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Keywords: code-switching, motivations, constructed language, Trigedasleng

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ABSTRACT

The present article deals with the issue of establishing the characters' reasons or motivations for code-switching between English and the constructed language, Trigedasleng, in the American TV series "*The 100*". To accomplish this objective, a sample of six episodes issued from seasons 2 and 3 of the series, have been analyzed using an observational approach. The qualitative analysis has

considered the different situations, contexts, and functions where each linguistic code is used. The results revealed that the major causes for such alternation include affective and strategic functions in situational and conversational environments, where English and Trigedasleng are assigned a specific place. It has also been observed, however, that the screenplay allowed the characters, bilin-





gual or not, to use both languages indistinctly to evidence the speakers' linguistic resourcefulness as well as to provoke

different reactions in the TV audience as has been determined by the developer and screenwriters of the series.

RESUMEN

En el presente artículo se intenta establecer las razones o motivaciones de los personajes para el cambio de código lingüístico entre el inglés y el idioma construido *trigedasleng* en la serie estadounidense de televisión “*The 100*”. Para tal objetivo, una muestra de seis episodios extraídos de la segunda y tercera temporadas de la serie fue analizada usando la técnica de la observación. Para el análisis cualitativo, se ha tomado en cuenta las diversas situaciones, contextos y funciones por las cuales se usa cada código lingüístico. Los resultados

revelan que las principales causas para esta alternancia incluyen funciones afectivas y estratégicas en entornos situacionales y conversacionales en los que el inglés y el *trigedasleng* toman un lugar determinado. Se ha observado además, que en la interacción se permite a los personajes, bilingües o no, usar los dos idiomas de manera indistinta para evidenciar su recursividad lingüística y también para provocar diferentes reacciones en la teleaudiencia que viene determinada por el desarrollador y los guionistas de la serie.

INTRODUCTION

Code-switching

Li (2000) defines code-switching as “changes from one language to another in the course of conversation”. This alternation may involve phrases, clauses, constituents, or merely words of one language or another. It implies that the participants need a certain degree of proficiency in the languages and are possibly

bilinguals (Rivera & Mather, 2015). Nevertheless, Grande (1988) had argued that a good command of either language is not always required for it to happen.

Once code-switching is produced, it becomes a linguistic phenomenon with the main characteristic of the participants’ “*unawareness*” when it happens, because of a smooth tran-





sitioning without long pauses, hesitations, or comments about it (Grande, 1988). It has its origins in social factors, though. Kaan et al. (2020) mention a "dynamically changing social situation" for which speakers choose a different code for a reason or motivation. They "use their languages for different purposes, in different domains of life, and with different people. Different aspects of life often require different languages" (Grosjean, 2010).

Toribio (2002) asserts that the study of code-switching can take two approaches: the syntactic and the sociolinguistic. The sociolinguistic perspective revolves around the motivations, and above all, around the functions of the alternation of codes. On this note,

Appel and Muysken (2006) argue that code-switching serves the same six functions of language in general: referential, directive, expressive, phatic, metalinguistic, and poetic. However, Choy (2011) establishes that only three of them are the functions of code-switching: referential, expressive, and metalinguistic.

Despite these affirmations, the most widespread distinction has been formulated by Gumperz's (1982) semantic model, proposing the existence of situational and conversational code-switching. In a similar fashion, more recently, Holmes (2013) distinguishes two main reasons for code-switching: a change in a feature of the domain or social situation and the aspect of the function or purpose of interaction as showed in Table 1.

Table 1
Reasons for code-switching

Change in a feature of the domain or social situation	Aspect of the function or purpose of interaction
Setting	Add emphasis
Participant features	Add authority
Addressee specification	Express feelings (vs describing facts)
Ethnic identity marker	
Express solidarity	
Express social distance	
Assert social status	
Topic	
Quoting someone	
Proverb	

Adapted from Holmes (2013)





Although some of these reasons are much easier to observe during an interaction, it is worth noting that sometimes code-switching may have more than one motivation. A bilingual person is, therefore, able to exploit all “the rhetorical possibilities of their linguistic repertoires” (Holmes, 2013). This means that the ability to switch between languages during a conversation is a unique resource evidencing a high linguistic competence (Muysken et al., 1996).

