Discourse Analysis of Code switching in the Community of Chlef: What about the Gender Marking?

Amina Babou*
University of Hassiba Benbouali, Chlef Algeria
aminababou88@yahoo.fr

Abstract:

As more studies on code-switching have been carried out, it becomes more blatant that it should not be considered as a random alternation of two languages but rather a patterned linguistic behaviour. Adopting Auer's discourse analysis to code switching (CS), this paper is an attempt to scrutinize how women and men manage to employ different varieties within discourse to realize their communicative needs. This phenomenon is considered as a communicative device to construct and define particular identities. The findings highlight to what extent women and men engage differently in defining themselves and constructing certain social meaning through the frequent mixture of different varieties in the conversations that form the bulk of day-to-day interactions. The findings reveal that gender division should not be taken for granted and that it is not fixed and absolute because both women and men are in a constant process of negotiation of identities by manipulating different languages in a variety of contexts. The gender parameter is *inter alia* a crucial point that should be taken into consideration as a determining factor of language choice, in general and code-switching in particular.

1. Introduction

There has been a wide range of attempts to give a precise linguistic categorization of the phenomenon of code switching. Crystal (1987) points out that this linguistic style occurs when bilingual speakers tend to alternate between two different varieties during their speech with other bilinguals. A host

---

* Author sending

of linguists define bilingualism as *"The use by an individual, a group or nation of two or more languages in all uses to which [they] put either"* (Bouamrane, 1986: 15).

Above all, the main objective of this research is to reason how men and women use different varieties in the ebb and flow of conversational interactions in an attempt to cater to communicative needs of the context. This thread of research seems as worth exploring because *"the basic principle of language style is that an individual speaker does not always talk the same way on all occasions"* (Bell, 1997:240). Poplack (1980) defines code switching as the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence or constituent, which is governed, in the case of balanced bilinguals, by both extra-linguistic and linguistic factors. Balanced bilinguals are those speakers who master both languages equally well in all contexts.

2.Literature Review

In this earlier works Gumperz (1976) claims that it is necessary to make a distinction between situational and metaphorical CS. In this line of thought, situational code switching is the glue that links the use of certain codes to different domains. Thus, speaking one language when talking with friends and acquaintances at home and switching to other language at work would be a case of situational CS. Metaphorical CS, however, concerns the communicative effect the speaker strives and intends to convey. Said in another way, speakers can also alter their code actively and without the intention of changing the conversational situation, but aiming at enriching it and their messages. In this case, code alternations are not guided by a situational change, but make metaphorical use in their competency of the social meaning of codes.

Thus, metaphorical code switching can be recognized when the variety used is abrupt, unexpectedly happened; howbeit, this switch is not purposeless since it may signal a change in mood, status or attitude of the speaker (Benali-Mohamed, 2007: 64). By this token, the speaker can communicate, through the use of metaphorical CS, metaphoric information about how he intends his words to be interpreted and understood. Moreover, Gumperz extended his earlier ideas and introduced the term "Conversational code switching". The term "conversational code switching" may indicate that Gumperz (1982) intends to emphasize, in particular, on the discourse function of language alternation which he classifies as *"the juxtaposition within the same speech*

exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systemsor subsystems" (1982: 59). Conversational CS, which may arise within situational code-switching, should be nevertheless distinguished from the latter in the sense that it is*" more individual, non-normative, and does not maintain structurallydifferent codes"* (Bouamrane, 1986: 6).

3.Languages of Algeria:

3.1 Arabic Language

Arabic is the language which is known to be spoken by Arabs. Above all, we opt to direct a spotlight not on all the entire Algerian society, but on a limited sample from Chlef, having taken both Arabs and Berbers (Kabyles, in particular) into consideration. They are, indeed all Algerians, yet the history and language must put their feet to disentangle the maze. So, an Arab is a person whose language is mainly Arabic which is a Semitic language originating in Arabia. It has been claimed that the entire population of Mesopotamia, dubbed in Arabic as [bilaad arrafidajn], stemmed in the population movement of (Arab's Island), a locus between the red sea and the Persian Gulf. Given the multilingual dimension of Algeria, classical Arabic (Cl.Ar) enjoys a great prestige, given its historical background as the language of the great Arabic literature.

