STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS IN GERMAN SOJOURNER CODE-SWITCHING AND IMPLICATIONS ON MULTIPLE EMBEDDING OF CULTURAL IDENTITIES

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0. Introduction: Identity

As identity can be understood in very different ways, I will give a brief bibliographical review on different relevant concepts of what identity is. Postmodern conceptualizations of the term *identity* for instance reveal a large divergence from the original meaning of the term: *identity* derives from a combination of the Latin *idem* and *unitas* to form the late Latin *identitas.* Accordingly, its denotation is "the sameness of a person or thing in its substance under all circumstances" (Oxford English Dictionary, 1992). The term *identity* in modern times, however, has been hardly thought of as a stable unified oneness, but is rather conceptualized as a fluid or fragmented entity (Keupp *et al.* 1999).

Identities are formed through influences such as regional ethnic practices, family upbringing, class, race, education, language or variety, gender, sexual orientation, and disability. Further, identities are constructed within limited parameters: ideological, linguistic and socio-cultural contexts of one's society. As these parameters are different in different societies and cultures, an identity developed in one culture would not fit well into a new cultural context with its corresponding language and therefore requires the reshaping of one's identity. This has also been conceptualized as the formation of a new "language ego", an identity a person develops in regard to the new language he or she speaks (Guiora and Acton 1979).

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1. Sociolinguistics and Identity

Gumperz (1982: 26) elaborates on the debate between two groups of social theorists: scholars who argue that social norms and categories are pre-existing and "individual behavior and conflict or action theorists, who see human interaction as constitutive of social reality". Thus, discourse analysts understand that individuals in everyday social interaction are able "to alter their social personae" (Gumperz 1982: 27) according to the different social genres within the pre-existing cultural, social, and linguistics norms. Widdiecombe (1998: 202) contends that the "fragmented self is constructed through the multiple discourses, in which it is momentarily positioned". For example, one could speak as a woman, a mother, an Italian American, a doctor, a lesbian, or a daughter, depending on the situation and participants of a conversation. However, these identities are not stable, but they are negotiated in context (Brown – Levinson 1987; Schulz von Thun 1999; Yep 1998). Collier (1998: 131) maintains that "being a member of a cultural-identity group occurs when interlocutors demonstrate their ability to use and understand the language code, symbolic forms, and interpretations; share worldview premises and sense of history".

Ethnographic conversation analyses examines the ways in which conversationalists in different cultures use grammar and conversational devices to show how societies and cultures differ in their ways of speaking. These can be divided into research that focuses on the discourse analyses of monolingual discourse and analyses of code-switching.

2. Code-Switching and Identity

Blom – Gumperz (1972) were among the first to theorize social functions of code-switching. They identified two types: metaphorical and situational code-switching, and understood that "situational switching involves change in participants and/or strategies, metaphorical switching involves only a change in topical emphasis" (1972: 409). Thus, situational code-switching refers to a switch evoked by a change of the conversational context, i.e., the situation or a participant. Metaphorical code-switching can be understood as a rhetorical device in which the speakers employ the switch for communicative effect.

Further, Gumperz (1982) first introduced the concepts of 'we-code' and 'they-code' that refer to the bilingual communities' ethnic language and the dominant societies' language, respectively. This concept of *we-code*, associated with informal and in-group activities, and of *they-code*, associated with formal, out-group activities, has been used by researchers whose analyses "rest on naïve social theory which presents concepts such as agency, action, identity and social role as non-problematic" (Sebba – Wootton 1998: 262). Gumperz had not intended this static identification and was misunderstood in that he conceptualized this linguistic group identity as symbolic, and not as a prediction of usage of either in- or out-group language. In the analysis of the data of this study, it will become clear how the reality of employing English (they-code) and German (we-code) are transversed.

Conclusions of recent studies on code-switching and identity include the following:

– Schely-Newmann (1998) finds that code-switching is the main discourse strategy through which the narrator is able to reinforce group solidarity with the listeners and to take on different roles and characters of the stories he is narrating.

– Scheu (2000: 133), in her study on Spanish-German bilinguals in Madrid, claims that "effective communication requires that speakers and audiences agree on the meaning of the words and on the cultural impact of values attached to choice of expression".

