that is better expressed in the other language. The most available word/phrase phenomenon may also play a role here (ibid.), as well as the phonetic similarity of the words concerned. Haugen (1969:380) proposes the following rule for using loanshifts:

If a native word is similar in sound to a desired foreign word, it is often given the meanings of the foreign word; if not, it is more common to borrow the foreign word.

Grosjean (1982) claims that sometimes bilinguals use loanshifts for purity reasons. If the use of foreign expressions is frowned upon as reflecting laziness, then the bilingual will change the base language so that it can express the concept in a way typical of the other language. If used on a regular basis over a prolonged period of time, borrowings are likely to replace the original expressions and become the linguistic norm.

Apart from borrowing, the bilingual person can always resort to using the other language without changing it in any way. The resultant mixture of languages, which has been termed code-switching, tends to be defined as the alternate use of two or more languages in the same conversation (Hamers & Blanc 1993:74). What needs to be stressed at this point is the fact that code-switches constitute complete shifts to the other language without any ensuing changes or adaptations.

The reasons for code-switching are similar to those for borrowing in general. Grosjean (1982) enumerates the following:

- the bilingual cannot find a particular word in one language and thus resorts to the other;
- the language being spoken does not have a particular word or the bilingual has not learnt it;
- the most available word phenomenon, which induces the bilingual to switch languages, especially when he is tired, lazy or under stress. Such use of code-switching is often condemned by language purists who see it as adherence to the law of least effort.

A discussion of borrowing cannot be complete without a mention of Grosjean's (ibid.) distinction between language borrowing and speech borrowing. The latter is often referred to as language mixing (Hatch 1995:172). In language borrowing, *the borrowed words become part of language and are used by its speakers as if they were native lexical items (ibid.)*. Polish words such as *weekend*, *garaż*, *konfetti* fall into this category, which implies that language borrowing occurs at the community or national language level. In speech (nonce) borrowing words are momentarily and/or spontaneously borrowed by individual speakers to create certain effects and/or meet a momentary linguistic need. The process is bi-directional, which, in practical terms, means that a bilingual may use the L2 with borrowing from the L1 or borrow heavily from the L2 when speaking the L1. What follows is a description and analysis of spontaneous borrowings from English that are used by Polish-English bilinguals in a predominantly L1 environment.

The study

The main objective of the study described below was to obtain information on the following issues:

- types of L2 borrowings applied by Polish-English bilinguals in their L1;
- reasons for borrowing from one language (L2) into another (L1);
- relationships between variables such as (1) perceived proficiency in both L1 and L2, (2) frequency of use of both L1 and L2, (3) identification with L1 culture as well as with that of the L2, and (4) the tendency to borrow from the L2.

Variables 1, 2, 3 were each contrasted with the tendency to borrow from the L2 (variable 4) to find out if there were any meaningful correlations between them that might shed light on the reason(s) why bilinguals borrow from their other language. The research was carried out on a sample of 45 Polish-English bilinguals who were in their 4th and/or 5th year of study at the English Department in the University of Silesia. All of the subjects had listened to a series of lectures on bilingualism prior to the study and were aware of the differences between borrowing and code-switching, which, undoubtedly, enhanced the accuracy of the information they provided.

To assess and sort out the data collected, the Haugen (1969) distinction was used, which, as explained in the Introduction, was devised to classify different types of language borrowings. However, the corpus gathered in this project revealed that the distinction was also applicable to speech borrowing, and as such provided an accurate tool for distinguishing between borrowing on the one hand and code-switching on the other.

The Method

The study made use of a questionnaire, which focussed on a number of aspects of bilingual speech including the use of English calques, loanwords and code-switches in Polish. What is more, the subjects were requested to provide examples of borrowings and code-switches that they themselves have used or heard other people use. They were also asked to explain what, in their opinion, induced them to use their other language when speaking Polish and under what circumstances this took place.

In addition, the questionnaire contained questions which required the subjects to rate their proficiency in both their languages, as well as comment on whether or not they identified with either of the two cultures or both of them. Last but not least, they were expected to state which of their two languages they used more often.

Results

The results of the study have confirmed the validity of the Haugen classification. Namely, it turned out that the subjects under investigation used all of its major categories in spontaneous speech. Presented below are some of the borrowings they admitted using.

Calques

The data collected show that calquing follows specific patterns, which for the purposes of this project, have been called collocational, idiomatic, syntactic and prepositional calquing (patterning).

