



A conversational approach to code-switching: A case study of Prishtina International Schools' students

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to investigate bilingual speech in the International Schools of Prishtina. More particularly, the focus of this article is on examining code-switching among students highly exposed to English with the latter as the medium of instruction at school in naturally-occurring conversations within school settings. Having reviewed a number of competing methods/approaches already proposed for the interpretation of code-switching, we followed in this article mainly Auer's Conversation Analysis as a primary source for arriving at some interpretations of CS. Driven by daily unsystematic observation, and prior research already undertaken, the hypothesis stated is that Albanian is influenced by English. More specifically, there will be a lot of lexical insertions from English into an otherwise Albanian frame. Moreover, code-switching is mainly discourse-related. The data gathered from students in informal settings suggests that there are well-founded grounds for an affirmative answer. The participants in this study are noticed to be code-switching, even though showing differences in degree. Regarding discourse functions, the findings reveal that code-switching is discourse-related but also participant- or preference-related. The change in code is not only associated with topic shift, but it serves a range of other discourse functions, such as reiteration, change in participant constellation, self-repair, emphasis, etc. Thus, CS displayed to have a number of complexities of functions within the discourse.

Keywords: language contacts; bilingualism; code-switching; Albanian; English

1. Introduction

Contacts between Albanian and English have varied across periods. A closer contact is known to have occurred in the period of globalization as a result of technological advancement, and has been more evident in fields such as information technology, economics, and other fields where the United Kingdom, and even more so, the United States, have been pioneers. This closer connection was due to the presence of foreign missions and various international organizations in Kosova. Much of this international presence was from English speaking parts of the world, and even when this was not the case, the primary language of interaction with these institutions and organizations was English. Amidst these newly created conditions, the contact between English and Albanian became more

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direct, with Albanian borrowing more freely from English to adjust to the new lexical needs alongside switching of the codes between English and Albanian for achieving particular purposes. This situation also coincided with the global trends of English becoming increasingly more present in almost every field, primarily due to the technological advancement, and the United States and United Kingdom's role as the economic world powers.

This situation has been present in Kosova for a while now, and the use of English reached the level that today has almost won the status of a second language. According to the United Nations Resolution 1244, prior to the declaration of independence in 2008, English had the status of the official language in Kosova along with Albanian and Serbian (Munishi, 2013, 2020). Furthermore, the language of UNMIK, which governed the country, was English. On the other hand, the Albanian language was the one in which things were translated. Hence, English was mandatory, while Albanian was available or possible in certain functions (Ismajli, 2003: 128-129).

Subsequently, in this newly created reality, not just in Kosova, where English has the status of a lingua franca, a lot of Albanian students have English as their medium of instruction and communication at school; in this manner, being under the exposure of English, code-switching, alongside borrowing as common aspects of bilingual speech, has become part of their everyday communication. Therefore, having to use two languages on a daily basis makes it even more interesting for a thorough analysis from a sociolinguistic and structural point of view due to the influence of the second language, in this case, English. This is to examine the specificities of bilingual aspects in order to identify the cases of alternation from language 1 to language 2. More specifically, it is aimed at analyzing the actual meaning of code-switching within the conversations that occur spontaneously in different informal schools' settings.

1.1. Literature Review

Code-switching (henceforth CS) as a very common bilingual phenomenon in multilingual societies and groups has been labelled from various perspectives for a relatively long period among authors of different communities particularly those that were in daily contact with more than one language. However, over the last fifty years now there has been an extensive interest in CS (Gardner-Chloros, 2009: 9). Moreover, it was the work of Gumperz (1982) that received considerable attention, since then, the study of CS was set forth as there was no indication of decline (ibid.). Further, the term 'code-switching' was elaborated more thoroughly by the sociologist and anthropologist Gumperz (e.g., Riehl, 2014: 25).

At an early stage, as Alvares Caccamo (in Auer, 1998: 32) goes back to history, the first one to mention "code-switching" and to refer to it more specifically and accurately is Vogt (1954: 368): "Code-switching in itself is perhaps not a linguistic phenomenon but rather a psychological one and its causes are obviously extralinguistic" (1954: 368). Even though, as it is cited in Auer (1998: 27), the first mention of the compound code-switching is attributed to Roman Jakobson (1952) who drew parallels between language switching, co-existing phonemic systems in borrowing, and information theory in which the term was already established. In the Albanian language, CS is given an Albanian translated form as "këmbim kodi" (Ismajli, Rugova, Munishi, 2020: 197), "ndërrim kodi" (Munishi, 2020) or adapted as "kod-suiçingu" (Schader & Shkurtaç, 2005: 248).

