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**CODE SWITCHING AS A MAIN SUBJECT OF SOCIOLINGUISTICS**

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**ABSTRACT**

One of the main subjects of linguistics nowadays is definitely code-switching. But for a variety of reasons, the interest in researching bilingualism by means of linguistic feature comparison in speech has not always been clearly visible. Originally undertaken under the structuralist paradigm, the first studies laying the foundation for the research of code-switching. Language contact was seen in this paradigm as a conflict between language and speech: bilingualism was studied from the viewpoint of the interplay of two language systems, while the living embodiment of language in speech activity did not get due attention. Structuralism regards language and its grammar as a self-sufficient, sophisticatedly structured system of interrelated elements. In this sense, code-switching is understood as the outcome of interference processes, therefore upsetting the structural integrity of this system.

**Keywords:** Code-switching, diglossia, the role of language, bilingualism, language contact.

**Introduction**

The examination of the active bilingualism period, the communication characteristics of bilingual individuals, and diglossia established the groundwork for the field focused on code-switching. Consequently, it is essential to examine the correlation of research undertaken in the latter half of the 20th century and to comprehend the logical progression that shaped contemporary approaches to the investigation of linguistic code-switching mechanisms.

Code-switching is a prominent topic of research throughout linguistics. The scientific interest in examining bilingualism through the investigation of the juxtaposition of two languages in speech did not emerge quickly, attributable to several circumstances. Initially, the foundational studies essential for understanding code-switching were conducted within the structuralist paradigm, wherein language contact was examined through a dichotomous lens, focusing on the interaction between two language systems, while the direct manifestation of language in speech was largely overlooked. In this instance, linguistic contact was taken into account. Secondly, drawing from structuralist theories regarding language and grammar as an autonomous, intricately organized system of interrelated components, code-switching was perceived as a result of the disruption of the system's structural integrity, specifically as a byproduct of interference processes.

J. Gumperz contends that linguistic analysis aims to uncover uniform, structurally homogeneous entities. Structural abstractions are sufficient when our focus is confined to linguistic universals, typology, or comparative-historical reconstruction.<sup>1</sup> A potential factor is the insufficient technology capabilities for the high-quality collecting of field material necessary for constructing and analyzing a corpus of spontaneous multilingual speech. The issue of establishing conducive settings for the natural and customary use of language among interview participants is particularly noteworthy. Initial research mostly concentrated on the linguistic transition towards the dominant language among immigrants, thereby neglecting code-switching as a characteristic of speech behavior.<sup>2</sup>

### Literature Review

In 1945, G. Barker, a pioneering researcher in language selection and switching, discerned the fundamental social roles of language. He specifically highlighted the identificatory function, viewing language as a mechanism by which a group is constituted and its members recognize their identity. Barker cites E. Sapir, who regarded language as a tool for group socialization and the maintenance of cultural traits. Language serves as a facilitator of social cohesion within a group, enabling its members to identify with a unified linguistic community while simultaneously establishing a new demarcation. Furthermore, the author underscores the role of language in shaping social connections within a group: language can mirror the societal structure and the interrelations among individuals, articulating the attributes of each person's social role and status within the group.<sup>3</sup> He notes the significance of language in the transgenerational transmission of cultural heritage and behavioral patterns among group members.

Additionally, G. Barker underlines that language is the medium through which the younger generation is socialized. Language is the medium through which youngsters are immersed in the ideological environment of their individual group. This function can be analyzed from two perspectives: the context of intergroup relations and the context of an individual's affiliation with a certain group. The author ascribes variations in forms of address, indicative of the speakers' differing social statuses, to tangible expressions of intergroup ties. Awareness of established circulation forms that reflect social class relations, even in the absence of personal experience, impacts behavior. The second part illustrates how socialization via language and the assumption of social roles at an early age influences individual development within the society. Community

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<sup>1</sup> Gumperz J.J., Hernandez E. Cognitive aspects of bilingual communication [Text] / J.J. Gumperz, E. Hernandez // Working Papers of the Language Behavior Research Laboratory. - Vol. 28. - Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969. - 19 p

<sup>2</sup> One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross-disciplinary perspectives on code-switching [Text] / eds. L. Milroy, P. Muysken. - Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. - 365 p.

