

Code-Switching and Code-Mixing in Sesotho Accordion Music: A Sociolinguistic Perspective

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Abstract

This article explores the use of code-switching/mixing in Sesotho accordion music within a sociolinguistic framework. Code-switching/mixing is one of the sociolinguistic concepts that is mainly highlighted in conversation. It refers to switching or mixing between two or more languages in the context of a single conversation or situation. Just like a conversation, Sesotho accordion music also exhibits the phenomenon of code-switching/mixing. The Basotho accordion music (*'mino oa korianana*) is one of the forms of the oral tradition from Lesotho whose singing is accompanied by a homemade drum, and it has its own unique and acceptable taste. This music is seen as both captivating and complex. We observe that its fascination and its complex features are a result of the incorporation of code-switching/mixing in a single song. We know how the songs are generated, and they are part of the generic culture and popular culture of the people. We purposively selected four songs from recorded tapes that used code-switching/mixing. Using critical discourse analysis, the results reveal that code-switching/mixing in the accordion music of the Basotho reflects intertextuality, which includes borrowing, inclusion and exclusion, literary and conversational intertextuality. The study also shows that code-switching/mixing reflects repetition used for emphasis, clarity or amplification. The findings further express affirmation of class/age identity and the intention of clarifying the speech content for the interlocutor. One of the emerging issues is that change in pronunciation may reflect tone and register in the accordion music of the Basotho.

Keywords: accordion music; code-switching/mixing; critical discourse analysis



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Introduction

Language is one of the properties of human beings that operates within a context. In particular, language operates in the context of culture. This is where people interact, interpret culture and exchange certain meanings, including dance, language and music on certain occasions (Halliday 2014). Sesotho, like other languages, operates in a Sesotho-speaking context. It is a vehicular cross-border language as it is spoken in Lesotho, the Republic of South Africa and other parts of the Sub-Saharan countries (Matsinhe 2013). In Lesotho, it is the language of the majority and functions as both the national and official language. Another official language is English, which also serves as an international language or lingua franca. Lesotho also has indigenous languages, which include Ndebele, Sephuthi and Xhosa/Thembu.

The Basotho, regardless of their literacy, mostly engage in oral or spoken communication. They interact through conversation or music. According to Oesh (2019), music and language are described as universal human capacities that have a number of similarities relating to structure and frequent implementation in social situations, to mention but a few. As Oesh suggests, this implies that both language and music have repeated units with a lot of combinations, which are normally organised. For interactions, such repeated units and combinations can be done simultaneously and used in dialogue, which is known as call-and-response in music.

Music is described as one of the powerful means of communication in which people share emotions, intentions and meanings (Miell, MacDonald, and Hargreaves 2005). The authors add that to some people, ordinary communication may be difficult, so music can provide an important lifeline to human interaction. Drawing from oral performance, Martins (2020) defines music as an element of oral prose bequeathed with power of flexibility and communicability reflecting social, political and economic experiences of the people. As stated above, music forms part of the people's culture. There are various types of music in the Sesotho culture, such as accordion music, popularly known as *famo* music (Coplan 1994; Moitse 1990; Wells 1994).

Accordion music is not only the renowned music, but also the popular culture of the Basotho. On this issue, Phafoli (2009) avers that the Basotho identify themselves with accordion music as it portrays their culture. Relating the origin of accordion music, Moitse (1990) states that *famo* music was played in shebeens, mainly on the outskirts of the towns in Lesotho. The music was played to attract more customers and entertain those who came for the business of stokvel. At first, the music was not recorded; however, 'Malitaba's recorded songs were sometimes heard over Radio Bantu and Radio Lesotho. Another group, Tau Ea Matšekha, also released an album in 1979 (Phafoli 2009). As they felt that their customs, beliefs and language were retained and propagated, the Basotho changed their attitude towards *famo* music. The music escalated beyond entertainment to business. It adopted the name '*mino oa k'horiana* (accordion music). It was called accordion music because the accordion features as the principal accompanying instrument to the chorus of voices and as a solo recitative one.

The accordion added effect and aesthetics to the music (Moitse 1990; Phafoli 2009; Wells 1994).

