Codeswitched compound verbs used by sequential bilingual children

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Research questions

- Do children produce codeswitched compound verbs (CCV) in the same way as adults?

- Can the Matrix Language Framework 4-Morphemes models (Myers-Scotton 2005, 2002, 1993) explain the CCVs or are they examples of borrowing?

Background

- Data as part of doctorial studies (Pert 2007)
- Data were collected from 167 children aged 2;6 - 7;2 in their home language for verbal comprehension and expression
- Main findings:
  - Intrasentential codeswitching was common in preschool and school aged sequential bilingual children
  - Codeswitching conformed to adult patterns after 3;6
  - Codeswitching increased with age
  - CCS were common sites for codeswitching
- This presentation examines a sub-group of 86 Mirpuri-English speaking children aged 3;0 to 6;5

Mirpuri

- Pakistani heritage language related to Punjabi and Urdu

- A pre-literate language , previously not described

- The Pakistani heritage population make up 1.3% of the population of the UK or 16.1% of the minority ethnic population
(National Statistics, 2004a).

- Third most common language spoken in the UK after English and Welsh
(Smithers 1999)

- Also called Mirpuri-Punjabi (Masidlover 2001) and listed as a dialect of Pahari-Potwari (Ethnologue 2004a)

Compound verbs

- In addition to lexical verbs, Pakistani heritage languages such as Mirpuri, Punjabi and Urdu have native compound verbs.

- These verbs typically consist of a noun plus an operator.
  - ◆ E.g.   'mur**a** ishara kar-n**a** pij**a**
                 boy   point   do-ing + male is + male
                 (the) boy is pointing

                 'kur**i** ishara kar-n**i** p**i**'
                 girl point do-ing + female is + female

- Note that the operator indicates 'activity' and acts as a stem for the attachment of the AGENT-VERB gender agreement.

Compound verbs

- For the verb phrase, the three languages studied differ in the form of the present tense morpheme:
  - Mirpuri: 'ishara kar-**na**'
  - Punjabi: 'ishara kar-**da**'
  - Urdu: 'ishara kar **raha hea**'
- In Mirpuri, there are two operators,
  - 'kar' - indicates activity
  - 'mar' - can occur as a lexical verb in its own right and translates as 'to hit'
  - In the compound verb form it indicates contact, E.g.   'jena tari mar-na pija' (man clap do-ing is)

Codeswitched compound verbs (CCV)

- CCV forms have been reported in adults who speak Panjabi-English in Birmingham, UK (Romaine 1995, 1986)

- Romaine found that Panjabi/English adults borrowed English verbs more frequently than nouns

- Examples included:
  - 'appreciate karna'   (Romaine 1986: 43), and
  - 'learn karni'   (Romaine 1995: 133)

Codeswitched compound verbs (CCV)

- Martin *et al*. collected data from 50 Indian heritage Panjabi/English speaking children aged 6-7 years old (2003)
- Martin *et al.* also discovered 'verb compounds' in the expressive language data.
- Examples included 'comb kar-dii' (combing), 'brush teeth kar-daa' (brushing teeth) and 'walk kar-dii' (walking) (ibid: 256)
- Different community and language contact history

MLF 4-M

- '…the 'helping verb' serves to carry the agreement and tense markers, which cannot be attached to the alien verb stem, presumably for morpho-phonological reasons' (Muysken 2000).

- This codeswitching innovation is described by Muysken as "…a quite remarkable observation because in Panjabi monolingual verbal compounds the left-most member cannot be a verb, and must be a noun…" (2000: 210)

- '**Content morphemes** are those that either assign or receive thematic roles' (Myers-Scotton 2005: 244).

- Nouns and verbs are typical content morphemes

- Myers-Scotton identifies '…subject-verb agreement…' (Myers-Scotton 2002: 76) as an example of an outsider late system morpheme.

Alien verb integration

- Wichmann and Wohlgemuth (2005) provide an overview of loan verbs
- Moravcsik (1975), highlighting that Moravcsik's paper suggests that 'if a verb is transferred from one language to another it will in the first instance be borrowed and treated as a noun, and will require some sort of verbalization in order to be treated as a verb in the target language.'(ibid: 1).
- '…sudden and intense contact may lead to relatively unintegrated borrowings of the type represented by the light verb strategy' (ibid: 13).

Data collection tool

- Photographs of everyday activities featuring adults and children from the local Pakistani heritage community
- Administered in the home language only

Examples of assessment stimulus pictures

Findings

- 86 Mirpuri-English speaking children aged 3;0 – 6;5 provided language samples

- 1343 multi-word utterances produced of which 567 contained codeswitching (42.2%)

- 75 verb types used (90 tokens)

- 43 unique CCVs types identified

Findings

- 25 unique codeswitched compound verbs (English stem verb + Mirpuri operator):
- 'carry kar-di'*, 'chuck kar-da', 'clap kar-ni', 'climb kar-na', 'colour kar-na', 'cook kar-ni', 'cut kar-ni', 'eat kar-ni', 'hold karna', 'laugh kar-na', 'look kar-na', 'make kar-ni', 'mix kar-ni', 'point kar-ni', 'push kar-ni', 'read kar-na', 'smell kar-na', 'smile kar-na', 'stand kar-na', 'throw kar-na', 'tidy kar-ni', 'wait kar-nay', 'walk kar-na', 'wash kar-na', 'write kar-na'

Findings

- 18 unique codeswitched compound verbs (English stem noun + Mirpuri operator):

- '*baby **bubble bath kara-na***' (having a bubble bath),
  '*ball **header kar-na***', '***ball kar-na***' (throwing),
  '***bath karna***' (washing), '***birthday kar-ni***', '***brush kar-ni***',
  '***flower kar-na***', '***paint kar-na***',
  '***football kar-na***' *(throwing a ball)*,
  '***hand kar-di***' (clapping),
  '***hoover kar-ni***' *(vacuum cleaning)*, '***ladder kar-na***',
  '***lips kar-na***' (eating sweets), '***machine kar-ni***',
  '***magic kar-na***' *(doing magic)*, '***paint kar-na***',
  '*paper **news kar-ni***' (reading a newspaper),
  '***pencil kar-na***' (writing).

Findings

- Insertion of an English verb was predominately via the CCV structure

- The insertion of an English verb did not disrupt the phrase order from SOV to SVO

- The utterance continued to meet the requirements of the monolingual Mirpuri frame by including the AGENT-VERB agreement morpheme

- Numerous examples suggest creative site as these were not heard in the adult model

Examples of codeswitching
Mirpuri frame: agent object verb

- Child's utterance: **boy flower-s smell** kar-na pija

- Literal translation: boy flowers smell do-ing+male is+male

- Translation: (the) boy (he) is smelling (the) flowers

- Target item 18. (the) boy is smelling (the) flowers

- Mirpuri target: mura phul sung-ena pija

  (boy flowers smell-ing + male is + male)

Monolingual Frame -
Codeswitching complies to MLF and 4M models

- Monolingual compound verb:
  - Kuri ishara kar-ni pi
    (girl point do-ing+female is+female)
- Codeswitched utterance:
  - man ladder-s climb kar-na pija
    (man ladders climb do-ing + male is + male)
- Note the maintenance of the SOV word order
- The English verb 'climb' is inserted using a pre-existing monolingual structure
- The auxiliary verb carries the gender agreement
- The same patterns are used by adult speakers but 26 novel examples were found in the data