<sup>3</sup> Barker G. The social functions of language [Text] / G. Barker // ETC: A Review of General Semantics. - Vol. 2, № 4. - 1945. - P. 231-232.

members regard linguistic habits as instruments for ascertaining their status within the group.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, the author conducted a taxonomy of the social purposes of language to elucidate the linguistic practices of Mexican Americans in the United States. It was underscored in the familial or individual context, both formal and informal. Researchers see the utilization of Spanish in informal personal conversations among respondents with familial ties, while English is employed in official contexts when interacting with native English speakers. Nevertheless, if the circumstances are ambiguous, the selection of language becomes contentious, and the incorporation of features from both languages is feasible. Mr. Barker notes that the inclination to employ multiple languages during communication is a defining characteristic of group identification, particularly evident among younger generations.<sup>5</sup>

The theoretical concepts articulated by G. Barker were further elucidated by U. Weinreich. In the foundational study of 1953, scientists inadequately developed the proposed classes, as they fail to encompass all tasks of the bilingual language group.<sup>6</sup> The researcher examines the functioning of language under settings of language interaction, emphasizing the symptoms of interference in the speech of bilingual individuals. At this juncture, the alteration of the communicative language in bilinguals is regarded as a consequence of the active influence of first language elements on the development of speech in the second language, as well as on the capacity to thoroughly assimilate the second language. The researcher highlights the capacity of bilinguals to alternate between languages within a single phrase and questions whether this regular switching represents a transitional phase in the process of language replacement.<sup>7</sup>

A crucial element for future research is W. Weinreich's assertion that in the speech of bilingual individuals, free morphemes are more frequently transferred between languages during linguistic interaction. This occurs because they are "more readily discerned by the speaker" and "more distinctly communicate grammatical meanings".<sup>8</sup> In the future, the examination of free morpheme switching will underpin the identification of universal constraints on intra-phrase code switching within the structural-linguistic framework.

In the description of the nature of the sign in bilingualism, the scientist makes reference to the concepts that L.V. Shcherba has regarding mixed and pure bilingualism. More specifically, the scientist discusses the relationship between the expression plane and the content plane.<sup>9</sup> Speech interference arises from the speaker's bilingualism, whereas linguistic interference results from the habitual use of interfering forms by bilingual

<sup>4</sup> Barker G. The social functions of language [Text] / G. Barker // ETC: A Review of General Semantics. - Vol. 2, № 4. - 1945. - P. 232-233.

<sup>5</sup> Nilep C. "Code Switching" in Sociocultural Linguistics [Text] / C. Nilep // Colorado Research in Linguistics. - 2006. - № 1 (19). - P. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Вайнрайх У. Языковые контакты: состояние и проблемы исследования [Текст] / У. Вайнрайх; пер. с англ. яз. и коммент. Ю. А. Жлуктенко. - Киев: Вища школа, 1979. - 151 с.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.: p, 111.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.: p, 14

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.: p, 35

speakers, which reinforces their entrenchment in the language. L.V. Shcherba defines pure bilingualism as the exclusive utilization of one of two languages in a particular communicative context, while mixed bilingualism is characterized by the simultaneous use of both languages, influenced by social contexts that correlate the two systems.<sup>10</sup>

The employment of foreign language elements, such as phonetic or semantic doublets, is relatively prevalent between congruent language systems, according to H. Vogt, who also notes that the usage of such elements does not result in any structural implications. Nonetheless, in languages that exhibit substantial structural differences, instances of code-switching have been documented, potentially resulting in structural alterations and the formation of novel grammatical categories.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, it is essential to mention the work that C. Ferguson did in 1959 which was titled "Diglossia". This study was significant since it helped to the establishment of theoretical assumptions of code-switching as a field of linguistic research. The concepts articulated in this work were shaped by the contributions of W. Weinreich and J. Gumperz.<sup>12</sup> The scientist defines diglossia as the functional differentiation in the use of various variants of a single language, contingent upon the communicative context and the specific functional domain. The stable nature of diglossia is characterized by the coexistence of a regional variant of a language (L1) alongside a codified, grammatically more complex variant (L2), which functions as the medium for literature and formal communication.<sup>13</sup> One variant, the literary or standard form, holds a more prestigious status and is referred to as the H-language (high). The second variant, represented by regional dialects, is termed the L-language (low), possesses a less prestigious status, and is utilized for everyday communication. The L-language serves as the primary language for community members, acquired naturally through interactions with parents and peers, whereas the H-language is learned formally, primarily through the educational system.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, C. Ferguson highlights the significance of employing the variant that is appropriate for the communicative context: the "high" code is used in the formal educational setting, such as university lectures, religious services, political speeches, news programs, the press, poetry, and prose. Conversely, the "low" code pertains to the service domain, interactions with family, friends, and colleagues, as well as entertainment radio programs and folklore.<sup>15</sup>

Fisherman's work from 1967, which was devoted to "Bilingualism with and without diglossia", helped to further refine Ferguson's theories on the functional distinctions in

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<sup>10</sup> Щерба Л.В. Языковая система и речевая деятельность [Текст] / под ред. Л.Р. Зиндер, М.И. Матусевич. - Ленинград: Наука, 1974. - 314 с

<sup>11</sup> Vogt H. Language contacts [Text] / H. Vogt // Word: journal of the International linguistic association. - 1954. - № 10. - P. 368-369.

