Crossover Memories and Code-Switching in the Narratives of Arabic-Hebrew and Hebrew-English Bilingual Adults in Israel

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Abstract : This study examines two bilingual phenomena in the narratives of Arabic Hebrew and Hebrew-English bilingual adults in Israel: CO memories and code-switching (CS). The study examined these phenomena in the context of autobiographical memory, using a cue word technique. Student experimenters held two sessions in the homes of the participants. In separate language sessions, the participant was asked to look first at each of 16 cue words and then to state a concrete memory. After stating the memory, participants reported whether their memories were in the same language of the experiment session or different. Memories were classified as 'Crossovers' (CO) or 'Same Language' (SL) according to participants' self-reports. Participants were also required to elaborate about the setting, interlocutors and other languages involved in the specific memory. Beyond replicating the procedure of cuing technique, one memory from a specific lifespan period was chosen per participant, and the participant was required to provide further details about it. For the more detailed memories, CS count was conducted. Both bilingual groups confirmed the Reminiscence Bump phenomenon, retrieving more memories in the 10-30 age period. CO memories prevailed in second language sessions (L2). Same language memories were more abundant in first language sessions (L1). Higher CS frequency was found in L2 sessions. Finally, as predicted, 'individual' CS was prevalent in L2 sessions, but 'community-based' CS was not higher in L1 sessions. The two bilingual measures in this study, crossovers, and CS came from different research traditions, the former from an experimental paradigm in the psychology of autobiographical memory based on self-reported judgments, the latter a behavioral measure from linguistics. This merger of approaches offers new insight into the field of bilingual autobiographical memory. In addition, the study attempted to shed light on the investigation of motivations for CS, beginning with Walters' SPPL Model and concluding with a distinction between 'community-based' and individual motivations.

Keywords : bilinguals, code-switching, crossover memories, narratives
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