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Examining concepts dealing with multilingual environments

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Abstract
This article explores how experts have dealt with theoretical issues related to language contact in its various forms that start with bilingualism and multilingualism. The discussion also includes terms encapsulated in current definitions of translanguaging such as code-switching, Spanglish, and language crossing.
Keywords: *bilingualism, multilingualism, code-switching, Spanglish, language crossing, translanguaging.*

Una revisión de algunos términos utilizados en ámbitos lingüísticos

Resumen
Este artículo analiza la manera en que los expertos han tratado los aspectos teóricos relacionados al contacto lingüístico en sus diferentes manifestaciones que parten del bilingüismo y el multilingüismo además de cubrir términos tales como el cambio de código, el espanglish y *language crossing*.
Palabras clave*: bilingüismo, multilingüismo, cambio de código, espanglish, inglespañol o espanglish*

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Overview

This article explores how researchers have tackled the theoretical issues surrounding language contact in its various forms that start with bilingualism and multilingualism. The discussion also includes terms encapsulated in current definitions of translanguaging such as code-switching, Spanglish, and language crossing.

Bilingualism and multilingualism

Many countries and many large cities have people who speak not only different dialects of the same language but also different languages. Because of their linguistic diversity, a point of departure starts with two useful concepts for conceptualizing such situations, namely, bilingualism and multilingualism. *Multilingual*, as an adjective and in contrast with *monolingual*, is used to refer to a community which makes use of two or more languages, and as adjective or noun, the term applies to the individual speakers who have this ability. In turn, *multilingualism* (or *plurilingualism*) in this sense may subsume bilingualism, but it is often contrasted with it in the case of communities or individuals in command of *more* than two languages (Crystal, 2008, p. 318, original emphasis). A bilingual may be defined as someone who can use two or more languages (or dialects) (Baker, 2001; Crystal, 2009, p. 318; Grosjean, 2006, p. 34; Mounin et al., 2004, p. 52); and bilingualism, besides existing as a possession of an individual, also applies as a characteristic of a group or community of people (Baker & Jones, 1998, p. 3), defined as the coexistence of two languages in the same community provided that the majority of speakers are indeed bilingual as in Catalonia, where most of the population speaks Spanish and Catalan or in the Central Valleys of Oaxaca, where Oaxacans of Zapotec origin speak both Zapotec and Spanish; though some sociolinguists use this last term to refer to the individual, and prefer "diglossia" when referring to bilingualism in a community (Mounin et al., 2004, p. 52).

According to Romaine, bilingualism has often been defined and described in terms of categories, scales, and dichotomies such as ideal vs. partial bilingual, coordinate vs. compound bilingual, etc., which are related to factors such as proficiency, function, etc. (Romaine, 1999: 11). Blackledge and Creese question the concept of 'bilingualism' as a fixed and static entity and prefer the term 'multilingualism' to convey a conception of linguistic practices as "multiple, plural, shifting, and eclectic, by drawing on features of what we might call languages" (Blackledge & Creese, 2010,

p. 23). This is more in accordance with current views which deal with linguistic practices as fluid not static.

A far cry from the Labovian paradigm, linguistic anthropology has taken "a constructivist approach to bilingualism", which involves "co-constructed practices critical in the production of bilingual repertoires of identity and the centrality of language" (Zentella, 2008a, p. 6): Unlike quantitative sociolinguists's considerations, bilinguals display their gender, class, racial, ethnic and other identities by following the social and linguistic rules for the ways of speaking that reflect those identities in their homes and primary networks and by becoming active agents who exploit new ways of doing and being.

