

Error Analysis of Yorùbá-English Subtitles in Nollywood Movies: The Case of Two Grammar Components

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Abstract

This paper explores some selected Yorùbá movies with the aim of identifying and classifying errors committed in their subtitles. The focus is largely on morphosyntactic component of the target language (English). The study randomly selected four Yorùbá Nollywood movies. A total of sixty-six (66) structures were randomly transcribed from the screen. The study is carried out against the background of Government and Binding Theory. It is found that errors in translation/subtitling of Yorùbá Nollywood movies are becoming worse. Most of the sentences lack grammaticality. More specifically, Spec-Head Agreement, Extended Projection Principle and case filter, are the most flouted conditions. Also, most of the structures lack accurate morphological marking; the errors identified are duplication of (inflectional) morphological features, outright loss of inflection, and lack of agreement feature between items that require inflectional markings. This study predicts two implications of these errors. First, that there is a subtle threat to the industry; it may result to decline in home consumption of the production from the industry. Second, that the industry constitutes a threat to the learning of English among young viewers; some, especially children are likely to learn errors in the course of watching such movies. Lastly, non-Yorùbá viewers may erroneously consider Yorùbá to be a pro-drop language due to frequent omission of the nominative singular pronominal, I. Thus there is the need to respond quickly to this in order to salvage the situation. It is thus recommended that professional editors should be recruited into the production team for better performance.

Keywords: Error analysis, Nollywood, Yorùbá movies, Communication, Grammar, Subtitles

Introduction

For so many years now, movie has presented itself as an efficient tool for passing information or whiling away time for people all over the world, irrespective of their race, colour, tribe, religious belief and geographical location. But contemporary movie has gone beyond this; it is now a creation, an outlet for information and education dissemination and also serves as a big source of revenues for both industries and countries. Consequently, the film industry is growing persistently with a number of film production industries and studios emerging everywhere in the world. The general public is now fast getting glued or attached to this phenomenon called film making, because it has presented itself as useful instrument for uniting families, communities and countries, by correcting relevant issues in the society.

The growth of the film industry has resulted to the increasing need of subtitling translation for both the deaf and the non-deaf communities. Subtitling can be done in the same language in which the film is acted so as to help the deaf or rendering the translation in a different language to help those who don't understand the language in which the film is acted. The Nigerian movie industry has come a long way in cinematographic rejuvenation. It is without doubt occupying a centre stage as it has, over the years, taken different dimensions of showcasing what the industry knows how best to do. The language of Nigerian video films, its choice, and those of subtitling and dubbing, have long escaped scrutiny, and only attracted scholars' attention within the past ten years. Unfortunately, the subtitles of recent movies done in English are redolent of errors. It is not enough that the industry should only be concerned with the visual quality and thematic thrust of the movies but with the grammar and semantic appropriateness of what is subtitled.

As highlighted by McLoughlin, Biscio and Mhainin (2011), 'an increasing number of contributions have appeared in recent years on the subject of Audiovisual Translation (AVT), particularly in relation to dubbing and subtitling', considered as particularly challenging. Nigeria and indeed Africa should be a major beneficiary of the subtitles considering the number of ethnic groups in the continent. The emergence of different film industries in countries around Africa has helped in showcasing Africa to the international community. Hence, subtitles came in handy, considering the fact that most viewers cannot understand the language with which the movies were produced.

Code Switching of Hausa Bilinguals in Diaspora

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Abstract

Code switching is the ability to use two or more languages in a single communicative episode. This act of switching from one language variety to another appears to be normal and pervasive phenomena in almost every day discourse of bilinguals. At times, the bilinguals may not possibly report the code they have chosen or may not be aware that they repeatedly switch between the available codes within their utterances. Therefore, speakers who are competent in two or more languages often switch between the linguistic varieties in single sentence or speech to express their intent and share interactive impression. That is why the research reported in this paper focus on exploring interactive significance of the persistent use of code switching by Hausa bilinguals in this century. Data for the study was collected at various occasions and locations through spontaneous recordings of the bilinguals' conversations hence analyzed within the framework of Inuwa (2014c). Besides, the result found that the Hausa bilinguals usually code switched from Hausa language to other various language English while quoting a statement made by an important person. As they normally code switched to reiterate a statement or to clarify it or at times to make some objective comments during conversation. The bilinguals also employed code switching to share a common identity or when addressing different audience or if they lack an appropriate term to use in one language. They still switch between the two or more languages to express exclamations. It is finally discovered that the act of code switching between two or more languages entail interactive and social values as opposed to notion that view the phenomenon as a substandard practice of language or simply an indication of partial control of the two or more languages available in the mental faculty of the bilinguals.

