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Gender marking in inter-sentential code-switching: potential self-repairs between languages

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1. Outline

Self-initiated self-repairs observed in spontaneous data from adult/child, both biligual German/Italian (Cantone 2015):

(1) C: Wo ist die$_{FEM}$ Sonne$_{FEM}$? (age 2;5,26)
Where is the sun
A: È un pò nascosta$_{FEM}$ – è nascosto$_{MASC}$ / (R: sole$_{MASC}$)
(it) is a little hidden

Characteristics of self-initiated self-repairs (cf. e.g. Di Venanzio, 2016):

- incomplete or inappropriate (syntactic) structure
- cut off of the turn and the original utterance after having produced the inappropriate element (= initiation of the repair)
- substitution of the *reparandum*, i.e. the inappropriate element, within the turn (= self-repair)

Self-initiated self-repairs demand that a) the speaker reflects and evaluates its own speech, and b) that he detects a mismatch in his utterance

- Self-repairs are the result of self-monitoring processes (cf. e.g. Levelt, 1983, 1989)
- They indicate the speakers' perception of appropriate and/or even target-like utterances
- Self-repaired gender features after a language switch show that both languages a) are activated in bilinguals, but b) the transferred gender is evaluated as inappropriate in the own speech

Previous studies on code-switching (CS):

- Grammatical studies focus on intra-sentential switching in spontaneous or elicited data (cf. MacSwan, 2014)
- Socio-linguistic approaches concentrate on speakers' perspectives in inter-sentential CS
- Dilingual conversations (De Houwer, 2009)
- "Bilingual mode" (Grosjean, 1998)

Gender marking in mixed utterances:

Central issue in the study on mixed DPs, gender selection is said to depend on

- the grammatical features of the languages involved (cf. e.g. Liceras, et al., 2005; Liceras et al., 2008; Moro, 2014)
- the type of acquisition, e.g. different gender representations in balanced or unbalanced child language acquisition (cf. Cantone & Müller, 2008, but see Eichler, 2011)
- language processing, cost and priming (cf. among others Abutalebi et al., 2007)
- nouns in mixed DPs could be interpreted as borrowings (Toribio, 2001)
- noun selection (automatic gender-access model, Caramazza et al., 2001): only gender of lexical node selected plays a role in processing (cf. Costa et al., 2003a)
- independency of gender systems: no effect of non-response language in naming performance (cf. Costa et al., 2003a; Costa et al., 2003b)

2. Research questions

(1) Which gender is preferred to be marked when referring to a noun after a language switch?
(2) Which gender can be predicted to be target-like?
(3) What does gender assignment in inter-sentential switching tell us about the degree of activation of a language in bilinguals?

3. The Pilot Study - Methodology

1) Socio-biographical questionnaire
2) Grammatical judgment task (GJT) consisting of 48 dialogues as in (1)
→ Judgement if the Italian utterance is appropriate or not

- All dialogues introduced by a German utterance presenting the respective context noun (differing from Romance with respect to gender)
- Subsequent comment by Romance utterance refers to noun with an object clitic or adjective
- 4 types of gender combinations (masculine Italian nouns: o-/e-nouns, feminine Italian nouns: a-/e-nouns):
  A: German = fem, Italian = masc (clitic/adjective = masc)
  B: German = masc, Italian = fem (clitic/adjective = fem)
  C: German = neutr, Italian = masc (clitic/adjective = masc)
  D: German = neutr, Italian = fem (clitic/adjective = fem)

3) Translation-gender-task (after the GJT!)

- Translation of all German nouns referred to in the GJT into Italian
- Marking of the right article of the translated Italian noun
- In the case of different translation than used in the GJT or wrong gender marking, the respective dialogue of the GJT was not taken into account in the analysis (due to different target nouns and gender features)

Participants:

- Heritage speakers, born and raised in Germany, Italian and German in early childhood
- 16 participants (14 socio-biographical data), age range 10-24, Ø=13.6
- Kindergarten and schooling in Germany, all schooling in Italian (heritage language classes)
- All say, knowing Italian AND German is important
- 13/14 want to speak better Italian (one is already very confident)
- 13/14 believe it is very important to cultivate

4. General Results

Results Type A: German N_{FEM} vs. Italian N_{MASC}

	Appropriate in %	Inappropriate in %
Monolingual mode (ITAL=masc)	86	14
Bilingual mode (ITAL=fem)	61	39

- **The monolingual mode is more accepted (86%) than the bilingual mode (61%)**
- **(GER = fem, ITAL = masc) > (GER = fem, ITAL = fem)**

MONOLINGUAL MODE:
A: Warte, ich hole dir Milch$_{FEM}$ zum Kaffee.
B: No grazie, non lo$_{MASC}$ metto nel caffè.
(→ il latte$_{MASC}$)
A: Wait, I get you milk for the coffee.
B: No, thank you, not it I put in the coffee.

