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ABSTRACT

Codeswitching (CS) is an unavoidable linguistic phenomenon amongst multilingual speakers. Whereas CS has mainly been studied in a sociolinguistic and structural perspective, this article has studied this phenomenon in a psycholinguistic perspective based on the tenets of Competition Model (MacWhinney, B., 1982, 1987). The aim of the study was to analyse how patterns of codeswitching can illustrate the level of language competence among adult speakers. Participants were Burundian educated adult multilingual speakers using both Kirundi (L1), French (chronological L2) and English as languages learned in the multilingual education system of Burundi. Some of the speakers could use Swahili, a language learned outside the formal education (Swahili was not in formal education during the schooling time of the participants in this study). Data was collected through a semi structured interview which was recorded (45minutes for each interview) and later transcribed for analysis. This study was designed as a unilingual mode of language production. The results show that less competent speakers either produced a great amount of 'intruders' into the language being used (English) and the lowest level of competence was marked by a shift of mode i.e. a complete change of code being used. None of the participants has been able to keep the unilingual/monolingual mode that they were required to operate in. What has been termed as 'fluent' codeswitching in natural language production designs is seen as a sign of incapability to keep the mode, therefore a sign of only middle level of language competence as far as the use of the known languages is concerned. Generally, in this study, we argue that codeswitching patterns among more competent speakers are built on single words or short phrases from a different language, middle language competence codeswitches were based on a navigation into different languages whereas lower competence was based on a complete shift of language (code) whereby the speakers changed the language they were supposed to use to a different language.

Keywords: *codeswitching, adult multilingual speakers, psycholinguistic study, language competence, multilingual education*

1. Introduction

The psycholinguistic perspective of codeswitching posits two possibilities of codeswitching namely the possibility for changes in languages known by the speaker which arise due to the unintended activation of the non-target language, which forces the speaker to switch languages to maintain fluidity in the conversation and the possibility whereby speakers may have a strong desire to switch languages. This means that when the speaker is required to use one language alone, the speaker adopts strategies to actively suppressing other languages to enable fluent speech in the language s/he is required to speak since speech planning involves parallel activation of the languages known by bi/multilingual speakers (Green, 2018). The fact of having parallel activation of the languages known by speakers creates many candidates for competition to be produced and leads to opportunities for cross-linguistic transfer.

The tendency for speakers to constantly codeswitch may reveal the results of a competition process between active items of both languages. In this case codeswitching can be seen as the manifestation of the most active and most easily retrieved items (Green and Wei, 2014) in any of the known languages. The multilingual speakers will therefore use either words and/or structures that win the competition among these competing active language items from any of their known languages. The types of language pattern will depend on how speakers manage the activation of their languages and the control demands of their interactional context (Green and Abutalebi, 2013; Green and Wei, 2014; Beatty-Martínez et al., 2020) towards the competing candidates in both languages.

In the case of this study, speakers (participants in the study) where required to speak only one language but they knew at least three languages. In a psycholinguistic viewpoint of this case, codeswitching is understood as a process which is unintentional in some cases or speakers have no other choice than codeswitching to fill the gap of missing language, whereby the speaker was forced to codeswitch because s/he needed to enable fluent speech in the language s/he was expected to use which was English in this case.

The codeswitches produced in the data are of different types and these different types of codeswitches have been produced by different groups of speakers which leads to predicting which types of codeswitches produced at which level of competence.

From literature, these different types of codeswitches may include the use of words, phrases, or short utterances from different languages known by the participants. This can be looked at as an indication of the competition between languages known by the speakers. In this section, this is

illustrated by a number of examples of utterances produced by the participants as multilingual speakers. These illustrations show the forms of codeswitches known as word form; phrase forms and sentence form. Since the speakers were required to only use English as the language of communication during the interview it can be said that speakers did not produce them consciously. These words/phrases/short sentences just came in the English language that speakers were using.

Moreover, the only way to give account of the representations and processes involved in bilingual language production was to highlight the surface manifestations of codeswitches found in the language produced by the multilingual speakers. For this reason, the systematic observation of the CS patterns in the language produced has been illustrated as reflecting as discussed by Karousou-Fokas and Garman (2001, 41) “the planning units and processes involved in bilingual language production.”. Codeswitching occurrences were therefore discussed the way they were produced by the speakers both as single word, phrases, and longer stretches of utterances.

