

### Testing Hypotheses about Steps in Grammatical Turnover/Shift

This paper reports on a project that ties together three contact phenomena, codeswitching, convergence and language shift, under one model, the Step Model. Here, shift refers to a turnover from a speaker's L1 to a community-dominant language as his/her main public language, not total L1 loss (cf. Backus, 1999; Myers-Scotton, 1998; 2002).

From a grammatical point of view, shift is a turnover in the source of the morphosyntactic frame of the bilingual clause, a turnover from the L1 to an L2. The overall hypothesis is: The informal bilingual speech of L1 speakers who also speak a community-dominant L2 shows steps toward the L2 that may end in language shift. The notion of steps is this: In their bilingual speech, a group of bilinguals fall at discrete steps in terms of the frequencies and types of codeswitching (to the L2) and in frequencies and types of convergence (to L2 structural patterns). The hypothesis is that such steps can be identified quantitatively.

The critical hypothesis is that the increase in L2 material (from one step to another) never includes the L2 grammatical morphemes that signal relations within phrases and between phrases in the clause (e.g. subject-verb agreement and tense markers). Before this happens, speakers will switch to the L2 as the language providing the morphosyntactic frame of bilingual speech and they will produce many monolingual L2 clauses. Overall, the claim is that because the frequencies and types of L2 incursions into bilingual speech form identifiable steps, change is abrupt in this sense, not gradual.

The bilingual speech of Xhosa-English bilinguals test the model. They are immigrants to Gauteng Province, an urban, industrialized area in South Africa. Because they have lived at least two years far from their home area, they are vulnerable to shift, at least regarding their main public language. L1 Xhosa speakers interviewed 50 subjects on relevant to their everyday lives. The interviewers used a few English words or phrases, but mainly spoke Xhosa. That is, the interviewees were biased to speak Xhosa. Still, all spoke some English; some even produced many English-framed clauses.

Analysis includes cluster analyses that considered speakers' ages, gender, and education, and their use of English. Preliminary results indicate that only measures of types of English usage are significant (i.e. result in discrete clusters of speakers). Thus, preliminary analysis supports the hypothesis that bilinguals who are vulnerable to shift will fall in discrete groups based on their use of a waxing L2 (English here).

This project offers an objective means to characterize the stages of grammatical shift. Also, it shows relations among codeswitching, convergence, and language shift. Its wider implication is that it details the type of extensive mixture in bilingual data that is possible, but tests the hypothesis that mixture on the way to shift is resisted in favor a uniform grammatical frame both before and after shift (i.e. the grammatical frame of one language always prevails in bilingual clauses).

485 words in body of abstract, not including title or references

#### References

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