CrossMark

Bilingualism: Language and Cognition 19 (5), 2016, 881–882 © Cambridge University Press 2016 doi:10.1017/S1366728916000043

Doubling: an error or an illusion?

MARGARET DEUCHAR
University of Cambridge
THERESA BIBERAUER
University of Cambridge
Stellenbosch University

(Received: January 15, 2016; final revision received: January 15, 2016; accepted: January 15, 2016; first published online 8 April 2016)

Goldrick, Putnam and Schwarz (henceforth Goldrick et al.) base their computational account of code mixing on two premises, (1) that code mixing is subject to grammatical principles and (2) that "mental representations in bilingual speakers incorporate blends of structures from each language". While there is copious evidence for the first premise, the second is far less well empirically supported. The authors imply that the second premise, the assumption of blend representations, is supported by Kroll & Gollan's (2014) review of speech planning in two languages, but this is not the case. Kroll & Gollan (2014:1) do indeed discuss evidence for the "parallel activation of the bilingual's two languages" but in terms of competition between alternatives rather than blended representations. The notion of BLEND is of course familiar to code-switching researchers from work on bimodal bilingual code mixing, as Goldrick et al. acknowledge, but here the term refers to "simultaneously produced English words and ASL signs" (Emmorey, Borinstein, Thompson & Gollan, 2008: 43). In speech the term has long been used to refer to a phonological mixture of two words, often in error: Fromkin (1971: 40) gives the example of *clarinola* as a blend of *clarinet* and *viola*. Poulisse (1999:172) finds blends between L1 Dutch and L2 English lexical items to be relatively rare, and argues that morphological and syntactic coding are language-specific.

There is thus no evidence in the literature for a consensus on the existence of blend representations in code-switching. On the contrary, there is much more empirical evidence for an aversion to doubling by bilinguals. Many code-switching corpora (unfortunately not examined by Goldrick et al.) exhibit asymmetry between the two languages in contact, with one language providing the morphosyntactic frame and the other the source of insertions of words or phrases into that frame (cf. Deuchar, 2006, Deuchar, Muysken & Sung-Lan Wang, 2007, Muysken, 2000, Myers-Scotton, 2002). A computational account of this widespread phenomenon, which seems to favour competition rather than blending, could have been very enlightening.

Instead, Goldrick et al. focus on what they themselves, following numerous other researchers, acknowledge to be the "exceedingly rare" (p.14) phenomenon of doubling. An important methodological issue which they do not address is how to treat infrequent phenomena in corpora, and whether doubling could be a 'performance error' given its rarity. Myers-Scotton (1993) presents a detailed account of how doubling may arise, assuming Levelt's (1989) Speaking model and concludes that "double morphology may result from misfiring at some point in production" (Myers-Scotton, 1993:135). A similar view is apparently adopted by Muysken (2000:105) who suggests that doubling involves an "adjustment in the planning of the sentence" and a "syntactic break".

Far from acknowledging these previous suggestions that doubling may represent error, Goldrick et al. argue that the occurrence of doubling is "constrained by grammatical principles" and involves "equivalence for grammatical features" (p. 16). In contrast, though, they argue that doubling involves violation of "a preference for congruent grammatical patterns in code-mixing" (p. 15). Appealing to a strongly dispreferred structure-type as the basis for a (very powerful Gradient Symbolic Computation-oriented) model of bilingual competence already raises questions, but an additional problem arises from the fact that the single Tamil–English example at the heart of their proposal is not representative of the doubling structures that Goldrick et al. themselves present (pp.13–14), let alone those that have been discussed in the literature.

While Goldrick et al. state that there is a preference for the doubling of functional elements, their central Tamil–English example involves the doubling of lexical verbs. And while they may be able to claim "equivalence for grammatical features" in this case, it cannot be claimed cross-linguistically for all functional elements. Since Rizzi's (1997) paper on the "fine structure" of CP, it has become well known that the structure of functional heads such as complementisers exhibits cross-linguistic variation. For example, Goldrick et al.'s example (9) includes 'doubling' of the English complementiser *that*

Address for correspondence:
Prof. Margaret Deuchar, University of Cambridge, Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, 9 West Rd, Cambridge, CB3 9DP
m.deuchar@gmail.com

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1366728916000043 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and the Korean complementiser *ko*. However, Bhatt & Yoon (1992: 49) point out that these are not equivalent since they behave differently in indirect questions (see also Kim, 2011). Similarly, Goldrick et al. use their example (3) to demonstrate 'doubling' of complements in English and Japanese despite the demonstration by Kuwabara (2013) that complementiser structure is very different in Japanese compared with English. Thus although the term DOUBLING implies the cross-linguistic grammatical equivalence that is claimed by Goldrick et al., recent work suggests that such equivalence at the functional level is an illusion. In fact, this non-equivalence may explain the appearance of the phenomenon in the first place.