Keywords: Hausa, bilinguals, code switching, 21st century

Introduction

Code switching is as an old linguistic phenomenon. As a rule, the mannerism of mixing language varieties in communicative exchange emanates mostly from contact between two or more languages which in turn leads to bilingualism in a given social organization. It is one of the most established theme and well known language contact phenomenon in linguistic and sociolinguistic inquiries alike. Speakers who are competent in two or more languages often switch between the available codes in a speech or statement to express their minds and share interactive values. Therefore, switching from one language to another within the discourse of bilinguals is a common universal linguistic phenomenon. The term is written or used in various studies as *code-switching* (Holmes, 2013), *codeswitching* (Bowers, 2006), *code switching* (Reyes, 2004) and abbreviated as CS. In a nutshell, code switching is the mental ability to use two or more languages within an utterance or in same statement. This bilingual pattern of mixing languages persistently manifested in various speeches in both formal and informal contexts including conversation between household members, chats involving peers, while performing at theater, during classroom interaction, religious sermon, news casting, official meeting and so on. Therefore, the study aims at identifying some interactive and social values manifested in the course of mixing more than one language in single statement by some Hausa bilinguals.

However, despite the fact that both code switching and code mixing are birds of a feather but it will be useful to discuss some peculiar distinction that exists between the two language contact phenomena. Whilst describing linguistic behaviors among Nigerian bilinguals, Ugot (2009) highlighted some dissimilarity between the two. Code-mixing is often an infusion of a single word or element of a donor language into a host language construction. Contrarily, code switching is the lifting of clausal, phrasal or sentence structure between the language A and B which occurs during a discourse between bilinguals. According to Hamers and Blanc (2000) code mixing is nothing rather than a kind of insertion code switching (intrasentential code switching), in which a lexical piece of language A is implanted into a single utterance or sentence in language B. The language B is sometimes the dominant language. This kind of code mixing usually includes a word or a conventional expression. It is vital to know that some scholars do not recognize a distinction between code mixing and code switching within their works. For instance, Muysken (2000) applied the word *code-mixing* in place of the term *code switching*. McCormick (1995) opined that code mixing involves short lexical elements, usually a single word, while code switching, entail alternation of lexical units longer than a single word.

Code switching is not a uniform bilingual behaviour because its norms varies from a single speaker to another, from one community to another, and from a situation to another (Wardhaugh, 2011). Some

linguists in various studies classified code switching by looking into the circumstances in which the behaviour repeatedly occurs in bilingual conversation. To Blom and Gumperz (1972), code switching is of two types; situational and metaphorical code switching. In contrast, Poplack (1980) and Romaine (1993) recognized three types of code switching namely; tags switching, intrasentential and intersentential code switching by closely observing the patterns and positions that the phenomena usually materialize within sentences.

The Situational Code Switching

The situational type of code switching happens when the languages spoken during conversation change according to the situations in which the bilinguals find themselves without changing the topic of discussion. Thus, they used one code in a particular circumstance and other code in an entirely different one. The substitution from one code to the other may perhaps be instantaneous (Wardhaugh, 2011). The example below is the instance of situational code switching in a conversation that happen between a bank staff and her manager, where she shifted back and forth between Hausa-English to thank the manager after giving her some advice on not to resign from her job. So, the code switching occurred here instantly as a result of the situation and the modes of the participant speakers have changed.

Thank you sir, sai an jima.