Another aspect which is worth mentioning is the unit of analysis of codeswitching considered in this work. The unit of analysis is based on Karousou-Fokas and Garman (2001, 44) definition of a Textual Unit as they defined it as “one speaker’s verbal contribution up to the point where another speaker takes over or there is a significant pause followed by a change in topic”. In this study, this textual unit has been taken as synonymous to the unit referred to as “utterance” (e.g., Hatzidaki, 1994). This has been considered because the data analysed is from a spoken language whereby the participants had to produce language by answering a set of questions in an interview and not in a form of natural conversations. Units of analysis found in literature, like sentence was avoided because this has more formal and structural aspects which led it to be used mostly in written language which is more organised. Though this unit of analysis constitutes the level considered for this study, organization of linguistic patterns that include clauses, phrases, or single-words were considered as being part of the stretch of unit that constituted the analysis.

2. Literature

For years, many linguistic phenomena have been studied in the field of language contact since the work of Weinreich (1953). The study of these phenomena includes different models to approach them. One of these phenomena which has been explored since years is interference (posited by behaviourists) which evolved to be studied as language transfer. The study of language transfer as a language contact manifestation (especially with the study of L3 acquisition, comprehension and production) has been referred to as Crosslinguistic transfer. Today a number of scholars have adopted another terminology to mean crosslinguist transfer i.e. Crosslinguistic influence. One of the

phenomenon involved in Crosslinguistic transfer as a manifestation of language contact is codeswitching (CS). This phenomenon has itself been studied since years with the earlier works of Pfaff (1979). Different perspectives have been taken to address the issue of CS. These perspectives are structural linguistic perspective including types of codeswitches (Mari, 2005), an examination for structural constraints able to account for different ways in which known languages can be combined (Poplack, 1980), the use of different language pairs and others, a sociolinguistic perspective (Gumperz, 1976; Almelhi, 2020; Yahiaoui et. al., 2021; Gardner-Chloros, 2020) and a psycholinguistic perspective. Most of the studies in literature have focussed on CS as a sociolinguistic phenomenon exploring its different aspects including attitude and motivation for codeswitching. Some scholars have analysed CS taking the two first approaches but not so many have shown great interest in scrutinizing this phenomenon through psycholinguistic lenses. However, the literature has a number of studies which have explored CS in a psycholinguistic perspective such as (Myers-Scotton, 1991; 1992; Milroy, 1995; Gardner-Chloros, 2009; Kootstra, 2015) and others.

Those works which explored CS in a psycholinguistic perspective have focussed mainly on looking at aspects such as Activation or Inhibition; Linguistic Distance; Code-switching and the bilingual mental lexicon, Language Dominance, the level of command of the languages involved and others. Bentahila & Davies, (1992) have quantitatively studied code-switching and language dominance and one of the aspects they focused on was the ‘possible use of code-switching as an indicator of bilingual ability’. This involves the implication of language competence in the languages the speakers were likely to use during the codeswitching phenomenon as their participants were involved in their everyday communication in their community both at home and at work. Their study concluded that Code-switching should not be looked at as representing deviant behaviour (a point that other researchers have raised) but that it is “actually a suggestive indicator of degree of bilingual competence.” (Bentahila & Davies, 1992, 616).

From these observations, based on the study of types of codeswitches made by bilingual speakers, this study tries to examine codeswitching phenomenon in a psycholinguistic perspective in order to predict the language competence of the participants. The search for understanding codeswitching in a psycholinguistic perspective is timely in order to investigate the phenomenon of language processing and mental lexicon of speakers of different languages. In this sense, Treffers-Daller (2009) argues for a need for scholars to inform and be informed by models of language processing in order to understand Codeswitching as one of different psycholinguistic processes that occur among speakers of different languages.

3. Methods

This investigation used a purposeful sampling method for participants inclusion. A group of 10 participants was engaged in oral interviews using a semi-structured oral interview guide in order to help participants produce natural language that was analysed. The semi-structured interview guide contained questions that were asked in a duration of 45 minutes for each participant. The questions were built on topics such as studies, work, hobbies, spare time activities, family, etc. Data were collected from people who studied when Kirundi and French were the only languages at primary level in education and Kirundi, French, and English at secondary school level. These data were audio-recorded and later transcribed. From the transcribed data, a presentation including detailed qualitative descriptions of illustrations of codeswitching was provided. There was examination of data for patterns of codeswitching that tally to changes in language competence. The unit of analysis was an utterance. The data have been interpreted based on tenets of the competition model MacWhinney (1982; 1987).

