

An exploration of extra linguistic factors of English – Kiswahili code switching in FM Industry in Kenya.

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Abstract

The paper examines English and Kiswahili Code-switching (CS) in Kiss Fm and Easy Fm radio stations in Kenya. CS is a recently formed practice in Fm stations in Kenya. Liberalization of the air waves led to a shift in the language of broadcasting among the Fm anchors unlike the previous years when broadcasters used English exclusively. The new stations started switching language during their shows. Since then, several Fm stations have adopted CS during their programmes to communicate with the Fm listeners and various audiences.

In this study, we examine the motivations of Fm anchors to code switch and whether the specific extralinguistic factors contribute to such code switching. Data from naturally- occurring conversations by four Fm anchors are analyzed within Blom and Gumperz (1972) *interactional/Interpretative model*.

An attempt is also made to demonstrate that code-switching in Fm stations is influenced by extralinguistic factors. Fm anchors are found to use CS as a communication strategy employed for effective communication between Fm anchors and Fm listeners .

The data set for this work came from four FM anchors in the two FM stations sampled through purposive sampling and ten Maseno University Student selected through snow ball sampling technique.

Keywords: *codeswitching, FM, extralinguistics factors, media, FM achors, FM listeners, Kenya.*

1. Introduction: Background

The study of bilingualism offers insights not available in the study of monolingualism alone as to how human mind and society construct and use language. Bilingual speech highlights the interaction of social and linguistic categories. Varying combinations of these elements from two languages results when speakers of different languages come into contact by working together over a period time. One area that has been overlooked by previous studies on CS is the growing practice among Fm anchors and listeners to use more than one code or switch from one code to another in the same Fm programme. This is the concern that forms the fulcrum of the study.

Code- switching (CS) phenomenon is studied within the sub discipline of linguistics known as of sociolinguistics specifically in the context of mixed languages domain. Hudson (1980) believes that people decide when to use a particular language.

According to Myers-scotton (1993-1475) "social forces of specific groups decide what linguistic codes are accepted and deemed appropriate in certain situations. The study considers social forces that affect the FM anchors to code-switch.

Fishman (1989) and Field (1994) present different views on CS and code mixing (CM).According to Fishman (1989:181).

Code-switching is changing from the use of one language to that of another within a single speech event. It involves the movement whether psychologically or sociologically from one discrete code (language or dialect) to another within a communicative event.

Code mixing on the other hand according to Field (1994:87) "refers to the blending of two separate linguistic systems into one linguistic system."By way of description, we follow the views of Fishman (1989) in defining CS phenomenon. The study therefore focuses on CS practices in Kiss Fm and Easy Fm and not Code mixing (CM)

2. Literature review-Code switching and Fm in Kenya.

The concept of code-switching has long engaged the attention of several scholars.Myers-scotton (1993) led the search for the ways CS can be understood as a Markedness Matrix. Researchers such as Jacobson (1990) continued to operate more or less within the Labovian (1972) *Social/linguistic* variable framework. Others like Poplack and Sankoff (1988), while mostly interested in the grammatical aspects of CS, gave more attention to its social context. In his work, Jacobson (1990) provides instances of intrasentential CS (exclusive of single lexeme insertions that Myers-scotton does include in her MFL model) attempts to characterize language switches as motivated by social categories such as emotions, domain, culture, interpersonal relationship, topic metaphor and preference. This essay addresses these extralinguistic factors which include area of birth of Fm anchors, their neighbourhoods,work,parent's occupations, years lived in their neighbourhoods,location of school attended and lastly level of education.

In contrast to Jacobson, Poplack and Sankoff (1988) do not focus on the social or extralinguistic factors of CS, but they state that the social role or function of language switching is a major factor determining bilingual speech. They also speak of a community identity associated with Spanish/English smooth CS among Puerto Ricans in New York city and imply that other social information is associated with the flagged CS (CS characterized by an interruption of the speech flow at the code switch point in order to mark the utterance socio-pragmatically) found in Ottawa and Hull, Canada among French/English bilinguals.

Their smooth CS is similar to Myers-scotton's CS as a marked choice. For this reason, this essay of CS practices of Easy Fm and Kiss Fm looks at social variables perspectives of CS.