Accordion music, like other genres of music, is not only therapeutic, but also versatile. Martins (2020) describes music as having the power of flexibility or versatility, meaning that musicians have liberty to draw upon endless styles. The accordion music has long been localised, but the additives of other foreign languages globalise the music, and enhance the saleability of the music and acquisition by other ethnic groups. Therefore, the inclusion of code-mixing and code-switching did not only render the music versatile locally, but also globally. This means that the artists use other languages in the course of a single song's lyrics or a single utterance (Mugari 2014).

Following Hoffman's theory of code-switching, Cakrawarti (2011) states that code-switching often occurs in an informal conversation amongst people who are acquainted and who share ethnic, educational and socio-economic backgrounds. The notion of code-switching/mixing is used in a bilingual or multilingual context. For simplicity, the study follows Romaine (1995) and Mugari (2014) who have used code-switching and code-mixing interchangeably as the difference between the two lies mainly on the clause levels, but the codes are more than one language. Code-switching/mixing refers to the use of more than one language in a single utterance, and it includes the aspect of borrowing. The same view is shared by Mugari (2014, 225), who points out that code-switching "may vary from context to context and situation ... [I]t is loosely treated as encompassing code-switching and borrowing." Furthermore, as Mugari (2014) notes, the terms denote that the listeners have to be well-informed in the languages used in an utterance or at least be in a position to grasp the intended communication. It can involve the following types: intra-sentential, inter-sentential, emblematic, and intra-lexical code-mixing, establishing continuity with the previous speaker and involving change of pronunciation (Cakrawarti 2011). Cakrawarti further indicates that the types emanate from the scope of switching and are driven by the situations.

Various genres of music have been studied in different cultures. Scholars such as Akande (2013), Davies and Bentahila (2008), Mugari (2014), Phafoli and Shava (2013) Phafoli and Zulu (2014), as well as Phafoli (1999, 2018) have researched different genres, such as Western pop, North African rai music, Nigerian hip-hop lyrics, Zimbabwean urban grooves music and famo music. Generally speaking, those concerned with accordion music in Sesotho did not whatsoever dwell on a linguistic approach. Observable features such as code-switching and mixing have been viewed through the lenses of aesthetics of the genre. Therefore, the study seeks to employ critical discourse analysis (CDA) to understand the significance of code-switching/mixing in Sesotho accordion music.

Theoretical Framework

The present study is premised on critical discourse analysis. This theory has enabled the researchers to link the text and society, and to unpack and reveal the implied or

underlying ideologies. This implies critically engaging the selected accordion music of the Basotho and trying to understand the significance of using more than one language, yet the music is meant for the Basotho. The study has adopted CDA's notion of intertextuality, which links one text to other texts, through direct borrowing, parody, pastiche, allusion or translation. The inclusion, which is the notion of equivalence, has enabled the researchers to expand on different concepts of translation (Zengin 2016). Kim et al. (2021) see equivalence as a concept that allows researchers to distinguish between translation and other forms of multilingual texts.

As indicated, for the Basotho nation, there is an interchange of meanings in Sesotho accordion music. For this reason, the theory is more applicable to unpack the situations where code-switching/mixing surface in the accordion music of the Basotho portraying intertextuality and the aforementioned principles.

Methodology

This study relies on a secondary mode of data gathered from the released artists' records (in the form of recorded tapes available in media houses [local radio stations], social media and through individual community members).

Purposive sampling was used for data collection based on the researchers' prior knowledge of the genre. The four recorded songs of two accordion singers were identified and listened to. In order for the researchers to spot the necessary data, they listened to the four tracks intently several times. Data from the audios were transcribed by assigning special numeric representations and codes. After that, the data were then translated to English. The data were taken from the chorus of voices, a leading voice and a solo voice reciting the lyrics. The researchers opted for qualitative content analysis because it enabled the examination of "who says what, to who and with what effect" (Bloor and Wood 2006, 58). Specific themes have been set up to represent the units of data chunks for purposes of analysis rather than simply using textual linguistic segments (Zhang and Wildemuth 2005).

Data Presentation and Discussion

This section presents the findings and discussion based on the selected accordion music lyrics of the Basotho, which have used more than one language. Therefore, various elements found in the accordion music of the Basotho are reflected in the given examples below.

Results

The data reveal that code-switching in the accordion music of the Basotho may be used to show repetition. Repetition is one of the literary works' devices (poetic device). According to Maimane (2016, 93), repetition is an aspect of language that contains "the constant recurrent or usage of a particular linguistic item such as a word or phrase ... to

highlight a certain idea.” Maimane further emphasises that repetition can be in the form of a chorus, speech sounds and syllables, words, phrases and clauses, as well as one notion using different words. This repetition integrated in some of the accordion music of the Basotho results from intertextuality, as shown in track 1, “Ingoma.”