Constructed languages in audiovisual productions

Adams (2011) highlights the nature of our everyday languages, in the world, as a result of evolution from the proto language. However, constructed languages are the outcome of a person’s invention, for whom the languages available are not what they want for their need or purpose. Thus, in audiovisual products, the language creator’s purpose is to manipulate the form of language which “can be used for promoting or changing the social, cultural, and political orders” (Romaine, 2011) developed in fictional worlds or realities.

The Language Creation Society provides information on constructed languages included in the scripts of more than 27 notable audiovisual productions since 1970 (e.g. Dothraki from *Game of Thrones*; Klingon, Vulcan from *Star Trek*;

Na’vi from *Avatar*). This list is, however, not extensive as smaller productions are not included. A great amount of the data presented revolves around the linguistic features of these languages, especially at the phonological and morphosyntactic levels, leaving the pragmatic dimension aside. Therefore, the sociolinguistic implications of code-switching between these constructed languages, and “natural” languages have not yet been studied.

Trigedasleng in the CW series: The 100

English and Trigedasleng (a constructed language) are the languages used for code-switching in the American TV series *The 100*. This show premiered in 2014 and was on air on The CW network until September 2020.

The 100 (The Hundred) is a science-fiction teen drama taking place in a post-apocalyptic world after a nuclear disaster that had apparently made the Earth uninhabitable. The survivors of this apocalypse, having fled away from Earth; and now, living in a space station for nearly 100 years, send a group of 100 teenagers back to Earth to explore and verify Earth’s suitability for life. Once on the surface, this group finds that people (Grounders) had survived the end of the world, and developed a new creole language based on English: Trigedasleng (Rothenberg, 2014).





Trigedasleng is a constructed language, developed especially for the series by David J. Peterson. He was also responsible for creating other fictional languages for TV shows (Peterson, 2020). During the show, the origin of the language is not declared until Season 7 - Episode 8 (Rothenberg & Fraiman, 2020); nevertheless, Peterson (2016) had previously stated that Trigedasleng would have started as a code or a secret language, used by Grounders, to identify the in-group; and eventually, evolved into a creole language when transmitted to new generations.

Most starring Grounder characters are fully bilingual in English and Trigedasleng, as observed throughout the series; even though, in Season 2 - Episode 1, one of the characters claims

English is only spoken by warriors, in order to communicate with monolingual enemies (Rothenberg & White, 2014). With the arrival of people from space, the need of communication between Grounders and Sky People arises, giving also place to code-switching situations.

The interactions between the characters established in the screenplay, containing utterances in alternatively English and Trigedasleng, are the object of analysis in this work. The aim is to determine the underlying reasons or motivations behind such language use, as cross-sectional element of the narrative of the audiovisual product. The diverse situations, contexts, and functions for which each linguistic code is used have been taken into consideration to attain this goal.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data

A total of six episodes, from both seasons 2 and 3 of the TV series on Netflix, have been analyzed to obtain data to fulfill the goal of the present research. Such episodes, according to the transcripts of the episodes (Peterson, 2014), contain the greatest number of utterances in Trigedasleng:

Season 2

- ◇ Episode 03 – Reapercussions
- ◇ Episode 09 – Remember Me
- ◇ Episode 10 – Survival of the Fittest

Season 3

- ◇ Episode 01 – Wanheda: Part One
- ◇ Episode 07 – Thirteen
- ◇ Episode 09 – Stealing Fire





Procedure

The six episodes were watched focusing on the interactions that included a code-switching situation. The transcription of such utterances was classified into categories in accordance with Holmes’s (2013) reasons for code-switching (see table 1). In the case of utter-

ances that would not comply with any instance of Holmes’s classification, or would fall into more than one category at once, underwent a different analysis that included recurring to other authors’ approaches. The context and the development of the character were taken into consideration for these occurrences.