– Cashman (2000) investigates the identity constructions of the hostess, a Cuban immigrant to the US, and the US-born guest, an actor in a Latino TV-Show. Whereas the actor is not completely successful in constructing a bilingual identity through his attempt to speak Spanish only, the hostess code-switches and is successful in doing so. Bilingual identity in this study is understood as proficiency in successful code-switching as a linguistic reflection of being a competent member of the US Latino community.

– Aidmann (2000) shows how a child constructs her bilingual and bicultural identity through letter writing in Russian and English over a period of four years. The author analyses the written discourse of the child and concludes that the intended audience and the purpose of communication determined the bilingual's choice of one language.

– Sebba – Wootton (1998), in their analysis of code-switching of London-born Caribbean youth, argue that one variety cannot automatically be associated with in-group or out-group identification, but that "the linguistic medium by means of which social identities are constructed may itself be a part of the identity but we cannot assume a fixed relationship between a social identity and the language of the utterance that evokes it" (1998: 284).

3. Overview on the English Language Influence on German

The German language is changing rapidly through the influence of English media, pop songs, computer technology, and Internet terminology. Clyne (1995) states that the current openness to the internationalization of Germany can be seen as a reaction to Nazi xenophobia and the historical development of postwar Germany. New political and economic alliances, such as NATO and the European Union, as well as the political alignment with the United States, contributed to the strong influence of English on German.

Due to institutional openness toward English in the media, linguistic transfers from English have become common in the everyday language of certain social groups in Germany. Linguistic transfer from American English characterizes the in-group jargon of the usually younger, more educated groups.

Transfer also intends to give the user "status or prestige" (Clyne 1995: 212) to be open-minded, young and educated. *Der Spiegel*[1] claims that "English or whatever sounds like it stands for progress, an uncomplicated way of thinking and the American way of life" (Clyne 1995: 242, my translation). A German informant residing in Germany stated that certain professional groups, such as advertising agency employees and people working in the media, are more prone to employ a high level of lexical and idiomatic transfers from English. Modern German is proven to be replete with English borrowings and 'pseudo- transfers' (Clyne 1995: 204), such as *Top-Preise* for low prices and *handy* for cellular phone. Therefore, if bilingual sojourners employ code-switching, it will not always be representative of bilingual and bicultural identity.

4. Grammatical constraint models

Several linguists developed models that identified structural constraints on intra-sentential code switching (Poplack 1980; Poplack – Sankoff 1988; Muysken 1995; Myers-Scotton 1995). Poplack, for example, proposed that Spanish-English code-switching is governed by the free morpheme constraint and the equivalence constraint. The free morpheme constraint proposes that a switch between a bound morpheme and a content morpheme may not occur unless the content morpheme had been phonologically integrated. Thus, an intra-morphological switch such as *catcheando is permissible. (Romaine 1996). The equivalence constraint predicts that code-switching would only occur where the surface structures of the two languages map onto each other. For example, a noun phrase such as *su favorito spot would not be permissible because it presents an ungrammatical structure in Spanish. In his overview on grammatical constraint models, Muysken (1995) distinguishes between insertional and alternate models of code-switching. Whereas the speakers in my data alternate between English and German, there are mostly large chunks with either language as the base language. When English is the base language, they hardly code-switch to German. However, when German is the base language, there is high evidence of code-switching into German. Therefore, an "insertional model" (Muysken 1995: 183) was adequate for the data.

Myers-Scotton developed the Matrix Language Frame Model, which she lays out in her book *Duelling Languages* (1995). It is assumed that one of the languages plays a more dominant role in an utterance, the Matrix Language (ML), and its grammar provides the morphosyntactic frame in which different constituents become inserted. Constituents in an utterance could be an ML island within the Embedded Language (EL),

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[1] "Wir wollen viel 'wow'!" Der Spiegel 44, 30 Feb. 2000: 240–244.

an EL island, or an ML+ EL island. Myers-Scotton claims that the morpheme type (if it is a system or content morpheme) will determine if it appears in an EL island or in the ML Frame. System morphemes (functional, closed, and often bound class in the Indo-European languages), which are syntactically relevant, must be from the ML (the System Morpheme Principle). Also, the morpheme order must not violate the ML morpheme order (the Morpheme Order Principle). In my analysis, I will show how these hypotheses do and do not apply.

