THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIOLINGUISTIC APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF CODE-SWITCHING. A REVIEW OF KEY THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

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Annotation

In modern linguistics, the study of bilingual communication has gained growing importance as language contact becomes increasingly common. This article reviews the main sociolinguistic approaches to code-switching and traces its theoretical development within bilingual discourse. It outlines the key ideas of scholars such as Gumperz, Poplack, and Myers-Scotton, emphasizing that code-switching serves as an intentional communicative device rather than a sign of interference.

Keywords: sociolinguistics, bilingualism, code-switching, discourse, communication.

Аннотация

В современной лингвистике изучение билингвальной коммуникации приобретает всё большее значение по мере усиления языковых контактов. В данной статье рассматриваются основные социолингвистические подходы к явлению код-свитчинга и прослеживается его теоретическое развитие в контексте билингвального дискурса. Излагаются ключевые идеи таких учёных, как Дж. Гамперц, С. Поплак и К. Майерс-Скоттон, подчёркивается, что код-свитчинг выступает как осознанное коммуникативное средство, а не проявление языковой интерференции.

Ключевые слова: социолингвистика, билингвизм, код-свитчинг, дискурс, коммуникация.

Annotatsiya

Zamonaviy lingvistikada ikki tillilik hodisasini o'rganish til kontaktlari ortib borayotgan sharoitda tobora muhim ahamiyat kasb etmoqda. Ushbu maqolada kod-almashinish (code-switchon) hodisasiga oid asosiy sotsiolingvistik yondashuvlar ko'rib chiqiladi, hamda uning nazariy rivojlanish jarayoni ikki tilli diskurs doirasida tahlil qilinadi. J. Gumperz, S. Poplack va C. Myers-Scotton kabi olimlarning asosiy g'oyalari yoritilib, kod-almashinish til aralashuvi emas, balki ongli kommunikativ vosita sifatida talqin etilishi ta'kidlanadi.

Kalit so'zlar: sotsiolingvistika, bilingvizm, kod-almashinish, diskurs, kommunikatsiya.

The term code switching (CS) was initially used by sociolinguists like Gumperz in the 1960s.[1] Code-switching is one of the important fields in multilingualism. The term code refers to „languages, dialects, styles of speech"; while switch denotes to an alternation or change between varieties of languages, dialects or styles.[2] Generally, the term code-switching defines the shifts in spoken language both across as well as within sentence boundaries.[3] Code-switching usually occurs in bilingual settings where speakers alternate between two languages on a sentence or phrase level.[4] It is also defined as selection or alteration of language elements to match the

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[1] Gumperz, J. (1958). Dialect differences and social stratification in a North Indian village. American Anthropologist, 60(4), 668-682.

[2] Gardner-Chloros, P. (2017). Historical and modern studies of code-switching: A tale of mutual enrichment. Multilingual Practices in Language History: English and Beyond, 15, 19.

[3] Blom, J., & Gumperz, J. (1972). Social meaning in linguistic structure: code switching in Norway.

[4] Mabule, D. R. (2015). What is this? Is it code switching, code mixing or language alternating?. Journal of Educational and Social Research, 5(1), 339.

context of the interaction; this practice may include linguistic and extra-linguistic elements like identity, norms, culture, etc. in its fold.[5] Code-switching is investigated via three different attitudes: sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic and structural. This need for involving other fields of knowledge in linguistic inquiry was first raised by Sapir.[6] Sociolinguistic theories investigate the social motivations that drive the speakers to switch the code from one to other while psycholinguistics theories investigate the cognitive process where two or more languages are working simultaneously; and structural approach focuses on the grammatical rules that interfere or permit the combination of different languages during switching process.

The sociolinguistic approach:

Sociolinguistic theories of code-switching explore code-switching as a social language behaviour that reflects the linguistic, social and cultural norms of a speech community. Sociolinguistics is an extensive theory that functions at macro and micro level.[7] The micro approach focuses on the interpersonal relationships between speaker and interlocutor; contrarily, macro approach analyses the functions of code-switching in a social context within a speech community. Keeping in view the broad dimension of sociolinguistic approach, the investigation of code-switching has been divided into two schools of thought:

(i) Code-switching as a social practice of communication to perform certain socio-cultural functions.

(ii) Code-switching in terms of conversation analysis.

