Metaphorical Code-Switching Revisited[1)]

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1. Introduction

In multilingual communities, speakers may employ more than two languages in conversations. Switching of language codes in interactions is called code-switching by sociolinguists (some scholars also use the term code-mixing[2)]). Gumperz (1982:59) defines conversational code-switching as a juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems. This is a frequently observed mode of communication among bilinguals, somewhat equivalent to style shift or change of dialects for monolinguals. Therefore code-switching is one of the important topics discussed in much of sociolinguistic literature. When teaching code-switching at the introductory level of sociolinguistics at the university, however, I found some discrepancies in descriptions regarding the distinction between "situational" and "metaphorical (or non-situational)" code-switching. This confusion of course affected many of my students' understanding of these notions. As I examined several textbooks, I found that certain examples suggested as metaphorical code-switching by some authors were also treated as situational code-switching by other scholars. Even those examples which are often considered as situational code-switching seem to be possible to also analyze as metaphorical code-switching. When example data collected by sociolinguists and my students at Ferris University were re-examined, it became plausible to consider that the distinction between situational and metaphorical code-switching is in fact unclear, and many

cases of code-switching involve the characteristics of both types of code-switching. It is, therefore, somewhat misleading to suggest in textbooks on sociolinguistics that metaphorical code-switching is in contrast with situational code-switching in its occurrence and pragmatic functions.

The purpose of this paper is to re-examine the distinction between situational and metaphorical code-switching, and to claim that what has been analyzed as situational code-switching is possibly analyzed as metaphorical switching as well in some cases. The distinction between situational and metaphorical code-switching is not clear.

2. Situational vs. metaphorical code-switching

Various types of code-switching have been distinguished and analyzed in linguistics. Some scholars group code-switching based on structural characteristics: intersentential or intrasentential code-switching. Others classify code-switching based on the reasons for switching. It is claimed that some cases of code-switching occur because of the changes in conversational situations such as setting, topic, and participants. A particular linguistic code may be strongly associated with a certain setting, and thus it is predictable for participants which language code is going to be used. This kind of code-switching is generally called situational code-switching. Code-switching may also occur when there is apparently no change in setting, participants or topics. The shift of language codes sometimes signify the change in psychological distance felt by the speaker, and thus code-switching can be understood as a metaphorical signal of changing interpersonal relationships. This type of code-switching is sometimes called metaphorical code-switching (or non-situational code-switching.) The general belief about the distinction between situational and metaphorical code-switching is that situational code-switching involves change in situational factors (e.g. topic, participant, and setting), while metaphorical code-switching does not.

In many textbooks on sociolinguistics, the distinction between situational

and metaphorical code-switching is often made. This notion of metaphorical code-switching was first introduced by Blom and Gumperz (1972), and since then, many researchers seem to accept the distinction but interpret these notions differently when it comes to the application of these notions to actual data. I will first introduce Gumperz and his co-worker's original definition of situational and metaphorical code-switching, and then take a look at other scholars' interpretations of these two types of code-switching. The comparison will show discrepancies in the interpretations of these terms.

2.1 Gumperz and his co-worker's definition

The term "situational switching" and "metaphorical switching" were first used by Blom and Gumperz (1972), and further elaborated by Gumperz (1982) in his discussion of conversational code-switching.

Blom and Gumperz (1972) did fieldwork in the Norwegian village of Hamnesberget where two linguistic varieties are recognized. One of them is Ranamal, which is a local variety used in informal settings. The other is Bokmal and it is a standard Norwegian variety used in formal settings. Choice of linguistic varieties is closely related to the speakers' recognition of the settings. It was observed that "when within the same setting the participants' definition of the social event changes, this change may be signaled among others by linguistic clues" including the shift from Ranamal to Bokmal (Blom and Gumperz 1972:424.) This kind of a language shift is called situational code-switching. They further write that "the notion of situational switching assumes a direct relationship between language and the social situation. (p. 424)"

In contrast to the situations where the choice of linguistic codes is narrowly controlled by social norms, there are others which allow participants considerable freedom in the choice of varieties. Metaphorical code-switching occurs in such situations to convey special social meanings such as privateness (Blom and Gumperz 1972:425-426.)