Interestingly, the feature of "purity" is grossly associated with (Cl.Ar), The Arabic of Quran, or the dialect of the prophet's tribe (Quraish). In modern period, the purity of the language is well-nigh situated thanks to the prescriptive Arabic grammar books and dictionaries which attempt to develop the modern variety of Arabic via education and academic research on Arabic and Arabisation (Ennaji, 2005). In this line of thought, Ennaji (2005) states that classical Arabic is a sign of erudition and Arabic scholarship. It is customarily adopted by religious scholars to tackle Islamic topics or undertake Islamic studies. Overall, classical Arabic refers to the language that has been laid down in the traditional Arabic grammars.

3.2. Berber (Tamazight):

The term "Berber" is, in fact, the label that was given by the Romans "Barbarous" to the Libyan peoples that were obstinate and refractory to the

Roman Civilization. Later on, that word that has been taken over by the Arabs, about the inhabitants of Maghreb "Barabir" as opposed to the term "Rum", used to dub the Romans or more accurately the Byzantine (Haddadou, 2000: 13). More importantly, Berber people did not develop in a vacuum and their history must be put into its North African context.

Tamazight, the second national language in Algeria, is comprised of a number of regional varieties, viz. the Kabyle /θəqvajliθ /,   the   Twareg /θamaʃeχθ/ in the extreme south of Algeria, in Hoggar and in the Tassili, the Chaouia /θaʃawiθ/ which is used by the Ishanouiyen in towns like Cherchell and Tipaza (The West), The Mouzabit /θamzaviθ/ which is spoken in the valley of the M'zab (the south of Algeria).

Today, the word for Berber is either "Tamazight" or "Imazighen", the first referring to their language, the second to the people who use it. In this work, we attempt to restrict our examination to the most important variety of "Tamazight", namely Kabyle (Taqvaylit). What we push us to specify this variety with the adjective of "important" is the fact that their great loyalty to their linguistic and cultural heritage pulls them together to indemnify their language and makes it thrive; the Kabyles *"have always carried the demand for an official recognition of the Tamazight language and identity in the Maghreb"* (Benali – Mohamed, 2007: 45).

It would be worth mentioning to point that Tifinagn [θifinaχ] is a system used by Berber speakers as it is considered to be the original writing system of the Amazigh people. The word "Tifinagh" is supposed to mean "our discovery". It is comprised of two words "Tifin + Nagh" /θifin / (Discovery) and / aχ / (our) (Iddou, 2001: 4). It has been reported that the origin of Tifinagn is Phoenician, as it is the case for a host of Semitic and ancient Mediterranean alphabets.

3.3. French:

After a long period of French colonial rule during which Algerian-Arabic was neglected to a secondary status, Algeria had a long tradition of using French as the language of government and instruction. So, French possesses a prestigious position in Algeria and is considered as the most suitable language for undertaking scientific and technical arenas of research. Following the Algerian independence, the country opted for a grand policy of Arabization in an attempt to reinforce and elevate Arabic to a status of an official language. We squarely agree with the fact that despite the political attempts to sustain the

use and the holistic reliance on Arabic at the educational and institutional levels, French remains 'The semi-official' language in Algeria. The ultimate goal behind this examination of code-switching and language choice is to check the unanimous hypothesis that reads that women tend to extremely use French more than men, even intellectual males those have a good background of French. Besides, it seems interesting to scrutinize the social and psychological motivations behind male/female code choice.

4. Auer's Discourse Analysis Approach to Code Switching:

Above all, with the vast recognition of the commonality of multilingualism, how bilinguals manipulate their use of different languages has become a moot subject of primary concern. It seems necessary to state that "bilinguals" are often broadly defined as individuals or groups of people who reach the knowledge and use of more than one language. In this vein, Haugen (1953:7) asserts that bilinguals are those individuals who are capable of being fluent in one language but who "*canproduce complete meaningful utterances in the other language*". As it has been pointed earlier, the popular beliefs that speculate that the alternative use of different languages within the same discourse is a sign of lack of knowledge and linguistic deficiency have been, for the most part, changed.