Early on, Romaine claimed that "what distinguishes bilinguals from monolinguals is that bilinguals usually have greater resources" as they draw from both codes on the linguistic level (Romaine, 1999, p. 173), and hybrid forms resulting from language contact are part of their repertoires (Bailey, 2007, p. 29); such claim might lead us to consider the possibilities as to the kind of resources multilingual speakers could have at their disposal. In that regard, Bailey (2007) adds that bilingual and bicultural individuals have both an expanded set of resources for the negotiation of identity, "and a broader range of social categories that can be made relevant through talk as compared to monolingual, monocultural individuals" (Bailey, 2007, p. 29). Similarly, Kramsch (2009) affirms that multilingual individuals have at their disposal "more modalities of signification than one single symbolic system" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 99). For decades, languages have been viewed as separate entities that can be counted, and bilingual and multilingual speakers were said to speak so many languages, again with an emphasis on numbers. Romaine (1999, p. 281) asserts that "the idea that any given speech event must belong to a particular named language" may not be a useful concept in dealing with codeswitching and that codeswitching may not in fact involve separately stored, independent codes; such tenet may very well apply to linguistic practices like crossing and translanguaging. García and Wei (2014) touch on this by claiming that "we are all *languagers* who use semiotic resources at our disposal in strategic ways to communicate and act in the world" (García & Wei, 2014, p. 10); the semiotic resources they refer to are what bilinguals and others recognize as belonging to different sets of "socially constructed 'languages" (García & Wei, 2014, p. 10). Similarly, Higgins (2009, p. 148) uses the term "heteroglossia", and affirms that

it has been shown to be a source of creativity, playfulness, strategy and most of all, identification in the form of multivoiced multilingualism (see also Jourdan, 2007, p. 45).

Romaine also argues that the idea of an "individual" linguistic competence may hold little meaning outside the context of testing procedures, which is the ideology that dominates public, particularly educational, policy on bilingualism (Romaine, 1999, p. 280). Testing operates from a monolingual point of view, judging bilingual or multilingual speakers from the hegemonic position of the language in which the testing is to take place: it is evident a monolingual speaker might have an advantage as bilingual and multilingual speakers may perform differently in the languages they speak. Bilingualism studies focus on competence measured as test answers, but never assessments of community-based communicative competence. After all, language is used primarily to communicate, as bilingual and multilingual speakers may rely on their repertoire to achieve that end, it seems illogical to try measure their competence by means of tests elaborated with a monolingual frame of reference as the base (Romaine, 1999, p. 280). As with testing, monolingual attitudes and standardization view the mixing of languages (again perceived as separate entities) as downright wrong or non-standard without considering that what bilingual and multilingual individuals do is simply access their linguistic repertoires to communicate in community social networks. Linguistic repertoires "may cut across more than one language, with switching from one language to another, or to a mixture, taking place in much the same circumstances as style switching in monolingual repertoires" (Milroy & Milroy, 2002, p. 102). In theorizing this dynamic activity, some scholars have begun to explore how successful communication depends on aligning the linguistic resources one brings to the social, situational, and affective dimensions operative in a context (see Kramsch, 2004). In other words, language learning involves an alignment of one's language resources to the needs of a situation.

Heller (2007, p. 1) aims to move the field of bilingualism studies away from a highly ideologized view of bilingualism as the coexistence of two linguistic systems, whole and bounded, to a critical perspective which allows for a better grasp on the ways in which language practices are socially and politically embedded; an approach which privileges language as social practice, and considers speakers as social actors who draw on linguistic resources, organized in ways that make sense under specific social conditions, and boundaries as products of social action.

Code-switching

The term *code-switching* (with and without the hyphen) was favored in the past to refer to some language practices of bilinguals; though some researchers still use the term, new terms have gained currency, and are preferred for reasons explained below. Code-switching involves alternation between two languages on the part of the speaker who maintains these two as separate systems of communication with their respective rules. Gumperz (1982) remarks that conversational code switching "can be defined as the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems" (Gumperz, 1982, p. 59). Broad definitions of code-switching include the "use of words and structures from more than one language or linguistic variety by the same speaker within the same speech [event], conversation or utterance" (Callahan, 2004, p. 5) or "the ability on the part of bilinguals to alternate effortlessly between their two languages" (Bullock & Toribio, 2009, p. 1). This so-called 'effortlessness' might not always be the case since speakers may code-switch out of necessity, i.e., the switch may entail some effort as when pausing to look for the right words to convey one's meaning, specifically in instances of low proficiency, language loss or language attrition in one of the linguistic systems.