What CS has come to mean is sometimes very controversial in language contact research (Riehl, 2014: 21). Clyne (2003: 70) speaks of "the troublesome terminology around 'code-switching'". He conceptualizes CS in three main ways: a) in contrast to 'borrowing'; b) subsuming 'borrowing'; c) with indexical (or other discourse) function only, for instance indicating group membership or 'otherness'. This terminological confusion arises from the fact that different researchers consider CS

from different research fields and emphasize different aspects. In research there is a lot of discussion concerning the issue of the distinction between borrowing and CS. Myers-Scotton (2002: 153) emphasizes that, from a synchronic point of view, there is no need to make this distinction, while Riehl (2014: 22), also Poplack (1980) consider the borrowing vs. CS distinction to be important. CS is considered as a transition from one language to the other, so here the languages do not change, while during the lexical and/or grammatical transfer one language integrates something from the other and in this case, it also changes its form (e.g., Riehl 2014: 22). In this regard, scholars like Riehl (2014) treat such single word insertions as ‘ad-hoc’ borrowings, while for Poplack (1980) these are known as ‘nonce borrowings’. On the other hand, even single word insertions are treated as CS according to some authors (e.g., Myers-Scotton, 2002: 153). In fact, it is Myers-Scotton who challenged Poplack’s position, among others, by developing the MLF model (Matrix Language Frame) according to which the ML is the dominant language, i.e., it is the language of more morphemes. According to her, it is the embedded language that follows the rules of the ML (as cited in Mustafa, 2005). Therefore, they should not be viewed as two distinct phenomena but rather as a diachronic continuum: at first loanwords enter the receiving language as code-switches and then eventually become integrated as loans (Gardner-Chloros, 2009: 12). The focus of the study at hand was not directly on borrowings, but rather on the CS phenomenon. Notwithstanding, a clarification between the two is significant and relevant to the study at hand. Thusly, MLF is applied in classifying words as switches or borrowings.

Muysken (2000) avoids the term CS and speaks instead of code-mixing as an overarching phenomenon of bilingual speech. The term code-mixing refers to all cases where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentence (Muysken 2000: 1). Auer uses “code-alternation” for CS and transfer (1995: 127). Further review of the prolonged discussion on the definition of CS is beyond the scope of this chapter; instead, for the purposes of this paper, CS will be used as a cover term.

Generally, CS has been viewed from three main perspectives, 1. the sociolinguistic perspective in an attempt to reveal the social meaning of CS (Gumperz, 1982; Myers-Scotton, 1993a, Li Wei, 1994, 2000; Giles, 2016, etc.), 2. The grammatical perspective, which is aimed at identifying the sentence points where CS is possible between two languages and (Poplack, 1980 & 2004; Myers-Scotton, 1993b; Muysken, 2000, etc.), 3. The conversational approach developed by Peter Auer. Influenced by the work of Gumperz, who views CS as a contextualization cue, as a discourse strategy, he further expanded and developed the analysis within the conversation through which an interpretation of the local meaning of CS is given (Auer, 1984, 1998, 1995; Wei, 1994, 2000).

1.1.1. Applying Auer’s Conversation Analysis in our data

Driven by Gumperz’s situational and metaphorical CS distinction and the notion of the *contextualization cue*, a rather different approach is Auer’s (1984) *Conversation Analysis* (CA) to code-switching. What Auer focuses on is the negotiation of language choice between participants, in this manner displaying bilingual competence. His idea is to focus from the perspective of the conversationalist rather than from the perspective of the analyst.

Just as in the monolingual conversation in which speakers use various prosodic, lexical and syntactic features to take turns in conversation, Auer shows us that CS (though not in the same fashion) could also be used as a tool in bilingual conversations in competing for taking turns. Thus, code-switching serves different functions in the discourse, which can be found if the preceding and following segments of the conversation are analyzed.

Even though, the speakers that have been part of the research at hand, when interviewed, claimed that, oftentimes, they are aware of the fact that they switch between languages back and forth and they don’t know why they do so. Also, many of them (elementary and middle schoolers specifically) have

claimed to have English as their first language, and the language in which they feel more comfortable. Notwithstanding, they prefer mother tongue for expressing anger, including jokes and funny comments - at least this is shown in their production speech despite their claim.

