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Spanish in Catalan interactions: code-switching as an ideological-discursive strategy to represent others

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Spanish in Catalan interactions: code-switching as an ideological-discursive strategy to represent *others*

In early code-switching research, Gumperz (1982) proposed that, in stratified societies, bilinguals may perceive their primary language as familiar and authentic (*in-group*) and the common language as foreign (*out-group*). This dichotomy encompasses how “speakers can shift their own perspective from experience-near to experience-distant” (Woolard, 2006: 77), and how those perceptions of proximity and distance are interrelated with particular languages. Despite the vast research on language mixing within the Hispanic world, little attention has been paid to the Catalan context in the field of code-switching (Casalmiglia and Tusón 1984; Millán 2020; Pérez-Sabater 2022). In addition, no studies to date discuss the implications of code-switching into Spanish within Catalan interactions in the bilingual region of Valencia. In this investigation, I show how bilingual Catalan-Spanish speakers with a predominant use of the former switch to Spanish to represent *others* – in particular, people with higher social status. I use the publicly available spoken corpora *Parlars* and *Museu de la Paraula*. I have used the software MAXQDA24 to transcribe and tag the instances of code-switching, including single words and fully-fledged sentences, and I have created four different categories. Here, I focus on those accounts of code-switching when speakers momentarily switch to Spanish to represent others. More particularly, they emulate, project, or imitate people who, despite growing up speaking Catalan, *choose* to speak Spanish to correspond to their newly acquired socio-economic status or, sometimes, to *perform* it. In these contexts, Spanish is a symbol for higher social statuses, while Catalan is a symbol for lower classes. In interaction, code-switching is a discursive tool to channel certain ideological stances on the languages, becoming a marked choice to represent *the others* more authentically, while distancing oneself from the language and the group that it comes to symbolize.

Keywords code-switching, linguistic ideologies, Catalan, ideological code-switching, Catalan sociolinguistics

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