


<p>Language Contacts and Collisions of Codes in the Case of Bilingualism</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Linguistics</p> <p>Keywords: language analysis, identity, diglossy, social identity, bilingualism, asymmetry.</p>
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<p>Abstract</p>	<p>Language constitutes one of the many systems of knowledge that man has acquired during his existence. Unlike traditional conceptions that see language as a phenomenon related to community, we can say that the language has an individual way, which is not only related to its performative displays, but also to its integral competence of special speakers. If nearly two centuries ago, the situations of bilingualism were viewed with suspicion and as temporary existence, now they are seen as the most dense forms of linguistic and ethnic contacts. At this point, to a large extent of individuals, the monolingual situation is slowly being replaced by the bi- or multilingualism, as a result of various causes. If we drew a comparison between the monolingual speakers and the bilingual ones, we would understand that bilingual speakers are not just individuals who recognize two languages, but they can also use them regularly. For this reason we cannot expect their language behavior be the same with that of monolingual speakers, who use only their native language. In today's society, the idea of a sustainable and clear monolingual situation is unreal. Despite the level of language knowledge, the contact with other languages is inevitable. In such a group, no language system is immune to barriers of words or phrases that come out in one language and take place naturally in the lexicon of another language, or some other languages.</p>
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Introduction

Language consists one of many systems of knowledge that man has acquired during his existence. Unlike traditional conceptions that see language as a phenomenon associated with the community, we can say that the language has an individual way, which is not only related to its per formative displays, but also with the integral power of special speakers. Hudson noted that there do not exist two individuals with the same linguistic experience (Hudson, 2002), even if they are twins who grow up in the same social environment. At this point, we see individuals who have various degrees of language knowledge, which depend on factors within the language (individual competencies, intellectual education, etc.) and factors beyond the language (the environment where the individual was born and grows up, social and cultural interaction, etc). As members of a linguistic community, we can not avoid cultural contacts, consciously or not, with other social communities. In this context we can speak of a language interaction that comes as a result of the contact between language systems, and undoubtedly its sociolinguistic implications which the much talked situations of bilingualism generate. Such contacts that come as a result of various factors (social, economic, political or even family members), are presented to us in an unstable form, which strongly reflect the flows of the invisible influence between different language codes.

Bilingualism is the ability that individuals have, to speak in two different languages. Bilingual speakers have a satisfactory knowledge of codes, the language and cultural ones.

Nearly two centuries ago, situations of bilingualism were suspiciously viewed as temporary existence. Now they are more dense forms of language and ethnic contacts. At this point, in a great number of individuals, the situation of monolingual is gradually being replaced by that of bi- or multilingualism, as a result of various causes.

The study of specific languages is seen as a rarer occurrence. What is most disturbing about languages in general, are just language interferences, arising as a result of population movement and the spread of mass media. Bilingualism as stable situation represents the simplest form of multilingualism, a popular and very common occurrence in modern societies. As a complex phenomenon, the bilingualism situation is separated into several levels:

➤ **personal bilingualism** (related to individual speaker, eg. : Arben is bilingual). In this category of individuals we can include two groups:

- *early bilinguals*, are those individuals who have mastered both languages during childhood and as a result, they know both codes. But, while one of them emerges as dominant in perception and production, the other might be partial. Here we receive the language mixed in lexical and grammatical structures
- *late bilinguals*, are those who have learned the second language in adulthood.

➤ **social bilingualism** (related to the social contacts of languages). It is one of the most prevalent forms of bilingualism and is created as a result of economic, political and social factors that exist in the speaking communities. Mostly, we face this group in the ethnic meetings, which are created from the delimitation of political borders of different countries, for example. in Montenegro or Macedonia, where Albanian speakers are involved in other social communities. The most vulnerable sign of this kind of Bilingualism is that of immigration, a phenomenon that has not only affected the Albanian-speaking community, but it is also encountered in a significant number of countries.

