

## A Unified Account of Bare Forms in Bilingual Speech

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A debate that will not go away is whether singly occurring forms in bilingual speech as in (1) should be treated as borrowings or codeswitched forms.

(1) German/English codeswitching

Und jetzt fhrt's mit aso an kleinen BICYCLE zum SHOPPING

'And now she rides around on a little bicycle to go shopping.'

While many researchers recognize such forms as codeswitched forms (e.g., Myers-Scotton 1993, Backus 1996, Boumans 1998), others continue to dismiss these phenomena as borrowings, if only for the nonce, and admit only XPs as proper codeswitched forms (Poplack & Mehan 1998, MacSwan 2000). More recently, Torres-Cacoullous and Aaron (2002) has escalated this debate by arguing that bare forms as in (2) also fall into the category of nonce borrowings.

(2) Spanish/English codeswitching

el era TANNER

'He was a tanner.'

In this talk, I examine the distribution of NPs in bilingual CPs from my research on German-English and Spanish-English bilinguals as well as from published reports on Arabic/Dutch codeswitching. The quantitative analysis reveals two possible outcomes: (1) with some language pairs (Spanish/English and German/English) singly occurring bare forms are rare; (2) in contrast, in Arabic/Dutch discourse, the bulk of NPs contain bare Dutch nouns. These facts need to be explained, not dismissed as mere cases of nonce borrowings.

I argue that the Spanish/English and German/English case is the unmarked case in bilingual discourse and that the singly occurring nouns are, in fact, legitimate codeswitched forms accounted for by the Matrix Language Frame model (Myers-Scotton 1993) and the Uniform Structure Principle (Jake, Myers-Scotton & Gross 2002). In contrast, the Arabic/Dutch case is atypical; yet, these bare Dutch nouns should also be considered codeswitched forms. I illustrate that the preponderance of bare Dutch nouns is the result of syntactic incongruence between Dutch and Arabic NPs. Thus, I suggest that in Arabic/Dutch CS, the production of bare forms is a compromise strategy to avoid irresolvable syntactic conflicts in the production of NPs.

Finally, I argue that because the Matrix Language Frame model and the Uniform Structure Principle can offer a more parsimonious account for both singly occurring alien forms as well as unambiguous codeswitched constituents in bilingual utterances, the notion of nonce borrowings has little theoretical importance.

### Selected References

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