“Ingoma” (Track 1) by Mothae le Lillo (2011)

Ha ke shaya “lingoma yam”
Bayo vuka balele
Ba tla tsoha ba robetse ee!
He! Bafu mabitleng koana ee!
Ke bina ka bothata ke thata ee!
Ke terebile, he lemong sena ee!
Sera saka se tla tsoha ee!

(When I sing my song
They will wake up from sleep.
They will wake up from sleep ee!
He! The dead from the graveyard over there ee!
I sing in a tough manner because I am tough ee!
I am terrible this year ee!
My enemy will rise ee!)

It is clear from track 1 by Mothae that the artist values and praises his music. In this song, the artist has mixed the codes isiZulu and Sesotho: “ha ke shaya lingoma yam bayo vuka balele ba tla tsoha ba robetse” (when I sing my song, they will wake up; they will wake up ee). Drawing from the notion of translation equivalence within intertextuality, it should be highlighted that the expression “bayo vuka balele” is equivalent to *ba tla tsoha ba robetse*, hence it is a form of repetition. In track 1, the artist has used expressions with similar meanings from the two languages involved. In addition, the notion of repetition could also be extended to translation intertextuality where the artist has translated “bayo vuka balele” to “ba tla tsoha ba robetse” (they will wake up from sleep).

Within the lyrics, code-switching can also be used to symbolise affirmations of the class of the artist (friends and acquaintances) or group identity. The study defines identity as qualities that make a person who they are, thus denoting individuality. Davies and Bentahila (2008) affirm that some performers delineate their identity in their lyrics. Code-switching to indicate age identity and other subsidiary elements is seen in the example below.

“Lesholu” (Track 2) by Mothae (2010)

No problem banna, majita hao!
Ke sa ntsane ke etsa feela one c-nyana feela one low
No problem hle banna hao!

(No problem fellow men, guys hey!
I am just doing a small *c* just one low.
No problem dear fellow men hao!)

The evidence shows that in some lyrics, code-switching is employed to present the class, in particular the age identity, of the artist, as well as to draw attention. In track 2 by Mothae, “Lesholu,” three codes are used, namely, English, Sesotho and Tsotsitaal, respectively: “no problem banna, majita hao!” (no problem fellow men, guys hey!). In this text, intertextuality is also recognised. Instances of intertextuality include bits of conversations where the artist seems to be responding to his friends. The use of the expression “majita,” a Tsotitaal word referring to guys, and “one *c*-nyana feela one low” indicate the age identity of the artist and his audience. In the latter expression, the codes have been mixed, where the Sesotho diminutive variant *-nyana* has been attached to the speech sound *c* to denote the size of the action that the artist is doing. The attachment of the diminutive suffix is common in the younger generation (Rapeane 1997). Therefore, it could be concluded that the artist and his audience are of a young age. The expressions can only be used in conversation with peers, not elderly people.

The study further observes that in the accordion music of the Basotho, code-switching/mixing is indicative of borrowing, inclusion and exclusion, as evidenced in the lyrics of Mohale oa Lioling in the example provided below.

“Lesholu” (Track No. 5) by Mohlale oa Lioling (2011)

Bontate, ntle le ho bua haholo, 'minong ona oa likheleke
'Na 70% ha ke e bone
Ke bona 30% feela
Bongata ba lona lipotso tsa ka le ke ke la li araba
Ke li-parable, li tšoana le tsa bebeleng
...
Ke hlile ke batla ho fetola tsena tse mabitso a koromo
Ke batla hore li-psychology le li-scientist, joale li ngole libuka ...

(Dear fellow men, without bragging, in the music of the eloquent ones
I do not see 70%
I only see 30%
Many of you won't be able to answer my questions
They are like the biblical parables
...
Indeed I want to translate the ones with skewed names
I want the psychologists and the scientist to write the book ...)

Mohale oa Lioling's Track 5, “Lesholu,” reveals that there is also an element of borrowing. Borrowing is the adoption of words or phrases of a source language by the main/target language. In this excerpt, the prefix denoting plural for the class 10 of Sesotho nouns has been annexed to English words, “parable,” “psychology” and

“scientist,” and the attachment is known as hybrid compounds or subtle intertextuality. This means that there is a modification of some form that suits the phonology of the borrowing language as plurality in Sesotho is signalled by prefixes, unlike in English, where plurality is formed through suffixes.

