Word- and Morpheme-Level Code-Switching in Crow

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1. Introduction

The Crow or Apsáalooke language, a member of the Siouan family, is spoken on and near the Crow Reservation in Southeastern Montana. Crow still exhibits considerable vitality, with three to four thousand speakers, virtually all of whom are bilingual—to various degrees—in Crow and English. There are many more Crows in their teens, twenties and thirties who understand Crow, and are able to speak it to a limited extent. And there are still a few children who are learning Crow as their first language.

The high degree of bilingualism among Crow speakers leads to a considerable amount of code-switching. According to my analysis there are two quite different varieties of code switching. The first variety entails switching back and forth between Crow and English on the sentence, clause and phrase level. This type of code-switching occurs most commonly among speakers who are less fluent in Crow, or are more accustomed to using English in everyday conversation, often because they are married to a non-Crow-speaking spouse or are living off-reservation. I am not going to say anything more about this variety.

The second variety, which will be the focus of this paper, occurs on the word and morpheme level, and is employed by fluent Crow speakers.

2. Assimilated borrowings

It has been said that Siouan languages are quite resistant to borrowing, and in one sense this is very true of Crow: there are very few borrowed lexemes that are phonologically assimilated. (1) is a list of the ones that I have found:[1]

(1) a. bálee 'money' (stem: bálaa) (from English 'money')
     b. batée (stem: batáa) (from French berdache)
     c. akíssatdee 'soldier' (from Lakota akičita)

Regarding *bálee*, the Crow dictionary developed by the early Jesuit missionaries notes, "They use the same word [as in English]" (1900 Crow Dictionary). G. Hubert Matthews (p.c.) has suggested that *batée* is a borrowing from French berdache. If so, the term must have replaced an earlier form, since the berdache was a common feature of Crow cultural life, and is to this day.

Secondly, there are a few English names that I have heard which have been adjusted to Crow phonological requirements, as in (2):

(2) a. Káannee 'Conrad'
     b. Awuúchiin 'Eugene'
     c. Kénnaa 'Kenneth'

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[1] Crow forms are given in the standard practical orthography: *ch = č, tch = čč, sh = š, ssh = šš. B m w* and *d l n* represent allophones of *m* and *n* respectively.

These appear to be attempts to avoid English consonants (e.g., *th*) or clusters (*nr, eu*) that a Crow speaker may find difficult to pronounce. I have no doubt that there are other examples that could be added to these two types of assimilations, but they are extremely rare.

3. Word-level code switching

3.1. With English nouns

Apart from these few examples of phonological assimilation, Crow has developed strategies for incorporating phonologically unassimilated English nouns and verbs into Crow discourse. One very common strategy involves the use of the semantically bleached form *kooté* with English nouns. *Kooté* is a nominalization of the stative verb *kootá* 'to be like that'.

3.1.1. With *kooté*

In a nominal construction where no further suffixes follow, it occurs in the citation form, *kooté*. Its use is illustrated in (3) and (4):[2]

(3) woodpecker kooté ilítshia-k
                    stink-DECL
      'the woodpecker stunk'

The context of (3) is this: Everyone in the family thought that the dog needed a bath, but it turned out that someone had left a dead woodpecker on the porch, presumably to save its feathers!

(4) chainsaw kooté ii-lía-laa-?
                    INSTR-do-2A-INTERR
      'did you use a chainsaw?

This practice is not restricted to single English words; a phrase may occur with *kooté*, as in (5):

(5) chief judge kooté
      'the chief judge'

3.1.2. With *kootá* + suffixes

The presence of *kooté* allows various suffixes to occur without having to attach them directly to the English noun, as in (6)-(9):

(6) pitcher kootá-m koolá-k
                    -DET be.there-DECL
      'there was a pitcher there'

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[2] The following abbreviations are used in the morpheme glosses: APPROX approximative, CAUS causative, COND conditional, DECL declarative, DET determiner, DIMIN diminutive, DISTR distributive, DS different subject, GOAL goal postposition, IMPER imperative, INDEF indefinite, INSTR instrumental, INTERR interrogative, NEG negative, PL plural, PUNCT punctual, RECIP reciprocal,   REFL reflexive, REL relativizer, SS same subject.