Fm in Kenya

The media in Kenya is diverse and a vibrant growing industry which faces a bright future. This media includes mainstream newspapers such as the standard, Daily Nation, The people, The Nairobi Star and The Metro, and more than 20 Fm Stations. According to Njoki (1998), English Radio broadcasting began in Kenya in 1928. The broadcasts targeted white settlers who monitored news from their homes and other parts of the world. In 1953, the first broadcasts targeting Africans were introduced during the Second World War to inform parents of African soldiers what was happening at the war front. In 1961 voice of Kenya (VOK) was formed and it began broadcasting in English and Kiswahili together with other vernacular, that is Dholuo, Kikuyu, Kinandi, Kiluhya, Kikamba and Arabic.

Njoki further reports that the growth of Fm stations in Kenya started in April 1996 when Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) started test transmissions for a new Fm channel. It was then called 101.9 Capital Fm. Shortly afterwards, though the channel was re-named 101.9 Metro Fm to pave way for another private commercial radio station known as 98.4 capital Fm. These Fm stations broadcasted exclusively in either English or Kiswahili. After that 96.4 Nation (1998) Fm (Now Easy Fm) and Kiss Fm (2000) followed and brought a new way of broadcasting. Unlike the previous years when broadcasters used English exclusively the new stations (Easy Fm and Kiss Fm) started switching languages during their shows. Currently there are more than twenty Fm stations in Kenya.

2.1 Theoretical Framework.

In light of the foregrounding facts, Blom and Gumperz (1972) *interactional/interpretative* theory has been adopted as the theoretical construct for this study. This theory's strength lies in its ability to provide tools to account for why Fm anchors and listeners switch English and Kiswahili in a particular context.

According to Blom and Gumperz (1972), a general theory of the interaction of language and social life must encompass the multiple relations between linguistic means and social meaning.

The *interactional /interpretative* model champions micro-analysis, emerging at a time in the intellectual history of sociolinguistics and the sociology of languages when most analysis was at the macro-level. In the context of Fm CS, the present study uses data from natural Fm conversation on small group conversation between Fm anchors and Fm listeners.

The Blom and Gumperz (1972) model considers language as a function of the dynamics of interactions. This premise is important in Fm discourse because this study analyzes the different contexts in Fm CS which are brought up by the topic of discussions on FM.

Linguistic choice as a social strategy is the final premise in the *interpretative/ interactional* model. According to Blom and Gumperz (1972) speakers do not use language in the way they do simply because of their social identities or because of other situational factors, rather, they exploit the possibility of linguistic choices in order to convey intentional meaning of socio-pragmatic nature. Therefore, this study analyzed whether practices employed by Fm anchors are discourse strategies.

3. Description and discussion

Since the main concern of the study is to assess the communicative purpose of CS in Fm between anchors and listeners, in the context of this study, data on extra-linguistic factors of CS and effects of CS on topic of discussion are considered.

Data on the background of the anchors is important because it would be difficult to describe linguistic variation and language use by social group without describing their respective backgrounds. Place of birth was requested to correlate any pattern in the linguistic data that could be associated with a particular region which could contribute to CS. It was found that majority of FM anchors were born in Nairobi, only one informant (Fm anchor) was born outside Nairobi and another in Kisii.

Speakers born in towns are prone to CS because of the natural bilingual contact. It was of interest therefore to find out whether the area of origin had impact on their CS when on air with the Fm listeners.

TABLE 1: Region of family origin of Fm anchors

Place of Birth	Number of subjects	Percentage %
Nairobi	3	75
Kisii	1	25
Other	0	0

Like labov (1972) who showed the importance of gender in accounting for linguistic variables, Jacobson (1990) recognized that gender and age should be apart of socio-linguistic study of CS apart from Socio –economic status alone. Age is very important in bilingual contact. Younger male and female are more likely to code-switch than older men and women. The FM anchors in this study belong to an emerging social class of young men and women who belong to a specific linguistic class. CS is seen as bridging the social classes between the Fm anchors and Fm listeners . Each informant was assigned an identification letter i.e. F1, M1, M11 and MI2 because some informants had identical initials. These letters are used throughout the essay to refer to informants.

TABLE 2: Age and gender of subjects

Age	Female (FI)	Male (MI)
20-30	-	1
30-40	1	2

Sanchez (1982) noted that occupation, salary, education and years of residence are all interconnected factors affecting the language choices. Occupational data is an important indicator of socio-economic status and are also a good indicator of the language (s) in which a speaker's parents interacts. Therefore FM anchors were asked to give their parents type of employment. The employment profile of four fathers gives indicators of linguistic variables which in turn affects their children (Fm anchors) in their interactions at work place. Fathers who speak English or Kiswahili more in their work situation are likely to in turn influence their children. Two FM anchors have fathers who are self employed. It follows that they are likely to have more English and Kiswahili contacts and in turn affect their children.