Further, a discussion exists about the distinction of what constitutes borrowing and what code-switching. Myers-Scotton categorizes a lexical item as borrowing when it occurs more than three times in her data. Muysken (1995) distinguishes between nonce loans, which are "borrowed at the spur of the moment" (Muysken 1995: 190), and established loans, which are "listed" and have gained acceptance in a particular speech community. Poplack – Sankoff – Miller (1988) investigated nonce and established loans and the significance of phonological integration into French, concluding that the phonological integration depends on the borrower's bilingual ability.

5. The study

Drawing from the numerous studies on code-switching, its grammatical constraints and its relationship to the speakers' cultural identities, it became apparent that the combination of a functional and structural analysis will be fruitful in understanding the patterns of bilingual identity construction.

In spring through autumn 2000 I conducted a total of six sociolinguistic interviews with groups of German immigrants residing in the San Francisco Bay Area. I

used both English and German for the interviews in all sessions to reinforce my group membership as a German acculturated to the United States. However, I claimed that the topic of the interviews was cross-cultural experiences, so as to not influence their linguistic choices, specifically their code-switching behavior. The speakers were videotaped in some instances and tape-recorded during all sessions.

Sociolinguistic interviews are used to analyze speakers' use of everyday language "without distorting it through the process of observation" (Schiffrin 1987: 41). Linguists use a variety of interviewing techniques and elicitation methods within the interview. The fact that I served as an interviewer and as a participant has influenced the data in this study, especially on a content level. A question-answer format has shown to inhibit the elicitation of informal talk. To minimize the effect of the format, group interviews were chosen, and I attempted to stay in the background as much as possible. It should be noted, therefore, that my background made my presence fairly unobtrusive. I immigrated to the United States a decade ago and share the same linguistic background as the other participants. I was able to meet with most of the speakers before and after the interview for several social activities, which provided me with the opportunity to observe the participants over a longer period of time. This also increased the informants' comfort with me.

During the interview I often changed roles: I asked specific questions, but most of the time I observed. I also disclosed several of my acculturation or personal experiences. This enabled the speakers to ask me questions and to see me as a participant rather than as an observer. Because group interviews were conducted, the speakers often addressed and questioned each other about the topics at hand.

6. Grammatical constraints in the data

Poplack (1980) states that intra-morphological code switching would not occur without phonological assimilation of the content morpheme. My data violates this constraint model in all instances. English content morphemes that are phonologically not assimilated appear with German function morphemes in one lexeme frequently.

Example 1

The participants are discussing the topics dating and love
76 W   aber Du hältst Dir das halt immer so wenn wie wie du dir   den
77   Computer ***upgradest*** *bei der time* wo du dann den Computer gekauft
78   hast,   gibt   es dann schon wieder ne neue Version.
"but you plan everything as if you upgrade your computer, by the time you have bought it, there is already a new version"

Example 2

 89 W   Und mehr als was habe ich in meinem Leben erreicht. Oder wo wo bin ich ***getravelt***,

"and more than what have I accomplished in my life, where have I traveled"

In the examples shown above, the English content morphemes are pronounced in English: the r- coloring and the pronunciation of the vowel /æ/ violate the free morpheme constraint. This is significant not only for this data but for borrowed and inflected verbs from English into German in general. The English content morpheme is pronounced English, even by mono-cultural speakers who employ established borrowings intra-morphologically such as in *upgradest* in their speech. This is to say that the free morpheme constraint model does not hold true.

However, both of these examples hold true for Myers-Scotton's Morpheme Order Principle. The Matrix language, providing the majority of morphemes in lines 76-78 is German. The system morpheme *-est* for second person singular in German is the suffix added to the English content morpheme. Further, this intra-morphological code-switch follows the morpheme order principle as well. A hypothetical utterance such as

   **wenn du dir upgradest den computer*

is grammatical according to English sentence structure, but ungrammatical in German. The morpheme order principle is followed as the syntax of the Matrix Language is followed in this utterance.

