



Conversational Code-Switching in Visakhapatnam

Shawn Kory Stevens

Code-switching is defined as the alternation between two or more languages in the course of speech. In multilingual communities, speakers will alternate between these languages, or codes, depending on the situation, context, and other sociolinguistic factors. Code-switching is distinct from linguistic borrowing because the words are not added to the mental lexicon of that language. In linguistic borrowing, words are phonologically adapted to the rules and format of another language, therefore becoming part of the lexicon of that language (Lederberg and Morales 1985). Speakers do not recognize the loan word as being bor-

rowed from another language or code, but rather consider loan words to be native to their base language.

A common example in English is the word *furniture*. This word is of French descent, but English speakers need not know the etymological identity of the word to employ it in fluent, casual speech. The word has been adjusted from the original French pronunciation, namely the vowels, to fit into the framework of the English language. When a native English speaker uses this word, he or she is simply selecting the word from the English lexicon present in the speaker's mind. Monolinguals can use linguistic borrowings in speech without having any knowledge of another language. There is no code-switching present at all in linguistic borrowing because the speaker recognizes this word as part of his or her own language. Borrowed words can even be found in dictionaries of other languages because they have officially joined the vocabulary of another language.

Code-switching is different in that this linguistic phenomenon only occurs when a speaker and the audience have mastery of more than one language. Some research has indicated that there are many situational variables that affect the presence and frequency of code-switching (Gumperz 1977; McClure 1977). For example, code-switching is affected by the topic of conversation (e.g., talking about family matters vs. work), the participants in a conversation (e.g., their linguistic abilities, social status, age), and the location or setting of the conversation (e.g., at home vs. at work). Because topic, participants, and location or setting of a conversation are systematic and somewhat predictable, researchers have concluded that there is a set of socio-linguistic rules that govern this code-switching behavior (Gumperz 1977). In other words, speakers involved in code-switching have a conscious understanding of when one can and cannot code-switch between languages.

Code-switching speakers can alternate between languages in a number of different ways. Intersentential code-switching is the alternation of languages between sentences. This means that speakers will

speaking full sentences in one language, but may alternate languages after phrase endings. The most common type of code-switching is intrasentential switching, which is the alternation of languages within a single sentence (Lederberg and Morales 1985). The most common type of intrasentential code-switching is the insertion of a single lexical item from a language, usually a noun, into a sentence composed of words from the other language (McClure and McClure 1975).

The motivation behind the present study is related to Gumperz's claim that the most common type of code-switching is a single noun item being inserted into the syntax of the matrix language (Gumperz 1977). The validity of this statement has been tested in two different contexts. First, young boys (ages 12–16) were observed playing cricket and their speech was recorded and analyzed. Second, cricket commentators on television were recorded and analyzed in order to search for which types of words were most commonly inserted into the matrix language. The goal of the present study is to challenge Gumperz's claim that the most commonly inserted lexical item is a single noun, with the following possible outcomes: 1) nouns will be the most commonly inserted lexical item, or 2) nouns will not be the most commonly inserted lexical item.

1. Nouns Are The Most Commonly Code-Switched Grammatical Category.

Code-switching involves the alternation between two or more codes within the course of speech, one of these languages acting as the matrix language. The inserted words assimilate to the grammar and overall structure of the matrix language. Code-switching is not to be confused with borrowing. Code-switched words do not become a part of the mental lexicon of the matrix language, but rather speakers consciously

recognize code-switched words as being a word or unit from a second language lexicon.

As previously mentioned, the most common type of code-switching is intrasentential code-switching, or the alternation of languages within a single sentence (Lederberg and Morales 1985). The most common type of intrasentential code-switching is the insertion of a single lexical item, typically a noun, into a sentence composed of words from the matrix language (McClure and McClure 1975). Based on previous research, code-switching seems to occur based on highly rigid grammatical categories. Ornstein argues that languages tend to borrow nouns more than any other word class (Ornstein 1976). He also goes on to say that beyond nouns, code-switching from any other category is rare. This seems quite logical because speakers will typically have a good command of individual vocabulary units rather than complex grammatical structures.