Dominant groups force minority groups to assimilate by means of educational language policies and practices seeking to maintain the status quo of those in power (who also speak the dominant language); additionally, speakers' lack of power impacts the status of their minority language, which is seen as linguistically inferior (Zentella, 1997, p. 212; Tse, 2001, p. 41; García & Mason, 2009, p. 79; Baugh, 2009, p. 75-76). To be realistic, minority speakers have limited access to resources due to reasons other than purely linguistic ones. Nevertheless, because of policies and language ideologies on the part of the dominant group, code-switching and language mixing of any sort tend to be stigmatized.

The communicative competence of speakers who make everyday usage of two or more codes includes drawing on each of these codes, plus the ability to mix them and switch among them, the structure of each code taken separately is usually reduced in some dimensions. Therefore, if the speakers' verbal ability is evaluated in a situation where they are forced to stay within a single code, such as in all contact with the monolingual community, these speakers' communicative competence will seem to be less rich than it actually is. On the other hand, the speaker's total repertoire is fully exploited in those bilingual settings where the speaker can call on the resources

from each of the available codes and on the strategies of switching among them (Lavandera, 1978, p. 391). Nevertheless, as long as a monolingual orientation prevails in any given country, people who make use of their repertoires (regardless of the languages or linguistic codes/systems involved) will continue to be frowned upon.

Bullock and Toribio draw parallels between monolingual and bilingual language use as monolinguals "shift between the linguistic registers and the dialects they command" (Bullock & Toribio, 2009, p. 2). In her studies of African multilingual communities, Myers-Scotton explains that code-switching is essentially a "juxtaposed multiple-language production which can also be studied between dialects or styles (registers)" (Myers-Scotton, 1993, p. vii); in other words, instead of code-switching we find style and register shifting among monolinguals, but bilinguals do *that* and more in their mixing of resources. Larger groups, at a society level, can be divided into sub-groups, each identifiable by their characteristic code-switching patterns, "as monolinguals can by discourse styles and registers", e.g., from a casual to a formal variety of speech (Gardner-Chloros, 2009, p. 5) or in *bidialectalism*, the switching between dialects, whether regional or social, as in regional varieties and the standard (Crystal, 2008, p. 52). The nonambiguous difference is that code-switchers alternate between at least two languages, which can be very well in an unchanged setting, in the same utterance (Bullock and Toribio, 2009, p. 2) or between larger segments but always in the same conversation, turn or speech event; in addition, code-switchers command different registers in each language as emphasized above. Code-switching may extend from the insertion of single words to the alternation of languages for larger segments of discourse such as phrases; in other words, it may occur at inter- and intrasentential (within the same sentence) levels (Callahan 2004, p. 5; Myers-Scotton,1993, p. vii) and may be deployed for a number of reasons: filling linguistic gaps, expressing ethnic identity, and achieving particular discursive aims, among others. For example, bilinguals may combine their languages in a particular community to express their group identity, in a way similar to having a characteristic accent (Gardner-Chloros, 2009, p. 5). For the sake of argument, it seems only logical to assume that polyglot speakers can actually code-switch in more than two languages if the setting demands it. Comparing code-switching across different communities and different language combinations can help reveal the relative role of linguistic and sociolinguistic factors (Gardner-Chloros, 2009, p. 5).

In line with that, Myers-Scotton came up with her negotiation maxims as a model which explains variation in linguistic code choice (Myers-Scotton ,1983, p. 115), and looks at code-switching in so many different ways: as accommodation, as a deferential strategy (defer to those from whom you want something), as an exploratory choice, as following the virtuosity maxim (make a marked choice to avoid being infelicitous) (Myers-Scotton, 1983, p. 123, 125) or as following the multiple-identities maxim (Myers-Scotton, 1983, p. 126) when more than one code is chosen and multiple identities are negotiated. She has also explored if codeswitching entails an unmarked choice or a marked one, a sequential unmarked or a strategy of neutrality (Myers-Scotton, 1993, *passim*). The marked and unmarked status of non-native material in the speech of urban multilinguals means that where people use a mixed language regularly, codeswitching represents the norm (it is an unmarked choice). In instances where people invoke another language in an obvious way, position of relative social, political or economic strength is often being negotiated, then codeswitching represents a marked choice (Eastman, 1992, p. 1). Myers-Scotton's markedness model might serve as a framework to analyze language choice on the part of speakers who weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of choosing one code depending on the situation and interlocutor involved.