In Gumperz (1982), he focuses on a very rapid and frequent switching in utterances by the same speaker. Please look at the examples given by Gumperz:

Example 1

A Spanish-English sequence taken from a mother's call to children. Spanish is in italics with English translation in parenthesis.

Ven aca (come here). *Vena ca* (come here). Come here, you. (Gumperz 1982:92)

Example 2

A Hindi-English bilingual speaker reports on a missed appointment with a female acquaintance. Hindi is in italics with English translation in parenthesis:

Timarpur ki bas samne khari thi (the Timarpur bas was standing before me). Then I thought I might as well take it. (Gumperz 1982:93)

Conversational code-switching occurs when no change in setting, topics and speakers take place. The speakers draw on two different codes of grammatical systems in the same speech activities, and each code is associated with a different social identity. Unlike diglossia, which is the alternative use of different languages depending on different domains of interaction, conversational code-switching can be very complex. In the case of diglossia, it is fairly predictable which language code is going to be used, because there are social rules that the speakers share regarding the appropriateness of a certain language in a given domain. On the other hand, in conversational code-switching, the choice of language code is not predictable based on such social knowledge. Frequent alternation in even the same utterance may occur. It is not the propositional content but the fact that two languages are used which carries various pragmatic meanings.

In code-switching, "we" code and "they" code are further distinguished.

Gumperz (1982:66) describes "we code" and "they code" as follows.

> The tendency is for the ethnically specific minority language to be regarded as the 'we code' and become associated with in-group and informal activities, and for the majority language to serve as the 'they code' associated with the more formal, stiffer and less personal out-group relations.

This association of language code and group identity is a symbolic one, and it does not directly predict actual usage. It is also important to consider the direction of switch in order to understand the metaphorical meaning of code-switched utterances. Thus the change from"we code"to"they code"often signifies emotional distance, annoyance, or objectiveness while the switch from "they code" to "we code"can be interpreted as the speaker's attempt to appeal to personal involvement and common identity belonging to the same ethnic group.

When examples 1 and 2 are examined from this perspective, Spanish and Hindi are the"we code"and English is the"they code." I will repeat these examples again.

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In example 1, the mother's switch from Spanish ("we code") to English ("they code") is therefore interpreted as her annoyance at the children who would not listen to her. In example 2, Gumperz explains that the Hindi-English version should be distinguished from all Hindi version in its meaning because the Hind-English version connotes that the appointment was a casual one: there is no emotional involvement associated with a romantic date.

In conclusion, Gumperz (1982:98) summarizes the nature of situational code-switching and metaphorical code-switching as follows.

Code-switching signals contextual information equivalent to what in monolingual settings is conveyed through prosody or other syntactic or lexical processes. It generates the presuppositions in terms of which the content of what is said is decoded. But these presuppositions operate at several levels of generality. In situational switching, where a code or speech style is regularly associated with a certain class of activities, it comes to signify or connote them, so that its very use can signal the enactment of these activities even in the absence of other clear contextual cues. Component messages are then interpreted in terms of the norms and symbolic associations that apply to the signaled activity.

The case of metaphorical usage is much more complex. The signaling mechanism involved is a shift in contextualization cues, which is not accompanied by a shift in topic and in other extralinguistic context markers that characterize the situation. (p.98)

2.2. Definitions of metaphorical and situational code-switching in textbooks on sociolinguistics

Blom and Gumperz' notions of metaphorical code-switching and situational code-switching were considered to represent one of the important social aspects of code-switching, and many linguists use these notions in their explanations of code-switching. In this section, I will examine some of the descriptions of these two notions in textbooks on sociolinguistics.

Stockwell (2002:9) defines situational and metaphorical code-switching in terms of domains of communication.

When a speaker moves from one domain into another, and changes their code as a result, this is **situational code-switching**. Sometimes, however, a speaker can deliberately change codes in the middle of a situation, in order to indicate to the hearer that they consider a new domain to be 'in operation.' This is called **metaphorical code-switching** and can be seen in the teenage boys' usage to differentiate 'joke time' from 'serious time'.

(The emphasis is by Stockwell.)