4. Interpretation of Data

According to Karousou-Fokas and Garman (2001), codeswitching is directly connected to two main elements i.e. lexical access and the integration of words within utterance frames. In terms of code interaction, the Competition Model (CM) relies on the notion of resonance to account for co-activation processes in both L2 learners and bi/multilingual speakers. The Competition Model postulates that when a speaker's two languages are less perfectly balanced in strength, there is a far greater level of intrusions of the stronger language into sentences/utterances of the weaker language. The analysis and interpretation of data in this study was based on this position of the CM: the weaker the language competence in the language under use, the more the intrusions from different other languages known by the multilingual speakers. It is important to note that this study made use of only English. However, the participants were also able to use (at different levels of competence) Kirundi (L1), English and French as languages learned in formal education. Some participants could also speak Kiswahili, learned in other sociolinguistic environments.

In this study, I show elements involved in the process of codeswitching including lexical items (words) and longer stretches of utterances such as phrases and sentences. In this study, I highlight the surface manifestations of codeswitching to illustrate the processes involved in multilingual language production.

Different studies have categorized the types codeswitches based on their syntactic structures in

an utterance during language production. Hence, there are those switches that come at the beginning of an utterance as in the illustrations below.

- (1) *infirmi* nas
(*It high school was* among err de high school of our country)
- (2) *Bon*, de way dey teach is good but err de content is hard today
(*Well*, de way dey teach is good but err de content is hard today)

Yudita, (2019:150) did not consider whether the codeswitches came at the beginning of an utterance or elsewhere but the type of codeswitch produced. These types of codeswitches were classified in different categories including word form codeswitches as in the example ‘do you know *nyepeti*?’

The italicised words in the presented data is the form of the codeswitch either in a single word or a phrase form as highlighted in the illustrations given above in (1) and (2). Another form of the codeswitch that were found in the data of the Yudita (2019) is that of the phrase form as example ‘*tapi ada yang sangat* popular in English’. The same form of the codeswitch have been found in the present study as highlighted in the illustrations below.

- (3) in the program I change a chronology *programme de la*
journée (*in the program I change a chronology program of the*
day)
- (4) I have studied *Lettres modernes*
(I have studied *Modern Arts*)
- (5) when de student are note errr hmmm ayii ... what... *ndasubiramwo* lesson
(When de student are note errr hmmm ayii ... what... *I repeat* lesson)

These forms of codeswitches are said to mostly appear at the end of an utterance as in illustrations above. Similarly, in a study conducted by Nortier (1990, 126) cited in Muysken (2000, 5) three kinds of code-switching were found: alternation, insertion and congruent lexicalisation. In the examples above, instances of code-switching include stretches of words whereby words of one language alternate with those of another within an utterance what Nortier named alternation.

As to what types of language elements that are subject to codeswitching, Azuma’s (1991; 1993) and Joshi (1985) argue that open class words such as single nouns are subject to codeswitching but that close class words (which apply to all grammatical words/morphemes) such as determiners, quantifiers, prepositions, possessives, auxiliary verbs, markers of tense, agreement, topic and case, pronouns, conjunctions are not susceptible to codeswitching. This is expressed by Joshi, (1985, 94) in the following words “closed class items ... cannot be switched”. However, from the data in this

study, it was found that even the grammatical words can be subject to codeswitching as in *in the program I change a chronology programme de la journée*. Here *de la* accounts for preposition and it is a grammatical close class word.

Since the unit of analysis is an utterance, it is also important to look at the structure of the utterance produced by the speakers to see if even though the two languages are combined to produce one utterance, the structure is appropriate and that the embedded language came in at an appropriate place. For example, in the illustration (3), the structure *in the program I change a chronology programme de la journée*, would be more grammatical if at least two articles were added and they are all English i.e. *the* and *of*. A well-structured codeswitch would be put as *in the program I change the chronology of the programme de la journée*.