If nouns are the most commonly inserted grammatical category, then one would expect to see an overwhelming occurrence of nouns being inserted in sentences of the matrix language because this seems to be easiest for the speakers and would agree with previous research on the topic. The common use of code-switched nouns could have some implications on second language acquisition, positing that speakers have a better command of a single noun in a second language than any other grammatical unit. However, in order to make that inference, further research would be required.

2. Nouns Are Not The Most Commonly Inserted Grammatical Category.

There is plenty of research that points at nouns being the most commonly inserted unit in intrasentential code-switching (McClure and

McClure 1975; Ornstein 1976), though this may not always be the case. Code-switching is defined as a widely operative norm of communication in certain types of multilingual communities (G. Sankoff 1972). Based on this definition, any type of word can be inserted into the matrix language and be generally accepted and understood so long as the operation and purpose of the utterance is preserved. Much research has been done regarding the parameters under which each language is selected and utilized in a given situation (Gumperz 1964). Gumperz makes this claim by the following four parameters: participants, topic, discourse type, and setting. In certain situations, such as cricket, nouns may not be the most utilized grammatical category, but rather verbs, which reflect the action of what is happening.

If this proves to be true, the current study will contradict a number of studies that have previously been done on the topic. Due to the narrow scope and sample of the current study, generalizations will not be made until further research is conducted on a larger scale.

3. Methodology.

This study investigates the syntax of the intrasentential code-switching of bilingual English-Telugu speakers in Andhra Pradesh. The code-switching of the subjects was observed within the context of cricket, as this provides an interesting linguistic environment. The British introduced cricket to India during colonization. As such, the language of cricket is a complex mixture of English, Hindi, and local varieties and dialects. The current study seeks to understand how English words are inserted into the matrix language of Telugu. The code-switching was examined through two different studies.

3.1 Cricket on Television.

Television has familiarized the general population in Visakhapatnam to both cricket and code-switching. There are a number of broadcast-

ing stations that televise cricket matches. In this study, three different television networks were observed and analyzed (NTV, Sakshi TV, ESPN India). I recorded eighteen hours of domestic cricket matches (four hours on each broadcasting network). These recordings were uploaded to a computer and then transcribed. Sentences that contained code-switching were also glossed. The majority of these cricket games took place in New Delhi, Chennai, or Mumbai, but they were broadcast in Visakhapatnam. All commentary was in Hindi and Telugu. My purpose in observing and analyzing cricket matches on television was to examine the grammatical categories of the words being inserted into the commentary. While observing these matches, I was paying attention to the frequency of switching and the grammatical category of the code-switched words.

3.2 Casual Cricket.

The second study was conducted on a group of young men at Jassver Academy, a cricket academy along Beach Road in Visakhapatnam. Every evening at 4:00 p.m. a cricket camp begins. There are 28 young men, ranging in age from 18–24 years old. All of these individuals were born in Andhra Pradesh and are native speakers of Telugu. The coach is also from Andhra Pradesh and is fluent in Telugu, English, and Hindi. I was allowed to record and talk with each of these boys individually, as well as record them playing cricket matches against one another. All of the participants reported to have studied at high schools that were conducted in English, known as English-medium high schools. I placed the recording device in the middle of cricket matches at the academy and recorded nine hours of audio. These recordings were then transcribed and, when code-switching was present, glossed as well.

3.3 Threshold of Significance.

The goal of this study is to understand which syntactic category of words is most commonly employed when code-switching. It has been

proposed that nouns are most commonly inserted. All of the code-switching will be recorded, tallied, and presented in a two-way table. If any one syntactic category accounts for more than 30 percent of the code-switching, then we will conclude that the results are statistically significant.

