Chapter 2: Code-switching

Clarifications before you read the chapter

Before you start reading the chapter, make sure you read my slides on morphology that I sent a few weeks ago. They should help you understanding some of the technical terms used in the chapter. The slides are available here, just in case:

http://sites.middlebury.edu/arabicsociolinguistics/files/2013/03/intro_to_morphology.pdf

Further clarifications on some linguistic technical terminology in Chapter 2

- Notice that **NP** means ‘noun phrase’. Also, a **CP** is a complementizer phrase, which is equivalent to a main clause (e.g., ‘John will come tomorrow’), or an embedded clause (e.g., the bracketed string in ‘John said [CP that he would come tomorrow]’). Notice that a complementizer refers to words that introduce clauses, such as the word ‘that’ in the preceding English example. In Arabic, a typical complementizer is ʔinna, which is pronounced as ʔinn in many modern dialects, e.g., from Egyptian Arabic:

  محمد بيفعل ان الولد وصلوا.

- Finally, **thematic roles** (occasionally referred to as **theta roles**) refer to the semantic roles of NPs in a sentence, such as AGENT and PATIENT. For example, in a sentence like ‘John kicked the ball’, John is the entity causing the action and is therefore called an AGENT, and ‘the ball’ is the entity affected by the action, and is therefore called a PATIENT. In ‘John is happy’, John is assigned the thematic role of EXPERIENCER (of happiness). There are a few other thematic roles such as GOAL and SOURCE, but we don’t have to worry about them here. Categories that can assign thematic roles are typically verbs, nouns, and adjectives. Categories that get assigned thematic roles are typically nouns.

- In section 2.4.1.2, do not worry too much about the technical terminology regarding ‘government’ and ‘maximal projections’. You can simply understand **maximal projections** to mean phrases such as a verb phrase, a noun phrase, or a prepositional phrase. Government is simply the relation between a verb and its object or a preposition and its following noun.
Questions on Chapter 2

Read Chapter 2, pp. 28-58, and prepare answers to the following questions for in-class discussion.

1. What is classic code-switching? What is diglossic code-switching? What is code-mixing? Are the differences always clear between these terms?
2. What is borrowing? How is it different from code-switching?
3. What is the general attitude regarding code-switching in your native country? Is it positive? Negative? Why do you think that is?
4. What are the first two approaches that focused on identifying structural constraints on code-switching? What are some of the empirical challenges they faced in explaining patterns of code-switching?
5. Read sections 2.4.1.3 and 2.4.2 on pp. 37-58 carefully and answer the following questions:
   a. Define the best you can the following terms: Matrix Language (ML) – Embedded Language (EL) – system morphemes – content morphemes – ML island.
   b. In a code-switching situation, what type of morphemes comes from ML and what type comes from EL?
   c. Why doesn’t the ML model work well for diglossic switching in Arabic-speaking communities? Explain with examples.
   d. Does the 4-M model overcome the problems raised by Arabic diglossic switching to the classical ML model? If not, explain why not, and mention any possible solutions discussed in the chapter.