In collocational patterning what is copied into the base language is the verb which is part of the relevant collocational pair in the L2; thus (1)

- (1) **Wziąć zdjęcie*
 P: zrobić zdjęcie
 E: take a picture
 **Wziąć autobus, pociąg*
 P: złapać pociąg, autobus
 E: take a train, bus

**Zrobić telefon*

P: zatelefonować, zadzwonić

E: make a phone call

**Robić sens*

P: mieć sens

E: make sense

Idiomatic calquing, as the name suggests, consists in translating entire idiomatic expressions from the L2 into the L1, where they are unacceptable. This gives rise to expressions such as (2)

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| (2) <i>*Mieć słodki ząb</i> | E: have a sweet tooth |
| <i>*Mieć motylki w żołądku</i> | E: have butterflies in one's stomach |
| <i>*Trzymać oko na swojej torbie</i> | E: keep an eye on one's bag |
| <i>*Robić górę z kretowiska</i> | E: make a mountain out of a molehill |

Syntactic calques reflect the word order of the equivalent phrases in the L2, as in the examples in (3)

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| (3) <i>*Ten dom jest wygodny do mieszkania w</i> | E: the house is comfortable to live in |
| <i>*On jest miły do porozmawiania</i> | E: he's nice to talk to |
| <i>Sugeruję, że powinniśmy to zrobić</i> | E: I suggest that we should do it. |
| <i>Zobaczyli ich przechodzących przez ulicę</i> | E: They saw them crossing the street. |

By the same token, what is borrowed from the L2 in prepositional patterning is a preposition, which is incorrect in the L1, as in the expressions below (4)

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| (4) <i>*W obrazku widać</i> | P: na obrazku (*on the picture) |
| | E: in the picture |
| <i>*Rozmawiałem do niej</i> | P: z nią (with her) |
| | E: I talked to her. |
| <i>*Jest pięć do trzeciej</i> | P: za pięć trzecia |
| | E: five to three |

Extensions

Although extensions do not appear to be as common as calques, the study provided a few examples of phrases that could convincingly be classified as extensions. They are the following:

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| (5) <i>*Nie każdy operuje (funkcjonuje)
na Twoim poziomie</i> | E: not everyone operates at your level |
| <i>*Lubię to (podoba mi się to)</i> | E: I like it. |
| <i>*Dokładnie (zgadzam się)</i> | E: Exactly |
| <i>*Muszę wieczorem studiować
(uczyć się) historię</i> | E: I have to study history tonight. |
| <i>*Zrealizowałem sobie (zdałem sobie
sprawę), że robiło się późno</i> | E: I realized it was getting late. |

Creations

The data also contained expressions which did not fit into any of the categories mentioned by Haugen, and which were therefore named creations. They were incorrect, i.e. non-existent expressions in the L1 which were not verbatim translations of the equivalent L2 items but which had been created on analogy to such items, thus (6)

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| (6) * <i>Maszyna do prania (pralka)</i> | E: <i>Washing machine</i> |
| * <i>Mam ból gardła (boli mnie gardło)</i> | E: <i>I have a sore throat.</i> |

All 3 types of borrowings constitute examples of L2 intrusion into the lexical and syntactic domains of the L1. However, by virtue of their incompleteness they preserve the phonological integrity of the L1 and, thus, do not appear to 'pollute' it in a direct manner.

The subjects who took part in the study also admitted using pure loanwords (56%) which, in principle, are nativized L2 items. The study provided quite a few examples of such loanwords, some of which are listed below (7).

- (7) *Wyspotować odpowiednie miejsce* (to spot the right place)
Szusy (shoes)
Writnij back
Looknij tam
Boysy się fajtują (the boys are fighting)
Gołujmy (let's go)
Nie ma busów na przystanku
Mam dwudziestu subjectów
Zrobić coś dla dżołku (as a joke)
Native-speakerzy
Checknij to słowo

As can easily be observed, in most cases the original spelling and pronunciation patterns have been preserved. Words that have been nativised the most in terms of both spelling and pronunciation have similar equivalents in Polish (see *bus*). Some subjects also remarked that they often preceded loanwords with expressions such as *tyw* (*the so called*) or *jak to mówią Anglicy* (*as the English put it*) to indicate that they were aware of the foreign character of the item they were about to use. What came as a surprise was the fact that borrowing was used in preference to code-switching. 56% of subjects confessed to borrowing from the L2 while only 32% said they switched languages in conversation. 12% said that they used both strategies.

Interestingly but not surprisingly, the data indicate that in the environment under investigation code-switching involves mainly single words which tend to be inserted unchanged into the L1. These include mainly

1. proper nouns: geographical locations, names of singers, song titles
2. specialized vocabulary learned in English: *design, project work, classroom management*
3. adjectives: *inflexible, sophisticated, confidential*
4. polite expressions: *sorry* and *excuse me*.

The noticeable preference for borrowing that has been observed here may be the result of a policy of language purity which most of the subjects seemed to subscribe to. Namely, some of them stated that they did not want to pollute their mother tongue with foreign elements, which explains why they avoided code-switching. Others expressed the view that borrowing and code-switching were signs of both snobbery and sloppiness in language use and should be disapproved of as such. This has been confirmed by statistical analysis (Pearson Product Moment Coefficient) which revealed a moderate negative correlation ($r = -0.52$, $p = 0.03$) between the use of L2 calques and identification with L2 culture. A negative correlation means that the lower the subjects' identification with the L2 culture, the higher the tendency to use L2 calques in the L1. These findings, among other things, indicate that both code-switching and borrowing do not function as identity markers among Polish university students of English as they are rarely used to signal national identity and solidarity (cf. Auer 1999). A vast majority of subjects (76%) stated that they strongly identified with their native culture. Only 10% of those questioned said they felt affiliated with the L2 culture, while 4% were uncertain about their cultural allegiance. This, in turn, seems to shed light on their obvious determination to preserve the ethnicity of the L1 by nativizing borrowed items.

