A Qualitative Evidence of the Markedness of Code Switching during Commercial Bank Service Encounters in Ìbàdàn Metropolis

Authors : A. Robbin

Abstract : In a multilingual setting like Nigeria, the success of service encounters is enhanced by the use of a language that ensures the linguistic and persuasive demands of the interlocutors. This study examined motivations for code switching as a negotiation strategy in bank-hall desk service encounters in Ìbàdàn metropolis using Myers-Scotton's exploration on markedness in language use. The data consisted of transcribed audio recording of bank-hall service encounters, and direct observation of bank interactions in two purposively sampled commercial banks in Ìbàdàn metropolis. The data was subjected to descriptive linguistic analysis using Myers Scotton's Markedness Model. Findings reveal that code switching is frequently employed during different stages of service encounter: greeting, transaction and closing to fulfil relational, bargaining and referential functions. Bank staff and customers code switch to make unmarked, marked and explanatory choices. A strategy used to identify with customer's cultural affiliation, close status gap, and appeal to begrudged customer; or as an explanatory choice with non-literate customers for ease of communication. Bankers select English to maintain customers' perceptions of prestige which is retained or diverged from depending on their linguistic preference or ability. Yoruba is seen as an efficient negotiation strategy with both bankers and their customers, making choices within conversation to achieve desired conversational and functional aims.
Keywords : banking, bilingualism, code-switching, markedness, service encounter
Conference Title : ICLLS 2018 : International Conference on Languages, Linguistics and Society
Conference Location : New York, United States
Conference Dates : June 03-04, 2018