Conversation Analysis of Code-Switched Repair Sequences in the Educational Context

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Abstract

The paper considers Anglo-Kazakh code-switching in the repair sequences among first-year students majoring in "Foreign language: two foreign languages". The study was conducted at Gumilyov Eurasian National University in Astana, Kazakhstan. Some specific characteristics of educational policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan are analysed. The results show that code-switching in repair sequences is used as: a) self-initiated self-repair; b) self-initiated other-repair; and c) candidate understanding. Repair initiation when code-switching happens to understand, to confirm and to clarify statements. Due to the specific linguistic situation of Kazakhstan, code-switching in the FL classroom may occur from English to Kazakh, or from English to Russian, depending on dominance of the language in the linguistic repertoire of the speaker.

Keywords: Conversation analysis; Code-switching; Repair

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1. Introduction

Code-switching has been investigated in various aspects: linguistic (Poplack, 1980; Di Scullio, Muysken and Singh, 1986; Myers-Scotton, 1993; et al.); sociolinguistic (Gumperz, 1982; Milroy & Li Wei, 1995; Rampton, 1995; et al.); psycholinguistic (Grosjean, 2008; Clyne, 1967; Myers-Scotton & Jake, 2001; et al.); and pragmatic (Auer, 1998; Li Wei, 1998; et al.).

This paper considers Anglo-Kazakh code-switching from the strand of conversational analytic approach in the educational environment. The paper aims at analysing repair sequences in the process of Anglo-Kazakh code-switching. The study was conducted at Gumilyov Eurasian National University in Astana, Kazakhstan. The participants of the study were first-year students on the specialty "Foreign language: Two foreign languages".

The structure of the paper is as follows: first, a brief overview of three languages in the educational system of Kazakhstan has been provided. Methodology describes the participants and the procedure of the study. The results demonstrate the analysis of code-switching in the organization of repair. The conclusions are based on the results.

2. Trinity of Languages in Kazakhstan's Educational System

Nowadays, the Kazakhstani educational environment is undergoing significant transformational changes associated with the main aim of the state's educational policy – entry into the global educational system. Over the last decade, substantial reconstruction of the educational system has been carried out, in which a series of reforms have been adopted to modernise and optimise the educational system. Currently, the higher educational system includes a 3-tier system: credit technology, the academic mobility of students and teachers, and the quality control of higher education in accordance with the requirements of the Bologna Declaration.

One of the key areas in the modernisation of multilingual education is to prepare multilingual personnel for secondary, vocational and higher education. According to objectives set out by the government of the Republic of Kazakhstan (RK), 100% of Kazakhstani people must be proficient in Kazakh by 2020, 95% must be proficient in Russian and 25% in English. Currently, there are 33 schools with medium of instruction in three languages. Subjects such as mathematics, physics, computer science, chemistry, biology and geography are taught in English, with 79 foreign English teachers working in 11 regions. It is planned that 476 schools will move to a multilingual education system and specific subjects will be taught in English in nine high schools. A model for multilingual education by means of e-learning is being developed by studying the best practices of Great Britain, Canada, USA, France, Switzerland, Belgium, Singapore and Malaysia.

It should be noted that two languages are dominant in the linguistic space of Kazakhstan at the present time: Kazakh – the state language; and Russian – the official language. Russian is considered as a basic source of information on all areas of science and technology, as well as the intermediate language for communication in general. Therefore, Kazakhstan's linguistic space is characterised by Russian-Kazakh bilingualism and Kazakh-Russian bilingualism. It is necessary to take into account the fact that, for historical reasons, Russian has a quite strong position and communicative power. Consequently, Russian-Kazakh bilingualism prevails over the Kazakh-Russian one. however, owing to the current state language policy the status of Kazakh is strengthened every day.

3. Methodology

The participants of the study are first-year students of the Kazakh branch majoring in English who are studying at the Department of Theory and Practice of Foreign Languages at Gumilyov Eurasian National University.

The study analyses audio-recordings of speech of the students recorded at "Home reading" lessons during 100 minutes: the duration of each lesson is 50 minutes. Two tasks were examined which involved work in pairs and in groups. The tasks were institutional; therefore, the interaction was strictly organized. According to the first task, students had to design and ask questions to each other according to the text. They worked in pairs, and afterwards in small groups of four to five people. The duration of the work is 33 minutes 57 seconds. According to the second task, the students had to retell the tale. The work was organized in pairs: the student started retelling the story and then the second student continued retelling it. The time was appointed by the teacher and the change of roles happened approximately every two minutes.