When asked to explain what made them borrow from the L2, the subjects mentioned the following factors:

- lack of an adequate L1 equivalent (52%)
- inability to remember the required L1 item (49%)
- interaction with other bilinguals who are proficient in both languages (40%)
- economy of expression; some L1 items are either too long or too imprecise (39%)
- lack of familiarity with adequate L1 terminology; subjects studied in the L2 tend to be discussed with heavy borrowing from that language (32%)
- experimenting and/or playing with language (11%)
- laziness (7%).

All of them point to the fact that one of the main aims of borrowing is the enhancement of communication when it is about to be disrupted due to a lack of an appropriate L1 word or when the L2 conveys finer and /or more accurate distinctions. Also, it cannot escape notice that borrowing in all its guises, is essentially a form of transfer and as such, constitutes evidence of crosslinguistic interaction at all levels of linguistic functioning. It is possible that borrowing is simply a way of coping with the strain that the processing of the two languages imposes on the bilingual, and reflects a natural tendency in language use to follow the law of least effort. After all, 60% of subjects claimed that borrowing was completely involuntary on their part, which is a case in point.

Statistical analysis did not reveal any meaningful correlations between the level of proficiency in L1 and L2, their frequency of use, and the tendency to borrow from the L2, which indicates that such variables may be less significant in a linguistically and culturally homogenous setting.

Discussion: the Chomskyan perspective

There are a number of issues that need to be considered when one approaches bilingual speech with all its idiosyncrasies from the Chomskyan perspective. The first question that springs to mind is whether language interaction occurs at the level of competence,

performance, or indeed, both levels. The Weinreich (1968) model of bilingualism allows for a certain amount of language mixing at the level of competence, especially in the case of compound and subordinate bilingualism. So does the neurological position dealing with the 'one or two lexicons' question (Grosjean 1982). However, one cannot rule out the possibility that language interaction may be determined by more abstract principles than those included in the models mentioned above.

Following recent developments in the realm of language universals, it is reasonable to assume that language interaction is governed by universal grammar (UG). If that, indeed, is the case, then, one must expect the bilingual to show a preference for unmarked forms over marked ones since such a tendency has been observed in various areas of language use, including language acquisition and loss. The validity of this statement will also be upheld if one adopts the view that borrowing is essentially a form of transfer. As far as the latter is concerned, Ellis (1986) argues convincingly that no transfer will take place if the donor language has a marked setting.

There may be a number of reasons for this unidirectional *exchange* of linguistic elements. According to Sharwood - Smith (1995), unmarked forms are more basic, simpler or simply shorter and, therefore, easier to use and/or process. Borrowing may, then, be regarded as a way of coping with the processing burden that is imposed on the bilingual. Such a view of language mixing is in line with the hypothesis put forward by Sridhar and Sridhar (1980, cited in Grosjean 1982) who maintain that both of the bilingual's languages are active when s/he is engaged in discourse. It also sheds new light on the bilingual's inclination to follow the law of least effort and borrow from the other language. One could risk saying that such behaviour is only natural since by following the law of least effort the bilingual is actually following UG. The same may hold true for the principle of the most available word. All in all, it would be interesting to discover the principles behind word choice in borrowing. Intuitively, one is tempted to say that marked options are likely to be replaced with unmarked ones.¹

The phenomenon of meaning extension as defined by Grosjean (1982) provides even more food for thought in this respect. Namely, one cannot not notice that it is essentially a form of homonymy, which, according to Croft (1993) is economically motivated. To be more specific, homonymy is believed to represent paradigmatic economy, i.e. minimising the number of morphemes by giving them several meanings (*ibid.*). In a more general sense, economic motivation constitutes an external factor that determines the form of languages, and, as such, is based on the functional position which claims that language structure can be explained in terms of language function. When applied to the bilingual context, economic motivation provides a plausible explanation for the occurrence of phenomena such as semantic extension or loanshifts in general. It is possible that when faced with the strain of spontaneous communication, the bilingual follows the universal tendency to economise on form in favour of meaning and extends the meaning of an item in one language to a similar - sounding item in the other. It goes without saying that by doing so the bilingual, in a way, demarks the item in question by making it more versatile and, therefore, applicable to a larger number of contexts, if the distributional criterion for markedness also holds true for

¹ Incidentally, this may explain the bilingual's preference for borrowing over code-switching. The former may simply be perceived as involving a process of de-marking, i.e. nativising alien and therefore more marked items.

the lexicon (Croft, 1993). It may be difficult to explain the nature of code-switching from this perspective, however. Despite the fact that code - switching is syntactically constrained and rule - governed, it is hard to explain in Chomskyan terms why the bilingual would violate the structure of the base language by inserting into it alien and, thus, asymmetric and marked elements. Once again, it appears necessary to turn to the functional position for assistance in finding reliable answers to the problems posed by code - switching. This type of analysis falls outside the scope this paper, however.

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