

Jopara: Conversational Code Switching Between Spanish and Guarani a Sociolinguistic Study

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Abstract : The purpose of this paper is to explore a communicative strategy used by Guaraní-Spanish bilingual speakers. It will be presented in English or Spanish. This strategy is conversational code-switching, which is used by people from rural as well as urban areas in Formosa, Argentina and Paraguay. Guarani is an Aboriginal Language that is the official language in Paraguay. Code-switching is a language-processing phenomenon that creates communicative and social meaning in a given community. This paper poses a broad question at the onset of this study: Spanish-Guaraní speakers tend to use four different conversational code-switching patterns in their oral alternations, these four categories being: quotation, addressee specification, reiteration, and interjections. Later, spoken data were prioritized in terms of their importance and potential impact on the hypothesis outlined. Different groups of people were observed in real-world settings. They consisted of fourteen proficient Spanish Guarani bilingual speakers from different social groups and ages. Afterward, a group of informants was chosen to obtain a wide range of natural encounters. Informants were observed with special attention to their natural communication, particularly oral interactions. Furthermore, the relationship between interlocutors during code-switching, as based on a negotiation between them, was considered of most relevance. Results were evaluated according to the interpretative method by testing the co-occurrence of the four conversational categories described above. The testing instruments identified that the four aspects of Spanish Guarani code-switching introduced above were applied.

Keywords : bilingualism, code switching, aboriginal language, language contact

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