4. Results

The researchers have marked statements and words in English in Roman font; Kazakh - in italics; Russian - in bold font.

Example 1 provides a conversation in pairs, where, according to the first assignment, students need to ask questions to each other regarding the text. Asel and Madina participate in this conversation.

Example 1

1 Asel: Why Finn scrambled aaah why Finn (0.8) why he eeem (.) why did why did Finn

2   scramble out of the cradle groaning?

3 Madina: because he was eeer (0.7) stiff > stiff деген не еді? <

            say what AUX VERB?

            what does stiff mean?

4 (2.3)

5 Asel: eeer қатып қалған (1.3) иілмей қалған, в общем, тугой, негибкий деген ғой

            stiff   rigid, in general, stiff (MASC) not flexible (MASC) say AUX VERB

            eeer stiff (1.3) rigid, in general, it means stiff, not flexible

6 (0.4)

7 Madina: Aaaah, right. He was stiff because he lies aah (0.6) he had lied in the cradle so

8   long

In Example 1, self-initiated self-repair as well as other-initiated self-repair can be observed. In Line 1, Asel asked the question in English. The question is grammatically wrong, so Asel, realising her mistake, initiates self-repair. Here, Asel repeats the question "Why?" several times, then "Why did?", thereby constructing the correct form of the question. In Line 3, Madina answers the question, but initiates the repair, asking a question – "What 'stiff' is?" – in a quiet tone of voice and switching to Kazakh. Asel answers the question, also switching to Kazakh: "қатып қалған, иілмей" ("stiff, inflexible"). Then she switches to Russian, giving synonyms of this word – "тугой, негибкий". It should

be noted that, in this study, switching mostly occurred from Russian to Kazakh; but in this example, switching occurs in the opposite direction, that is, from Kazakh to Russian. As mentioned earlier, switching to Russian in the speech of bilingual Kazakhs is a common phenomenon.

There is also work in pairs between the students Zhanar and Samal. In this case, one can also observe candidate understanding.

Example 2

1 Zhanar:	Did he manage to to to (0.5) to squeeze into the cradle?
2 (0.6)	
3 Samal:	(1.6) eeeeehm (0.6) to squeeze?
4 Zhanar:	yes, to squeeze
5 (5.8)	
6 Samal:	aaaah to squeeze eeeem (0.7) to squeeze означает же протиснуться?
	mean PARTICLE to squeeze
	to squeeze means to squeeze, doesn't it?
7 Zhanar:	ия, протиснуться. Did he manage to squeeze?
	yes, to squeeze
8 Samal:	Aaaaah. Did he manage to squeeze? Eeem (.) Ол бесікке сыйды ма?
	He cradle AUX squeeze PAST PARTICLE?
	Did he squeeze into the cradle?
9 (1.6)	
10 Samal:	Yes, yes, he managed to squeeze into the cradle.

Zhanar asks a question to Samal regarding the text. Then comes a slight pause, before Samal repeats the word "squeeze" in an interrogative form, initiating a repair. Zhanar confirms the question, followed by a long pause. In Line 6, there is candidate understanding of the utterance. Switching to Russian, Samal asks Zhanar again to confirm her understanding. Zhanar confirms her question, then repeats the question. Samal repeats the question, and after a small pause she switches to Kazakh, and reiterates the same question, thereby initiating candidate understanding. In Line 10, after a short pause, Samal gives an answer to the question, which has been put in the beginning of the conversation.

In Example 3, we see the group work. Dana asks a question based on the first task.

Example 3

1 Dana:	Why Mrs. Finn why (0.3) why did Mrs. Finn take the baby out of the cradle and
2	and (0.2) and eeem put him in their own big bed (0.6) eeem in the next room?
3 Kuanysh:	[because she
4 Aizhan:	[SHE WANTED TO eeehm (1.5) қорқытуға, в общем, анау дәуді
	to frighten, in general, that giant
	to frighten that giant, in general

5 Asel: Yes, she wanted to frighten that giant

6 Aizhan: She wanted to frighten the young giant

In this example, we see that when answering Dana's question, the turns of Kuanysh and Aizhan overlap. Kuanysh begins to answer the question, but Aizhan's voice sounds louder. By initiating an overlap, Aizhan continues to speak, switching to Kazakh. It should be noted the use of the parenthesis "в общем" ("in general") in Russian. The use of parentheses in Russian is common in the speech of the people of Kazakhstan, in spite of whether the person knows Russian or not. Here we can observe it in the example. Asel initiates repair and answers the question in English. Asel's response confirms once again that the conversation takes place in an institutional context, and that all the participants should follow the requirements of this context. In our case, Asel's answer in English is supported by the participants – as occurs in conditions of the FL classroom – and all the participants of this interaction should speak only the target language. Following Asel's response, Aizhan repeats her answer in English, thus solving the problem which was presented at the very beginning of the conversation.

