Review

Linguistic Identities: How Code-switching and/or Code-crossing help constructing solidarity or otherness in multilingual societies

Sepideh Hozhabrossadat

Vienna University. E-mail: Sepideh_hozhabrossadat@yahoo.com

Since communication is the most important part of defining and structuring our identities, a recent phenomenon had emerged which has been called linguistic identities. As the name suggests, there is no single identity in terms of communication and interaction. The question is how our linguistic identities are formed; and by what means or linguistic devices we identify ourselves or others. There are multiple identities that are being constructed, revised and shaped. At first, identity is defined as being fluid and linguistically motivated. Four models are introduced to link identity construction with language. Linguistic devices, including code-switching and code-crossing are being defined and further analyzed into two important sub-devices called positionality and indexicality. In conclusion, human beings tend to (un)consciously utilize the linguistic devices in multilingual communities to bond or bind.

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INTRODUCTION

Identity is not a new phenomenon in the field of Linguistics; yet, Sociolinguistics in general and Cultural Linguistics in particular have decided to focus primarily on this controversial aspect of the human life. In this paper, identity is being looked at through the linguistic point of view. For this purpose, the concept of identity needs to be clarified. Identity is defined by Block (2006: 39) as, " socially constructed, a self-conscious, ongoing narrative an individual performs, interprets and projects in dress, bodily movements, actions and language." This poststructuralist definition merges two previously clear-cut categories of individual identity and collective identity, among which the individual has received plenteous

assiduities. What is meant by individual identity, here, is how any individual person replies to this question, 'Who am I?', and different concepts one has about oneself, while facing different situations in life or invoking past experiences and memories. It, also, includes inner voices and unconscious thoughts. On the other hand, collective or community identity is about the picture that community at large presents to itself and other communities. De Fina (2002: 377) defines this concept as such,

> Collective identities have to do with what people think characterizes them as a group that is different from others. Thus, the shaping of a

collective image for a social organization reflects implicit conceptions about the qualities and traits that are perceived as defining the community. However, collective identity is not a mental image, but rather an emergent construct that takes shape within significant practices. There is an important connection between being and doing, between building and projecting an image of the group and carrying out certain activities.

Definition of Linguistic Identities

In this paper, the term 'identity construction' is used to indicate that identity is not a static notion, rather, it is seen as an ongoing, never-ending process even at the individual level. The leading edge culture of a society is the optimum ground for identity construction. For the purpose of clarity, in this paper, the culture is considered the language, which is used by participants in an interaction. Language changes our identities and our identities are shaped by different forms we use language. Our relations and positions in the communities we live are defined, to a great extent, through the language we use.

   Language is not a fixed concept either. There are many living languages being spoken by different speakers and what is more, each and every language has its own variations, dialects, slangs, registers. As Ansaldo (2010: 617) puts it, individual's linguistic identities are shaped by the "plurality of linguistic codes." All of these lead to questions such as, how is the identity of a person defined in monolingual, bilingual or multilingual communities and to what extent language plays a role in assigning individual memberships in a community of a specific language or giving the role of 'otherness' to them? Linguistic identities may direct individuals into membership of a community and hence encourage solidarity and accommodativeness or lead to their exclusion; hence the distance and 'othering' effect. The author believes that the terms 'otherness' and 'othering' are related to alienating consequences of not belonging to or being a member of a linguistic community.

   What follows in this paper delineate some basic concepts that clarify the most obvious and thought-provoking issues in the field of linguistic identities. For the purpose of specificity, the writer limits the study to multilingual societies, those in which more than two languages are used and exist. First, the most relevant theories will be introduced, based on a chronological order and then they will be compared and contrasted. Second, the notions of solidarity and otherness will be discussed in light of their relation to language use and identity construction. Third, different linguistic devices will be drawn upon to show how speakers in a multilingual community position themselves and others through language. Fourth, it will be concluded that, in order to

communicate efficiently in multilingual communities, one has to cross the borders of the self and the others by amalgamating these two; hence, one has to create a third space in which differences are negotiated and linguistic devices are used to solidify or alienate.

Identity construction: principles and models

Sociolinguistics has long been attempting to pinpoint the exact role of language in identity construction. It is of great importance to know how exactly the identity of individual speakers in a special community across time and space is formed. Recent theories of identity, which will be discussed below, have been evolved from the idea that there is no change in human behavior with the focus on the static nature of identity, to more dynamic and interactive ones which address language as the immediate cause and result.