Thank you sir, see you next time. (Chamo, 2012)

Metaphorical code switching

While the metaphorical one occurs once the topic of discussion change necessitated the change in the language in used. That is, the speakers changed the topic as they redefined the situations; from official to personally, formal to informal, politeness to solidarity, and so on. This kind of code switching entails an affective dimension. In the sense that once the subject matter change requires automatic changeover of the language spoken within a given situation is said to have a metaphorical shift between the two or more languages. However, certain group of speakers may perhaps engage in this kind of switching to serve various social purposes.

3-Tag-switching

Tag switching involves embedding a tag or a phrase from one language variety into a speech which is entirely different in the other language. This switching happens easily due to the fact that most of the grammatical tags are minimal constraints. This is especially, the English ones that are not violating the syntactic rules of the languages in the process of implanting them into the monolingual sentences. Typical English tags are *alright, very good, you know, that is, okay, look, uh, etc.* The example below is an English tag that is attached into the Hausa utterance which is quite different.

Okay, ni zan ajiye nawa aikin.

Okay, I will resign from my job. (Chamo, 2012)

Intersentential code switching

The Intersentential occurs within the sentence boundary or at clausal level in one language or another in speaker turns within the same sentence or statement. For the speakers to involve in this kind of code switching, they must be fluent (compound/dominant bilingual) in the two or more language varieties, so as to abide by the rules of the languages in the course of alternating between the codes. The example below is an instance where Hausa-English code switching occurs between sentence boundaries within the same utterance.

Aliyu kar fa ka manta ni fa matar aure ce, idan ka manta na tuna ma. Leave my office now.

Aliyu don't forget that I am married, if you forget let me remind you. Leave my office now.

On the other hand, Yusuf (2011) described Hausa as a member of Chadic groups from Afroasiatic language families. It is the largest and most widely spoken vernacular in West Africa. Also, it is mainly established in Northern Nigeria and Niger Republic besides large number of Hausa communities commonly found in major cities and settlements throughout West Africa and a number of African countries, especially Chad, Ghana, Sudan, Cameroon, Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Libya and Egypt. Recent estimate approximated one hundred million natives who speak Hausa as first language and over one hundred million nonnative speakers who demonstrate varying degree of competence in the language. Hausa comes into

contact with neighboring and far away languages. By this relationship some languages exercise their influences over Hausas which lead to emergence and manifestation of different language contact phenomena like interference, code switching, diagglossia and borrowing in their speeches.

The role English played as media of instructions in Nigerian schools; the multilingual situation in Nigeria and technological development of globe contributed greatly in the influence of the language over Hausa. But Hausa had been significantly influenced by Arabic far than by English in Nigeria. Since the association between Hausa and Arabic traces back to several centuries, while that between Hausa and English only goes back to two centuries after the colonization of Nigeria by the British. Moreover, Hausa has been influenced by other nearby languages, specifically Fulfulde, Kanuri, Nupe, Tuaregs and Yoruba (Ahmed and Daura, 1970). However, there are some multilingual Nigerians who can speak a tribal language at local level (Hausa), the official language (English) at national level or at times Arabic or any indigenous language of other ethnic group in the country. It is sometimes very difficult for Hausa bilinguals across Nigeria and diaspora to withstand a single conversation without shifting or switching back and forth between the language varieties at their disposal. It mostly happens between English, Arabic and either one of the Nigerian languages in both formal and informal communication, particularly in the course of a classroom interaction, religious lecture, official gatherings, or within a conversation among peers, and sometimes between members of the same family.

Review of the Related Literature

Early linguistic studies on code switching, 1950s downward universally considered bilinguals' habit as sub-standard practice of language (Weinreich, 1968). But modern linguistic inquiries discovered otherwise. Jagero & Odongo (2011) argue that code switching is a normal bilingual behavior. It has been described as natural language contact phenomena (Obiamalu & Mbagwu, 2009). The bilingual act is also perceived as subconscious behavior (Li, 2000; Woolard, 2004; Auer, 2010). Therefore, alternating between two or more languages manifested subconsciously and naturally in discourse of the bilingual speakers. Ariffen and Rafik-Galea (2009) regard the trait as discourse strategies use by bilinguals to effectively communicate their mentality. While discussing code switching in multilingual contexts like Nigeria, Essien (2000) found that code switching among bilinguals such as Nigerians has to be considered as normal linguistic phenomenon in the societies where two or more vernaculars and dialects are spoken.

