

### **Constraints on Intra-Sentential Codeswitching in Gibraltar**

Most of the research on codeswitching (CS) has been focused on the possible constraints that restrict the change of codes: social/situational and discourse constraints have been found on inter-sentential CS (Bell 1984, Auer 1984, Poplack 1980, Gumperz 1982, Milroy and Wei 1991), and syntactic constraints on intra-sentential CS, which has been studied both from a variationist (Pfaff 1976, Poplack 1980, 1991) and a generative perspective (Woolford, 1983; Di Sciullo 1986, Meyers-Scotton 1992, Muysken 1991, Belazi et al. 1994), the latter being of relevance for the present study. In the framework of generative grammar, Belazi et al. (1994) argue that CS obeys the Functional Head Constraint (FHC), a constraint grounded in the system of categories of Chomsky (1986) and in Abney's f-selection (1987), which disallows switching between a functional head ( $C^{\circ}$ ,  $I^{\circ}$ ,  $Neg^{\circ}$ ,  $D^{\circ}$ ,  $Q^{\circ}$ ) and its complement. Some recent works by Mahootian and Santonini (1996), MacSwan (1997) and Nishimura (1997) have presented counterexamples to the FHC, but Belazi et al. have refuted them on the basis of two main arguments: their reliance on naturalistic data and, therefore, on performance rather than on competence; and their misinterpretations of borrowing as CS. The present study takes these two factors into consideration and tests the FHC as applied to the Spanish/English CS daily used in the Gibraltar community and commonly known as Yanito.

This study uses different data collection methods: recordings of interviews and naturalistic data (both my own and some of Moyer's, 1992), written excerpts from emails and discussion forums, written sections from the online magazine *Panorama*, and an acceptability judgment task. The participants are fluent bilinguals who have been born and/or lived in Gibraltar for most of their lives. Their demographic information was collected by means of a questionnaire developed by Toribio (2000). The goal of this paper is to test whether the FHC can explain the Yanito intra-sentential CS, not only when analyzing the speakers' CS in oral and written speech but also when looking at their acceptability judgments of switches at functional junctures, ruled out by the FHC. Even though the FHC plays an important role in determining the acceptability of certain switches in Yanito's intra-sentential CS, there are other factors that need to be considered such as the existence of conventional switches and patterns characteristic of this particular community, whose members share a strong sense of identity.

The analysis of the Yanito data shows that the FHC does not suffice to predict the kind of intra-sentential CS that characterizes the Gibraltar community. The Yanitos switch languages at some functional junctures and judge those switches acceptable. Switches between  $C^{\circ}$  and IP (*Supongo que I speak two languages*), and the  $D^{\circ}/Q^{\circ}$  and NP (*Dos colleagues did not hand in el work*) are very common and widely accepted in Yanito. Even though not as frequent in the naturalistic data, the speakers also produce and accept sentences that involve switching codes between  $I^{\circ}$  and VP (*Estoy studying para el examen*). No switches between  $Neg^{\circ}$  and IP (*\*La biblioteca no opens on Sundays*) were found or accepted, though. These results show that even though the FHC can account for some of the constraints on CS, this principle is systematically overridden in Yanito in which the pattern Spanish function word- English content word appears to be emerging. This could be tentatively explained by the more dominant role that English seems to be acquiring in the daily bilingual speech of this community, situation that could be giving way to a shift phenomenon in which Spanish functional words are being carried into the English language; this phenomenon has been attested in other language contact situations like in central Ecuador, where *Media Lengua*, a language variety with the lexicon of the now dominant language (Spanish) and the grammar of Quechua, is spoken (Thomason, 2001).

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