One reason for using CA proposed by Peter Auer for interpreting CS in our data is that bilingual students under observation reside in an otherwise monocultural country, with the majority of the population speaking Albanian. Therefore, one of the reasons for using two languages on stage, on interaction are not predicted in this case, as it could be predicted, we assume, in other bilingual communities where two or more languages are used simultaneously in everyday life.

Another reason why Auer's CA is applied in our data is that the participants under investigation come from similar linguistic backgrounds, in that they all share the same ethnic identity, but they all do their schooling in English. Therefore, the cases of code-switching are rather unpredictable. They do not switch when conversing with each other to show higher status, as one would claim, since more or less, they are all knowledgeable enough in two languages. The latter case could only be thought of happening if these bilingual students would be studied in conversations with other Albanian speakers who do their schooling in their mother tongue.

1.1.2. Code-switching studies on the Albanian/English pair

The situations where most of the CS cases have been analyzed generally is in immigrant contexts where societal bilingualism is present². A range of diachronic studies was conducted by Nuhiu in America to determine the impact of English on the Albanian language of the immigrants (2013). Notwithstanding, since Albanian and English are in more direct contact in the last twenty years or so due to the status of English as the *lingua franca* of the global world, CS has emerged as a linguistic behavior of the Albanian language speakers who are in daily contact with English. However, as far as we know, there are only a few papers published in this regard³ (e.g., Mustafa, 2005; Kryeziu, 2017, Shabani, 2018). Mustafa (2005), is the first and among very few studies that deals with the sociolinguistic factors that influence the occurrence of code-switching in Albanian language speakers, focusing on international organizations in Kosova specifically. Using a variety of qualitative approaches in her analysis, she found out that participants varied in code-switching behavior – which was analyzed using Gumperz's three situational categories: participants, topic and person. Likewise, Kryeziu (2017) conducted another qualitative analysis on the written informal language used in social networking sites. Shabani (2018) follows with another research by means of tape-recording, where focus group discussions of bilinguals were under observation. The emphasis was thus on the structure and function of CS.

The aforementioned authors try to reveal the social meaning of CS through deductive generalizations, along with a symbolic discussion on the structure that characterizes the grammar of CS involving English and Albanian. Accordingly, this research aims to go beyond enumerating reasons for CS. It is aimed at analyzing the actual spontaneous conversations between in-group bilinguals where they are free to choose the language they want to. More specifically, by referring to

² Schader (2005) studied the contacts of Albanian and German languages in Switzerland. Among others, CS of the Albanian-speaking immigrants is analyzed by means of tape-recording and questionnaires for examining the reasons for CS from the actual conversations, determining language choice by situational parameters, such as topic, participant, and place, but also the quantitative analysis through questionnaires that were used as a primary source to come to conclusions.

³ Instead, studies on Serbian - Albanian pairs have been thoroughly analyzed due to the long coexistence of the language contacts of the two. In this regard, Munishi (2020) talked about the coexistence of these two languages for a long time and the asymmetrical bilingualism that existed in Kosova, also in former Yugoslavia, with Serbian as the more dominant language and Albanian as the less prestigious one. In terms of CS, Munishi examined a sequence of a film released in 1983 which best reflects the situation where language conflicts appear, in which the Albanian-speaking actors switch back and forth between languages, depending on whether they are approaching other native speakers or Serbians with whom they only use Serbian (2020: 30-37).

CA by Peter Auer, turn-by-turn analyses of the conversations will be done in order to reveal the actual role of CS within the conversation.

Instead, one of the outcomes of language contacts of the two languages at hand for which considerable attention has been paid so far is the English lexical borrowing into the Albanian language (Nuhiu, 2013a, 2013b; Gërmizaj, 2009, 2013; Munishi, 2013, 2020, etc.). The need for research in this area is reinforced by the role that English plays in today's world as the language of technological innovations, world politics and diplomacy, economy, internet, sports, music, etc. As this influence reflects upon the Albanian language in the form of a great variety of words that flow into our language almost on a daily basis, there is a need to study these words and decide whether their presence in Albanian is acceptable and justified, or whether the Albanian language needs to be protected from foreign influence.