In (6) we have the stem-form *kootá* rather than the citation form *kooté*, since the indefinite determiner *m* follows *kootá*.

(7) hileen Jews kootée-sh kuss-iláa-(a)k
     These   -DET GOAL-speak-SS
     'he spoke to these Jews' (Jn 19:4)

In (7) *kooté* is followed by the definite article *sh,* which occurs with the citation form.

(8)   conchos koót-bis-aah-aachee-sh
                   -exist-DISTR-APPROX-DET
     'there were some conchos here and there'

In (8) four distinct morphemes follow *koot(é)*: the existential verb *bishí* 'exist, be there' (here reduced to *bis*), distributive *aah(i)*, approximative *aach(i)*, and the definite determiner *(ee)sh*.

(9) quorum koót-deete aa áhpaa-m
                  -not.exist until evening-DS
     'they didn't have a quorum until evening'

In (9) *kooté* is followed by the existential verb *deete* 'not exist'.

(10) ten miles an hour koot-aach-káate
                        -APPROX-DIMIN
     'only about ten miles an hour'

In (10) *kooté* is followed by the approximative and the diminutive.

3.1.3. With dates and temporal expressions

Kooté often occurs with dates and temporal expressions, as in (11)- (13):

(11) Baáhpuuo ko koolée aa 1906 kootée-sh koon shée-k
     Pryor   there be.there until   -DET there die-DECL
     'he was at Pryor until 1906 when he died there' (*Apsáalooke Bacheeítche 53)*

(12) 1876 kootée-sh General Crook huua áxp-ak bachí-o-m
             -DET   say.PL be.with-SS fight-PL-DS
     'in 1876 they fought with General Crook' (*Apsáalooke Bacheeítche* 40)

(13) one month later koot-aaché
                        -APPROX
     'about one month later'

3.1.4. With "stative" verbs

Since *kootá* is underlyingly a stative verb, it may occur with English descriptive adjectives, which would be statives in Crow, as in (14) and (15):

(14) juicy kootí-immaachi-k
          like.that-future-DECL
   'it will be juicy'

Crow has a phonological rule whereby morphemes ending in short *a* are raised to *i* before suffixed beginning with *i*.

(15) baseline kooté open kooták
    'the baseline was open'

In (15) both the subject and the verb occur with *kooté*.

3.2. With English verbs

English verbs are incorporated into Crow discourse by *koochée* 'do that'. This verb is formed by combining *kootá* with the direct causative *ee*. (The change of *t* to *ch* is regular before high and mid front vowels.)

3.2.1. Inflection

Koochée is inflected as in (16):

(16) 1sg koót-baa   1pl koót-buu
    2   koót-daa   2   koót-duu
    3   kooch-ée   3   koot-úu

3.2.2. Examples

This construction is illustrated in (17)-(20):

(17) next day bii-call koot-úu-m
            2B-   like.that-CAUS.PL-DS
   'the next day they called me'

(18) layup koót-baa-k
        like.that-1.CAUS-DECL
   'I made a layup'

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(19) baa-koolá-ssee Tim block kooch-ée-laash
INDEF-be.there-NEG   like.that-CAUS-really
'the late Tim really blocked'

(19) illustrates the use of *baakoolássee*—literally, someone not there—to refer to a deceased person.

(20) half koot-aat-da(a)-áh-nak
          like.that-APPROX-2.CAUS-PUNCT-COND
'if you do about half'

In (20) the approximative occurs between *koot(é)* and the second person causative, and the causative is followed by the punctual marker *áh(i)*.

(21) isaashkakaáshe recognize kooch-ée-k
her.dog   like.that-CAUS-DECL
'she recognized her dog'

(21) occurred in the context of a story about a ceremony in which dog meat is consumed. When the woman was given a portion of the dog meat to eat, it was said that 'she recognized her dog', which had been stolen and cooked. A typical example of Crow humor.

3.2.3. In relative clauses

(22) eighth graders graduate ak-kooch-ée-sh
                              REL-like.that-CAUS-DET
'the eighth graders who graduated'

In (22) *koochée* occurs in a relative clause; *ak* 'who' introduces the relative clause.