RESULTS

According to Holmes (2013), code-switching happens for different reasons, and it has been verified with the evidence of this research.

Solidarity with the participants

The Grounders, being the bilingual group, often use English in front of the Sky People to be accurately understood, even when they are not addressing their speech to them.

This can be clearly seen throughout the series. As an example, at 8:51 in Season 3 – Episode 7, a speech given by Lexa, the commander of the Grounders, is carried out in English at the beginning in a Trigedasleng-speaking domain, because of the presence of Clarke, from the space station. Lexa, the commander of the Grounders, and Titus, her mentor, eventually switch back to their native language to give orders to their people

(see Findings section) (Grillo-Marxuach & White, 2016).

LEXA: We gather here on this Ascension Day to honor the Commanders that came before me, those who live on within me, as I would live on within one of you.

(Peterson, 2014).

Holmes (p. 36) also mentions the possibility of non-bilingual people switching code as a signal of group membership. Sky People use Trigedasleng in this context. In an attempt for getting acceptance from the Grounders, Sky People would use some typical expressions in Trigedasleng, such as: **Yu gonplei ste odon** (*Your fight is over*), **ogeda** (*together*), **Skaikru** (Name given to the survivors coming from the space station), **Trikru** (Name given to one clan





of survivors on the surface of earth) or **Ste yuj** (*Stay strong*). The use of these expressions often cause surprise in the Grounders and is very noticeable in Season 2 – Episode 9 at 17:04 (Fortenberry & Madha, 2015).

CLARKE: *Yu gonplei ste odon.*
 (Peterson, 2014).

Switching for affective functions

This reason for code-switching is a very much frequent one in the observed episodes. In the case of Grounders switching, from English back to Trigedasleng, it is normally used to threaten the participants as seen in Semet's interventions at 5:58 – 10:22 in Season 3 – Episode 7 (see Findings section) (Grillo-Marxuach & White, 2016) or Ontari's dialog in Season 3 – Episode 9 at 25:00 (McAdams & Briesewitz, 2016).

ONTARI: Well, Lexa's not *Heda* anymore. Thanks to you. Let's get this over with.

TITUS: (to Ontari) You must be cleansed before you ascend. (to Murphy) Take her to the commander's chambers. Perform the ritual.

MURPHY: Are you sure I'm ready for that?

ONTARI: *Hod yu hichplei op, moskwoma.*

(Peterson, 2014).

Whereas for Sky People, switching from English to Trigedasleng happens in hostile situations with the Grounders. Sky People uses Trigedasleng to try to calm down the Grounders as seen in Season 3 – Episode 1 at 17:54 (Rothenberg & White, 2016).

BELLAMY: Tell them we observe the Commander's truce. Do it now!

OCTAVIA: *Osir gouba ogonzaun kom Heda in.*

(...)

LEAD GROUNDER: *Weron Wanheda kamp raun?*

BELLAMY: *Breik em au!*

OCTAVIA: *Osir nou get in chon daunde bilaik! Beja!*

(Peterson, 2014).

Lexical borrowing

Since Trigedasleng is a language derived from English, it is not easy to recognize any lexical borrowing from English per se. English, borrowing some words from Trigedasleng, is much more noticeable because English-speaking people are introduced to a new world of possibilities in this new language. One of the most repeated lexical borrowing from Trigedasleng, throughout the episodes, are the words **Heda** and **Wanheda**, which are translated in English as *Commander* and *Commander of death*, respectively, and are used systematical-





ly. The same goes for expressions like: **Octavia kom Skaikru** (*Octavia of the Sky People*) or **Lexa kom Trikru** (*Lexa of the Tree Clan*), to point out the origins of the

people that are the subjects of conversation; or the words **Skaikru** and **Trikru** themselves, which refer to the two main groups of people starring in the series.

FINDINGS

After analyzing the data, it has been seen that sometimes, code choice and switching might serve more than one of the purposes established on Holmes's (2013) work. In some other cases, code choice could imply other intentions, especially because of the warlike nature of the series in these two particular seasons.