In one such effort, a Scientific Workshop was held in Prishtina in 2013, and there was a call for the establishment of a committee to analyze English borrowings, the extent of their assimilation in the recipient language, and determine whether or not the presence of these loanwords in Albanian is necessary. The Scientific Workshop gathered the most prominent linguists and lexicologists from Kosovo, Albania, and Macedonia (some of them cited above), with the aim of discussing this infiltration of anglicisms into the Albanian language and finding the best possible solutions for reducing their use in Albanian or adopting them should that be deemed necessary.

1.2. Research questions

1. To what extent is code-switching practiced among students in Prishtina International Schools? What is the linguistic behavior that they display?

2. What specific discourse functions CS displays among Albanian bilingual students in Prishtina International Schools?

2. Method

This study is of a qualitative nature thus participant systematic observation was used to collect the data. Also, interviews were used for getting some deeper impressions and their interpretations of their language use.

2.1. Participants

The field research was used through participant systematic observation in order to gather as more natural data as possible. 30 students have been under investigation, out of which 21 have been doing their schooling in English, starting at the age of 5 or 6, while the remaining, 9 students, and were identified as newcomers. Their mother tongue is Albanian, and they have all claimed that the language they communicate with their parents, family members is mainly Albanian, considering that the latter are monolinguals. The native language spoken represents the Gheg dialect of the Albanian language. More specifically, the vernacular spoken in the Prishtina region.

On the other hand, they use English when at school, including their interaction with international students, including Turkish, Swedish, American, Norwegian, etc., with which the only language of communication is English. The choice of the participants to be observed was random.

2.2. Instruments

The analysis is based on a corpus of 8 hours and 8 minutes of audiotaped conversation among Albanian-English bilinguals (group members) in the American School of Kosova and the American University of Kosova.

2.3. Data collection procedures

Most of the time, the fieldworker simply sat close to them and turned on the recorder, but there were also cases when the latter got involved in their discussions. The students were aware that some sort of research project was going on and that they were part of it, but were not told the real reasons behind the research in order for their language not to be affected. Oftentimes, they perceived the fieldworker as a teacher for the reason that during the break time usually teachers supervise them. Accordingly, they became familiar with each other.

The fieldworker found it more convenient to observe and get in touch with the students during the lunch break which was immediately followed by recess time with the first lasting approximately 20 minutes and the latter by another 20 minutes. But other situations were also taken into account, for example at the school's library where they happen to talk and discuss about various topics, when fifth graders were preparing to go to the lunch break, their interaction with their court teacher, who always approaches them in English regardless whether they reply in their mother tongue or in English, including their interaction with each other. Another place to get to know middle-schoolers were the clubs that usually take place around midday, and these clubs are joined by students of different hobbies/likes, such as dancing, drawing, movies, karaoke, etc.

The conversation was transcribed in full and underwent detailed analysis.

3. Results and discussion of findings

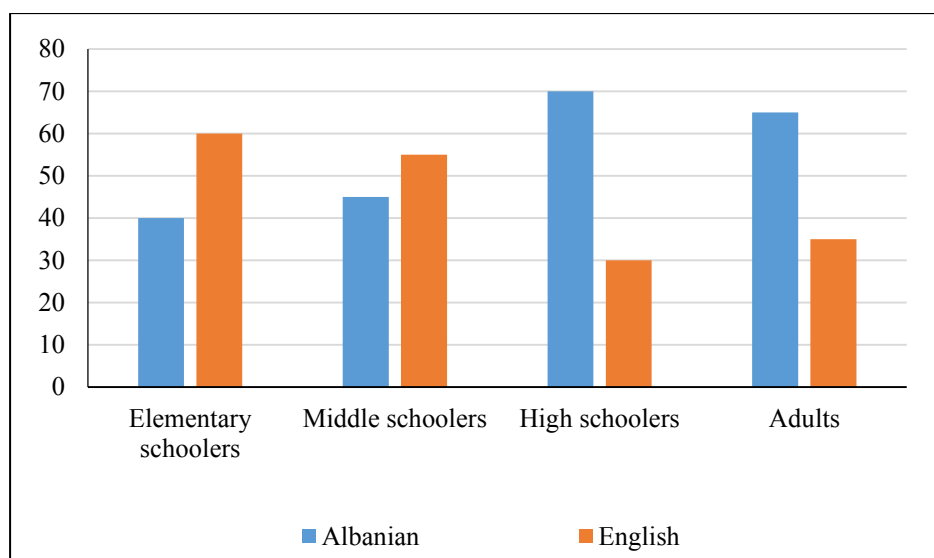


Chart 1. The overall participation of the languages among the Albanian bilingual students observed