In illustration (5), the hesitation, and the use of *what* indicate an embarrassment in the language being used. It could be said that the hesitation is normal as in any speech whereby one has to think about what to say as ideas come in but this would not necessarily be followed by a change of the code being used. I argue that the change of the code indicates that the challenge is in the code being used. But because the languages known are all activated, then there is possibility to draw from other languages to compensate the gap in the language being used as a communicative strategy.

As could be expected, the L1 is likely to be the most activated and any language candidate to the competition with the L1 can easily lose competition. The illustration in (4) is a well-structured codeswitch. If the speaker were free in the choice of language(s) to use, it would sound very normal but in this case the design was that the speakers make an effort to use the language required. This shows that codeswitching is an avoidable phenomenon among multilingual speakers whose languages are mostly activated and who are familiar to drawing from any of them. In case the mode of speech changes, the multilingual speaker might not have that ability of keeping one code and possibly blocking the other candidates competing for production from the other codes known.

From the language produced by the participants, it was found that, other forms of codeswitches occurred in the middle of the utterances showing possibility of the speaker to move through the languages during speech production. The samples in (6) and (7) show that this possibility is however made of short insertion of embedded language in the matrix language. The words or constituents from one language which are inserted into a syntactic frame (that Myers-Scotton and Jake 2000 referred to as matrix language) provided by another language have been referred to as insertion. The samples of utterances highlighted below are examples of this type.

- (6) De classroom in de near future, ohhhh if I was eh hh if I have a lo a lot an ada activities I will buy a motorcar I'll buy *imodoka* a motorcar ill carry de a anada...

I'll buy anada anoda parc.... [*parcelle*] anadaaa I'll *constru*....[*construire*] Il'l
build anada house which deyi can which someone see and say disi dis house is to
our chief (Speake 2 group 1)

- (7) yes, eeh someone someone is *anapenda sana* an activity of a nurse *comme moi*
(yes, eeh someone someone is s/he loves a lot an activity of a nurse like me
(8) ... in school language ilikuwa in French. (...in school language was in French)

The example (6) shows that the speaker was not intending to change the code in use but the competition between words of different languages known by the speaker made that some similar words were produced but where not the intended ones. This is example of the use of the word *imodoka* before *a motorcar*. As the language in use was English, it is clear that the intended word was the English one but since the L1 items are also activated to compete with those target language ones, the most activated are likely to come in especially when there are similarities which highly activate all of them. *A motorcar* and *imodoka* are all words of English and Kirundi and the syllables tend to sound alike, a fact that is likely to activate them all. Moreover, the meaning is also close, and it is additional factor that allows the activation of all of them. The most activated, is normally the one to win competition and if it is not the one which is simply produced, it is produced first then followed by the appropriate one.

Other forms of codeswitches are those that occur in the stretch of utterances and only one short element is affected and located inside the same utterance. Dabene and Moore (1995) called such type of codeswitches unitary codeswitching or insert in which either the L2 element is treated syntactically as an L1 element or the L2 element is simply inserted in the L1 utterance.

They highlighted this in their example in Spanish-English (1) and French-Spanish (2) language pairs as highlighted below.

1. era bueno aquel *gateau*.
(*That cake was good*)
2. *Mais* es por eso que nunca las he probado
(*But, that's why I never tasted them*)

The same type of codeswitches found by Dabene and Moore (1995) have been found in the present study as in the illustrations that follow with the words highlighted in italics. Those types of codeswitching can be confused with what has been referred to as tag switch but looking at it closely they are not in the tag format.

- (9) it must be maybe in de office of maybe members of de government or maybe doze
big *ONG* and I just respond to the call.

(it must be maybe in the office of maybe members of the government or maybe those big *NGOs* and I just respond to the call)

(10) Errr donc I prepare de lesson and err ayiii I teach what I have I had

prepared... (Errr so, I prepare the lesson and err ayiii I teach what I have I had prepared...)

(11) Because err he remember... dati music remembers me errr some values, our culture errr emm, ego, and new words dat errr I don't hear now.

(Because err he remember... dati music remembers me errr some values, our culture errr emm, yes, and new words dat errr I don't hear now.