In certain bilingual interactions, code switching has a variety of linguistic and conversational function. Gumperz (1982) point out social meanings of code switching while explaining six classification related to conversational functions of the trait between these language pairs: Slovenian-German, Spanish-English and Hindi-English. He further viewed it as conversational strategy employ by bilinguals to express interactive connotation like quotation, addressee specification, interjection, reiteration, messages qualification and objectivization. They do so in response to the context and social variables. Malik (1994) in exploring sociolinguistic aspect of code-switching related to language condition in India labeled ten functions and reasons that motivated bilinguals to switch between two or more languages: lack of facility in one language, register incompetence, semantic significance, addressing different audience, showing solidarity/identity with group, emphasizing a point, mode of a speaker, habitual expressions, pragmatic motives and attention attraction. Similarly, Bollinger (1975) posit that code switching is employed by bilinguals to eliminate any conversational difficulty that may rise in communication as they switch deliberately to disguise, misinform or brag to the hearer outside the conversation.

Despite the pervasive nature of code switching in almost every aspect of Hausa bilinguals, studies on code switching with reference to Hausa, Arabic, English and other neighboring languages seems not enough based on the researcher's knowledge. Nevertheless, a number of studies (literatures) have been carried out by some researcher as reviewed in the present study. In an effort to discuss the incidence of code switching from the sociolinguistic perspective, Inuwa (2014) examined the manifestation of code switching act and factors motivating the occurrence of code switching among Hausa bilingual elites studying at Northern University of Malaysia. The study explored that the act of code switching manifested naturally and subconsciously due to influence of certain sociolinguistic and grammatical factors of the two languages. The researcher further cited some instances of code switching where the Hausa statements remained, while switching to English is written in bold italics:

Gaskiya ***I was very disappointed*** domin ban ji dakin abin da ya faru jiya.

Actually, I was very disappointed yesterday because of what happened (Inuwa, 2014)

Furthermore, Sarbi (2014) evaluated the effect of code switching on translation. The information uses in the study were collected from texts, mass media and by physical observation of the bilingual speeches at different times and occasions. Five scenarios from the data have been selectively observed. The researcher in the first place discusses the situations where code switching affects both the source and the receptor language of proficient translator despite conducting an effective translation. The second case is the possibility of carrying out an effective translation in a situation where the translator can be a multilingual in the source, receptor and the interfering language. The third is the possibility of doing an unproductive translation where the translator is multilingual but ineffectual in the interfering language. The fourth condition is when a bilingual translator finds it necessary to consult another person who is proficient in the source and interfering language to help in turning the text into unilingual language. In this translation is possible after technical hitches of consultation. The last case is a situation where translation is impossible when the translator is an indolent and uneducated in the intruding language.

Abbas (2014) examined the use of code switching within the songs of the contemporary Hausa films. The researcher in her analysis examines the nature of the code switching act and the reasons that usually influence the switching between the two or more languages in the songs. It is noted that switching back and forth in the Hausa songs is mainly influenced by the author's literary level except in some cases where the singers employ the phenomenon to share group identity. Finally, the study established that the act of code switching that mostly manifested within the contemporary Hausa film songs is a conscious behavior contrary to the subconscious one which recurrently appears within the spontaneous conversation of the bilinguals. Abbas further went on to cite the instances of code switching from one Hausa song 'Rainy Season'. The Hausa utterances remained, while switching to English is inscribed in italics:

Farkon ganinki na yiwo *confusing*,
 Sai da zuciyata ta yi *squeezing*,
 Sai da *temperature* ta tai *raising*,
 Jiri nake ca ake na sha *poison*,
 Ni ko so nake a san ina da *reason*,
Reason na farko kina da kyan *dressing*
Reason na biyu kullum kitsonki *weaving*,
Oh! *rainy season.* (Abbas, 2014)

In the same vein, Chamo (2012) observes the nature and factors responsible for switches between Hausa and English in the contemporary Kanywood Hausa films. The finding reveals that code switching in Kanywood films is influenced by emotional feelings (love or anger) of the characters. They also employ code switching to share identity and show solidarity with a person or sometimes with group members in the movies. The example below is an instance where Hausa-English code switching occurs within a single sentence. The Hausa utterances remained, while switching to English is written in bold italics:

Gaskiya ne corruption is a cancer us.
 You are right ***corruption*** is a cancer to us. (Chamo, 2012)

Under the grammatical view point of code switch analysis, Yusif (1985) talk over the syntax of Hausa-Arabic code switching among the bilingual speakers. The inquiry digs into the prospects and figures of code switching within the syntactic units by the different native Hausa speakers, who to some extent express themselves in Arabic at certain altitudes. The researcher collected the data from the compiled Hausa written documents (poems and other translation materials) and orally by partaking in conversational terms with the Hausa-Arabic bilinguals. The exploration discovers that in the instances of practicing code switching by the Hausa-Arabic bilinguals within sentences happens without any syntactic restriction. For example, the following sentences are samples of the Hausa-Arabic intra-sentential type of code switching found in the study. The Hausa utterances remained, while switching to Arabic is written in italics:

Muhammadu ya *kattaba qasiidaa* da Laarabci.
 Muhammadu wrote a poem in Arabic.
 Muna faataa zaaku *bazala juhuudii*.
 We hope you will put effort. (Yusif, 1985)

Findings and Discussion

This study is conducted qualitatively through covert and overt recordings of Hausa-English bilinguals studying at Universiti Utara Malaysia in December, 2013. However, instead to apply general linguistic and sociolinguistic explanation to discuss social values of code switching, the researcher adapted the model of eight functions of code switching used by Inuwa (2104c). In doing so, the technique of exploratory contextual

analysis was employ to analyze collected data by conceptualizing the significance i.e. quotation, lack of facilities, addressee specification, interjections, reiteration, clarification, identity sharing and objectivization. They have been numbered 1-8 by rendering each instance in English. Hausa utterances remained while switching to English is written in bold italics.

Quotation

Quotation involves repetition of same speech made somewhere by a personality. Direct or indirect quotation is one of code switching strategies employ by Hausa bilinguals to quote a an adage or at times statement to reestablish the importance of situation or topic in a given discourse, which may be in public, religious, household or classroom interaction, as we can see:

Ya tava cewa: '*if u can't beat them don't join them*' amma yai *joining* xinsu a qarshe.

He once says: if you can't beat them don't join them' at last joined them.

Muna buqatar *leaders not rulers* kamar yadda Xanmasani ya tava cewa.

We need leaders not rulers as Xanmasani once said.

In the immediate instances, the practices of switching between two languages indicate circumstances where the original assertions made by certain speakers are reused by shifting from Hausa to English in relation to the topic of discussion. Therefore, this act of code switching is metaphorical in an intrasentential level.

Lack of facility

Some words representing certain concept and thought in one language may not be exactly available in other language, especially technical terms in particular area of specialization. Any time code switchers come to terms with such expression or terminology they mostly found themselves in no choice than switching to other language which has the exact word to fully express oneself and avoid loss of the intended meaning.

Ka fara *downloading* tukunna sai ka yi *copy and paste*.

You have to download then copy and paste.

Zan yi *using questionnaire* ne.

I will use a questionnaire.

In the above case of Hausa-English code switching, the bilinguals come across certain modern technological terms which almost have no corresponding items in Hausa language. So, instead to spend a time thinking of the equivalent Hausa terms they prefer to switch to English and use the words to avoid losing intended meaning and fully express themselves. So, this act of code switching is situational in an intrasentential level.

Clarification/Message Qualification

Bilingual speakers usually engage in acts of code switching to clarify a possible misconception or sometimes to resolve message ambiguity regarding the earlier statement they have uttered. In order to make the previous statement very clear in conversation, they often decided to choose a code and switch to another language.

Yanayin ne sai a hankali don rayuwar ba tabbas. *No condition is permanent*.

Life is overwhelming to a certain degree. No condition is permanent.

I was disappointed. Saboda ban ji dakin abin da ya faru jiya ba.

To be honest, I was disappointed with what happened yester night.

