Sociolinguistic Dimensions of Code switching:
the Role of Social Factors in its Occurrence in an Algerian Context, Tlemcen Speech Community

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Abstract

The present study tries to investigate code switching behaviour of Tlemcen bilinguals, mainly from the micro-sociolinguistic perspective. The basic assumption being to consider it as a strategic tool that bilinguals possess to create social conventions, and effective conversational functions emphasising the messages conveyed. This sociolinguistic perspective, the core of this work, relies on the sociolinguistic and pragmatic approach of code switching as speakers select their codes according to the context. This work aims at discerning the main sociolinguistic and pragmatic factors that affect the use of code switching in Tlemcen speech community. In other words, the study investigates the occurrences of code switching between Algerian Arabic and French in daily conversations, attempting to study the circumstances and the factors that may have an impact on the future of the French language in Algeria. The survey incorporates both quantitative and qualitative methods using recordings, notes taking, questionnaire, and interviews. This dissertation is based on three models: that of Gumperz (1982) which relies on conversation analysis and contextualisation cues; that of Myers-Scotton (1993) which will guide our analysis of code switching in conversations in terms of marked or unmarked code; and that of Holmes (2013) for a functional analysis of code switching. The results of the study revealed that there are circumstances which can influence the respondents to codeswitch, in particular, the interlocutors, the setting, the psychological state of the speaker and change of topics.
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