Stockwell describes that metaphorical code-switching occurs when the speaker deliberately shifts language codes in order to signal a new domain. The problem here is that many metaphorical code-switching actually occurs even when the speakers are not conscious of the switch. Especially in a conversational code-switching where the shift of codes takes place rapidly and frequently, it is hard to say which switch is made deliberately and which one is not.

Romaine (2000: 59-60) uses the term transactional code-switching to refer to situational code-switching

Transactional switching comes under the heading of the type of switching

most commonly discussed as being controlled by components of the speech event like topic and participants. ...

Metaphorical code-switching, however, concerns the various communicative effects the speaker intends to convey.

One of the causes for possible confusion here is the use of different terminology (transactional rather than situational), which I will discuss further later. In addition, when we examine metaphorical and situational code-switching, it becomes also important to understand what communicative effects mean. The speaker's recognition of the shift in speech event may influence the choice of language codes, which in turn may influence the communicative effects.

Holmes (2001:40-42) uses the term metaphorical code-switching for a narrower meaning. She refers to it as rapid and short exchanges of language codes in the same speaker's turn.

> Some people call the kind of rapid switching illustrated in the last two examples 'code-mixing', but I prefer the term metaphorical switching. ... switches are very well motivated in relation to the symbolic or social meanings of the two codes. This kind of rapid switching is itself a specific sociolinguistic variety. (p.42)

Such frequent switches of language codes are explained as the speaker's association with dual social values connected with each linguistic variety. She further emphasizes the rhetorical aspect of metaphorical code-switching, stating that metaphorical code-switching is a rhetorical skill used to express one's ideas effectively.

> Each of the codes represents a set of social meanings, and the speaker draws on the associations of each, just as people use metaphors to represent

complex meanings. The term also reflects the fact that this kind of switching involves rhetorical skill. Skillful code-switching operates like metaphor to enrich the communication.(p.41)

For Holmes, in the case of situational code-switching, whether or not the reasons for switching can be identified is the key: "When people switch from one code to another for reasons which can be identified, it is sometimes called *situational switching*. If we knew the relevant situational or social factors in advance in such cases, we could predict the switches" (emphasis by Italics is Holmes'.) (Holmes 2001:36)

It should be mentioned that Holmes does not draw on the distinction between "we code" and "they code" directly, even though Gumperz (1982) emphasized the importance of the direction of switch in the use of metaphorical code-switching. It seems that Holmes uses the term "metaphorical" code-switching in a narrower sense than Gumperz'.

In sum, it can be seen that different scholars make the distinction between "situational" and "metaphorical" code-switching, but they use these terms differently.

2.3. Different terminologies for situational and metaphorical code-switching

Employment of different terminologies of code-switching also contributes to the confusion of the concept as they give different connotations. Romaine's (1994; 2000: 59) description provides a good example.

In an early study conducted in a rural Norwegian village called Hemnesberget, the concepts of 'metaphorical' and 'transactional' switching were introduced (sometimes referred to as non-situational v. situational code-switching).

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Romaine's use of "transactional code-switching" might give the impression that this type of code-switching is used mainly for business transactions. However, her intent was not to restrict this to just business purposes since she writes after this passage that this type of switching is controlled by components of the speech event like topic and participants. This explanation is in accordance with general explanations of situational code-switching. But when this passage was translated to Japanese, the term *gyomuteki* [literally meaning for business or for duty] was used by Tsuchida & Takahashi (1997), giving the impression to Japanese readers that this type of code-switching is mainly for business purposes.

What is more problematic is the use of "non-situational" switching to refer to metaphorical code-switching. The use of this term gives the impression that metaphorical code-switching is in contrast to situational code-switching, and that these two do not co-exist in the same code-switching situations. However, this is not necessarily true when we look at actual examples of code-switching. Some of the shifts are associated with situational factors, and yet at the same time they can also symbolize changing role-relationships between the participants, creating a possibility that metaphorical meaning is conveyed as well.

3. Re-examination of examples

In this section, I will discuss in more detail some of the examples of code-switching which can render multiple explanations.

The following example originally comes from Blom and Gumperz (1972), and is cited in Holmes (2001:36). In a little village of Hemnesberget, Bokmal is the standard Norwegian to use for official transactions at the tax office, and Ranamal is the local dialect which is used for friendly chat among local people. When the worker in the tax office is a personal acquaintance of a citizen who needs help in filling out a tax form, the conversation may go like this:

[Utterances in Bokmal are in capitals. Ranamal is in lower case.]