An alternative to treating doubling as performance errors, then, would be to treat them as indicative of possible convergence. Convergence (see e.g., Backus, 2005; Silva-Corvalán, 1986; Toribio, 2004) is a phenomenon well worth modelling in a way that encompasses its other manifestations, including omission. Goldrick et al.'s faithfulness constraint penalises omission of constituents considerably, and yet this is a phenomenon which is associated with grammatical convergence in language contact. Davies & Deuchar (2014), for example, document the frequent omission of utterance-initial auxiliaries in Welsh, resulting in SVO structures which are more congruent with English, the language with which Welsh is continually in contact. A model representing the widespread phenomenon of grammatical convergence would also have the advantage of helping to account for contact-induced language change.

Conclusion

We have argued that there is no consensus on the existence of blend representations in code-switching, and that while doubling is a puzzling and interesting phenomenon, it may be sufficiently rare to be explicable in terms of 'performance errors' or mistiming in production. Alternatively, it may be considered an indication of convergence, and in that case should be dealt with alongside related phenomena as part of a comprehensive model of grammatical convergence as a consequence of language contact.

References

Backus, A. (2005). Codeswitching and language change: One thing leads to another? *International Journal of Bilingualism, 9*(*3*), 307–340.

Bhatt, R., & Yoon, J. (1992). On the composition of COMP and parameters of V2. In D. Bates (ed.), *Proceedings of WCCFL 10*. Stanford: CSU, 41–52.

Davies, P., & Deuchar, M. (2014). Auxiliary deletion in the informal speech of Welsh–English bilinguals: A change in progress. *Lingua, 143,* 224–241.

Deuchar, M. (2006). Welsh-English code-switching and the Matrix Language frame model. *Lingua, 116* (*11*), 1986–2011.

Deuchar, M., Muysken, P., & Sung-lan Wang (2007) Structured variation in code-switching: towards an empirically based typology of bilingual speech patterns. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 10*(*3*), 298–340.

Emmorey, K., Borinstein, H.B., Thompson, R., & Gollan, T.H. (2008). Bimodal bilingualism. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition, 11,* 43–61.

Fromkin, V. (1971). The non-anomalous nature of anomalous utterances. *Language, 47,* 27–52.

Kim, S-S. (2011). Noun Complements and Clause Types in Korean (and Japanese). In W. McClure and M. den Dikken (eds), *Japanese/Korean Linguistics* 18. Stanford: CSLI Publications, 278–290.

Kroll, J. F., & Gollan, H. (2014). Speech planning in two languages: What bilinguals tell us about language production. In M. Goldrick, V. Ferreira and M. Miozzo (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Language Production* (pp. 165–181).

Kuwabara, K. (2013). Peripheral effects in Japanese questions and the fine structure of CP. *Lingua, 126,* 91–119.

Levelt, W. (1989). *Speaking: From Intention to Articulation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Muysken, P. (2000). *Bilingual Speech*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Myers-Scotton, C. (1993). *Duelling Languages*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Myers-Scotton, C. (2002). *Contact Linguistics: Bilingual Encounters and Grammatical Outcomes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Poulisse, N. (1999). *Slips of the Tongue: Speech Errors in First and Second Language Production*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Rizzi, L. (1997). The fine structure of the left periphery. In L. Haegeman. (ed.), *Elements of Grammar*. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 287–337.

Silva-Corvalán, C. (1986). Bilingualism and language change: The extension of *estar* in Los Angeles Spanish. *Language, 62,* 587–608.

Toribio, A. (2004). Convergence as an optimization strategy in bilingual speech: evidence from code-switching. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition, 7* (*2*), 165–173.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1366728916000043 Published online by Cambridge University Press