The initial hypothesis was that Albanian is influenced by English, with a lot of English lexical insertions. The quantitative analysis showed that out of eight hours and eight minutes recorded conversations, there were six hundred and seventy-four code-switched items. Switching is mainly unidirectional, with English lexical insertions (single words, or phrases inserted as embedded islands

from English) into an Albanian frame, especially the case with high schoolers and adults. While inter-sentential switching, or switching at boundary level, when students switched entirely into English or Albanian, was also part of their conversations, specifically with elementary and middle schoolers. Accordingly, the hypothesis is confirmed in that, the study shows that the mixture of the two languages among Albanian bilingual speakers is a common linguistic behavior. Depending on the extent of their schooling and the age at which they started their education in English, they showed that besides English which use is a must in the learning process, they return to the Albanian language use also in informal environments – which appears to be their base language in fact.

In terms of age, the younger they began the education in English, the more they use English when conversing, playing, and eating with their peers. On the other hand, the newcomers still seem to prefer and feel more confident at using their mother tongue when not under the pressure of using English.

The matrix language identified, in most of the cases, turned out to be Albanian among students at the university level in informal conversations. This was also the case with some of the middle-schoolers with an Albanian linguistic background that were identified as newcomers to the ASK (American School of Kosova). High schoolers showed different language preferences in informal settings also, just as the fifth graders did. In this regard, one thing that facilitated insertions from English into Albanian is that Albanian is typologically an SVO language, like English, even though the word order is relatively free owing to the fact that it is an inflected language.

3.1. Discourse Functions of CS

In terms of discourse functions of CS, the guess was that switching to English is topic-related. However, the results show that besides the change of the code due to the ongoing process of conversation, the Albanian bilingual students' CS is also participant- or preference-related. Hence, it was revealed that CS serves a range of discourse functions within the conversations happening among the Albanian bilingual students, which will be given below.

The primary source for interpreting CS and its local meaning within the conversation is thus Auer's Conversation Analysis (1984, 1998). However, we also relied on the Markedness model (1993a), and the Accommodation theory (Giles, 2016). The markedness model is important because of the distinction between marked versus unmarked CS, accommodation theory will often find applicability in our data as CS is used to keep in synch with, or adjust to, each other. By all means, in order to go beyond a list of code-switching discourse functions right away, we will present the application of the CA of Peter Auer to the Albanian-English pair, in an attempt to interpret the local meanings of conversations.

Example one ((when the student returned the phone she has borrowed from the teacher))

01 Teacher: Did you talk to her?

02 Erëmolla: Yes, she said: “qe po vij”

(Eng. “I'm coming”)

Regardless of the fact that Erëmolla knows English is the expected or the unmarked language choice to be used in formal settings, or when conversing with the teacher, she decided to report her exact mother's words and what she said to her on the phone. If we were to apply Peter Auer's CA approach, the above switching is discourse-related transfer. Besides the fact that transfer is usually on the word level, the transfer can also relate to “higher structural levels” for reporting citations, songs, sayings, poems, rhymes, etc. Thus, the transfer is not related to a certain point in conversation but rather which has a predictable end and also “terminates the use of the other language” (1984: 29; 1998: 203).

Example two

((two students aged 24 discussing about their personal characteristics))

01 Festina: ...ama neve nuk na pelqen *comfort zone*. Për qatë jena qështu.

02 Lumta: Unë e kom thy moti *comfort zone-n*. E sa shtirë është me pasë partnerin në comfort...

(English version below)

01 Festina: ...but we don't like *comfort zone*. That's why we are this way.

02 Lumta: It's been a long time since I broke *comfort zone-infl*. You know, it's hard to have your partner in comfort...

The example shows how *Comfort zone* connects anaphorically to the first mention of the phrase by the other participant. Hence, topical cohesion is set up between two adjacent parts (Auer, 1984: 26). Besides, the use of the same phrase by the co-participant reveals a tendency to accommodate to the first language choice. Cases like this one when the use of English is triggered by the previous English form are many in our corpus.