From the above specimens of code switching, the bilinguals alternate between the two language varieties largely to make the immediate statement very precise to the listener (s), as they often switch back and forth between Hausa and English to avoid ambiguity during communicative exchange. In this case, code switching manifested in an intersentential level.

Reiteration/Elaboration

A statement may be well restated in another code to stress a point in spontaneous conversations. Speakers like the Hausa-English bilinguals often repeat the same utterance in either one of the languages solely to emphasize or amplify what they have immediately uttered within the same statement. They essentially use a word or a fragment of speech from one language to abridge or interpret what they have instantly said earlier

within same speech, mainly in lyrics, presentation, lectures or in uncertain circumstances such as disagreement and so on.

Da wannan za a hana cin hancin; a yi *fighting corruption*?

How can they fight corruption like this?

In the above occurrence of Hausa-English code switching in intersentential level, the bilinguals repeated almost the same Hausa statement in English in order to reiterate the main point of discussion. This is why the bilinguals in the example repeated the same expression in other language to emphasize what have instantly uttered in the speech.

Identity Sharing

The practice of code-switching at times reflects social class or identity of bilinguals. This symbolizes a situation where bilinguals share certain similarities and sense of belonging to a particular class. In the process some clauses or expressions are retained in their original languages to signify a sense of understanding and familiarity amid group members.

Har yanzu ban samu *salary* ba amma wasu sun yi *receiving alert* tun jiya

I am yet to receive the salary but some have already got it since yester night.

An saki *second semester result*

The second semester result is out.

From the above instances, bilinguals belonging to a particular languages-sharing group (staffs and students) employ codes-switching in intrasentential level to share their identities. This signifies that alternation between two languages is a conversational strategy, use by speakers of same language group or culture to show understanding and shared values.

Addressee Specification

Moving from one language to another variety may occur to direct the message to a particular listener. In the sense that during spontaneous conversation bilinguals may employ code switching to single out one in midst of different possible addressees through directing the message to the targeted recipient. For example:

I mean Fesal ba kai ba.

I mean Fesal not you.

Why zaka yi min haka, bayan ga yadda muka yi da kai?

Why would you do this to me, despite the agreement?

From the above examples, it appears that the Hausa-English bilinguals within their spontaneous conversation code switched at intrasentential level to direct a message to the targeted recipient or to single out one among various possible listeners.

Interjections

Interjection, such as exclamation or an interpretation of mode of a speaker is normally use for better expression of a given situation in discourse. The Hausa-English bilinguals in conversation switch back and forth between the two codes to show exclamations, especially pleasure, sorrow, happiness, surprise and so on as we can see in these instances:

Oh my God! Wallahi na manta *matric card* xina.

Oh my God! I forgot my matric card.

Gaskiya *you are very funny!*

Honestly you are very funny.

From the above case of Hausa-English code switching, the bilingual substitute between the two languages to demonstrate exclamatory mode that is pleasure and surprise in discourse. The latter is a case of intrasentential code switching while the former is a case of intersentential switching.

Objectivization

Objectivization refers to an individual comment in discourse intend to decide between known facts or a topic of discussion with personal opinion. Bilinguals in some cases employed code switching to remark personally regarding the subject matter, which may be opposing, seconding or assertion.

Domin ni a *argument* dina *democracy is relevant*.

In my humble opinion, democracy is relevant.

Abin da yakamata a yi wajen *dealing* da *corruption*...

What they have done in fighting the corruption.....

From the above example of Hausa-English pattern of language use, the bilinguals used code switching in intrasentential level to comment personally on a given subject matter.

Conclusion

Finally, the study explored that bilinguals who are proficient in two or more languages, especially Hausa and English switch back and forth in single statement or speech to share conversational values as opposed to perception that views the phenomenon as substandard practice of language or just a sign of partial control of two or more languages available in the mental faculty of bilinguals. The bilinguals often utilized code switching as conversational strategy to say again certain quotations or to clarify statement or to reiterate a point or comment objectively in exchanging speeches. The bilinguals also used code switch to share common identities that bind them together or in the process of specifying addressee, or when lacking an appropriate term to use in one language. They however switch between the two or more languages to express exclamations. It is finally discovered that the act of code switching between two or more languages entail interactive and social values

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