The same is the case in line 89: *getravelt* takes the perfect tense circumfix from German, which is the Matrix language. This follows the system morpheme principle. The sentence structure in English and in German is the same, so that this example would not prove Myers-Scotton's morpheme order principle. However, it validates Poplack's equivalence constraint model, in that the sentence structures of both languages overlap.

Example 3

Speakers are talking about German kindergarden children, who were naked on a hot summer day

334 W   =*Here* würden sie den *teacher **suen**   millions who dares to do such a thing*

(here they would sue the teacher, millions! Who dares to do such a thing)

This example illustrates how both the system morpheme principle and the morpheme order principle are followed, whereas the free morpheme constraint model and the equivalence model are not. The speaker pronounces an English voiceless /s/ instead of

the German voiced /z/ in the content morpheme *sue*. The system morpheme *-en* for the third person plural in the present tense is used. As German is the Matrix language, according to the model, the system morpheme must come from German. The Embedded and Matrix Language Island follows the morpheme order of German. A sentence such as

* here sie wuerden suen den teacher

follows the structure of the EL English, but violates German grammar. Thus, the example violates the equivalence constraint model and exploits the morpheme order principle.

In many other instances of this data, the Matrix Language Frame model holds true, whereas the equivalent and free morpheme constraint model do not. This leads to the conclusion that the former is a stronger model and the latter a fairly weak model. However, there are several utterances in my data that violate Myers-Scotton's model.

The participants talk about politicians

Example 4

192 W Und das gibt's wirklich in jedem Land halt nur wenige die **out** die **stand out**
193   ich glaub das ist wirklich äh grenzenüberschreitend.
(and that exists really in every country, there are only a few who stand out I believe that it is like that across the borders).

The system morpheme principle is not followed in this utterance for two reasons. The phrasal verb "stand out" has two German equivalent phrasal verbs *herausragen* and *hervorragen.* As we can see, the speaker attempts to use *out* first in attempt to follow the German structure. According to German syntax *out standen* with the third person plural inflection *-en* needs to be produced. The speaker however corrects himself and follows

the English sentence structure and morpheme order, which violates both the morpheme order and system morpheme principle.

Further, the Matrix Language Frame Model does not account for two major features in the data. There are long turn exchanges in English where the speakers do not code-switch into German nor borrow from German. There are only two occurrences of an ML island in the EL, both employed by speaker G.

Examples 5 and 6

243   G   *is there a gain for* mich (me)

289   G   = *yeah and for me to do nothing that's fine and don't have a problem*

290   *with that that's* sogar super *I know how to relax and uhm I don't like to schedule my day*

        mit das   das ist (even super)

It is apparent in the data that there is a large discrepancy between borrowings from English and from German into the respective ML because English and German are about equally used in these data. The above examples follow the morpheme order principle even though the syntax in both cases is the same for German and English (compare line 243 *Ist da ein Gewinn fuer mich* "is there a gain for me" and line 290 *Das ist sogar super* "that is even super").

When speaking German some deep borrowing from English into German occurs. W. uses an English sentence structure with German morphemes in several utterances. This case is not distinguished by Myers-Scotton as such. Consider example 7:

Example 7 (Comparison of American-German leisure behavior)

232 W   = *But they do not* wo der Deutsche die Gradwanderung schafft

233	er arbeitet hart er aber ist auch in der Lage wirklich seine Freizeit, seinen Feierabend zu
234	machen und sich dann nochmal hinzusetzen und dann wird nochmal ein Bier getrunken
235	mit den Kollegen *after after work* und dann sitzt halt und spricht halt **über Stunden**. Das
236	kann der Amerikaner ja nicht dem ist ja dann die Zeit zu wertvoll. Es ist ja dann die
237	Freizeit alles schon im *schedule* drin

(*But they do not* where the German can create the distance, he works hard but he is also able to really his leisure, to be off work and to sit down and they you drink a beer with the coworkers *after after work* and sit and talk for hours. The American cannot do that, the time is too important. There is the leisure everything is already in the *schedule*).

The structure *ueber Stunden* is not grammatical in German, which is the Matrix language in this utterance; the correct form would be *stundenlang* ("hours long"). The speaker seems to borrow the deep structure of English, which uses the prepositional phrases *for hours* and *over a period of time*. In another utterance a preposition that is required according to ML German structure is left out.