(12) In the past in the past de education is not very clear to this to dis time and dis time *les* ehhh the student is is in middle of of many activities

(In the past in the past de education is not very clear to this to dis time and dis time *the*

ehhh de student is is in middle of of many activities)

Most of these words were inserted into the utterance and treated as words of the target language or at least an unintended word was produced followed by a correct one as illustrated in (12). Moreover, some of them add no meaning to what was being said. This is illustrated in example (11). The word *ego* (Kirundi) translated as *yes* has come in the utterance but it actually adds no meaning in the context. However, in example (9) it is evident that the speaker used the abbreviation *ONG* (French for *NGO*) by treating it as a word of the target language.

The same speaker has used the word more than two times and has not been aware that the abbreviation is not English. The illustration in example (12) is a case whereby competition between items of languages known by the speaker is apparent. The word *les* is French which can be translated as *the* (in plural). The fact that the speaker has corrected this shows that he knew well the appropriate word but the competition between the competing candidates in word items from different languages for production led the most activated and the strongest item *les* appear before the correct one *the*. It can be said that the speaker was aware that he is using English and even though these language items came in, the code being used was not changed. The speakers kept operating in a unilingual mode no matter what other languages contributed to their language production.

As can be seen from the data samples, in order to compensate the missing English language that speakers (participants) were supposed to use, they switched into other languages they know. This can be looked at as a communicative strategy since the speakers needed to say what they wanted.

However, since the mode was supposed to be unilingual, then, there was a problem at least in the language that was required to be used.

The participants mostly switched in either French, Kiswahili and Kirundi. But switching into Kirundi was at lesser extent (compared to switching into French). Nevertheless, it can be said that Kirundi would be normally the one which should be the most activated and most accessible for the present speakers and therefore contribute more in terms of changing the codes.

The reason for not codeswitching in Kirundi, the L1 would be that the speakers made an effort to speak in a foreign language since the language in use was also foreign by blocking the other words from other languages. The competition between words of the known languages led to the selection of at least a foreign language because Kirundi would definitively be rejected since it is not a foreign language. The planning of the language to be used would normally inhibit any language felt inappropriate. However, as I argued in the previous paragraphs, it is not always possible to completely inhibit a language which is the most activated and in competition with the target one. That is why some words could come in the utterances even if it is bringing no meaning to the idea being expressed.

Some of the types of codeswitching highlight what has been known as fluent codeswitching, however, depending on the design in this study, these aspects of codeswitching show that the speaker has not been able to operate in unilingual mode as was required.

In what we can look at as ‘fluent’ codeswitching in the language produced by the participants, there was a recurrent change of the codes speakers were using (which was the one required) by either starting an utterance with a language other than English, then switching to another language in the course of the utterance, and ending the utterance with a different language.

I argue that this was used as a communicative strategy whereby the speakers made use of other languages to compensate and fill the gap because they found it difficult to fully communicate in the unilingual mode. The participants in this study illustrate the use of all the languages which are in the multilingual education system of Burundi as they made use of English, French, Kirundi and Kiswahili as shown in the examples below from the language produced by the participants in this present study. However, these speakers did not take Kiswahili in formal schooling as the time they were still students, Kiswahili had not been introduced in education. Nevertheless, Kiswahili was used in different places especially Bujumbura the then capital city and in other districts bordering Tanzania.

The ways these languages are used and the move in the change of codes can be seen from the illustrations in (13), (14), and (15). I argue that these illustrations highlight the activation of the

languages known by the speakers and that the language items from those languages are involved in competition for production. The purpose of using the languages involved in the multilingual setting in Burundi are diverse, however, the fact of compensating the language which is not strongly activated (less accessible because it is not developed enough) plays an important role.

(13) hmmm ayii ... what... *ndasubiramwo lesson. Je ne sais pas.*
Iyo batabitahuye.

(hmmm ayii ... what... *I repeat lesson. I don't know. When they didn't understand.*)

(14) students are able to uhhh to produce what dey are... [showing sign of hesitations]
abanyeshure ubu nibo err nibo *baparticipa* cane nibo ba ahhhh bakora.
Abanyeshure ubu bagira ntuze *participative*. Atari ntuze *metode participative*
abanyeshure *baraparticipa* bikabavamwo, hama *the teacher* niwe aca agira
synthese.

(students are able to uhhh to produce what dey are .. [showing sign of hesitations]
now students are the ones err they are the ones who participate a lot...they are the ones who ahhhh work. Now the students they do... what... participative. If not participative methods. Students participate and things come out from them, and then the teacher is the one who does synthesis.)