Jan: Hello Petter. How is your wife now?

Petter: Oh she's much better thank you Jan. She's out of hospital and convalescing well.

Jan: That's good I'm pleased to hear it. DO YOU THINK YOU COULD HELP ME WITH THIS PESKY FORM? I AM HAVING A GREAT DEAL OF DIFFICULTY WITH IT.

Petter: OF COURSE. GIVE IT HERE ...

The switching from Ranamal to Bokmal in this example is sometimes explained as the change in topics. Jan and Petter were first talking about Petter's wife, but when the topic changed to the tax form, the code-switching occurred. Therefore, it is said that this is an example of situational code-switching which was triggered by a topic shift. See for example Azuma's explanation (1997:29).

ラマナル語での会話は，途中でボクマル語にスイッチしている。家族のことを話している間はラマナル語で会話が進むが，役場での公的な用件に話の内容が変わると，言葉もボクマル語に変わる。このように，状況の変化（この場合は話題の変化）によっておこるコードスイッチングは，状況によるコードスイッチング（situational code-switching）とよばれている。

[The conversation in Ranamal switches to Bokmal in the middle. When the speakers were talking about family matters, the conversation was conducted in Ranamal, but when the topic changes to a public transaction at the office, the language changes to Bokmal. In this way, the code-switching which is triggered by situational change (topic change in this case) is called situational code-switching.] (Translated into English by Yohena.)

When this example is examined from the perspective of a change in role-relationships, however, it also becomes possible to interpret that this code-

switching signaled the change in the participants' roles in the conversation from personal friends to a citizen and an tax office worker. If metaphorical code-switching generally signifies the shift in role relationships, then this example may also be said to involve some characteristics of metaphorical code-switching.

Let's take a look at Blom and Gumperz' (1972:425) original explanation of this event here.

> The language switch here relates to particular kinds of topics or subject matters rather than to change in social situation. Characteristically, the situation in question allow for the enactment of two or more different relationships among the same set of individuals. The choice of either [Ranamal] or [Bokmal] alludes to these relationships and thus generates meanings which are quite similar to those conveyed by the alternation between *ty* and *vy* in the examples from Russian literature cited by Friedrich [1972]. We will use the term *metaphorical switching* for this phenomenon. (Italics by Blom and Gumperz)

Thus, Blom and Gumperz recognize the metaphorical function associated with different relationships between the participants in this case of code-switching. Why are such different views toward the same example proposed by different linguists? Is this example situational code-switching or metaphorical code-switching, or can it be both?

Whether topic changes alter the situation or not also seems to be a key factor in understanding the apparent confusion among scholars. Romaine (2000) identifies topic as a component of a speech event, and topic change contributes to situational code-switching. Holmes (2001:36), on the other hand, explains that the change of topic symbolizes a change in relationship between the interlocutors in the above example:

Nothing appears to change except the topic of discussion and with it the code. In fact the change of topic here symbolizes a change in the relationship between the men. They switch from their roles as neighbors to their roles as bureaucrat and member of the public. In other words they switch from a personal interaction to a more formal transaction.

This kind of role switch is commonly associated with a code switch in multilingual communities.

As I have mentioned, metaphorical code-switching is often understood to signal the change in role relationship. For example, Pan (2000:34) summarizes the distinction between situational and metaphorical code-switching in the following way:

> Blom and Gumperz (1972) distinguish two kinds of code-switching: situational code-switching and metaphorical code-switching. Situational code-switching occurs when there is a change in the topic or participants, while metaphorical code-switching signals a change in role relationship such as group membership and ingroup/outgroup distinction.

Fasold (1984:194) notes that, in metaphorical code-switching, "the linguistic choice becomes a symbol or 'metaphor' for the relationship being enacted *regardless* of the situation" (Italics by Fasold). Such explanations of the definitions between situational and metaphorical code-switching seem to represent one of the most common understandings of the phenomena by many sociolinguists. But if metaphorical code-switching does signal a change in role relationship while a change of topics causes situational code-switching, the example we examined above involves both dimensions of code-switching: shift of topics and shift of role-relationships. Therefore it is not only difficult but also problematic to attribute this kind of example to just one type of code-switching as some authors of socioling-

uistics textbooks have done.