Myers-Scotton (1995a: 214) hypothesizes different fairly clear-cut scenarios where the ML (usually the speakers' first language) turns into the embedded language due to extended residence in another country such as in immigrant communities. Even though her model does account for some of the code-switches and borrowings, it does not hold for deep borrowing where lexical borrowing plays only a minor role. It fails to explain why the syntax of the EL is used when the ML is spoken. A further development of her theory is therefore needed to account for the fluid and unpredictable nature of language in general and code-switching in particular.

We will now look at historical and cultural motivations for code-switching and the relevance for the speakers' cultural identities.

7. Cultural Motivations for employing borrowings

As mentioned above, the speakers employ a high level of nonce borrowing. It will be shown how different types of borrowings are culturally significant. Since both of the speakers are bilingual and live in an English speaking country, we can expect that phonological integration into German has not occurred.

Example 8

14 I   Das ist einfach nur so eine *formula*, dass dass Du jetzt natürlich weisst aber am Anfang

15   findet man das so komisch oder nicht?

16 W   ja wenn Du im   *supermarket* bist und jemand geht dann halt   vor   Dir durch

17   und sagt *sorry! excuse me!* als   hätt'   er   was   ganz Schlimmes getan

(I   That is just a *formula*, that you now know of course, but in the beginning, you find it funny,don't you? W. Yes when you are in the *supermarket* and somebody passes in front of you and says *sorry! excuse me*! as if he had done something very bad)

The nonce borrowings *formula* and *supermarket* would not have been used in German monolingual discourse. They are culturally significant to the experience of these immigrants. *Formula* refers to apologetic expressions, such as *excuse me!* when passing somebody at a certain distance. It is culturally expected to use such a formula in the US, whereas in Germany it is not. Similarly, the borrowing *supermarket* refers to an American supermarket and not a Russian or German one. By using *supermarket* instead of the German *Supermarkt*, another loan translation, the speaker triggers the connotations of supermarket, which are different from those of *Supermarkt*. The American supermarket is bigger, it offers a larger variety of consumer goods, the customer service is friendlier, etc. The borrowings *sorry* and *excuse me* are used instead of the German *Entschuldigung* or *Entschuldigen Sie bitte!* to present the American situation in a more

authentic way. Also, the connotations of the German translation *Entschuldigung* would be different. A German would only say *Entschuldigung* if there was a direct purpose to talk to another person. Such as *Entschuldigen Sie, sie haben was verloren*, *Excuse me, you've lost something!* or *Excuse me that I hit you with my shopping cart!* These nonce borrowings are therefore reflecting the experiences in the United States and their cultural implications.

Example 9

177 W   Clinton, ja und er hat dann und sie haben ihn gefragt   ob er *sexual intercourse* hatte

178   mit der mit dem *Intern* und er sagt er hat dann erst mal lang und breit angefangen   *sexual*

179   intercourse zu definieren und hat   sich   dann   natürlich

180   G   = *to define what it means*

181   W   irgendsowas   weil   er   ja   *lawyer*   ist und   er

182   spielt natürlich er ist sehr redegewandt

(W.   Clinton yes and he then and they asked him if had sexual intercourse with the Intern and he says then he started to define *sexual intercourse* in great detail and the of course.. G to define what it means

W.   something like that because of course he is a lawyer and he plays of course he is very eloquent…)

The borrowings used in this excerpt are not established in German monolingual discourse and they have different cultural implications than the German counterparts. The single-word code-switches *intern* and *sexual intercourse* relate to W's experience of hearing about the Monica Lewinsky incident through American media and not the German media. The German word for *Intern* is *Praktikantin*, and for sexual intercourse Germans would say *Geschlechtsverkehr* or simply *Sex* (an established English loanword).[2] For W to use the German *Geschlechtsverkehr* or *Sex* would not have the