In Example 4, students complete the second task. Kunsulu begins to retell a summary of the tale.

Example 4

1 Kunsulu: Well, Finn Mac-Kool was the (1,6) strongest strongest and (.) strongest and

2   the biggest giant in in in in all Ireland. But other giants thought that (0.6) they

3   was eeehm (.) were stronger and bigger than Finn Mac-Kool. And they kept

4   coming along. When aaah (0.5) Finn Mac-Kool saw them aaaah(0.7) he

5   would grumble aaah grumble >grumble аудармасы қалай еді? <

                                      translation how AUX ?

                                      What is the translation of grumble?

6 (0.8)

7 Zhanat: ааа ворчать, (0.6) то есть он начинал ворчать, когда видел этих

           to grumble, (0.6) that is he begin PAST to grumble when he see PAST those

           aaah to grumble, (0.6) i.e. he began grumbling when he saw those giants

8   гигантов giants

9 (1.6)

10 Kunsulu: ворчать? Қазақша аудармасы қалай еді?

           To grumble? Kazakh translation how AUX?

           To grumble? What is a Kazakh translation of it?

11 (6.8)

12 Zhanat: Aaaah (0.9) ворчать қалай қазақша? Eeeem ворчать

                    to grumble how Kazakh? to grumble

           Aaaah (0.9) What is a Kazakh word for "to grumble"? Eeeem to grumble

13 (5.8)

14 Zhanat: Аааah, кажется ашулану ааа

                         seem to be angry

          I think it is "to be angry"

15 (3.9)

16 Zhanat: иииu (0.5) ұрсысу

          Aaa and: to quarrel

          and to quarrel

17 (0.8)

18 Kunsulu: Ah, ия, бажылдау ғой, есіме түсті!

          yes, to grumble, remember PRES PERF

          Ah, yes, it means to grumble, I have remembered!

When retelling the tale, the researchers observed that Kunsulu has a problem with the word "to grumble" in Line 4. Switching to Kazakh, she asks the translation of the word in a low voice. Zhanat initiates repair by giving the meaning of the word in Russian. There is a switching to Russian in Zhanat's response. Then Zhanat continues her statement by saying that Finn McCool began to grumble when he saw the other giants who came to fight with him. Kunsulu asks Zhanat again to find the equivalent of the word in Kazakh. After a long pause, Zhanat gives the Russian translation of the word again, and asks herself what the Kazakh equivalent of the word is. After a pause, Zhanat gives a rough version of the word in Kazakh ("to be angry"). Then she translates this word as "to quarrel". All these words express the connotative meanings of the word "to grumble". After having heard the connotative meanings of the word, Kunsulu recalls and pronounces it. In this case, it is clear that Kunsulu did not understand the Russian. As it has been told earlier, almost all Kazakhstani people understand Russian. the researchers observed from the sociolinguistic characteristics of students that Kunsulu immigrated to Kazakhstan from China. Immigrants from China mostly do not speak Russian; so, in this case Kunsulu asks for the Kazakh version of the word. Zhanat is a resident of Astana, where her surroundings are mostly Russian-speaking people. When she has problems with the word "to grumble", she immediately switches to Russian, initiating repair. It is easier to find the equivalent in Russian. Moreover, it is difficult to find the exact meaning of the word in Kazakh. Consequently, Zhanat is trying to convey meaning with connotations of the word. After hearing the synonyms, Kunsulu recalls a similar word in Kazakh – "бажылдау" – which is often found in oral speech rather than in writing. In Line 17, answer to the question can be seen, as given by Kunsulu.

In Example 5, there is a repair of the grammatical material. Madina and Asel participate in a conversation. According to the second task, Madina summarizes the text.