<sup>12</sup> Ferguson C.A. Diglossia [Text] / C.A. Ferguson // Word: journal of the International linguistic association. - 1959. - № 10 (2). - P. 325.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.: p. 336

<sup>14</sup> Ferguson C.A. Diglossia [Text] / C.A. Ferguson // Word: journal of the International linguistic association. - 1959. - № 10 (2). - P. 331

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.: p. 329

language use.<sup>16</sup> In contrast to Ferguson, the researcher outlines comparable patterns in the functional utilization of various languages. This study delineates four scenarios regarding the interplay between diglossia and bilingualism in a language community: diglossia accompanied by bilingualism, diglossia absent of bilingualism, bilingualism devoid of diglossia, and the absence of both diglossia and bilingualism. Fishman elaborates on the theoretical framework of diglossia, primarily drawing on Gumperz's contributions.<sup>17</sup> The scientist applies the term code, suggesting that the utilization of various codes within a community aligns with specific functions designated to each, which remain inaccessible to others. Both codes encompass distinct behavioral characteristics, relationships, and associated values. There exists a relationship among language or language variant, social role, and aspects of identity.

Therefore, in the 1960s, studies of language contacts and code-switching began to actively address the questions of the role of conditions, themes, and participants in communication in the selection and use of language formations, as well as the significance of other extralinguistic elements. This was done in order to investigate the significance of language formations. During the 1970s, these trends became more pronounced. In 1964, S. Ervin-Tripp, building on the work of D. Hymes, conducted a study on bilingualism among Japanese women residing in the United States. She identified key components of the communicative situation, such as the setting, participants, conversation topic, and participants' attitudes, as critical factors influencing language code selection.<sup>18</sup> The setting encompasses aspects of time, place, and situation, particularly focusing on behavioral patterns. A modification in any variable may lead to a breach of social norms or the emergence of a novel situation. Communication participants are analyzed through their sociolinguistic characteristics, which encompass gender, age, and professional background that contribute to their social status, as well as their roles within specific social contexts. The functions of communication necessitate that the author considers the influence of the speaker's actions on themselves, while language serves as a mechanism for affecting the addressee through the listener's response. Code switching elicits reactions in listeners that may be positive or negative, subsequently influencing the addressee and potentially altering the situation.

Formal aspects of communication are identified by S. Ervin-Tripp. Among these formal aspects, the code or variant of the language system is of significance to us. This variant contains both the standard form of speech and a variant that is not standard. Members of the language community possess a range of code alternatives, which they utilize according to the communicative context. Furthermore, the scientist highlights that,

<sup>16</sup> Ferguson C.A. Diglossia [Text] / C.A. Ferguson // Word: journal of the International linguistic association. - 1959. - № 10 (2). - P. 329

<sup>17</sup> Gumperz J.J. The speech community [Text] / J.J. Gumperz // Linguistic anthropology: A reader / ed. A. Duranti. - 2nd edition. - Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Ltd., 2009. - P. 57.

<sup>18</sup> Эрвин-Трипп С.М. Язык. Тема. Слушатель. Анализ взаимодействия [Текст] / С.М. Эрвин-Трипп // Новое в лингвистике / пер. с англ.; общ. ред. и вступ. ст. Н.С. Чемоданова. - М.: Изд-во «Прогресс», 1975. - Вып. VII. - С. 336-338, 340-341.



during language data collection, researchers aim to regulate the linguistic context to prevent informants from employing multiple codes, concentrating instead on identifying informants whose speech exemplifies a distinctly recognizable norm.<sup>19</sup>

The scientist references J. Gumperz, indicating that distinguishing characteristics of individual non-standard variants presents challenges, as they frequently coexist and appear simultaneously in speech behavior. Furthermore, in communities where code switching, interpenetration, or borrowing elements from one code to another is permissible, these phenomena can indicate a role or topic change within a given setting.<sup>20</sup>

### Conclusion

It should be brought to your attention that the researcher considers a language circumstance in which neither diglossia nor bilingualism is seen to be an extremely uncommon occurrence. This includes the lack of any code differentiation that is related with the shift in social practices and communication contexts. All communities exhibit specific practices that are not universally accessible, resulting in a linguistic repertoire that includes both unfamiliar linguistic units for community members and the practice of metaphorical switching to capture attention, convey humor, satire, or criticism. This stance appears significant because it deviates from the linguistic purism theories prevalent in 19<sup>th</sup> and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century literature, which accepted monolingualism as the standard by default while ignoring, stigmatizing, or considering bilingualism or polylingualism from the perspective of interference processes.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.: p, 344

<sup>20</sup> Эрвин-Трипп С.М. Язык. Тема. Слушатель. Анализ взаимодействия [Текст] / С.М. Эрвин-Трипп // Новое в лингвистике / пер. с англ.; общ. ред. и вступ. ст. Н.С. Чемоданова. - М.: Изд-во «Прогресс», 1975. - Вып. VII. - С. 345.

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