(15) ... Err their teacher was [silent showing sign of not knowing how to say what she wanted to say]... *abigisha bari bafise niveau nininya, ego.*

(... Err their teacher was [silent showing sign of not knowing how to say what she wanted to say]... teachers had high level [of competence], yes.

In this 'fluent' codeswitching, all the languages are used to build an argument. In illustration (14) below for example, the codeswitching was used simply as the speaker switched the mode from unilingual to trilingual mode by moving through English, French and Kirundi. The use of these languages shows the languages that the speaker took during schooling time in addition to the fact that Kirundi is L1. The capability to do this is attributed to fluent multilingual especially when the utterances produced are well structured and do not violate any of the syntactic structures of any of the languages involved. This way of codeswitching is presented as fluent codeswitching in bilingual/multilingual mode.

However, studies on changing mode among multilingual speakers have shown that the change of mode is usually based on language competence. This is the case of second language learners while using their less developed language. When they have to operate in their weaker language, they

usually change the code while they do less code changing while operating in their stronger language (Lanza, 1992; Genesee, Nicoladis, & Paradis, 1995). More balanced bilinguals can be able to control and keep language mode (Grosjean, 2008). Grosjean (2013, 4) argues that when bilingual speakers are required to use a language and that this language mode turns to be weaker, they “attempt to deactivate their stronger language in a monolingual environment that requires the weaker language, but the latter may simply not be developed enough to allow them to stay in a monolingual mode. Hence, their stronger language is activated and it is used to help them out”.

Considering that the speakers in this study were supposed to operate in a unilingual mode, we can argue that their failure to keep the mode they were supposed to operate in is a sign of weakness at least in the language they were using. If this is connected to language competence, a more multilingual speaker would be able to keep the mode. For the present study, I argue that the more often the code was changed the less competent was the speaker. Moreover, the more intrusions from a different language, the less competent the speaker is considered at least in the language they were required to use.

(16) *Atari ntuze metode participative abanyeshure baraparticipa bikabavamwo, hama the teacher niwe aca agira synthese.*

(Which is errr... participative method, students participate and build their [knowledge], and the teacher is the one to make synthesis.

(17)... because *nilikua napenda sana*,...

(... because I loved[it] a lot)

(18) *eeh, a routine err, kwanziya, kwanziya matin asubuhi mtu anafanya douche, puis ataingia ku kazi ku job.*

(eeh, a routine err, from, from morning morning one takes shower, then will enter at work at job.)

(19) *Eeh, after job mtu anapata ropos, puis je rentre le soir, puis la journée se termine. (Eeh, after job one takes a rest, then I come home the evening, then the day ends.)*

In the example (16) there was a switch into Kirundi and French whereas there was a switch into French and Kiswahili in (18). The word *participate* is a cognate in French and English with a difference only in pronunciation. This is the case of the word *baraparticipa* which is *to participate* (English) or *participer* (French). This word has at least three parts: *ba+particip+a*. The first and the last parts are Kirundi parts whereas the root is shared between French and English. In the example

(18) there is a mixture of Kiswahili (*kwanziya asubuhi mtu anafanya, ataingia ku kazi, ...*) French (*matin, douche, puis, ...*), and English (*a routine, after job, ...*).

As it has been discussed in previous paragraphs, these types of codeswitches are illustration are examples of what is known as fluent codeswitching. A form of codeswitching that normally occurs in natural speech of multilingual speakers. A phenomenon which happens because all the languages known by the speakers are activated and can be used when necessary. However, the normal occurrences of the type of codeswitches happen are said to happen when the speaker is operating in a bilingual mode. In this study, the participants were required to operate in unilingual mode.

The types of illustrations discussed in (16) and (18) above are similar to those found in other codeswitching situations whereby speakers use languages they know without any requirement of using one of them. I argue that this type of codeswitching was used because the participants were finding it difficult in using English as a way of keeping a unilingual mode and they decided to use the other languages to fill the gap.

However, I am aware that there might have been other factors that pushed the speakers to use other languages than the one required and therefore pushing them to change the mode. However, this reason alone cannot explain their codeswitching behaviour in the sense that the use of Kiswahili for example is not common for everybody except those who take it in class. Therefore, the codeswitch in Kiswahili would be avoided since there was no sign that the interviewer could understand Kiswahili.