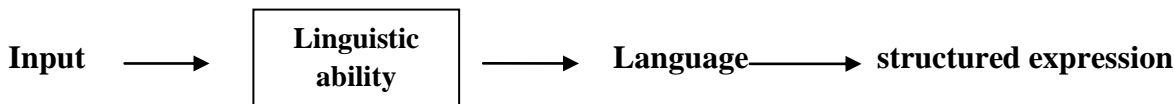
➤ **international bilingualism** (eg, a Swedish and a Norwegian who communicate through two idioms).

If we compare monolingual and bilingual speakers, we would recognize that bilingual speakers are not simply bilingual individuals, but they also use these languages regularly. For this reason we can not expect that their linguistic behavior to be the same as that of the monolingual speakers using only their own language.

Observing the specifications of the classification of the Bilingualism situation and the impacts found in the nowadays Albanian language, different from other languages with which it is in contact or not, it would not go unnoticed an element of bilingualism, that is exactly the Bilingualism of today's Albanian immigration in Italy. It happens because of the collision of codes within a certain geo-political area. We highlight the data provided by this situation, which can be generalized even for the conflicting elements in other languages (that are in contact with Albanian), which the Albanian-speaking individuals face.

One aspect of the strategic competence is related to the appropriate use of the statement according to the relevant situation. This has to do with the perceiving and decoding of messages.

According to Chomsky (Chomsky, 2008: 60), the process of language acquisition and exception goes through these phases:

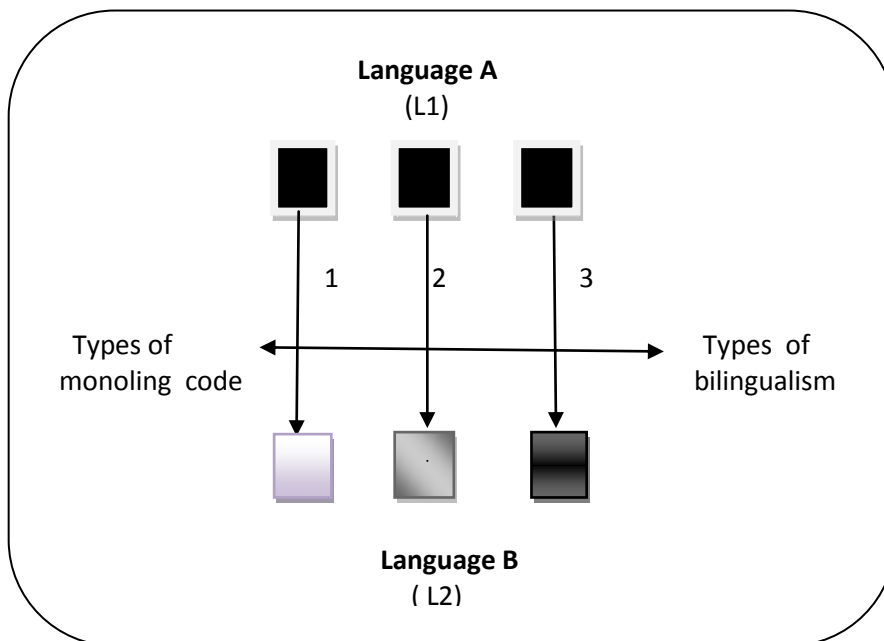


Relying on this scheme we can deduce a number of issues related to the perception and structuring of bilingual language situations. In cases where the speaker accurately knows both languages, we have to do with ideal bilingualism, not a very frequent situation but which is associated with a high competence in the perception and production of the two language systems by the individual speaker. Thus, the data are provided from the two languages, and considering the time in which they are perceived, we receive the application of language skills in one of the codes, structuring concrete statements. Chomsky connects the language ability with the biological gifts, that an individual owns, in the perception and language mapping of the units. (Chomsky, 2008: 35)

For a man to understand a linguistic expression, his brain must determine its phonetic form. Then we can have the connection with a reference in the semantic field and further on so that we can create logical cohesive connections at a morph-syntax level, designed in the phonemic system as clearly structured expressions.