In her ethnographic studies in *el bloque*, Zentella found that the decisive factors that determined the language dyads at home and elsewhere were physical features, gender, and age (Zentella, 1997, p. 85); in other words, speakers draw primarily on their language repertoire as "required by the 'observables' of the speech situation, e.g. pragmatic norms, specific setting, and participants" (Toribio, 2004, p. 42). Speakers code-switch when interacting with bilingual speakers but prefer to address older speakers in Spanish. If someone does not look Latino, they stick to using English. A study also placed in New York found that Chinese speakers who speak mutually unintelligible Chinese dialects communicate with other Chinese speakers in Cantonese or in Mandarin. The latter is part of a shift in lingua franca from Cantonese to Mandarin. Still both languages bridge the gap when speakers must decide on the right code to communicate with speakers of other dialects; these Chinese speakers frequently resort to code-selecting and code switching (Pan, 2002, p. 244).

Another issue that has been tackled is the fact that linguists take monolingualism as the basis from which to explain other linguistic phenomena such as bilingualism, and multilingualism, when in fact, a great percentage, probably a half, of humankind is at least bilingual (Romaine, 2000), and the world has probably been multilingual from its beginnings (Calvet, 1998, p. 202). Auer and Wei estimate that most of the human language users in the world speak more than one language, i.e., they are at least bilingual, a similar claim made by Baker and Prys Jones, (1998, p. vii) and put their number at two thirds of the world's population. In quantitative terms, then, monolingualism may be the exception and multilingualism the norm (Auer & Wei, 2007, p. 1) but then again, those with a prescriptionist agenda have permeated not only language policy and planning but also linguistic areas such as lexicology, lexicography and applied linguistics. Purists, very much infused with the ideology of the dominant language, may be the first ones to condemn code-switching as deviant or as an aberration. Such reactions are by no means new, Adams states that Cicero seemed to condemn the practice (Adams, 2004, p. 19): what occurred more than 2,000 years ago is still happening. Outsiders tend to see code mixing as a sign of linguistic decay as a result of not knowing at least one of the languages involved very well (Appel & Muysken, 2005, p. 117) when it is actually a linguistic resource as it will be further discussed. Though there is significant progress in many parts of the world where multilingualism, in the sense of having different languages coexisting alongside each other, is beginning to be acceptable, what remains hugely problematic is the mixing of languages (Wei, 2017, p. 6).

Bilingual speakers confident about their language skills in both the heritage language, and the dominant one may wield authority in their realization of linguistic power excluding outsiders in defiance or in indifference for as Zahavi and Zahavi (1999) argue, though social rank is easy to discern, as could be the speakers' blue or white-collar status; prestige, on the other hand, is complex and harder to measure precisely because it has to be accepted by the subordinates (Zahavi & Zahavi, 1999, p. 144). By rejecting the prestige claimed by others, these speakers reject a language ideology imbued with a pretended superiority. Since the situation is reversed on the Mexican side of the border, Mexican speakers might feel proud of their linguistic prowess and experience a sense of empowerment as EFL learning can be associated with elite groups and/or with cosmopolitanism though they may also experience backlash if they speak English in Spanish monolingual settings. As Gardner-Chloros observes: the study of code-switching only became possible once the results of two languages coming into contact ceased to be considered as aberrations and

ceased to be compared with narrowly defined monolingual norms (Gardner-Chloros, 1991, p. 47). Once the results of language contact are no longer considered arbitrary aberrations, the need arises to classify them and describe the relations between them (Gardner-Chloros, 1991, p. 48).

In light of the current multilingual paradigm, i.e., translanguaging, which involves the deployment of entire linguistic repertoires on the part of speakers , most current researchers no longer use the term "codeswitching" due to three main reasons. On the one hand, translanguaging includes this so-called code switching or mixing, which renders its use unnecessary. On the other hand, codeswitching approaches keep linguistic resources apart as if they were independent concrete systems, i.e, named languages. And finally, translanguaging is better suited to analyze not only linguistic but also literacy practices as it includes multimodality and language in its written form (Wei, 2017, p.1).