(i) Code-switching as a social practice

First school of thought is represented by Gumperz, (1956; 1982), Blom and Gumperz, (1972), Myers-Scotton (1993) and others have referred to code switching as a social dynamic in a bilingual or multilingual discourse. They focus on speaker; interlocutor; physical setting; conversational style (i.e. formal or informal) and the topics of discussion as the instigating tools to switch the code for achievement of particular social functions or to achieve sociolinguistic goals (Bhatt & Bolonyai, 2008; Chakrani, 2016; Clyne, 2003). Gumperz (1958) concluded that male population uses local dialect at home or in informal settings while standard dialect is reserved for formal interactions, like workplace, official gathering or meeting.

Blom and Gumperz's (1972) theory was criticized on the grounds that both situational and metaphorical code-switching lack the clarity as both focus on the choice of code and functions (Panhwar, 2018). Gumperz (1982) redefined his concept asserting that external factors of situational code-switching such as setting, topic and changes in the linguistic situation are the main motivational factors; while in metaphorical code-switching the speaker is comparatively more focused (Gumperz, 1982, p. 61). In metaphorical code-switching the code switcher is considered as the „prime cause" of code-switching depending on the individual"s perception (Panhwar, 2018, p. 211).

(ii)   Conversational Analysis

Conversational Analysis Code-switching at micro level is analyzed through conversation analysis (CA), also known as conversational code-switching (Gumperz, 1982). When Blom and Gumperz"s (1972) notions of situational and metaphorical code-switching were criticized, Gumperz (1982) revisited and modified these notions of code switching by avoiding the situational and metaphorical code-switching taxonomy by using the general term conversational code-switching that focuses on particular language choices in a specific setting, topic, and speaker" language strategies. Gumperz (1982) introduced the notion of contextualization cues which focuses on the brief, spoken interaction as a way of identifying the functions of code switching. Defining the contextualization cues, Gumperz (1982) states that a feature of language

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[5] Nilep, C. (2006). Code switching" in sociocultural linguistics. Colorado research in linguistics, 19(1), 1.

[6] Sapir, E. (1929). "The Status of Linguistics as a Science." Language 5(4): 207-214.

[7] Shah, M., Furqan, A., and Zaman, K. M. (2019). A Sociolinguistic Investigation of the Code Switching Practices of Students Outside Classroom in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Review of Economics and Development Studies, 5(3), 497 504.

that signals at a presupposition which may carry meanings and information for a conversational situation is called a contextualization cue.

However, Auer (1984-1998) and Wei (2002; 2005), using the term conversation analysis (CA), broaden this concept. They believe that structural and sociolinguistic approaches leave a gap in the understanding of code-switching because a structuralist focuses on language-internal factors while the sociolinguist analyses language-external factors. In this situation, CA can be the best option to bridge the gap by focusing on why code-switching occurs and how it occurs (Auer, 1995). Using the term code alternation, Auer (ibid) expanded the socio pragmatic functions of code-switching by elaborating contextualization cues as a sequential way of language choice. (1995, p. 116). Auer argues that no utterance can be interpreted in a void, but must be taken as an "utterance in a particular locus of occurrence" paying a special focus on the speakers as social actors. Related to this, Auer introduced the notion of sequentiality which states that the emergence of functionality of code-mixing occurs as a sequential development and that coder-mixing alterations depends on sequential environment for their meaning (1995). However, Auer‟s notion of CA is at micro level that pays attention to the speakers‟ intentions but it does not address the social aspects of code-switching.

Conclusion

To sum up, the phenomenon of code-switching occupies a central place in the study of bilingual and multilingual communication, revealing the complex interplay between language, society, and individual speaker intention. The theoretical perspectives discussed-from Gumperz's early sociolinguistic insights to the later developments proposed by Poplack, Auer, and Myers-Scotton-demonstrate that code-switching is far more than a random alternation of languages. Instead, it functions as a meaningful communicative strategy shaped by social context, conversational structure, and the speaker's own identity and goals. The sociolinguistic, conversational, and interactional approaches collectively show that bilingual speakers use code-switching purposefully to negotiate relationships, express cultural belonging, mark social boundaries, and adapt to shifting communicative situations. Therefore, code-switching should be viewed not as linguistic interference but as an intentional, dynamic, and socially grounded practice that reflects the richness of bilingual discourse.

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