TABLE 3 Employment of father of all informants

Employment of father	FI	MI	Total for each category of employment	Percentage%
Self employed	1	1	2	50
Unemployed	-	1	1	25
Retired	-	1	1	25
No response	-	-	-	-

However, unlike the employment profile of the fathers, linguistically females are likely to speak the standard variety than male speakers (Labov, 1972). The study found that unlike for fathers who only two of them are self employed, three mothers of Fm anchors are self employed. Therefore, self – employed mothers of Fm anchors are likely to use more of Standard English and Kiswahili than fathers hence influencing their children linguistically.

TABLE 4: Employment of mother of all informants.

Employment of mother	FI	MI	Total for each category of employment	Percentage%
Self employed	1	2	3	75
Unemployed	-	-	-	-
Retired	-	-	-	-
No response	-	1	1	25

The number of years lived in Nairobi was requested because this factor as noted in the data, often correlated closely with proficiency in English and Kiswahili and with ability to code-switch frequently. An observation was made that FM anchors with greater proficiency in English were more likely to code-switch and that greater proficiency in English was linked to longer amounts of time spent in Nairobi, especially from an early age. This variable is important because it shows that all the FM anchors have more contact years with regard to English and Kiswahili. They belong to a linguistic social class that is prone to switching from English to Kiswahili.

Table 5: Years in Nairobi

Gender	0-2 Years	3-4 Years	5-6 Years	7-10 Years	10+	Total	Percentage%
FI	-	-	-	-	1	1	25
MI	-	-	-	-	3	3	75

The site of resident was also requested to reveal possible language patterns related to the area which could in turn also contribute to CS by Fm anchors. Some areas in Kenya are much more densely populated by English Speakers as a second language while others are populated by Kiswahili speakers. Therefore a radio presenter from English speaking areas will have fewer opportunities for interaction in Kiswahili and vice versa. The study revealed that all the four informants have had more than four years in their current neighbourhoods. Their language patterns could therefore reflect their neighbourhoods, that is, their neighbourhoods have influenced them linguistically. Different neighbourhoods have different language patterns, for instance, the Eastern and Western parts of Nairobi. Most speakers from Western parts of Nairobi prefer speaking in English while speakers from Eastern parts prefer Kiswahili. All the Fm informants live in Western parts of Nairobi: Lavington, Kilimani, Highridge and Loresho. Their neighbourhoods have influenced their linguistic choice.

TABLE 6: Years lived in their neighbourhoods

Informant	0-2 Years	3-4 Years	5-7 Years	7-10 Years	10+ Years	Total	Percentage%
FI	-	-	-	1	-	1	25
MI	-	-	1	2	-	3	75

Years of formal matriculation in Nairobi showed that three informants have had formal instructions in Schools in Nairobi. Formal instructions include full time attendance at public and private Schools and full or part time matriculation in college, University, or technical Schools. Three informants have had some formal instruction in Nairobi as opposed to one informant who have had formal instruction outside Nairobi, in Kisii. This variable indicates that they have had more contacts with speakers of both English and Kiswahili. The three FM anchors have gone to Schools where there is early contact of English and Kiswahili. This shows that they are likely to code-switch bilingually.

TABLE 7: Years of school in Nairobi

Informant	0 Years	0-2 Years	3-4 Years	5-6 Years	7-10 Years	10+ Years	Total	Percentage%
FI	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	25
MI	-	-	-	1	-	2	3	75

An individual level of education is an important determinant of how she or he would use language. Since this study addressed the communicative purpose of CS by Fm anchors thereof, it was necessary to ask the informants their education background. All the four informants have University education. This variable indicates that they have more years of English and Kiswahili interaction which may in turn impact on their CS.

Table 8: Level of education

Education level	University	College	Secondary	Primary
FI	1	-	-	-
MI	3	-	-	-

4. Conclusion

In this article, we have argued that code-switching is a necessary consequence of extra linguistic factors. This has demonstrated the reality of influence of these extralinguistic factors in the development of varieties of English in the Fm industry in Kenya. Codeswitching has been presented as an emerging persuasive and communicative strategy in Fm discourse with FM listeners.

Gardner-Chloros (1995) points out that social factors such as age, gender and social group are at least as influential as bilingual proficiency in the types of CS used by Speakers. Data reported by informants on the Social factors are correlated with their motivation or communicative purpose of CS. The emergent pattern proves that these social variables are key determinants of CS by Fm anchors. *International/ interpretative* model (Blom and Gumperz, 1972) account for the social meanings of language use of situated contexts.

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