4. Analysis

4.1 Analysis of Cricket Announcers.

The code-switching exhibited by the commentators on television was very advanced and different from what is present on the streets in Visakhapatnam. The commentators were very skilled in English as evidenced by the manner in which their code-switching was employed. Indeed it is impossible to commentate a whole cricket match without inserting some English words, but the broadcasts showed a high level of fluency from the commentators. There are many words in English for which there are no Hindi or Telugu words. Because cricket was introduced relatively recently in Indian history, local languages have not created words to replace English terms. For instance, the word for *bat* in Telugu is “bat.” The word for *wicket* in Hindi is “wicket.” The words are, of course, adapted to Telugu and Hindi phonology and pronunciation but are nonetheless the same word. Likewise, the word “batsmen” is an English word, as there is no Telugu word with the same meaning. At this point, a language has two options: to adopt the word into the new lexicon or to create a new word with the same meaning. Hindi and Telugu have both adopted the British cricket vocabulary into the lexicon of the Indian languages. Therefore, these cricket vocabulary words are very common. On the other hand, even though Hindi and Telugu have words for “ball,” the commentators on all accounts preferred to use the English words to the Hindi or Telugu words.

It was obvious that the cricket announcers were very skilled with both English and their native language of Hindi. They demonstrated the use of full, complex English sentences, which included simply inserting a single noun or a single verb. On occasion, the announcers would use difficult English vocabulary that was hard to understand even for a native English speaker. The following is an example of a difficult English verb being inserted. The top line is the Hindi sentences, with the code-switched words appearing in uppercase. The second line is the English transliteration, and the third line is the full sentence in English.

tej gend jab SCRAMBLED se dalli hai
first ball when scrambled with throw past
“The first ball was scrambled when thrown.”

The Indian announcers are not code-switching to be more easily understood. Gumperz states that one of the motivations behind code-switching is universal comprehension (Gumperz 1977). However, in the example above, English may not have been used to facilitate universal comprehension. There are a number of different reasons why a word like “scrambled” would be inserted into a Hindi sentence. The commentator’s personal background could play a part in which words are inserted. It is possible that Hindi does not have a lexical equivalent of the word “scrambled” and so the speaker inserted the English word. In this particular example, I would support Karen Cheng’s hypothesis that code-switching is a source of pride (Cheng 2003). Switching languages and inserting foreign vocabulary may reflect how one wants to be perceived by others—such as intelligent, proud, educated, or cultured (Cheng 2003). Another reason that possibly explains this vocabulary is that the speaker is unable to find the words in the relevant code to express what he or she wants to say. I have compiled a list of possible motivations for code-switching in the context of cricket:

- lack of one word in either language
- some activities have only been experienced in one of the languages

- some concepts are easier to express in one of the languages
- some words are easier or more distinguishable in one of the languages
- a misunderstanding has to be clarified

In this case, I feel the second and third reasons on the above list are the motivation for employing code-switching in cricket commentating. Cricket is a British game. Upon its introduction in India, there was a diffusion of vocabulary that accompanied the popularity of the sport. These activities have been done in English for so long that there continues to be a linguistic dependence on English to effectively express and explain what happens in the game. Cricket announcers use the English language because some words and situations in cricket have no lexical items to describe such events and occurrences. Throughout all of the observations there seemed to be a definite need to use English. Whether this is because the announcers spent significant time in an English-speaking country or because they initially learned the game in the context of the English language, I do not know.

I constructed the following table based on the recordings of the cricket commentators. The matrix language was Hindi, and English was being inserted into the Hindi sentences. The data presented below is the result of eighteen hours of recordings. The data comes from three different cricket matches with different commentators for each match. One match was an international match where the Indian national cricket team was playing against the England national team. The other two matches were teams from the Indian Cricket League and were taking place in New Delhi. The data is presented below:

Analysis of Cricket Commentators						
Syntactic Category of Switch	Hindi to English		English to Hindi		Total Code-Switches	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Single Nouns	174	21.67%	27	3.36%	201	25.03%
Noun Phrase	52	6.48%	0	0.00%	52	6.48%
Pronoun	9	1.12%	16	1.99%	25	3.11%
Single Verb	109	13.57%	42	5.23%	151	18.80%
Verb Phrase	73	9.09%	3	0.37%	76	9.46%
Adjectives	18	2.24%	21	2.62%	39	4.86%
Imperatives	8	1.00%	0	0.00%	8	1.00%
Numbers	19	2.37%	68	8.47%	87	10.83%
Full Sentences	127	15.82%	37	4.61%	164	20.42%
Totals	589	73%	214	27%	803	100%