Through this process, seemingly very natural, bilingual communicative schemes are realized. The phenomena that occur during language interference correlate exactly with the level of production units thus preparing them for reception. Mutual impacts are associated with the selection of units and their full or partial grammatical shaping. It is said ‘partially’ because at this stage we see the so-called structural borrowings, mainly in the lexical level. The level of impact is related to the extent to which the foreign language L2 is known, in this case Italian. In the light of a continuous Bilingualism (De Houwer 1995: 230), first we have the acquisition of the mother tongue and then the recognition of the structures of the foreign language. This is typically the case of the immigration Bilingualism, where most of the speakers are educated with the forms of their mother tongue and the foreign language is found in a typical diglottic situation. The selection of the codes depends on the communicative situations, where the high variety finds multilateral use, while the low variety (position in which the Albanian language is found) has more limited use. Bilingual individuals may appear as users of either one language code, or two. This depends on the interlocutors, the subject of discussion, the situation of the use of languages etc. Linguistic forms are associated with the activation state of the bilingual system as well as the processing of the language mechanisms. At this stage speakers speak and understand both codes, but with the adult bilinguals, in the language intervention phase, mental formulations of different phrases are realized in Albanian (Shamku: 2005: 46), while the message is transmitted in Italian.

Often the contact between bilingual speakers is seen as accidental or messy. This is because the transfer of codes and the conscious or unconscious effects of the languages on each other, can cause the different levels of language competence in the respective systems, at the bilingual speaker. The continuation of language forms can be presented in this way, distinguishing two aspects of the occurrence of language situations, monolingual and bilingual:



If we were to interpret the above scheme, we would recognize the way the phenomenon of Bilingualism in different speakers is stratified. Adult bilinguals pass through three stages, in the case of contacts between Albanian and Italian language:

a- In the first phase, the native language is obviously dominant and the speaking in a foreign language is very partial to errors in structure.

b- In the second stage, L2 strengthens the positions and we face the expansion of vocabulary and a most comprehensive knowledge of grammatical structure.

c- In the third phase there is a balance in the use of both codes. Individuals come to understand and speak both languages almost well. Here they are aware of the linguistic interference and as such, these interferences are implemented in certain situations.

The lack of language convergence, present in such contacts, appear as a result of code mixing, a known element in sociolinguistics.

The mixing of codes is a phenomenon present among bilingual individuals. It has to do with the use of elements (phonological, lexical and morph -syntax) from both languages in the same conversational segment. The situations of code-mixing depend usually on the form of the mixture of codes (inter or extra-discursive), on the nature of the elements used interchangeably (eg. the functions versus the contents of words), the variety of the language used and the context where the conversation takes place (eg, the bilingual interlocutors versus the monolinguals). There is a vast number of individual differences in, both, instances and ways of mixing, and even in subjects belonging to the same family. (Vihman, 1998: 68)

In this category of speakers we find the difference of the language (code switch) for a variety of communicative purposes, eg.: to be identified ethnically, to determine the status and role in society, and to establish intimate relationships or distances between individuals. At this point the mixture of codes happens inevitably. (Myers-Scotton, 1993: 94).

As a result of mixing and breaking of the codes (code mixing and code switch), a series of asymmetries are created affecting all language levels. Before we look at the string of communication irregularities, we will highlight a very frequent phenomenon that occurs at a certain rank of bilingual speakers.

When two languages are used at the same level of expression, grammatical inconsistencies may occur (eg. change of word-order or creation of unrealistic lexime, etc.). Indeed, the common perception of the code-mixing situation describes it as a non-grammatical form of language use.