The results also demonstrate that code-switching/mixing signals inclusion and exclusion in the accordion music of the Basotho. In Mohale oa Lioling’s track 5, the artist opens up the lyrics in a foreign language, thus including foreign listeners and engaging literate people who understand how percentages work, as he states that he does not see 70%, he only sees 30%. The artist wants to weigh his questions in terms of difficulty and simplicity statistically, and that could not be easily interpreted by an illiterate person. This means that the artist excludes illiterate listeners as the message is meant for a limited audience: literate people, hence the notion of exclusion. While undermining them as people who are less skilled and less eloquent than him, he resorts to the use of language that deliberately excludes them from literate people.

In line with class identity, the results also demonstrate that code-switching/mixing can be used to reflect literary intertextuality through the use of metaphor and lack of lexicon in the Basotho accordion music, as exemplified below.

“Lesholu” (Track No. 9) by Mohale oa Lioling (2011)

Se ntšoantseng le bana ba sekolo
Bana ba matsatsi ana bo-mohloka-teboho le bo-’mamohloka-teboho
Ba mona bao e reng ha ba qeta ho ithuta Sekhooa
Ba a qala ba senya matichere lebitso
Ba re matichere a roba tense

...
Ke ’na cable ea lefatše, ke sehlahisoa sa fatše la Iraq ...
Ke mohlankana ea special haholo

...
Ha ke sewerage, ke energade,
Ke drink e nooang ke barutehi
Ke nooa li-campuseng feela
Ke maloti-maid monn’a ’Mamahlapane
Ke septonomenometha, mochini o mona oa lipetleleng
O metha mali
O metha pressure

...
Har’a tsona ke batla li-medical superintendent
Ha le qeta le mpatlele manese

(Don’t compare me with the school kids
Children of these days are those that are ungrateful

Those who after learning English
They start to defame their teachers

They say that teachers break tense
...
I am the cable of the world, I am the product of Iraq
...
I am a very special gentleman
...
I am not a sewerage, I am energade
I am a drink that is sipped by the educated ones
I am sipped only at the campuses
I am maloti-maid, husband of 'Mamahlapane
I am the speedometer (thermometer), the machine of hospitals
That measures blood
That measures pressure
...
Amongst them, I want the medical superintendents
After that find me the nurses)

The study illustrates that the use of code-switching/mixing within the accordion music lyrics of the Basotho is a component of literary intertextuality where metaphor surfaces. Metaphor is a figure of speech in which words or phrases literally or directly refer to something else. In these lyrics, the artist calls himself “cable ea lefatše” (cable of the world), “energade,” “a drink sipped by educated ones,” “maloti-maid” and “speedometer.” The figure of speech is used to show how viral the artist’s music is. It is listened to globally in countries including Iraq. Even though the words “cable” and “sewage” may have Sesotho equivalents, they may not send the intentions of the performer as the listener may interpret them wrongly, hence the use of code-switching.

Code-switching is also used due to lack of equivalent lexicon in Sesotho. For instance, Sesotho does not have words such as “campus,” “speedometer” and “medical superintendents.” These are technical terms. As for the word “pressure,” it has a Sesotho equivalent; however, that can be a long phrase, hence the artist mixes the codes. The noun “manese” undergoes a phonological alteration to conform to the structure of the Sesotho language. There is an equivalent Sesotho word for “nurses,” which is *baoki*. Nonetheless, as observed, the word “manese” is commonly used in casual talks. For this reason, the artist mixes the codes to reflect his tone and register.

Discussion

The study reveals that the use of code-switching/mixing within the accordion music lyrics of the Basotho reflects intertextuality. As indicated, the notion of intertextuality in a text is a form of stylistic creativity, which shows that a target work/text has been influenced by other texts to place one’s work within a certain tradition. This suggests that there is creativity of its kind in that target text. Therefore, code-switching/mixing in the accordion music of the Basotho demonstrates stylistic creativity of such artists. This finding conforms to Mugari’s (2014) view that the use of code-switching represents stylistic creativity.