Example three

((high school students at recess talking about various topics))

01 Student A: *Homecomings* janë *warm ups*, *dance*... (interrupted)

02 Student B: Hej, a e dini që na kena m'u lëshu me 22, jo 23 dhjetor?

03 Student C: e marte po i bjen, une me 15 e kam dit'lindjen

04 Student A: Poooo, unë e kom t'premtën dit'lindjen, t'hanën ja nisum *exam week*, paramenoooo?

(English version below)

01 Student A: *Homecomings* are *warm ups*, *dance* // (interrupted)

02 Student B: Hey, do you know that the term ends on the 22nd, not on the 23rd of December?

03 Student C: I can see, it's on Tuesday; my birthday is on the 15th.

04 Student A: Yes, my birthday is on Friday; on Monday we begin the *exam week*, can you imagine?

According to the *Bilingual Conversation Analysis* (1998: 17), here the code-switched utterance by student B in line 02 introduces a new footing (a new topic) and the choice of Albanian language is therefore discourse-related as it contributes to the ongoing organization of the interaction. The speaker marks the distinction between the old and the new context by change of language, and the rest of the conversation continues in Albanian as the matrix language as the language of the interaction, with English inserted at times which is an elaboration of preference-related CS.

Example four

((5th graders on the playground))

01 Student A: Çka po hani?

02 Student B: Po hajna pite.

2.0

03 Student A: Ku o Reina?

04 Student B: *I don't know*.

05 Student C: Qe, atje.

06 Student A: Ku?

07 Student C: N'futboll. Tha po du me lujt futboll se njëfarë djali aty...

((all laugh, except student A))

(English version below)

01 Student A: What are you eating?

02 Student B: We are eating *pite*.

2.0 (2-second pause)

03 Student A: Where is Reina?

04 Student B: *I don't know*.

05 Student C: There she is. (pointing to Reina)

06 Student A: Where?

07 Student C: On football field. She said I wanna play football because there is a guy there...
(they all laugh, except student A)

In this short conversation we have got adjacency pairs (questions – answers). Student B seems to ignore Student A by first making a joke in line 02 saying they are eating 'pite' which, in fact, they aren't eating anything; and secondly, after a two-second pause, student A insists on conversing with them by asking another question in her L1 to which she receives a reply in 04 in English implying she is not interested to converse with her. In other words, student B switches to English in line 04 in her second attempt to exclude her. Meanwhile, Student C replies in Albanian complying with Student A's choice in her question. The kind of switch we encounter in example four is preference (person)-related code-switching, in Auer's terms. Thus, by not complying with Student A's choice of language, Student B is trying to narrow the participant constellation. Otherwise, if Muysken were to analyze this conversation, using the functional framework of Jakobson (1960) and Halliday et al. (1964) (as cited in Muysken, 2000), he would canalize this type of code-switching into directive function, in this particular case, to exclude the person from this conversation.

Example five

((Students are doing the *Brain Break* activity as part of their classes. When the teacher announces the end of such an activity, students beg the teacher not to ruin their games so that when they get back from the Art class, they can continue playing the games. In order to achieve this, they code-switch, i.e., we have got participant-related CS))

01 Teacher: *OK, guys let's get ready for the art class.*

02 Student A: Oh *miss.*, t'lutna. Loçkë t'kom.

(2.0) (2-second silence)

03 Another student: *Oh miss*, locka jem. (trying to convince the teacher to let them continue the games)

(3.0) (3-second silence)

04 Student B: *Oh, miss., please! Don't let anybody move this. We were playing.*

05 Teacher: *OK, guys. Let me give you some more time when you get back from the art class. So right now, let's keep it this way.*

(There was much rejoicing in the class)

06 Student D: Oh, shyqyr o Zot.

07 Teacher: *So, if you want that, you'd better get ready for one minute to move to the Art class.*

08 Student C: *miss., don't touch this, we're playing.*

09 Student C: to student D: *Mos e prish ti ashtu.*

10 Teacher: *Nice drawing!* (looking at somebody's drawing). *OK, I can see only Amelia waiting outside. Guys, are you ready to go?*

(English version below)

01 Teacher: *OK, guys let's get ready for the art class.*

02 Student A: *Oh, miss, no please. My sweetheart!*

2.0 (2-second silence)

03 Another student: *Oh miss, dear.* (trying to convince the teacher to let them continue the games)

3.0 (3 second silence)

04 Student B: *Oh, miss, please! Don't let anybody move this. We were playing.*

05 Teacher: *OK, guys. Let me give you some more time when you get back from the art class. So right now, let's keep it this way.*