Spanglish and surrounding controversies

Spanglish, the composite language of Spanish and English, has prompted most researchers to take sides in terms of use of the term and on its legitimacy as a set of language practices. Some of the critics, view Spanglish as an invasion of Spanish by English in accordance with normativity and linguistic purism. Among the researchers against the use of the term, Otheguy rejects it because, according to him, Spanglish is dangerous to the survival of Spanish in the U.S. and proposes 'popular' or 'colloquial US Spanish' (Zentella & Otheguy, 2009). These proposed labels are, in a way, limiting and confusing because 'popular' or 'colloquial' are registers commonly monolingual (i.e., part of the same linguistic system) and characterized by the frequent use of slang, by their informal character, by using words instead of terms (e.g., specialized language), and many of the words and expressions utilized are not part of la *norma culta*. Adding to the controversy is the fact that the core of code switching is the mesh of resources said to belong to different linguistic systems, which in a way overlaps with what is thought of as Spanglish. Some authors like González-Echevarría take a more pragmatic approach and concede that "loans and calques are fine when there are not any equivalents in Spanish" but unjustified otherwise (González-Echevarría, 2008, p. 116). Again, this sounds like a restriction on the linguistic practices of bilinguals. But the negative views towards hybridity do not stop there: González-Echevarría views Spanglish as the language of poor illiterate Hispanics, as a danger to Hispanic culture and as an obstacle to the social advancement of Hispanics in the mainstream U.S. (González-Echevarría, 2008, p. 116). Penfield

(1985, p.14) also considers the label "Spanglish" derogatory because it suggests that code switching is no more than a bastardized or corrupted version of Spanish and English mixed together. According to Farr and Domínguez-Barajas, Spanglish is "often denigrated by English and Spanish speakers alike" (Farr & Domínguez-Barajas, 2005, p. 14; see also Hidalgo, 1986, p. 215). Linguistic purism is rooted to such an extent that many people while accepting the existence of different languages, reject mixing as a form of 'contamination' of their language. Such language belief is one of the reasons mixed languages are ridiculed (Wei, 2017, p. 6) as are *Chinglish* or *Spanglish*, even though the creative process mixing represents is an important and integral part of language evolution (Wei, 2017, p. 6)

Some researchers avoid the use of the term altogether. Sánchez (1994) focuses on loanwords, registers, and stylistic shifts within Chicano Spanish instead of using "Spanglish" to describe the results of English-Spanish contact, whose traits could be classified as belonging to Spanglish by some. In addition, she focuses on code-switching discourse by Chicanos and argues that it is characteristic of Southwest Spanish, which she also calls authentic Spanish varieties (Sánchez, 1994, p. 98). Again, the processes she tackles could be described as Spanglish by some. Fought (2003, p.5) also mentions that codeswitching is referred to as "Spanglish", which should not be confused with *Chicano English*, an English variety. Codeswitching has been stigmatized through time, Gumperz (1982) reports that code-switching is stigmatized in Texas and throughout the US Southwest, and that the derogative term 'Tex-Mex' is widely used to refer to it while in Quebec the word 'joual' refers to a hybrid variety of French (that presents its own lexical traits and shows signs of creolization vis-à-vis Canadian English) that has similar stigmatizing connotations (Gumperz, 1982, p. 62-62).

Of those in favor of the use of the term, Zentella equals Spanglish to codeswitching (2008b) and maintains that although Spanglish has a negative meaning the term is useful for challenging an imposed normativity. Additionally, she argues that Spanglish captures conflict and the linguistic oppression of speakers of Spanish in the U.S. (Zentella & Otheguy, 2009).

