

Code-Switching as a Bilingual Phenomenon among Students in Prishtina International Schools

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Abstract : This paper aims at investigating bilingual speech in the International Schools of Prishtina. More particularly, it seeks to analyze bilingual phenomena among adolescent students highly exposed to English with the latter as the language of instruction at school in naturally-occurring conversations within school environment. Adolescence was deliberately chosen since it is regarded as an age when peer influence on language choice is the greatest. Driven by daily unsystematic observation and prior research already undertaken, the hypothesis stated is that Albanian continues to be the dominant language among Prishtina international schools' students with a lot of code-switched items from the English. Furthermore, they will also use lexical borrowings - words already adapted in the receiving language, from the language they have been in contact with, in their speech often in the lack of existing equivalents in Albanian or for other reasons. This is done owing to the fact that the language of instruction at school is English, and any topic related to the language they have been exposed to will trigger them to use English. Therefore, this needs special attention in an attempt to identify patterns of their speech; in this way, linguistic and socio-pragmatic factors will be considered when analyzing the motivations behind their language choice. Methodology for collecting data include participant systematic observation and tape-recording. While observing them in their natural conversations, the fieldworker also took notes, which helped transcribe details better. The paper starts by raising the question of whether code-switching is occurring among Prishtina International Schools' students highly exposed to English. The data gathered from students in informal settings suggests that there are well-founded grounds for an affirmative answer. The participants in this study are observed to be code-switching, although showing differences in degree. However, a generalization cannot be made on the basis of the findings except in so far it appears that English has, in turn, become a language to which they turn when identifying with the group when discussing about particular school topics. Particularly, participants seemed to use intra-sentential CS in cases when they seem to find an English expression rather easier than an Albanian one when repeating or emphasizing a point when urged to talk about educational issues with English being their language of instruction, and inter-sentential code-switching, particularly when quoting others. Concerning the grammatical aspect of code-switching, the intrasentential CS is used more than the intersentential one. Speaking of gender, the results show that there were really no significant differences in regards quantity between male and female participants. However, the slight tendency for men to code switch intrasententially more than women was manifested. Similarly, a slight tendency again for a difference to emerge is on intersentential switching, which contributes 21% to the total number of switches for women, but 11% to the total number of switches for men.

Keywords : Albanian, code-switching contact linguistics, bilingual phenomena, lexical borrowing, English

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