(There was much rejoicing)

06 Student D: *Oh, thanks God!*

07 Teacher: *So, if you want that, you'd better get ready for one minute to move to the Art class.*

08 Student C: *Miss., don't touch this, we're playing.*

09 Student C: to student D: *Don't ruin it that way!*

10 Teacher: *Nice drawing!* (looking at somebody's drawing). *OK, I can see only Amelia waiting outside. Guys, are you ready to go?*

In the ASK as an international school, teachers are supposed to address the children only in English to which, in turn, they have to reply in English, regardless of the mother tongue. That is, English is the unmarked choice in any given context. Even though we know their general linguistic behavior, in practice, as has been observed, and it is quite noticeable from the side of the students that there is a tendency to also use their mother tongue – especially Albanian which seems the most dominant first language among students there. If we examine the aforementioned example in a more detailed, turn-by-turn analysis such language attitude and preference can be demonstrated. The exchange starts when the teacher announces the end of the free fun activities the students were doing and enjoying. The students wanting to continue the games start begging the teacher using Albanian also to which they do not receive any positive reply from the side of the teacher. Since the initial request received a null response, student B in line 04 makes another attempt in reformulating the same request using only English to which the teacher replies positively – i.e., giving them some more time only when they get back from the Art class. There is much rejoicing going on in the class including exclamations, CS into Albanian followed by further requests not to ruin their unfinished games addressing the teacher in English whereas, at times, using Albanian among each other.

Example six

((university students giving their opinions about the language use and the advantage of knowing English))

*Lumta: Rreth pyetjes për universitetin a menoni që është mirë ose i krijon njëfarë disavantazhi gjuhës shqipe. Aspak jo, ta përgatit **ideally** është e mirë për shkak që e përgatit studentin thjesht me*

compete, a din, me konkurru me të tjerët në mënyrë pak më të barabartë ka ana gjuhësore që është **a must** me dit gjuhën edhe me të tjerët, qoftë me Evropë, qoftë me Amerikë, d.m.th tregun botëror, e bën shumë ma të përgatitun.

(English version below)

Lumta: Regarding the question about the university, do you think it is good or it gives Albanian language any kind of disadvantage. Not at all, it prepares you **ideally**, it's nice because the student is prepared to **compete**, you know, to compete with others in more or less equal way regarding languages, which is **a must** to know the language, with others, either in Europe or in America, which means in world market, the student is much more prepared.

Examples like this one are many in our corpus where students use the same expression in two languages. This has been interpreted in different ways depending on the very specific settings these utterances have occurred. For Auer's context of the migrant situation of Italians in Constanza, Germany, this kind of switching speaks of "a momentary lack of competence" in the first language and a better knowledge of vocabulary in the other language. It also could be interpreted as accommodating to the co-speakers language preference as it was the case because the fieldworker and Lumta were conversing about the importance of knowing English. However, for Alfonzetti (in Auer: 1998: 185-186) this kind of switching can also relate to reformulations – when the speaker introduces the English verb combined with the Albanian particle *me compete* but immediately interrupts herself with a correction marker (tag-switching type) in the Albanian *a din* (you know), and then follows to translate the verb into Albanian. According to Alfonzetti, the "co-occurrence of the three elements: self-interruption, correction marker and translation", in this case, allows us for inferring about the speaker's perception of the situation where the use of the foreign item is regarded from the speakers as an inappropriate verbal activity that calls for repair (as cited in Auer, 1984: 60).

Example seven

((Robert and his friend are just about to sit somewhere for having lunch))

01 Student 1: "Robert, come here!"

(Robert and his friend sit somewhere else.)

02 Student 1: "Kurrë mos um fol, kurrë hiq" (angrily), "majmun!"

English "Never talk to me, never ever! (angrily) "monkey!"

Student 1 approaches Robert in English and invites him to join them in their table. When Robert ignores him by sitting somewhere else, he then escalates in line 02 in the Albanian language expressing his anger. The word "majmun" is a derogatory word. This is in compliance with Gal (as given by Auer in Muysken and Milroy, 1995, 122) who observed the cases when participants switched from Hungarian into German. He found out that it usually occurred in a particular sequential point, i.e., Hungarian was used as a 'topper' in escalating angry arguments, marking the culmination of disagreement and hostility. She then associates this common practice of switching to Oberwarther's conception of the languages of repertoire in which German is usually regarded as "prestigious, urbanely sophisticated and authoritative but also socially distant" (In Muysken and Milroy, 1995: 122).