In careless talks of this category, there are observed forms of a "language hyper-correction", relating to the use of excessive and often wrong language forms. They range from the introduction of several separate lexical elements to the use of some structural borrowings from the foreign language, eg., the use of past participle nouns that our language does not recognize as a substitute to the infinitive forms in Italian, ie., *të qenurit vetvetja* (kundrejt *të qenit*)⁹ / (*essere se stessi*; *essere se stessi*) etc.

Such hyper-correction forms, which are starting to feel like part of the daily discourse, in the light of language purism, donate artificial nuances to the language. They are seen as the initial phase of the birth of asymmetries in language level, as part of the changes that occur from the interchange of language codes.

⁹ Being oneself (versus being or existing)

If we were to observe the types of asymmetries encountered in Albanian, as a result of the contact with the Italian language, we would have to see the kinds of bilingual situations and its stratification at different ages.

Taking into consideration the period of time when the second language is perceived by the speaker, we notice:

1-*early bilingualism* which is realized at the time when the idiom is firstly taken by the active study of the second language, mainly at preschool age.

2-*simultaneous bilingualism* which occurs when the use of both idioms takes place at the same time. This is the case of the individuals who live in families where both idioms co-exist and are used in parallel way.

3-*passive bilingualism* realized when one of the two languages is only understood and the speaker is not able to reproduce it. This type, according to linguists, is a special type of bilingualism, as the two codes can't be considered at the same level because the speakers' competences are different in the two idioms.

Most of the research which is related to the development of the two language systems simultaneously have concluded that the children being exposed to two language systems, pass through a single stage, in which the languages are not differentiated. (Volterra 1978: 312)

If we refer to the first two stages, we will highlight the use of L2 from the most flexible part of the bilingual community, exactly from the children as they are those that significantly differentiate and acquire both language systems.

Chronologically, according to the phases of obtaining language information, we would notice:

- *In the first phase*, children have a lexical system which includes words from both languages. At this stage, bilingual children's language development is similar with monolingual children's language development.

- *In the second stage*, children distinguish two different lexical systems, but they apply the same syntactical rules to both languages.

- *In the third phase*, bilingual children speak two differentiated languages either lexically or syntactically. (Volterra & Taeschner: 1978: 315)

This hypothesis states that the first stage of language development at bilingual children is actually monolingual and that both languages develop independently. Their language repertoire is spread through similarities in the syntactic competence and partly the semantic one. The latter does not come just as a connection between the references and the reality, but rather than a deep knowledge of the concrete meanings of specific lexical units, whether they are labeled differently in both languages.

If we refer to a kind of division by age group and the impact that they have with the second language, we will highlight three groups of bilingual individuals:

1- *immediate acquirers* of L2 including children as active bilinguals;

2- *simultaneous users* of both codes, according to psychosocial situations, including youth and middle age;

3-*receptive users* who resist bilingualism situation by not using L2. This category includes old age and preschool-aged children who do not attend any educational structure. Language repertoire of this category is limited to monolingual experiences influenced by close family environment.

Problems of language irregularities will be encountered much more in the first two groups because the third group may segment unnecessary language elements as a result of the scarce knowledge of the second language.

Language asymmetries are associated mainly with the speakers' performance, reflecting an average competence in the use of L2. As in any kind of language influence, the extent of symbiotic forms affects all language levels.

In this article, we will not stop at lexical borrowings, as they are numerous (and not only in the situation of bilingualism), but we would highlight the different structural borrowings introduced along with their lexical meaning.

The relative amount of time spent during the use of each of the language codes naturally affects the size of the lexical inventory of each language during the bilingualism situation.

The type of language interferences is associated with the forms that these lexemes take in Albanian. So a special class of borrowed verbs, almost identical in shape with the Italian ones, is created. It is a class of suffixation patterns, characteristic of the Albanian language eg.: *xhiroj (kthej) makinën*¹⁰ (girare la machina), *salvoj (shpëtoj) dokumentin*¹¹ (salvare il documento) *sprekoj kot*¹² (sprecare inutilmente), *lançoj (hedh) topin*¹³ (lanciare la palla etc.).