These controversies surrounding Spanglish are another reason why the term translanguaging is better suited for the description of hybrid linguistic practices as it treats language as a resource without resorting to labelling each lexical item as belonging to different languages. Also, if we move Spanglish from the U.S. to the Mexican side of the border, oppression

from English gets taken out of the equation. What really remains are linguistic practices and the speakers' agency. In short, leaning towards alternatives such as translanguaging makes sense as they may encompass what is viewed as *Spanglish*, and in doing so they are free of lopsided positions, biases, and normativity. Normativity itself is lopsided as it leans towards rules that are set by those with privilege. Terms such as *translanguaging* or *translingual practices* view linguistic practices as repertoires in use, maintaining a scientific approach towards language and treating it as valid language in use without necessarily attaching labels such as "correctness" or "propriety". Any register can be viewed as equally valid and as serving the purpose of allowing speakers to communicate amongst themselves and with others in a given setting.

Language crossing: A related concept

For researchers dealing with more diverse situations, Rampton recommends that the study of code-switching be taken a step further beyond bilingual ingroups focusing instead on the emergence of new plural ethnicities and on the exploration and/or renegotiation of reality characterized by race stratification and division (Rampton, 2002, p. 291). Taking the code as currency, "language crossing or code-crossing refers to the use of a language which isn't generally thought to 'belong' to the speaker". In those respects, language crossing "involves a sense of movement across quite sharply felt social or ethnic boundaries, and it raises issues of legitimacy that participants need to reckon with in the course of their encounter" (Rampton, 2002, p. 291). A striking difference between code-switching and code-crossing is that in the former, the participants arguably belong to the same group and/or to the same speech community or community of linguistic practice (if not locally, on a large scale, for example, having a common origin) whereas in the latter, they do not. As a consequence, speakers move outside their normally used language varieties, and briefly adopt codes which they do not have full and easy access to (Rampton, 2002, p. 298) for the reason that they do not belong. Canagarajah (2013, p. 3) defines it as the "practice of borrowing words from the languages of out-group members for purposes of temporary identity representation and community solidarity" but it goes beyond lexis to include phonological, syntactic, and semantic traits. The term 'ethnolect' is also used to refer to varieties of a language that mark speakers as members of ethnic groups who originally used another language or distinctive variety (Clyne, 2000, p. 86), and as such, is "increasingly being applied to the linguistic practices of the

urban young" (Jaspers, 2008, p. 87). In major cities like New York, Los Angeles or London, speakers with an ethnic background are said to speak an *ethnolect*. In such places, white speakers may use the variety (the ethnolect) for styling purposes; in fact, ethnolects are stylized in the media (e.g., in movies, on television, comics, rap music, hip-hop, and the like).

What we see here is that they play not only with language but with their identity; it is what Jourdan (2007) calls *Homo Ludens*: individuals use language to create themselves (Jourdan, 2007, p. 45). This statement is not far from what critical forms of multiculturalism envisage: "a different 'practice of the self' and new forms of self-fashioning and subjectivity based on more progressive conceptions of freedom and justice" (McLaren, 1994, p. 51); thus, opening up a window for subaltern identities to empower themselves by redefining the constructs surrounding them. This so-called 'self-fashioning' will be further explored below. Language, as seen in the previous examples, becomes an indicator of the richness of the social scene and its complexity where each community of practice represents a group in which "language produces and indexes identity creation" (Jourdan, 2007, p. 45).

The difference between *crossing* and *codeswitching* is, according to Rampton, that the former "focuses on code-alternation by people who aren't accepted members of the group associated with the second language they employ" (Rampton, 2005, p. 270). *Crossing* implies moving across social or ethnic boundaries and also raises issues of social legitimacy that participants need to negotiate (Rampton, 2005, p. 270-271). In contrast, *codeswitching* is an ingroup phenomenon restricted to those who share the same expectations and rules of interpretation for the use of the two languages, and can be "used to affirm participants' claims to membership and the solidarity of the group in contrast to outsiders" (Woolard, 1988, p. 69-70).

Finally, Rampton 2005, p. 270) remarks that many of the most influential studies have looked at the conduct of groups in which the use of two or more languages is a routine expectation because speakers are born with a multilingual inheritance or because of migration to places where other languages are spoken. The concept, though relevant to grasp part of the meaning of *translanguaging*, presents some limitations as it is restricted to ethnic groups and ethnic boundaries, and the practices the former engage in.

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