

1. Introduction

In a conversation between two bilingual people, who have a command of the same two languages, code-mixing is a common phenomenon, and has been studied and described by many researchers (cf. Grosejan 2001, Tracy 2000 etc.). Particularly in recent years several studies on Russian-German code-mixing have appeared (see e.g. Meng 2001, Meng & Protassova 2005), although they mainly deal with the speech of adult bilinguals or with school children.

There are only a few articles regarding Russian-German code-mixing among younger children at an early phase of language acquisition (Anstatt & Dieser 2007 and Dieser 2007). These articles focus less on the phenomenon of code-mixing and more on quantitative relationships between monolingual language production and code-mixing.

2. The Goal

The goal of the present study is to investigate:

- how code-mixing functions (and in particular word-internal code-mixing) among young bilingual Russian-German speaking children at the very beginning of language production;
- whether there are already in this phase certain regularities, whereby morphemes (or phonemes) of Russian and of German are put together to form one mixed word;
- if so, whether these regularities are different from those that are characteristic of the word-internal code-mixing of bilingual Russian-German preschool children and adults (Meng 2001, Brehmer 2007);
- to what extent the code-mixing of children is influenced by the code-mixing in the input the children are given.

3. The Data

The data basis constitutes:

- 1) Longitudinal studies of a bilingual Russian-German speaking boy (aged 1;0 to 7;0), whose input hardly contains code-mixing;
- 2) A cross-sectional study of recordings of Russian-German speaking children (30) at ages between 3 and 10 years and bilingual Russian-German speaking adults (10); some of the children display a high percentage of code-mixing, especially for the matrix language Russian.

4. The Proposal

The results of this investigation showed that for the most part the same systematic is foundational for the code-mixing of young bilingual Russian-German children as that of older children and adults. This can be seen in the asymmetrical relationship; in code-mixing one of the

two languages provides the analytical (article etc.) and synthetic (flexion etc.) functional elements. This language can then be considered the matrix language (cf. Myers-Scotton 1993, Schmitt 2000). On the other hand most of the elements that convey meaning come from the other language. Further, an individual's matrix language can change in the course of time. For the child observed over a long time period, the main matrix language for (word-internal) code-mixing was German between the ages of 2;5 and 2;8 and Russian between the ages of 2;9 and 3;1.

The code-mixing phenomena show that the child already conducts a cross-linguistic word type analysis at two years of age and completes a morphological adaptation that doesn't stem directly from input. This conclusion is discussed in the framework of functional-connectional (Elsen 1999 u.a.) and of generative approaches.

Among older children (between 5 and 7 years old) a higher proportion of code-mixing in language production almost always testifies to a higher percentage in the input given to the child.