Another way to look at the difference between situational and metaphorical code-switching is to consider the speakers' roles in determining the language codes. Romaine (1989:159) states that, in metaphorical code-switching in Gumperz' sense, the speakers have more freedom to choose linguistic varieties to accomplish their communicative intents:

> The difference between the kind of approach advocated by those such as Weinreich, who see code-switching as a function of changes in setting, topic, etc. and those such as Gumperz, lies at least partly in the role attributed to the speaker. In the pragmatic approach, the speaker plays an active role in choosing the perspective and social framework in which he intends his discourse to be situated. Language choice is not imposed upon him by factors such as setting and topic. The pragmatic approach does not generate a predictive model.

When we look at various situations of communication, there are different degrees of formality, familiarity, and expectations for appropriate behaviors for the participants. Some situations such as religious ceremonies may be considered more strict in terms of the expected choice of language code, but some other situations may allow the participants a wider freedom to choose the instruments for communication. The way people recognize a particular situation as more formal or not may also differ, depending on their age, gender, education, regional background etc. Therefore, speakers' roles in choosing linguistic varieties may differ as well. As Romaine states, the speakers' roles in the choice of codes is only a partial factor that contributes to the difference between situational and metaphorical code-switching.

Let's look at another example. Romaine (2000:59-60) explains metaphorical code-switching by using a case observed in a university classroom.

Metaphorical code-switching, however, concerns the various communicative effects the speaker intends to convey. For example, teachers deliver formal lectures in the official standard form of Norwegian, but lecturers shift to regional Norwegian dialect when they want to encourage discussion among the students. Thus, while the components of the speech event such as speaker, topic, listener, setting have not changed, the tone of the interaction has been altered by a switch in language.

Romaine's example seems to be originally from Blom and Gumperz (1972). But this example raises some questions regarding the nature of metaphorical code-switching. The components of the speech event such as speaker, topic, listener, and setting have not changed when the teachers changed from the official standard form of Norwegian to the regional Norwegian dialect. But if the activity has changed from lecture to discussion among the students, doesn't that mean a change of speech events? By code-switching, the teachers may have conveyed the shift in communicative activities: this is the end of the lecture, and now it is your turn to speak. If so, could this example be seen as situational code-switching?

Blom and Gumperz (1972:424) explains this shift as follows:

> Similarly, teachers report that while formal lectures — where interruptions are not encouraged — are delivered in [Bokmal], the speakers will shift to [Ranamal] when they want to encourage open and free discussion among students. Each of these examples involves clear changes in the participants' definition of each other's rights and obligation. We will use the term *situational switching* to refer to this kind of a language shift. (Italics by Blom and Gumperz)

As we can see, Blom and Gumperz (1972) actually treat this as an example of

situational switching. It is not clear why Romaine gives such a different account of this example from that of Blom and Gumperz, but the different treatment of the same example by different scholars is very confusing.

It seems that while situational code-switching tends to pay more attention to salient aspects of social factors which constitute a speech event, the notion of metaphorical code-switching emphasizes metaphorical functions that code-switching can carry. But these two types of switching are actually closely related. Some cases of switching can involve the characteristics attributed to both types of switching at the same time.

Conclusion

As we have seen, there are discrepancies in the treatment of situational and metaphorical code-switching in textbooks on sociolinguistics. The same example may sometimes be introduced as a case of situational switching while it is treated as metaphorical switching in others. Such diverse interpretations of actual data show the difficulty in distinguishing various functions of code-switching.

It is important to recognize the metaphorical functions of code-switching. But it is problematic for sociolinguistic textbooks to describe situational code-switching and metaphorical code-switching as contrastive types of switching in their occurrences. What should be emphasized is the complexity and possibility of multiple interpretations of code-switching because code-switching may be triggered for more than one reason, including factors associated with both situational and metaphorical code-switching. Code-switching is indeed a very effective communicative tool. And therefore, it is complex.

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2) Holmes (2001:42) states that code-mixing gives the impression that "the speaker is mixing up codes indiscriminately or perhaps because of incompetence."