This can be explained by the fact that the low level of competence in the target language was compensated by the other languages known by the speakers all contributed to help them fill the gap of the missing language (the one in use during the data collection).

The codeswitches also involved simply using either Kirundi or French in a stretch of utterance. This meant changing the language mode throughout the conversation. Some participants, agreed to participate using English but they changed the language and shifted to a different language (one shifted to the use of Kirundi throughout the conversation and another one shifted to using French). The shift in a different language means that the speaker has changed the code and it is even impossible to talk about intruders in the language in use. The case of completely shifting the language can be considered as the lowest level of language proficiency at least in the language being used. Samples of such language shift can be seen in illustrations below.

- (20) Why, bon kubera dukorera mu bantu ba communauté uravyumva kandi dukora mu ma programa atandukanye, dukora le travail en commun, je sinikoranye ndumwe

(Why, well, because we work with communities you understand and we work in different programs, we work in shared work, I did not work alone)

- (21) Because I love it, j'aime l'enregistrement des étudiants parce que j'aime la comptabilité, j'aime la comptabilité parce que j'aime ce qui est en rapport avec balanceship

(Because, I love it, I love registering students, because I love accounting, because I love anything which has to do with balanceship)

- (22) ico igihe tuuu, hari igihe tuja kubatora kuri frontier, tukabazana ku ma centre de transit, hagaca hongera hakaba transifere tubatahana mu ma komine iwabo
(that time, we errr, sometimes we pick them from the border, and bring them to transit centres, and then there is a transfer and we bring them back to their respective districts)

in other studies (Yunta, 2019 for example), this has been referred to as permanent codeswitching in which there is a shift from the language under use to another one. Since the interview had started we decided to continue and let the participants speak the way they wished. Throughout the interview there was no instance where the speaker came back to mainly using English, but they kept in the language they have shifted into. This might be explained by the fact that the speakers had English to communicate but another language was stronger than English and more activated. This point can be explained by the fact that all the questions to be answered were asked in English and the answers given by the speakers were in line with the questions. However, the language used was not English. This is type of codeswitch which shows how competition between known languages can lead to a complete inhibition of a weaker language and therefore lead to a change of code.

In the languages that the speakers switched to, there was codeswitching well formulated but not using English. In sample (22), the speaker made the matrix language Kirundi and constantly switched into French. The use of words *transfer*, *frontier*, *centre de transit* are all used in one utterance and have French source.

The illustrations of codeswitching presented here have been produced in the sense to compensate the missing English. As far as English language use is concerned in the multilingual speakers (both produced and still in the multilingual education system in Burundi), it can be said that there was a problem of the use of language since as codeswitching in a psycholinguistic perspective posits an inappropriate code which is produced in a need to compensate a language gap.

It is important to note that the interviewer used English only by asking questions to elicit production of the language in a more natural way, however some participants have tried to answer these questions in English when they failed there was the use of the language they felt comfortable with. This means that the participants understood the questions in English and knew the answers they wanted to give but they could not get the language to use as far as English language is concerned.

5. Discussion

This study took a psycholinguistic approach to studying codeswitching (other studies took structural and/or sociolinguistic approaches) which assumes this linguistic phenomenon is a result of the way the speaker's language systems interact. This study investigated the utterances produced by the speakers and looked at how these utterances were constructed based on the languages that participants know and how they are simultaneously activated to contribute to the phenomenon of CS.

In this study, I showed elements involved in the process of codeswitching including lexical items (words) and longer stretches of utterances such as phrases and sentences. I highlight the surface manifestations of codeswitching to illustrate the processes of word/phrase/sentence insertion to build an utterance in multilingual language production. Different studies have categorized the types of codeswitches based on their syntactic structures in an utterance during language production. As has been done by Kapantzoglou, et al. (2021) language samples were used to inquire the level of language competence among the Burundian multilingual adult speakers.