Principles

The Role of Agency

Agency is a key element in the studies of identity construction in relation to language. To what extent individuals are free to make choices and how far they can move across boundaries of language and identity structures, which are imposed by society, are among crucial questions to be answered. Block (2006: 38) acknowledges that, "identity is an emergent process, taking place at the crossroads of structure and agency". This, in fact, suggests that identity construction is not seen as a product of mere ruling structures in society, but it must be seen as a merger of these structures and social agents.

The Role of Consciousness: Subjectivities

Linguistic identities are (re) formed at every moment of interaction in which participants may or may not be conscious at the time of practice. Consciousness relates to the level of awareness that each individual has in linguistic interactions. In line with this concept, there is the notion of Weedon's Subjectivity(1997:32) that is defined by her as the "conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation in the world". The most crucial factor in shaping individual's consciousness in a linguistic interaction is experience (Cornejo 2012: 117) and by experience, it is meant, the usage of available linguistic sources in positioning self and others on a daily basis.

The Role of Ideology

The ideology which is prevalent in a society affects its

language and the way individuals perceive themselves and others. This understanding leads individuals into mapping categories in which they construct their own identities, and create or are created by social events. These structures and linguistic ideologies emerge during the social interaction via language (Bucholtz & Hall 2005: 4). The established ideology in a community determines how meanings are realized and led to identity construction. Structures or "stereotypes" are the backbones of our standpoint (Weiguo, 2013: 151).

Models

Social identity theory (SIT)

It is a groundbreaking theory that was developed by Tajfel (1981). This theory is based on the membership of individuals in different groups. Individuals tend to keep a distinct social identity by marking their specific viewpoints through becoming the member of a community. This theory in essence, maintains that individuals put aside their identity for the one that is the most 'salient' and powerful. In other words, they join the mainstream identity and form an in-group identity. Salience is defined by Meyerhoff (2006: 71) as how " a particular variant is perceived/heard." Moreover, salience is not totally predetermined in an interaction; rather, it appears collectively during the interaction.

What tells this theory apart from other theories of identity, is the element of emotional significance for individuals regarding their membership in the group. Meyerhoff (ibid: 72) accentuates that " in order to feel good about Us, we need a Them to compare ourselves to" .In terms of how this theory relates to language, one may argue that since individuals adopt the identity of a group, the adoption of the language of that group follows. This adoption may be in the form of dialect, in-group slang and jargons, or special registers.

Performativity

Butler (1997) proposed yet another challenging theory called Performativity. Butler was mainly concerned with the notion of gender, but her theory was expanded to cover all identity issues. According to this theory, our identity is constantly (re)constructed during our speech acts and our activities; and they are not 'predetermined traits we possess'. The theory of Performativity has significant consequences for language, since enacting identities in any given context necessitate the abandoning of acceptable or appropriate ways of communicating, or in other words going against the mainstream and acting on an individual level.

Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT)

According to Giles (1977), individuals can consciously put to use linguistic devices, and as a result, their identity in the process of interaction. Individuals have the power to join a community and adopt the identity of the group and at the same time, they can distance themselves from the community and construct their own individual identity and hence, linguistic discourse. These notions are introduced as 'convergence' and 'divergence' in SAT. The former is the (un)conscious tendency of the speaker to highlight the similarities in interaction, whereas, divergence is the (un)conscious attempt on the part of the interlocutors to distance themselves from each other (Meyerhoff 2006: 73).

Hierarchy of Identities model (HOI)

Omoniyi (2006: 17) sees identity as a means "in the service of hierarchization." According to this theory, there are different variations of identities, from which, some are prioritized at different moments of reactions. The act of prioritizing is based on the notion of salience. According to HOI,

An identification context may comprise one or more actions with one or more performance moments. Thus, each situation is potentially characterized by multiple positioning acts in which a cluster of identities are invoked and read but each varying in salience. The most salient identity option in any one moment of performance within a given interactional context is forgrounded through talk and located therefore at the top of a hierarchy of identities. (Omoniyi 2006: 20)

Linguistically speaking: Code-switching and Code-Crossing

Definitions

With all the theories above, for an instructional process to happen, there is always the need for an encoder and a decoder. While the presence of the last one is a necessity, the presence of the first is not. There are two distinct categories in code-switching depending on whether it is 'domain-based' or 'address-based' (Meyerhoff 2006:116). The former is restrained by where the speakers actually are, and the latter points to who the speakers are conversing with.