These shapeless forms (as they don't belong to any of the codes) are used to simplify the transition from one language to another or simply for some language snobbery so that the speaker are labeled as bilinguals.

Various studies have shown that individuals (especially children) who face both of the language codes, show signs of use of the two phonological systems (Vihman, 1996). This category of individuals appear to introduce signs of a divergent development in both levels: the prosodic (the level of the syllable, tone or spoken rhythm) and the segment (the level of phonemes, phonemic changes and their dispensation).

This phonological dichotomy is related particularly to the phoneme inventory of a language, which varies in number and surely enough in the phonetic realizations. Bilingual children, who know the phonemic and graphic system of Italian, find the Albanian phonemic system being different in composition and articulation forms.

Regarding the prosodic level, there is a certain deviation from the way emphasis is conducted and the musicality of Albanian phrases, taking penultimate nuances as well as the Italian stress schemes. The impact of high code in such speakers is considerable, noting the amount of time spread to use one and the other code.

A significant impact is the second language (Italian in our case) in morpho-syntactic structures of language. This asymmetry means the use in Albanian speaking of these individuals, forms, ways of grammatical shapes which the Albanian language with its means manages to achieve in different ways. (Shamku: 2005: 51).

The excessive use of Present Perfect instead of Past Simple, or sometimes even instead of Present Simple, is one of the most common morphological asymmetries. Such forms as:

¹⁰ drive back the car

¹¹ save the document

¹² sprinkle uselessly

¹³ throw the ball

*është hapur sporteli (për u hap),
është treguar i mirë me ne (për u tregua); ose
ka njohje të mire (për njeh mirë) etj.*

Another effect is observed in the use of auxiliary verbs HAVE and BE which often perform different morphological and syntactic functions in Albanian and Italian, for example: *sa vjeç ka* (për *sa vjeç është*)¹⁴, the direct impact of borrowed structure "quanti anni ha"; *kemi dijeni për jemi në dijeni*¹⁵ (abbiamo conoscenza etc.).

The use of the verb come, instead of the verb am, for example.: *vij nga Tirana, për jam nga Tirana*¹⁶ (Italian form *vengo da Roma*, etc.).

Some uses of direct speech have entered the Albanian language as new structural foreign elements obtained identically from Italian, ie.: the question "ç'punë bën {What do you do}? And answers like "bëj muratorin" ose "bëj inxhinierin", for "punoj murator" ose inxhinier {"I am a bricklayer; or I'm an engineer".}

Conclusion

All these types of asymmetries are taking place increasingly in the pragmatic language performances of bilingual speakers. This comes as a direct result of diglossic contacts that Albanian language has as a low variety toward Italian language, even if the latter appears in various diatopic forms.

In today's society, the idea of a sustainable and clear monolingual situation is unreal. Despite the level of the language knowledge, the contact with other languages is inevitable. In such a framework, no language system is immune to word and phrase barriers encountering in one language and taking place naturally in the other language. If you would like to be objective, we would accept that structural interventions can not be excluded completely noting the level of individual integration into the Italian society. In a later stage of the development of bilingualism, we will have a different configuration of the language curve, especially in the new generation of bilingual speakers who under social pressure, they are often reluctant to identify themselves as subjects with different ethnicity and tend toward a full or partial assimilation under the influence of peer group.

Comparing bilingualism to monolinguals, some researchers think that bilingualism is an urge to the development of the language, although it is a deviation from the natural which was noted above. However, we can assess the psychosocial dimension of bilingualism. The language we speak helps in the formation of our social and ethnic identity and that these elements of irregularities should not affect structures of respective languages.

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¹⁴ how old is (how old is he)

¹⁵ we know about are aware

¹⁶ come from Tirana, for I am from Tirana

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