Codeswitching as an aspect of lexical transfer is manifest in different positions in the speech of speakers. The position can reveal the level of planning in the process of retrieval of the words to be produced to convey meaning henceforth the place of competition among words competing for production. In the data from this study, I have illustrated such examples of words of codeswitching that have been produced at the beginning of the utterance. These examples are made of one word which is from a different language. However, in many other studies, the one word codeswitch can come at any place in the utterance. Contrary to some findings in literature, the present study has found that any word category can be subject to codeswitching. From the data in this study, even the grammatical words can be subject to codeswitching.

Some other forms of codeswitches have occurred in the middle of the sentence showing possibility of the speaker to move through the languages during speech production. Such kinds of

utterances whereby the speaker can make movements throughout the languages they know during codeswitching have been considered as fluent codeswitches. The words or constituents from one language which are inserted into a syntactic frame (that Myers-Scotton and Jake, 2000 referred to as matrix language) provided by another language have been referred to as insertion.

Moreover, codeswitches also occur in the stretch of utterances and only one short element is affected and located inside the same utterance in which either the L2 element is treated syntactically as an L1 element or the L2 element is simply inserted in the L1 utterance. This type of CS has also occurred in the language produced by participants in this study and considering how the participants inserted into their speech this type of CS, the words from different languages were treated as words of the target language making the production of these words unintentional.

In order to fill the gap of the missing English language that speakers (participants) were required to use, they switched into the other languages they know. Participants mostly switched in either French, Kiswahili or Kirundi. However, switching into Kirundi was not common even though it can be said that the Kirundi (speakers' L1) has the highest activation level and that it is the most accessible for the speakers. The reason for not codeswitching in Kirundi, the mother tongue would be that the speakers made an effort to speak a foreign language as they wanted to speak a language as the one that they were supposed to use was a foreign language (English). The awareness of the kind of language speakers were supposed to use (and that this language is a foreign language) played a role in the languages being more activated for access and later retrieval. The competition between words of the known languages led to the selection of at least a foreign language because Kirundi would definitively be inhibited since it is not a foreign language (at least for the interview during this study).

Furthermore, the use of codeswitching led to shift the matrix language which would normally be English in the present case. Some of the participants used Kirundi as their matrix language whereas others used French. Here, the sociolinguistic environment plays a significant role as to which language speakers are more competent than others. It has been realised that those who shifted the matrix language to French are those who reside in town whereas those who shifted into Kirundi reside in the countryside. In both of the two cases, the participants were not able to keep the unilingual mode that was required therefore showing a lowest level of language competence at least in the language being used. This can also be expressed in the terms that, in other studies participants reported their felt ability to use a language but ended up realising that they overrated their supposed ability in the language(s) they know.

Generally, the languages the participants switched into was mainly French. Kirundi and

Kiswahili contributed to the codeswitching to a lower level. This shows that besides the competition among languages that are known by the speakers from the multilingual education system of Burundi, there is also an awareness on the side of the speakers that the language under use is a foreign language. This might have had a significant impact on the languages activated and the degree of control exercised by the speakers in order to fit the circumstances present i.e. the use of a language other than the L1 since they have in mind that the language required for use was also a foreign language.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the present results show, that codeswitching depends on language competence in multilingual speakers. Based on tenets of the competition model, the amounts of intruders into the language being used (which should be the matrix language throughout) reveals to what extent a multilingual user is competent in his languages. For instance, the code-switches inserting a single word in an utterance can be seen as a sign of advanced competence into the language being used. inserting a whole phrase or chunk of an utterance in another utterance is middle competence while frequent codeswitching in a design like the present is a sign of low competence

Moreover, the capability of the multilingual speaker to keep in a unilingual/monolingual mode illustrates their level of language competence. For instance, in the data discussed from this study more competent speakers would have some few intruders in their language. Most of them would be unintentional whereby the speaker uses a word and be unaware that the word being used is not the target language. In addition, what has been referred to in literature as fluent codeswitching (in designs where the language is recorded as it is naturally used) can be seen as a level of language competence in a design where the speakers are required to operate in a unilingual/monolingual mode. The lowest level of competence is when keeping the mode is completely impossible. That is when the speakers shift into a different language. That means the language the speaker has shifted into is the strongest one whereas the one required is very weak. In this case, it becomes even impossible to talk of intruders. It come out that, based on the notion of switching codes developed by the competition model, the amount of codeswitches produced by speakers can reveal their level of competence at least in the language being used in designs whereby the speakers are required to operate in unilingual mode.

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