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[2] Notably, W does not use the feminine dative article *der* but the neuter or masculine *dem* A possible Explanation is that the phonological shape of *Intern* would require a neuter gender, such as in *das Innere*, *dem Innern*

same connotation as *sexual intercourse*; since the incident happened in the United States and did and would not have happened in a German or European cultural context, where extramarital affairs and multiple marriages of high level politicians are publicly known. W's experience of living in the US, in having followed the case by means of American media, determine the choice of the English code-switches and retell the case in a more authentic American way. Similarly, Lewinsky was referred to as an intern and not a *Praktikantin* in the media. W. uses the nonce borrowing *lawyer* and not the German counterpart *Anwalt*. This borrowing is culturally significant in that there exist different stereotypes about this professional group in American culture and in German culture due to the different judicial systems. The use of the borrowings also establishes the bilingual identity of the speakers. Both languages mark the interlocutors' cultural experiences in Germany and the US and are therefore significant for the bicultural and bilingual identity of the speakers. However, not all borrowings from English imply such cross-cultural experiences, as speakers in Germany make use of English frequently.

Example 10

(Talking about the Clinton trial)

172   W   Ach du hast das nicht gesehen? Als sie

173   ihn *interview*t haben da und

(oh you didn't see that? When they interviewed him and)

(English: *the inner*). The phonological shape of a borrowed word has been a factor for gender assignment in several studies (Romaine 1996).

The verb *interview* is a borrowing from English that is morphosyntactically integrated into the German language and as the majority of English borrowings, the phonology remains mainly English. This borrowing is not an indicator of a bicultural identity as it is integrated into the German language. However, the use of English sentence structure in German gives us a hint of W.'s bilingual and bicultural identity. The phrase *Als sie ihn interviewt haben* "When they interviewed him" would not be used in German, unless it was very clear who "they", the referents are. German would use the passive construction *Als er interviewt wurde* "When he was interviewed" in this scenario. The deep borrowing from English sentence structure into German is the hint of W.'s bilingual and bicultural identity and not the lexical borrowing. Also, consider the first and last example: *Upgrade* has been integrated into German like other phrasal verbs.

Example 1

(The participants are discussing dating and the topic love)

76 W   aber Du hältst Dir das halt immer so wenn wie wie du dir   den Computer **upgradest**

77   *bei der time* wo du dann den Computer gekauft hast, gibt   es dann schon wieder ne

78   neue Version.

(but you plan everything as if you upgrade your computer, by the time you have bought it, there is already a new version)

Example 11

 80   W   = und immer der Drang das **upzugraden** zu müssen.

          And always having the need to upgrade

The infix *zu* (infinitive "to") shows how *upgraden* is treated like the German equivalent *aufrüsten*, *aufzurüsten*. Even though the speaker overuses the *zu* in this utterance, it demonstrates how this phrasal verb is integrated into modern German. In the above cases, the borrowing does not represent a construction of a bilingual and bicultural identity, but is an expression of a postmodern German identity that can be constructed by

contemporary mono-cultural and mono-lingual German speakers as well. *Der Spiegel* claims that the structure of modern German is changing due to this stronger lexical and idiomatic influence of English.

8. Conclusion

This bilingual discourse is representative of the multiple embedding of cultural identities. The German speakers who moved to the US have been exposed to extensive borrowings from English before their arrival. For the mono-cultural Germans this use of language is representative of a new 'progressive, uncomplicated' German identity. In this discourse, the speakers do construct a bilingual and bicultural identity through the alternate use of English and German in general and a high usage of nonce borrowings in particular. The high level of deep borrowing from English is equally indicative for the cross-cultural identity of the interlocutors. More research on such discourses and the structural change of modern German is needed. This is not to say that speakers are always aware of the fact that they code-switch and employ borrowings from English. However, the interlocutors draw from both English and German when they communicate, and the mixing of the two languages shows that they are neither mono-cultural Germans nor Americans. Thus, the data reveal how code-switching serves as an agency in the construction of marginal bilingual identities: the interlocutors are able to express their identities in the discourse by drawing from both German and English; they are re-inventing language in the form of a new mixed code.

Whereas the constraint models do account for many of the code-switches in my data, they did not hold for many other structural features. It seems that a model that

accounts for all of the multiple and complex influences of languages onto each other and their fluid nature is not possible to create. As language and bilingual discourse are developing as we speak, a prediction of all possible language contact phenomena is a precarious undertaking.

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