Table 1. Categorical distribution chart

There are some interesting findings based on the data above. Gumperz states that the most common type of code-switching is a single noun item being inserted into the syntax of the matrix language (Gumperz 1977). This theory holds true. Another interesting finding is that the announcers were not only speaking English but also adopting other foreign borrowings in their speech. For example, when referring to speed, the announcers would use the term “miles per hour.” I find this very interesting because India uses the metric system. Not only were English words being used, but some foreign references were also being mentioned, furthering the idea that universal comprehension was not the goal.

The high frequency of full English sentences that were used is also noteworthy. It is logical that single nouns being inserted into a Hindi sentence is most common. Most of the vocabulary in cricket can only be expressed in English. However, full English sentences being used at such a high frequency raises some questions. Why would a speaker use so much English? Can the general audience understand? After analyzing the table above, I highly doubt that the cricket commentators are an accurate representation of the typical Indian code-

switcher. These broadcasters appear to be highly educated and possess a high level of proficiency in the English language.

The following sentences are excerpts from the recordings:

Ek se jyda RUN nahi nil raha.

One than more run not get pres. tense marker

“They are not getting more than one run.”

Gend baji karte hai WICKET ke uppar
Bowling pres. doing pres. wicket dative above

“The bowling is above the wicket.”

TYPICAL FAST BOWLER ka aata hai.

Typical fast bowler poss. Come pres.

“A typical fast bowler is coming.”

Atanu BEHIND THE SQUARE khela.

He behind the square played

“He played behind the square.”

ONE HUNDRED FIFTY ke gati se gend baji ka CHANGE OF PACE

One hundred fifty of speed with bowling change of pace

“There is a one hundred fifty kilometers per hour change of pace.”

Latti he aur SLOWER BALL kitne dhesem ati hai.

pres. cont. he slower ball how slow is coming

“There is a slower ball coming to him.”

The examples above show the large range of items being inserted into Hindi sentences. While nouns may be most common in this context, many different grammatical categories are represented in the code-switching.

4.2 Analysis of Casual Cricket.

These results are very different from the results of the previous section of this paper. Almost half (42 percent) of the code-switched words were imperatives. Another 26 percent of the insertions were single verbs being used in Telugu sentences. The data shows that verbs, both in the declarative and imperative moods, were overwhelmingly more common than any other type of grammatical insertion. Gumperz claims that a single noun is the most common grammatical element (1977). However, in this data, noun insertion only accounts for 5.7 percent of the code-switching. Some examples of the imperatives found in the data are as follows:

1. CATCH IT ra!
 - 'catch it'
2. COME ON babu!
 - 'come on'
3. LEAVE IT ra!
 - 'leave it'

The boys would often communicate with each other in English when talking from a distance. For example, when yelling across the pitch (the field) the boys would do so in English. The above examples were all observed when the boys and coach were talking from a distance.

The young men in this study were all attending English-medium educational institutions, which definitely affects their level of English proficiency. The coach, when addressing the group as a whole, would speak in all Telugu. However, when talking with individuals, he would speak in English. This is consistent with Singh's theory that there is a difference in register when speaking in a position of authority as opposed to speaking with a friend (Singh 1983).

Player to player communication was conducted all in Telugu, except when yelling across the field or yelling things out. Exclamations

were also in English, such as “good ball” or “good fielding.” It is my theory that these common exclamations and imperatives are learned through watching cricket on television. Because cricket is such an important aspect of Indian culture, there is motivation for these boys to want to be like their favorite cricketers. In America, this is similar to when boys want to copy or act like superheroes or stars in their favorite television shows. Everyone in America knows Superman, Spiderman, and Batman. In India, everyone knows Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, and M.S. Dhoni. I believe that these boys watch their favorite player on the pitch and then try to act like them, often copying what they hear them say.