Rampton (1995: 228) defines code-switching as an "in group behavior," while he contrasts it with code-crossing which is concerned with "switching into language(s) that are thought not to 'belong' to the user." Rampton, who introduced the concept of code-crossing, identifies some differences among the two. In code-switching, the

speakers can use one or more languages in one single interaction, but not in code-crossing. Code-crossing happens to a stigmatized language. In code-switching, conventions are not violated, while in the other divergence happen. Last but not least, there is dissociation between the speaker and the code in code-crossing. (ibid)

In SAT, pitch and speech rate are mentioned among phonological aspects of the language choice (Meyerhoff, 2006: 73). Individuals may decide to speak slowly while interacting with a non-native person or, they may decide to speed up in order to create alienating effects. In HOI, seven contexts have been introduced to show how linguistic devices are used as such. In conversations we shift between " the personal self and the public selves." An example is given from Politicians, when they constantly change from 'we' to 'I'.In personal narratives, like life histories, individuals often change their "orientations". In political speeches, we witness the use of "embedded structures." This happens when an individual draw on multiple identities in terms of address. In commentaries, "use of marked solidarity forms in the media and sports commentaries in which objectivity and neutrality are expected." In trades and commercial contexts, there is a switch from language A to language B or to a language which is comprehensible for both parties. In musical contexts, the codes are crossed to achieve the acceptability criteria. Last but not least, in "community narratives and claims", to establish hereditary assertions, the folk language and terminology are used. (Meyerhoff, 2006: 29-30)

These linguistic strategies may lead to the solidarity or the distancing effect in a linguistic community. Some codes may be used to signal the membership or in-group unanimity, while others may be used to (un)intentionally dissociate with the out-groups; these can be represented as "we code/they code distinction" (Cashman & Williams 2008:2).

Devices: positioning and indexicality

Positioning

Closely related to the concept of Subjectivity is the positioning method in creating the notions of the self and the otherness. Stewart (2012:317) upholds that these strategies are used to " bind and bond, to construct identities and delimitate different groups." Whether participants choose to be formal language users or informal ones depend on the situation of the interaction and the position they may consciously or unconsciously take. One may even decide to use both the formal and the informal in one single social interaction. It is even more than the formality criteria, since there are other positioning devices like using marked sentences or using

the pronoun 'I'. This may take us to the familiar concept of audience design. According Meyerhof (2006: 70), "speakers drive their style shifts to an addressee from the characteristics that they associate with the speech of the group as a whole. One of the assumed devices in this regard is hyper-correction, the tendency of the speakers of a stigmatized variety to converge to the more prestigious or dominant dialect. Stewart (2012: 305) adds personal deixis, especially in hedging and asides.

Indexicality

One linguistic tendency of all human beings is to label and categorize; we tend to index ourselves and others in linguistic interactions. One familiar example is the use of adjectives and presuppositions. As an example, we tend to normalize our thoughts and implicatures by using antonyms like 'good' or 'bad'. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) hold that, "an index is a linguistic form that depends on the interactional context for its meaning " and furthermore, they delineated the below linguistic means through which identity is constructed in discourse,

Identity relations emerge in interaction through several related indexical processes, including: (a) overt mention of identity categories and labels; (b) implicatures and presuppositions regarding one's own or others' identity position; (c) displayed evaluative and epistemic orientations to ongoing talk, as well as interactional footings and participant roles; and (d) the use of linguistic structures and systems that are ideologically associated with specific personas and groups. (ibid: 594)

In multilingual communities, this indexicality principle can bring about both advantages and disadvantages. This process may have significant drawbacks for those speakers whose dialect or language variations are deemed as inferior. What is more, speakers may opt for indexing just one facet of their linguistic identities in social interactions (Dyer 2007:106) Settling upon special features of one's language(s) indicate the "intentional modification" of the individual self or others (Ige 2010: 3049)

CONCLUSION

Any given construction of identity may be in part deliberate and intentional, in part habitual and hence often less than fully conscious, in part an outcome of others' perceptions and representations, an in part an effect of larger ideological processes and material structures that may become relevant to interaction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004:376)

It has already been stated that linguistic (cultural) differences give rise to diverse linguistic identities. With a view to this we have to be aware of a the fact that there

are not one, but many realities as there are many linguistic identities. Although Individuals keep their own linguistic identities during a conversation or interaction, they mutually create a third space in which all the available linguistic repertoires act and interact to converge or diverge, depending on the positionality principle. In this third space we are "compelled to stop the flux of becoming in order to interact with one another" (Monceri 2009: 52). To use Cruddas's words(2007:486), in this third world, individuals can "create new ways of being".

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