Overall, the scrutiny of the alternate employment of two or more languages in the discourse has proliferated along different but related directions: structural and sociolinguistic dimensions. By the structural approach to code switching, it is meant to be the focus on grammatical aspects. The crux of this approach it to identify syntactic and morphosyntactic constraints on CS. The sociolinguistic approach, on the other hand, concentrates on embarking upon explaining queries such as how social meaning is constructed in code switching and tries to elicit particular discourse functions that this phenomenon serves. It should be noted that the theoretical empirical part of our research in code-switching is to canvass why bilingual speakers talk the way they do, directing a specific attention on how women and men manage to mutate codes within the same discourse. Interestingly, the term "code" is relatively neutral conceptualization of a linguistic variety; this latter be it a language or a dialect. Milroy and Muysken (1995: 7) define code switching as *"the alternative use bybilinguals of two or more languages in the same conversation"*.

Importantly, the publication of Auer's bilingual conversation (1984) signals a significant turning point in the studies of code switching. According to him, situation is not a predetermined bundle of norms which serve solely as a constraint on linguistic performance. In this sense, participants in a conversation constantly produce preliminary frames for subsequent activities, which in turn innovates novel and new frames. Along this line of thought, every utterance and every turn, then change some features of the situation, and sustain or reproduce others. Auer (1984) states, in this respect, that the phenomenon of code switching is *per se* an important resource used to negotiate social meaning. We will focus on how women and men through language enact, create, elucidate and reproduce culturally apt and relevant constructs of personhood, gender, knowledge and socialization. More specifically, what we intend to explore here is the critical role of language and the engagement in code switching in the negotiation and fabrication of a multiple of identities among women and men.

In an attempt to afford a discourse-based model for a rigorous examination of CS, Auer (1984) tries to draw on a conversational analysis approach in the scrutiny of bilingual's linguistic behaviour among Italian migrants dwelling in Germany. Conversation analysis is a method which he adopts for the sake of describing the functions of code switching as having the approach of ethnomethodology as bedrock. Ethnomethodology tries to understand how people see, describe, and jointly develop a definition of the situation (Zimmerman and Wieder, 1970).

In support of this, Auer (1984:92) points out that "*The proper locus at which semantic values may be assigned to the codes are the very same situations in which language juxtaposition is used for communicative purposes*". Overall, he elucidates a conversational model which filled the room left by macro – sociolinguistic investigations into code switching and the grammatical approach. Stated in very general terms, macro-sociolinguistics investigates what societies do with their languages. That is, the different attitudes and attachments that account for the functional distribution of speech forms in society (Coulmas, 1998).

Under this approach, language choice is primarily determined by the relation between the knowledge of social actors about interaction and their tools and models in daily interaction. This knowledge is built through conversation i.e. the interchange through speech of information, ideas, etc. More importantly,

Auer directs particular limelight on the sequential environment of the meaning of CS that must be tackled according to its preceding as well as to its following utterances. The paramount importance of this condition may become apparent when he states that: "*Any theory of conversational code-alternation is bound to fail if it does not take into account that meaning of code alternation depends in essential ways on 'its sequential environment'* " *(*Auer, 1995: 116).

By sequential environment, Auer (1995) intends to refer to the preceding and following language choices which must be taken into consideration in the interpretation of code alternation. Thus, specific attention must be paid to the generic organization of the discourse with particular emphasis on the sequences in which codes alternate. With regard to the interpretation of code alternation as a contextualization cue, Auer (1995) distinguishes a number of code alterations as linguistic tools according to specific functions within conversation. In addition to revealing some fundamental sociolinguistic answers about the functions of code switching, our investigation has also been directed towards dissecting how women and men differ in their language choices and dissect the validity of the persuasive idea that women are much more likely to adopt French language than men under the rubric of French is a symbol of "social mobility", "modernity" and "enlightenment".

5. Data Collection

Participants in this experiment are 24 informants (from the community of Chlef), 14 females and 10 males. In an endeavour to reach a penetrating analysis, we opt for the use of primary data (originally collected) in our research. Apropos, we intend to adopt the indirect method of collecting data to obtain information which cannot be directly achieved. It is believed that this indirect method allows for a natural speech that doesn't give the informants the opportunity to reroute the conversation so as to make it as formal as possible and meet the expected norms as well. Unexpectedly, some female respondents wondered why they were not informed about the recordings. Naturally enough, female speakers usually gravitate towards establishing their speech styles and even appear as formal and modern in their linguistic behaviour. It must also be noted that questions such as: What do you mean by saying this? Why do you choose to speak this way? Are, in sober fact, directed to both Arab respondents and Kabyle ones.