BILINGUAL MODE:
A: Die$_{FEM}$ neue$_{FEM}$ Seife$_{FEM}$ ist wirklich ganz toll!
B: Sì, è profumatissima$_{FEM}$!
(→ il sapone$_{MASC}$)
A: The new soap is really great!
B: Yes, (it) is very perfumed.

- **Nevertheless, the bilingual mode is not evaluated as inappropriate**
- **There is no difference between the results of o-nouns and e-nouns**

Results Type B: German N_{MASC} vs. Italian N_{FEM}

	Appropriate in %	Inappropriate in %
Monolingual mode (ITAL=fem)	79	21
Bilingual mode (ITAL=masc)	64	36

- **The monolingual mode is more accepted (79%) than the bilingual mode (64%)**
- **(GER = masc, ITAL = fem) > (GER = masc, ITAL = masc)**
- **Nevertheless, the bilingual mode is not evaluated as inappropriate**
- **There seems to be a difference between a-nouns and e-nouns**

MONOLINGUAL MODE:
A: Guck mal, wir haben Vollmond$_{MASC}$!
B: Davvero? È piena$_{FEM}$?
(→ la luna$_{FEM}$)
A: Look, there is full moon!
B: Really? Is (it) full?

BILINGUAL MODE:
A: Kennst du den$_{MASC}$ Hauptbahnhof$_{MASC}$ in Berlin?
B: No, non lo$_{MASC}$ conosco.
(→ la stazione$_{FEM}$)
A: Do you know the main station in Berlin?
B: No, don't it know I.

- **In the case of a-nouns, the HS prefer the monolingual mode (89 % : 70%)**
- **In the case of e-nouns, there is no clear preference for one mode (68% : 56%)**
- **Feminine e-nouns seem to be more susceptible to the bilingual mode than feminine a-nouns and masculine e-nouns**
- **Interesting: No frequency effect! Feminine e-nouns do not occur in a higher frequency than masculine e-nouns (cf. De Mauro et al., 1993)**

Results Type C: German N_{NEUT} vs. Italian N_{MASC}

	Appropriate in %	Inappropriate in %
Monolingual mode (ITAL=masc)	100	0
ITAL = fem	42	58

- **The monolingual mode is fully accepted (100%), BUT: the feminine gender is accepted even though it is not the gender of the equivalent Italian or German noun**

MONOLINGUAL MODE:
A: Wird dasNEUT Restaurant$_{NEUT}$ nebenan verkauft?
B: Sì, lo$_{MASC}$ venderanno la settimana prossima.
(→ il ristorante$_{MASC}$)
A: Will the restaurant around the corner be sold?
B: Yes, it will be sold next week

CONTROL MODE:
A: Wir müssen ein$_{NEUT}$ neues$_{NEUT}$ Bett$_{NEUT}$ für Sandra kaufen.
B: *Dove la$_{FEM}$ metterete?
(→ il letto$_{MASC}$)
A: We have a new bed for Sandra to buy.
B: Where will you it put?

Results Type C: German N_{NEUT} vs. Italian N_{MASC}

	Appropriate in %	Inappropriate in %
Monolingual mode (ITAL=fem)	92	8
ITAL = masc	60	40

- **The monolingual mode is almost accepted (92%), BUT: the masculine gender is accepted even though it is not the gender of the equivalent Italian or German noun**

MONOLINGUAL MODE:
A: Hast du schon das$_{NEUT}$ neue$_{NEUT}$ Haus$_{NEUT}$ von Daniele und Lisa gesehen?
B: Sì, mi sembra molto moderna$_{FEM}$. (→ la casa$_{FEM}$)
A: Have you already the new haus of Daniele and Lisa seen?
B: Yes, (it) seems to me very modern.

CONTROL MODE:
A: Hast du das$_{NEUT}$Frühstück$_{NEUT}$vorbereitet?
B: No, ancora no. *Lo$_{MASC}$ preparo adesso.
(→ la colazione$_{FEM}$)
A: Have you the breakfast prepared?
B: No, yet no. It I prepare know.

5. Discussion

(A) Which gender is preferred to be marked when referring to a noun after a language switch?
➢ Overall, participants prefer to mark clitics and adjectives with the gender of the Italian equivalent, and less with the gender of the German noun

(B) Which gender can be predicted to be target-like?
➢ "Bilingual mode" is also accepted, at least in the combination masc/fem
➢ Self-repairs can act as link between the bilingual and monolingual mode

(C) What does gender assignment in inter-sentential switching tell us about the degree of activation of a language in bilinguals?
➢ Only gender of lexical node selected plays a role in processing (c.f. Costa et al., 2003a)?
➢ Nevertheless, participants accept both modes, i.e. the gender of the equivalent N (less activated L?)

Selected references:
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