The following chart is a summary of the data from the cricket match recordings. The chart highlights a significant increase in the use of verbs, both in the imperative and declarative moods.

Analysis of Casual Cricket						
Syntactic Category of Switch	Telugu to English		English to Telugu		Total Code-Switches	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Single Nouns	28	5.7%	4	0.82%	32	6.56%
Noun Phrase	5	1%	0	0%	5	1.02%
Pronoun	17	3.5%	7	1.4%	24	4.92%
Single Verb	126	25.8%	2	0.41%	128	26.23%
Verb Phrase	2	0.4%	0	0%	2	0.41%
Adjectives	30	6.1%	0	0%	30	6.15%
Imperatives	196	40.2%	9	1.84%	205	42.01%
Numbers	7	1.4%	0	0%	7	1.43%
Full Sentences	42	8.6%	13	2.66%	55	11.27%
Totals	453	93%	35	7%	488	100%

Table 2. Categorical distribution chart

Noun usage decreases to just 6.56 percent, whereas a single verb increases to over 26 percent. Imperatives account for almost half of total code-switching occurrences. The increased use of the imperative seems to fit the nature of sports, as there is a lot of movement and col-

laboration that requires the use of the imperative. The majority of the code-switching occurs when an English word is inserted into a Telugu sentence.

5. Conclusion.

The results and analysis of the current study supports the second study, saying that nouns are *not* the most common code-switched grammatical category. The code-switching of cricket commentators on television supported Gumperz's claim by inserting a single lexical item 25 percent of the time. The players, however, only inserted a single noun 6.56 percent of the time. The players code-switched by inserting verbs (imperative commands and single verbs) 68.24 percent of the time. The current study recognized a threshold of significance at 30 percent or more. The data shows that verbs accounted for more than 30 percent of the recorded code-switching, concluding that nouns are *not* the most common, therefore supporting the second theory.

Code-switching is a large field of sociolinguistics, and this research has shed more light on code-switching in Southern India. Borrowing and code-switching are becoming more common as English continues to spread and dominate many areas of the world. This study explored the categorical distribution of code-switching and attempted to look at common patterns and possible reasons as to why certain switching occurs.

Although the initial intention was to produce results that could provide generalization, I have found that the studies were rather limited and narrow in their analyses. The number of subjects for each of the experiments could be increased to produce more concrete and general trends among the population. Because cricket is a male-dominated sport, females were essentially non-existent in most of this research. While the data produced may be accurate for males, these conclusions

cannot be generalized to a female population without further studying females in the context of cricket.

Another limitation on these study results is that I was located in a particularly wealthy area of Visakhapatnam. Therefore, many of the individuals that were questioned or participated in this study were, on average, more proficient in English compared to other areas of Andhra Pradesh and certainly other areas of India as a whole. Many of the neighborhoods where these studies took place were wealthy, meaning that the children had the means of attending English-medium schools and the adults had more exposure to the English language. This means that the individuals in this study had more proficiency with the English language and were likely more prone to code-switching and utilizing English words in their daily speech.

6. FUTURE WORK.

There are a number of possibilities for further work using the basic structure and methodology of the current study. Women were not analyzed or the target of this study, as women do not play cricket in India. However, women's use of English in a non-cricket setting could vary from men's and would be an interesting complement to these results. The data from a study analyzing women's use of code-switching would complement the current study and provide a more comprehensive picture of the sociolinguistic landscape in southern India.

There have been a few studies conducted regarding Sports Announcer Talk (SAT). Aside from code-switching, a look into SAT could reveal some interesting linguistic habits and findings. Sports announcers are paid to talk for hours; the structure of their job alone has a great effect on the way they speak. A study regarding SAT could potentially provide more insight and reasoning behind the data in the current study.

This study was conducted in an area where English-medium schools were very common. This study may produce different results if conducted in an area where English schools are less common. I believe the data in the current study possesses higher occurrences of code-switching because the population in the area has higher rates of speaking English than does the average location within India.

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