6.Data Analysis

6.1. A device to signal a change in topic

Auer (1995) claims that code-switching may contextualize a shift in topic or a change in the participant constellation. Not only monolingual speakers (knowing or expressed only in one language), bilingual speakers alter the topic under discussion even within a single conversation as well. Auer (1995) states that this kind of alternation has the function of taking part into the organization of the discourse in a particular situation. It is usually interpreted by the participant to contextualize a particular feature of the interaction. Discourse-related switching is considered as a type of conversational code-switching where constituents of different varieties are exploited in the conversation to commence a new topic (Alfonzetti, 1998: 197).

Obviously, both women and men in Chlef tend to switch code for the sake of signalling an initiation of a new subject or topic. Alfonzetti adds "*code switching may therefore be seen as one of the devices by means of which the task of changing topic may be carried out by bilingual speakers*".

(1) A: lju:m tlæqi:t mɛa ʃʃi:x tæɛ lpsycho xlaɛni ki gæli ɣadwa l'examen.

 (Today I met the teacher of psychology; he shocked me when he told me that the exam will be held tomorrow).

B: ʃæ fi:ha ? (Where's the problem?).

A: / ami? jax akkən inɛawəz laɛʃa / (How? We stayed up together last evening and I didn't revise).

This is a conversation between two Kabyle male classmates about the fact that (A) met their teacher of psychology. This is why speaker (A) intends to inform his fellow about the date of the examination using Algerian Arabic. When speaker (A) was asked about his choice of AA in swapping this piece of information to his friend; he responded that this code choice is spontaneous since the professor is an Arab speaker. Albeit that speaker (A) starts the conversation inn Algerian Arabic(AA), he himself switches to Kabyle (K) in order to send a message that he is going to change the topic. He may not change completely the topic, but he aims at reminding his friend that they were

enjoying their times together last night, and that there was no occasion to open any book of psychology.

(2) A: Enfin, la conférence est terminée. Je suis très fatiguée.

  (Lastly, the lecture is finished. I am very tired).

  B: Nous irons directement à la maison.

  (We will go directly home).

  A: məʃi   θəniḍd atəqḍuɣ ? (Didn't you say that you will go for shopping?).

The above dialogue is shared by two Kabyle female students of Biology (the study of living organisms). The two ladies prefer to use French at the beginning of the conversation, but speaker (A) changes the topic through the use of the Kabyle variety to ask her friend if she still plans to go for shopping. By this token, the two female speakers seem to favour French because they were attending a lecture which is normally held in French. Then, the shift to Kabyle seems rational since speaker (A) starts to speak about "shopping", a topic which immediately pulls them away from the formality of the lecture to the informal topic which triggers the use of their mother tongue (Kabyle). More specifically, we may easily notice that female speakers tend to maintain the use of French even outside the amphitheatre where they attended the lecture. By way of contrast, male speakers do not pay much attention to the necessity of using French.

As for the case of switching code to signal a change in topic, we have noticed that women and men in CSA sometimes, share the same French expression "A part ça?" (Apart from that?), where they strive to alter the subject they are talking about. This French expression is conspicuously inserted within, may be, a whole conversation in Algerian Arabic. In addition to signal a shift in topic, this expression is deemed as a call for closing the conversation. In this vein, some speakers of CSA (males and females) state that they say (A part ça?) to suggest to the other interlocutor (especially on the phone) that he attempts to quit mainly the long conversation.

6.2. A device to introduce contrastive information:

Bilingual speakers may use code switching as a linguistic device to express contrast or distinguish by comparison of unlike or opposite qualities. For such,

(3) Les femmes Arabes savent très bien dancer /amaɛna θaɛravin usintara aðʃəḍħənt iθqvajliθ / / θiqvajliji:n ʃḍaħ nsənt xffi:f aṭas /

(Arab women dance well but they do not know how to dance like Kabylians. Kabylians' dance is very fast).