Example eight ((the central theme of the conversation: 5th graders organizing a charitable undertaking and dividing duties))

01 Student 1: Se s'na dalin boll. I marrim na 100 (njëqind) *containers*.

02 Student 2: Tani mos nuk na dalin as qeto.

03 Student 3: Ngomni, une me Erëmollen i marrim *emergency supplies* edhe i m'lojna.

04 Student 3: *une me Erëmollen e kena shpine ngat Jumbos, we can just walk to it and buy the containers.*

05 Student 1: *You can buy six.*

06 Student 2: *No, we buy ten.*

07 Student 3: *OK, I'll try to buy some more.*

(English version below)

01 They won't be enough. We take 100 *containers*.

02 What if these ones are still not enough.

03 Student 3: Listen, Erëmolla and I will take the *emergency supplies* and cover them.

04 Student 4: Mine and Erëmolla's home are near Jumbo, *we can just walk to it and buy the containers.*

05 Student 1: *You can buy six.*

06 Student 2: *No, we buy ten.*

07 Student 3: *OK, I'll try to buy some more.*

According to CA sequential analysis, the conversation between the three interlocutors belongs to Pattern IIIB: AB1, A2, AB3, AB3, B1, B2, B3⁴. Such a pattern is characterized with turn-internal switches from English into an Albanian frame, which in this case are used for momentary lack of competence. But also changes of code between consecutive turns, mainly competing for turn-taking – leaving the code-choice open reveals something about speakers' conceptualization of the situation. That is, the first speaker in 01 chooses to speak in Albanian as a frame within which a single word in English is inserted. The second speaker in 02 continues the conversation in Albanian, i.e., she accommodates to the first speaker's choice of language. On the other hand, speaker 3 talks in Albanian but inserts an embedded island from English at her first utterance, while the next utterance of the same speaker is uttered in Albanian and switched to English inter-sententially to which the other participants respond and accept the same language which then becomes their language-of-interaction. Leaving the code-choice open by all participants, in Auer's interpretation, can be interpreted both discourse-related and participant-related.

4. Conclusions

The systematic observation of four different age groups revealed various characteristics which can be divided according to the language used. Some of these groups were observed to use predominantly English; others, predominantly Albanian; followed by another third group who seem to mix up the languages. Thus, the first hypothesis is confirmed with the high schoolers and, particularly, with university level students who still seem to use the Albanian language as their primary language in informal settings. But code-switching is part of their speech also.

However, this was not the case with middle schoolers who showed differences in the degree of participation of the two languages at hand. A number of middle schoolers use the Albanian language extensively in informal settings therefore they are Albanian dominant. While the remaining part used constantly English in the playground or elsewhere where they usually spend their recess. The students that used Albanian extensively have got an Albanian background, many of them are newcomers that have been transferred to the school recently – thus making Albanian as the 'ingroup' language of peer interaction. At the same time, they all share the same mother tongue – Albanian where it is not

⁴According to Auer's analysis, letters stand for languages, while numbers for speakers

required to use English in informal settings such as recess. As for the remaining part who are English dominant (there were no cases of CS among these students), the main reason for using English observed was that they are surrounded by international students who do not have knowledge of the Albanian language. For that reason, they seem to use English all the time.

Among the different age groups investigated in our study, CS as a contextualization cue is displayed to have a number of discourse functions. Both of the languages are used when organizing the game, when competing for taking turns, when showing their emotions, when talking about peers, when organizing events, etc. In addition, CS is employed for self-repair, reiterations, topic shift, change in participant constellation, accommodating to the co-speakers choice of language, in reported speech, and other functions that participants displayed through the use of CS.

In general, CS in the sociolinguistic situation of the Albanian bilingual students within Prishtina International Schools is seen to display features that are known in other bilingual contexts as well, regardless of the context of the occurrence. They demonstrated their skills in code-switching by making ‘smooth’ transitions from one language to the other.

This study aimed at analyzing the speech and displaying some of the functions of CS within the settings of Prishtina International Schools. We recognize that for this research to have greater generalizability, the sample should have included other instances of interactions (outside school settings) where the bilinguals would display their group membership and bilingualism to outsiders, for example.

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