Military strategy

Jones (2018) argues that the means in military strategy "are the resources and methods used to achieve the strategy". In the context of the series, the use of other linguistic codes has a strategic function that implies communicating with enemies and allies (Chauvot, 2010). In Season 2 – Episode 3 at 20:32, we can observe how Indra starts explaining the war strategy in Trigedasleng, and suddenly, switches to English, in the middle of it, when she stops her warriors from questioning her strategy, but most importantly, because she perceives the presence of Octavia, who would eventually become their ally.

The English-speaking woman comes out from where she was hiding to approach the warriors (Ginsburg, McIntyre & White, 2014). This code-switching could be due to, in part, solidarity with the participant -Octavia- so she could understand, and also due to a directive function of the language. There is an ulterior motive for this code-switching, which is an eventual victory at war, which may have been achieved thanks to the appropriate and strategic use of language.

INDRA: *Sobwe dou kamp raun hir. Oso na zog emo daun hir.*

PENN: *Dison laik yu strat? Tomak gele op. Artigas laik skat noumou—*

ARTIGAS: *Emo don hon ai nontu daun. Ai na gon raun.*

PENN: *Yu na gon raun on ripa op?*

INDRA: *Stop! We strike from the shadows when they stop to feed on our bait.*

ARTIGAS: *So I'm the bait?*

INDRA: *No! You are a warrior. She is the bait.*

(Peterson, 2014).





In Season 3 – Episode 7, starting at 5:32, there is a celebration day for the Grounders, in which all the leaders of the clans meet with their commander. A Grounder man interrupts this reunion to demand vengeance for crimes committed against his people; therefore, a kind of trial takes place. Half of it is carried out in Trigedasleng, and the other half in English. Surprisingly, the part in English, is when the commander explains the strategy and gives orders to the armies. The petitioner, who had originally explained his situation in Trigedasleng, uses English to express his dissatisfaction with the commander's strategy, and when the tension grows, he uses Trigedasleng again (Grillo-Marxuach & White, 2016). This time, because of affective functions, with the goal of infuriating the crowd.

SEMET: *Fleimkepa don swega klin bi-laik osir na ge sen in!*

Wigod ai op hashta min klin ona disha presh sintaim, Heda. Ai laik Semet kom Trikru en ai kom op hashta raitnes.

LEXA: *Gouva yu klin. Chomouda yu don sis op Okteivia kom Skaikru gon honon?*

SEMET: *Em laik honon kom wor, Heda, don ge lid hir na sin in kripon-de kom omon kru.*

SEMET: *Beja, Heda. Ai beja yu daun. Goch osir klin.*

CROWD: *Jus drein jus daun! Wamplei gon Skaikru!*

TITUS: *Yu na spek daun ona disha wogeda!*

LEXA: *Today I call upon the armies of the 12 Clans to march on Arkadia. Not to attack, but to contain. We will blockade the 13th Clan. We will keep them from the lands they wish to possess. We will give them time to take out their leaders from within. Once they rise up against them, then we will welcome them back as one of us.*

TITUS: *You heard the Commander. Send riders. Tell your armies to set up a buffer zone around Arkadia. 5 miles should be enough to keep them away from our villages. What are their orders, Heda?*

LEXA: *Any Skaikru caught across the line will be subject to a kill order.*

SEMET: *Heda, I do not understand, how is this vengeance?*

LEXA: *That is not vengeance, my brother. It is justice.*

SEMET: *Skaikru killed my son, and my brother, and my wife! The steer of the Commander will not protect us! Then what will!*

TITUS: *You mind yourself, Semet.*

SEMET: *WAMPLEI GON HEDA!*

TITUS: *Blood must have blood.*

(Peterson, 2014).





Sarcasm

Sarcasm could be defined as a negative notion expressed in positive words (Deshmukh & Solanke, 2017). In Season 3 – Episode 1, Octavia chooses Trigedasleng to convey sarcasm in her speech, a phenomenon that would normally take place in the native language of the speaker (Holmes, 2013).