Example 5

1 Madina: And Finn Mac-Kool eeem (.) never bothered by other giants

2 Assel: He WAS never bothered (.) by other giants

3 (3.6)

4 Madina: Was?

5 Assel: Ия, was never bothered

          Yes

6 (2.4)

7 Madina:	Түсінбедім, неге was болу керек?	
	Understand NEG, why 'was' be FUT?	
	I don't understand, why there should be 'was'?	
8 Assel:	Passive қой себебі. Финн Мак-Кул басқаларға мешать еткен жоқ қой	
	AUX reason. Finn Mac-Kool other SUFFIX to bother AUX no AUX	
	Because it is Passive. According to the story, Finn Mac-Kool didn't bother others.	
9	сюжет бойынша. Оны мазалады ғой? Сол жағдайдан кейін қойды ғой	
	plot according. He bother PAST AUX? That situation after stop PAST AUX	
	He was bothered, wasn't he? After that incident they stopped bothering him.	
10 Madina:	Ааа, ия. Етістіктің Passive формасы to be көмекші етістігі арқылы	
	Aaah, yes. Verb form auxiliary verb by means of	
	Aaaah, yes. The Passive form is created by means of the auxiliary verb to be,	
11	жасалады ғой?	
	make AUX?	
	isn't it?	
12 Assel:	Ия, дұрыс.	
	Yes, right.	
	Yes, you are right	
13 Madina:	Сонда He was not bothered болады ғой?	
	Then be FUT AUX?	
	Then it will be "He was not bothered, won't it?	
14 Assel:	Ия, дұрыс.	
	Yes, right.	
	Yes, you are right.	

In Line 1, Madina makes a grammatical mistake. In her statement, Madina misses the auxiliary verb of the passive voice, thereby changing the meaning of the utterance. Asel, hearing this statement, initiates repair and corrects it by adding the auxiliary verb "was". Madina asks why it is necessary to insert "was" by switching to Kazakh. Asel initiates repair by also switching to Kazakh. She explains that it is not Finn McCool who bothered others, but other giants bothered him; therefore, the statement should be built in the passive form. In Line 9, Madina initiates a candidate understanding by asking Asel if the passive is formed with the auxiliary verb "was" and gets a positive response. In Line 12, Madina again initiates a candidate understanding, correcting and reiterating the question. Asel solves the problem by a positive answer to the question.

In Example 6, we see a relatively long sequence where Zhanar and Samal solve the problem using code-switching.

Example 6

1 Zhanar: Why was the baby eeer (0.6) огромным?

                     enormous?

                     Why was the baby enormous?

2 Samal: enormous?

3 Zhanar: yes

4 Samal: Why was the baby enormous?

5 Zhanar: Yes, why was he enormous?

6 (3.7)

7 Samal: eeh (1.8) because (0.7) because eeh

8 (4.4)

9 Samal: because the baby eeem (0.5) was not eeem the (2.5) real the real baby.

10 (1.6)

11 Samal: Finn Mac-Kool eeem pretended to be the baby.

12 Zhana: Yes, you are right.

In Line 1, researchers observed a problematic turn where Zhanar asks the question; the answer is given in Lines 9 and 11. Here, the researchers observed that Zhanar switched to Russian, and speaks the word "enormous" in that language. Samal solves this problem and gives the English equivalent of the word.

5. Conclusion

The researchers have tried to analyse Anglo-Kazakh code-switching in the repair organization in foreign language classrooms.

The results demonstrate that the Anglo-Kazakh code-switching is regarded by students as a tool for understanding in the repair organization. It has to be noted that the presence of a teacher was reduced to a minimum. Repair is an important practice of interaction between students. Students use repair techniques by using different question markers and discourse particles demonstrating the fact that repair is an interactional phenomenon with different contextualization cues. Code-switching in repair organization is conditioned by the dissatisfaction of repair solutions by the communicant. It should be noted that repair in the Kazakhstani educational environment occurs not only to Kazakh, but also to Russian. It can be explained by the unique linguistic situation prevailing in Kazakhstan, and historical background which go back to the period of the Soviet Union connected with the policy of Russification.

In conclusion, the analysis of the above-given examples leads to the following conclusions: the use of FL (institutional work) and L1 (interaction) are divided by the speakers. During the Anglo-Kazakh code-switching the following types of repair are used: a) self-initiated self-repair; b) self-initiated other-repair; and c) candidate understanding. Repair initiation happens when code-switching happens to understand, to confirm and to clarify statements. Due to the specific linguistic situation of Kazakhstan, code-switching in the FL classroom may occur from English to Kazakh, or from English to Russian, depending on dominance of the language in the speaker's linguistic repertoire.

In general, it is clear that use of code-switching in repair sequences is a helpful tool which contributes to comprehensive understanding between students. Therefore, the use of code-switching in repair sequences in teaching practices can be recommended for better understanding and acquisition of a foreign language.

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