The use of 'eighth graders' in (22) and 'next day' in (17) show that English words are sometimes inserted into Crow discourse without *kooté* or *koochée*. It is my impression that older speakers with a fuller command of the language tend to use *kooté* and *koochée* more than younger or less fluent speakers.

3.3. In possessive constructions

There is also a strategy for forming possessive constructions with English nouns. It involves the use of a nominalized form of the Crow verb *eé* 'have, own' following the possessed noun. In this construction *eé* is inflected as in (23):

(23) 1sg b-eé 'have, own' 1pl b-aá-u
     2   d-eé   2   d-aá-u
     3   eé   3   aá-u

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Note that this verb ablauts in the plural. Illustrations are given in (24) and (25):

(24) coffee cup b-eé shóo-?
               1-have where-INTERR
   'where is my coffee cup?'

(25) drivers license d-eé xapíi-laa-?
                  2-have be.lost-2.CAUS-INTERR
   'did you lose your driver's license?'

In the possessive construction the verb *eé*, which is possessive in meaning, is the vehicle that carries the person and number marking of the possessor.

4. Morpheme-level code-switching

The examples we have seen with *kooté, koochée*, and *eé* illustrate word-level code switching, whereby English words are inserted intact into a Crow grammatical context, with any further morphology attached to the Crow morphemes that follow.

In this section we will look at contexts where Crow morphemes are attached directly to English words. We might want to call this morpheme-level code switching.

4.1. Pronominal prefixes

First, it is possible for prefixal morphology to combine directly with English words, as in (26)-(29):

(26) bii-punish kooch-ée-k
    1B-   like.that-CAUS-DECL
   'he punished me'

(27) ihchi-trust kooch-ée-ssaa-k
    REFL-   like.that-CAUS-NEG-DECL
   'he didn't trust himself'

(28) d-íhchi-protect koot-áa-h
    2-REFL-   like.that-CAUS-IMPER
   'protect yourself'

(29) bach-outfox koot-úu-k
    RECIP-   like.that-CAUS.PL-DECL
   'they outfoxed each other'

In (26)-(29) we see an object pronoun, two reflexives, and a reciprocal, respectively, combining with English verbs.

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4.2. Noun incorporation

Indefinite objects are incorporated in Crow, and one occasionally hears an incorporated English noun, as in (30) and (31):

(30) wine-isshi-ak
       -drink-SS
   'he's drinking wine'

(31) ak-ice-iiwaaiaschilee-sh kala-híi-k
    REL-ice-sell-DET   now-arrive-DECL
    'the ice-seller is here'

In (31) the verb with its incorporated noun is part of a relative clause.

4.3. Diminutive *káate*

There is also a small set of English nouns that occur with diminutive *káate* directly suffixed to form a single word, as in (32):

(32) a. puppy-kaate 'puppy'
    b. kitty-kaate 'kitty'
    c. silly-kaate 'silly'
    d. baby-kaate 'baby'
    e. puli-káate 'policeman'

In the first four examples the stem ends in short *i*, which fits the phonological environment for the occurrence of the diminutive suffix. The last form, *puli-káate*, is an obsolete term for policeman. In this example the final consonant of English *police* is elided before the suffix is added.

4.4. Plural *ammishe*

The plural suffix *ammishe* refers to a group or collective, as in (33):

(33) a. biilápx-ammishe 'my fathers' (including clan fathers, ceremonial fathers, etc.)
    b. bachuuk-ammishé 'my younger brothers' (including clan brothers, etc.)

I have also heard tokens of this suffix directly following English names, as in (34):

(34) a. Dana-ammishe 'Dana's group'
    b. Cedric-ammishe 'Cedric's group'

The first example referred to Dana and his fellow horseshoe players, and the second to Cedric's drum group.