22:43 OCTAVIA: *Nais oukou.*

31: 11 OCTAVIA: *Lis yu ste mema sleng-de in.*

(Peterson, 2014).

She used these words in an angry tone, and helped by gestures, such as: rolling of the eyes or not looking directly at the person to whom she is talking to implies sarcasm (Rothenberg & White, 2016). There is an affective function as well as a solidarity part implied in the speech, but in this case, there are negative feelings trying to be evoked.

Calques

Literal translation of complex expressions or phrasal, calquing, (Chantier & Dente, 2009) has been detected, in the series, in one utterance. Both, Sky People and the Grounders have their own set of last words, in a proverb-fashion, which the people pronounce before they die. For a native speaker, of any of these two languages, it would

be just natural to pronounce their last words in their mother tongue. In the case of Grounders, it would be “*Ai gonplei ste odon*” (*My fight is over*). However, in Season 3 - Episode 9 at 40:18; Lincoln, a Grounder, uses a calque from English, instead. The Sky People’s proverb, “*May we meet again*”, is translated into Trigedasleng (*Mebi oso na hit choda op nodo taim*), and it is used as his last words (McAdams & Briesewitz, 2016). It could be explained as a code choice where affective functions gain over referential, ending up as a merger of expressing love for his native English-speaking girlfriend. and his cultural and linguistic background.

Although, the analysis of the data provides a basis to understand the main reasons for code-switching in *The 100*, it can be difficult to determine all the underlying purposes of the code choices in the show. Interactions seen in Season 3 – Episode 1 at 30:53 – 32:30 (Rothenberg & White, 2016) could be perceived as erratic code-switching, because of its unclear function. It has been hypothesized that it could serve entertainment purposes only. Consequently, further research, involving the developers of the series and screenwriters, would be necessary in order to establish more accurate assertions on the issue, by understanding the screenplay purposes and the expected audience reaction.





CONCLUSIONS

Code-switching in everyday life can be manifested in various types of situations and for a great deal of motivations. In the case of an audiovisual production, like *The 100*; however, the alternated use of two codes: a natural one, English and a constructed one, Trigedasleng, seems to be a much more of a restricted phenomenon. Such restriction responds to the fictional nature of the show and the language typology of Trigedasleng.

Language, as a cross-sectional element of the narrative of the show, conceives the use of both: English, spoken by Sky People and Trigedasleng, spoken by Grounders for communication with fellow speakers. Nevertheless, the contact between these people makes place for code-switching situations. This study has made an attempt to explain the motivations in the selection of language in the screenplay.

Holmes's (2013) reasons for code-switching, such as: expressing solidarity, expressing feelings, and ethnic identity markers, have been observed frequently throughout the analyzed episodes of the series, corroborating this theory. It has been noted that in these instances, the characters use their addressee's language in order to fulfill these functions. Therefore, Sky People

would use Trigedasleng and Grounders would use English to communicate with members of the other linguistic community, even in the case of characters that have been portrayed as monolinguals. It is also important to mention that, in regard to the expression of feelings, for the most part, Trigedasleng is used to convey negative messages by the Grounders; in contrast, Sky People uses it to elicit positive feelings.

Additionally, it has been found that some other occurrences of code-switching do not completely fall into Holmes's (2013) categories, and needed further analysis involving the development of the characters and situational aspects. These include the expression of sarcasm, the use of language for military strategy, and the use of calques. The evidence concludes that the native language was not employed to communicate with these intentions, although, it would have been expected to be the case.

Another point is that a few utterances that include code-switching do not seem to serve a clear purpose in the fictional context of the series and would give the impression to be erratic sometimes. Consequently, it has been hypothesized, that the alternation of English and Trigedasleng, in such interactions





could have been planned exclusively to be entertaining and easily understood by the audience.

To conclude, further research is recommended to unfold all the underlying motivations of code-switching in *The 100*: a study with the participation

of the developer and screenwriters, who could provide essential information on the topic. Besides, investigation of this kind could be expanded to the analysis of other audiovisual products or literary works, especially those that include constructed languages.



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