In this study, intertextuality is observed to be the main reason for code-switching/mixing, and it is portrayed through the use of repetition, affirmations of group identity, attention, borrowing/calque, inclusion and exclusion, literary intertextuality and lack of appropriate diction. It has been observed that in one song, code-switching can be interpreted to represent or portray a number of features of intertextuality.

From the context of its use, repetition surfaces through code-switching/mixing in the lyrics for clarity and emphasis. This is supported by Cakrawarti (2011) and Luke (2015) who aver that a bilingual person sometimes uses both languages to express a similar message to clarify, amplify and emphasise what is said. The two codes are, therefore, used to emphasise the value or power of the artist's music, which drives people to pay attention. Since repetition is also observed in the literary works, we argue for the notion of intertextuality. Generally, these phrases depict replication of the same source material, as also maintained by Davies and Bentahila (2008) who state that translation is meant to replace or duplicate the source material. The artist's intention is to send a clear message to the listeners of both Sesotho and other target languages.

The use of more than one language can also be regarded as a means of showing off the language expertise that the artist is endowed with. The majority of accordion music artists in Lesotho either work in the industries of the Republic of South Africa or have stayed there in search of employment. Having stayed in a multilingual South Africa, the artists are exposed to many languages that influence their linguistic repertoires. This is to say that the mixing or switching of the languages might be a subconscious product rather than a conscious one. Therefore, from the data, multiculturalism is identified. There is also an integration of conversation where the artist seems to be responding to conversers. Through the conversation, the listeners can determine the age identity of the artist and the artist's audience.

Apart from conversation, it has been indicated that borrowing is also identified in the accordion music of the Basotho as an element of code-switching/mixing. The borrowed words have their equivalents in the Sesotho diction, and the artists could have used them; instead, they have mixed the codes. The mixture of codes includes those who understand English, isiZulu and Tsotsitaal; at the same time, it excludes those who speak Sesotho only. As a result, in a case where such speakers want to mimic or imitate the song, it may be difficult to pronounce the words. Even if they gradually perfect the words, they may fail to understand the message, hence the notion of exclusion.

Still on the issue of inclusivity, non-native speakers of Sesotho are not only considered to be part of the Sesotho language, but also part of the popular culture of the Basotho. Regarding the inclusion of foreign listeners, code-switching/mixing in this instance can function as a marketing strategy of the accordion music of the Basotho. Davies and Bentahila (2008) share a similar view that translation and code-switching normally produce similar effects, including opening up the lyrics to foreign listeners or producing effects such as alienation and exclusion. However, in terms of exclusion, the major

targets are the fellow artists to whom the artist displays his acquisition of more than one language. In reality, most of the Sesotho accordion singers have only elementary knowledge of education. Some of them have not even gone to school. Thus, artists undermine and regard them as people who are less skilled and eloquent than them. As a result, such artists resort to the use of language that deliberately excludes them.

In line with literary intertextuality, metaphor is used. For instance, it has been shown that some artists such as Mohale oa Lioling label themselves as “energade,” “a drink ... sipped by the educated ones.” The implication is that even educated people listen to their music. Mohale oa Lioling views his music as a juicy and soft one, as it is also listened to by the students on campus (cf. Mohale oa Lioling).

In this study, it is also observed that English words are used due to lack of equivalent vocabulary in Sesotho. This finding correlates with Cakrawarti (2011) who notes that the lack of equivalent lexicon in languages leads to the bilingual use of terms from another language, especially if the term is technical. Conversely, some foreign words in the accordion music of the Basotho have Sesotho equivalents; however, they can be long phrases. For this reason, the artists tend to use code-switching/mixing. In other cases, it has been illustrated that other artists mix the codes to reflect their tone and register.

Conclusion

The study aimed to establish the significance of code-switching/mixing in the accordion music of the Basotho. The reason is that the accordion music is sung in Sesotho, and it is meant for the Basotho nation, yet other codes are used in the music. The results reveal that code-switching in Basotho accordion music reflects intertextuality. It is concluded that code-switching/mixing in Basotho accordion music reflects affirmations of class/age identity, inclusion and exclusion, literary and conversational intertextuality, borrowing and repetition, either for emphasis or clarity or amplification. One of the emerging issues is that change in pronunciation may reflect tone and register in the accordion music of the Basotho.

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- Mohale oa Lioling No. 4. 2011. "Lesholu." Track no. 9 on *Lekunutu la nyatsa*. Produced by Masia.