This snatch of conversation is taken from a Kabylian woman speaking with her neighbour about the difference between Kabylians' and Arabs' dancing. She prefers to use French in expressing her viewpoint about Arab's dancing. She immediately tends to alternate the code; she employs Kabyle in order to introduce a piece of information which serves as a contrast with the proceeding utterance. Unlike Arabs dancing, Kabylian women- she intends to say- are much more likely to dance in a rapid and vibrating manner.

(4) / æna məʃi kima nta nəbɣi nækul əṭɛæm / /amaɛna səziθ uzumu:r/ (I am not like you, I like eating couscous but with olive oil).

This sentence isuttered by a kabylian male speaker with his brother. The subject under discussion is about the Couscous; the spicy dish, originating in North Africa, consisting of steamed semolina usually served with meat broth. He is capable of using the Berber equivalence of Couscous /sseksu/ or even uttering the whole utterance in Kabyle. Notwithstanding, he tends to switch code to K aiming at pointing to the difference of taste between him and his brother. In addition to the intention of signalling a contrast meaning, he seems as being aware that "olive oil" is the famous Algerian product of the Kabylian region and that it is of a grand significance in the preparation of a host of Berber dishes. Put differently, he seems to recognize that the most appropriate variety to speak about "olive oil" should be Berber. Moreover, a striking fact about the disparity of using French among male / female speakers in CSA is that a great number of women tend to frequently use French to demarcate themselves from male speakers, especially in formal settings.

(24) /ħna ʃwija manæʃ xʃæn felhadra / mais les hommes ont toujours la tendance à prendre et conserver les pouvoir dans leurs discours.

(We are a little bit not harsh in our speech but men have always the tendency to gain and maintain power in their discourse).

This AA – Fr code switch is, in fact, produced by a woman as conveying her opinion concerning the difference between women and men which may lead to miscommunication. Unlike this female report of opinion, a male speaker does not signal any need to change the code even when revealing contrastive information. The male speaker keeps using AA in answering the same question by saying /əræʒəl jtebbaɛɛaqlu bessaħ lmra tebbaɛ galbha / (the man leads with his mind but the woman leads with her heart). What is of particular concern here is that the man prefers to offer the contrast that states that a man is a logical thinker and a woman is an emotional feeler without descrying that the switch to French may be requisite for marking the contrast as the woman does.

6.3. A device to emphasize one's message

In most cases, code switching in used for the purpose of reiterating of what has just been said. A message in one code is repeated in another code serves to corroborate and clarify what is said, but often they merely accentuate or emphasize the message (Auer, 1998).

(5) Je viendrais /adasa/   (I am coming)

(6)/adasa aqliji:n/   (I have already come).

This example is uttered by a female when she is in a hurry and she was called by her friend who expressed her annoyance about her delay. It's quite clear that the woman was not so calm; she was somehow hampered by the fact that she is so late. Besides her usage of French at the beginning of the utterance, she alters her language choice to K to stress the message that she is about to come. Meanwhile, a man in mainly the same situation finds it apt to emphasize the message without switching to another code. Again, most of men don't share the same tendency with women to direct much attention on the alteration of the code in the same utterance in general and the switch to French in particular.

6.4. ADevice to Structure and Segment the Information into Smaller Units:

In addition to the functions cited above, code-switching can be used as a linguistic tool to slice information into smaller pieces (Benhattab, 2004). Auer (1984) notices that some discursive activities such as the introduction of a new

topic is likely to be expressed by bilingual speakers through the use of code switching which is, in fact, different from the one employed at the beginning of the preceding utterance. As a point in case, the following examples will endorse this line of thought and it will demarcate male/female tendency to use Fr in their conversations.

(7) /aqlji:n usiɣd mbaɛd anəmləlaf   2:00 / (I am coming, then we will meet at 2 o'clock).

(8) /aqlji:n usiɣd/ (après je vais vous voir l'après midi).

(I am coming, then I will see you at the afternoon).