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4.5. Coordinate conjunction *dak*

The coordinate conjunction *dak/lak/nak* can also occur suffixed to English nouns, as in (35) and (36):

(35) Jews-dak Romans-dak Greeks-dak
'Jews, Romans, and Greeks' (Jn 19:20)

(36) 1843-lak 1851-nak isaakuamméaxe
'between 1843 and 1851' (*Apsáalooke Bacheeítche* 66)

4.6. Blends

Occasionally one will hear Crow-English blends such as those in (37):

(37) a. baatchaach-errific! (baatcháachi 'excellent, great, wonderful' + terrific)
b. Bulu-Bill (bulupía 'I dislike' + Bill)
c. Aashka-Ben (testicles + Ben)

I heard *baatchaacherrific* on a radio broadcast of a Plenty Coups High School (Pryor, Montana) basketball game. The announcer was a Crow speaker. The second, a bilingual pun, is a name bestowed on an individual by his teasing clan. I don't know the story behind the third name.

4.7. English names

English personal given names (not surnames) may appear with the definite article if they end in a vowel or a sonorant, as in (38):

(38) a. Mary-sh
b. Harry-sh
c. Peter-sh
d. Carol-sh
e. Randy-sh

Otherwise, the article is omitted, as in (39):

(39) a. John
b. James
c. Robert
d. Randolph

5. Conclusion

The Apsáalooke people have succeeded, against great odds, in maintaining the vitality of their language. Although the long-range prospects for language survival are not good, it is clear that Crow will be spoken for at least several generations yet.

At the same time, the Apsáalooke are part of a broader society and economy that is dominated by English. While it is possible for fluent speakers to converse in Crow for hours with barely a word of English uttered, it is often easier, in the heat of conversation, to toss in English words, especially for speakers who are fluent in both languages. Examples (15), (18) and (19) occurred in a discussion of a basketball game. Basketball, of course, has its own specific terminology—layup, jump shot, free throw, etc—which would be difficult to translate into Crow. Often very common words such as 'wood' are spoken in English rather than Crow. 'Call'—in the sense of 'call on the telephone' is very commonly spoken in English: *húuleesh bii-call koochéek* 'he called me yesterday'. Once we get past one, two, and three, English numbers are preferred to their Crow equivalents.

At the same time, the use of *kooté, koochée,* and possessive *eé* serve to preserve the integrity of the Apsáalooke language. In a sense, the English words that are used in Crow discourse are 'walled off' from the rest of the sentence by these devices. The use of *kooté* and *koochée* suggests to me that the English words that Crows borrow are not fully real, they are just 'like that', bracketed off. And when these constructions are used there is no need to make any other adjustments, phonological or morphological, in order to draw upon the lexical resources of English in an utterance.

I wonder if this isn't an example of what the anthropologist Edward Spicer has termed 'compartmentalization,' a way of keeping Crow and English separate even while employing English words to expand speakers' lexical resources.

Even in the cases where Crow suffixes are attached to English words, they only occur where they do not do violence to Crow phonological patterns. The diminutive suffix *káate* occurs only after *i,* a context where it would occur after a Crow stem. The definite article *sh*, which always follows a vowel in Crow, can only occur after English names that end in a vowel or a sonorant. Thus Crows are able to incorporate English words into their discourse while preserving Crow phonology, morphology and syntax.

Another context in which English is employed but 'walled off' from Crow is in direct quotations. Crow has no mechanism for indirect discourse, and quotations are always given in the speaker's exact words. People are always quoted in the language they originally spoke. It often happens that a Crow speaker will quote a non-Crow speaker or even repeat an entire dialogue that he or she had with an English speaker. The words that were originally spoken in English are repeated in English, but in such a way that the language being spoken is Crow, not English. (40) is a constructed example:

(40) "where are you going?" baa-lichi-m
                                      1.say-APPROX-DS
    "where are you going?" I said.

    "I'm going to Billings" he-k
                                      say-DEC
    "I'm going to Billings" he said.

The use of a form of the verb *he* 'to say' serves to show that it is Crow that is being spoken, not English. I once arrived at the sweat lodge where I heard someone speaking English whom I would have expected to be speaking Crow. It was only when I heard the *hek* at the end that I realized that he was simply giving an extended quotation from an English speaker.

The data that I have documented in this paper are not terribly unusual; I'm sure that similar types of contact phenomena can be found in other bilingual situations. As far as I know, however, these types of code-switching have not been documented for Siouan languages, and as such they are a contribution to our knowledge of Crow and of the Siouan family.

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