The first utterance is taken from a male speaker when telling his male chum that he is coming to meet him. By so doing, he aims at adopting the switch to Algerian Arabic in order to divide the information into smaller pieces and introduces, at the same time, a new piece of information. As it has been demonstrated earlier, Kabylian males are more likely to switch between AA and K in informal contexts when talking with friends and acquaintances. Women, however, marked a greater preference to switch code to French as a contextualization strategy via the transition from one type of verbal activity to another. To illustrate the point one more, female speakers (Kabyles) generally use more French than men. Example (8) demonstrates that the lady tends to continue in employing French code to the rest of the utterance. By analogy to example (7) uttered by a man, she alters the code in order to divide the whole utterance into two pieces of information. Notwithstanding, the disparity between women and men in the use of French is, mainly, blatant in the fact that the female speaker selects to say (après) instead of the Kabyle equivalent /θiʃəkki / or the Algerian Arabic one /mbaɛd/. Besides this, she intends not solely to use (après) to single the division of information; it is conspicuous then that she finds it more suitable to maintain the choice of French for the remaining part of the whole and dominant utterance.

7.Conclusion

By and large, it is possible to state that men use code-switching but not constantly like women, or at least not paying much attention as women in their code choice. Kabyle women seem to cling to their mother tongue in specific contexts, and seem to be reluctant to maintain it in the presence of non kabylian speakers because it is well known that the woman is overall punctilious and

meticulous about the other's intention in conversational interactions. More interestingly, women according to these findings, tend to use more French CS as a bid to construct and negotiate a multiple of identities. French, in general, is more favoured by women because it is positively perceived as a symbol of "enlightenment", "social mobility", "modernity" and "opens to the western world". Invariably, women are still considered as the most interested in employing F in different contexts more than men, of course, depending on their linguistic ability and the topic addressed. The bottom line is that code switching is one of the linguistic devices which are motivated by male/female's intention. And women in Chlef (both Arabs and Kabyles) seem to be mindful communicators about the use of the varieties they are equipped with to negotiate a multiple of identities even in the ebb and flow of the same conversation.

References

-**Alfonzetti, G. (1998).** "The conversational dimension in code-switch- ing between Italian and dialect in Sicily", in A UER (1998: 180-214).

-**Auer, P. (1984).** Bilingual Conversation. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

-**Auer, P. (1995).** The Pragmatics of Code-Switching: A sequential approach. In L.Milroy & P.Muysken (Eds), One speaker, two languages: Cross-disciplinary perspectives on Code-Switching (pp. 115-135). New York: Cambridge University Press.

-**Benali-Mohamed, R. (2007).** A Sociolinguistic Investigation of Tamazight in Algeria with a special reference to the Kabyle Variety. Unpublished Ph. D Thesis. Oran University.

-**Benhattab, A. L. (2004).** Aspects of Code Switching, Code Mixing, and Borrowing in the Speech of Berber Speakers in Oran. Unpublished MA Thesis, Oran University.

-**Bouamrane, A. (1988).** Arabic, French code switching in Algeria. Etudes et Recherche en linguistique et sociolinguistique. Document N° 08 – CRIDDISH: Oran.

-**Coulmas, F. (ed.), (1998).** The Handbook of Sociolinguistics. Oxford, Blackwell.

-**Crystal, D. (1987).** The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

-Ennaji, M. (2005). International Journal of The Sociology of Language, New York, NY: Mouton de Gruyter.

-Gumperz, J. J. (1976). "The sociolinguistic significance of conversational code-switching" In: J. Cook and J.J Gumperz (eds.), Berkeley University of California, Language Behavior Research Laboratory.

-Haddadou, M. A. (2000). Le Guide de La Culture Berbère. Paris: Edition Paris-Méditerranée.

-Haugen, E. (1953)**.**The Norwegian Language in America: A Study of Bilingual Behavior. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

-Iddou, N. (2001). Language Use among Kabylian Speakers. Unpublished MA Thesis, Oran University.

-Milroy, L. & Muysken, P. (1995). One Speaker, Two Languages, Cross Disciplinary Perspectives on Code Switching. Cambridge University Press.

-Poplack, S. (1980). Sometimes I'll start a sentence in English y termino en español: Toward a Typology of Code-Switching. Linguistics, 18: 581-618.

-Zimmerman, Don H. and D. Laurence Wieder. (1970). "Ethnomethodology and The Problem of Order: Comment on Denzin "in Understanding everyday life" edited by Jack D. Douglas. Chicago: Adline (p.p 285-98).