

Language contact situation between Israeli Sign Language & Kufr Qassem Sign Language: A case of code-switching or borrowing?

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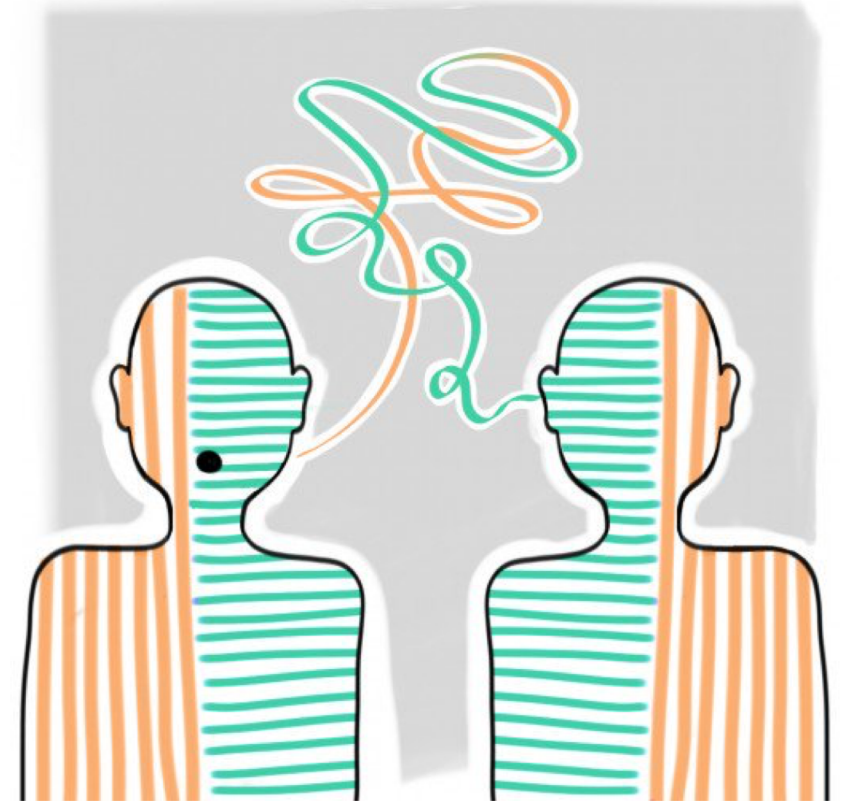
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אוניברסיטת בר-אילן
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What is code-switching? What is borrowing?

- When two languages come together, contact-induced change can occur:
 - **Code-switching** is the use of more than one language (variety) within the same speech exchange or communicative episode (Blom & Gumperz 1972; Poplack 1980; Heller 1988; Schendl & Wright 2011)
- Code-switching can lead to borrowing*
- **Borrowing** typically is the adoption of individual words or even large sets of vocabulary items from another language or dialect (Daulton, 2012)



*(Heath 1989; Romaine 1989; Myers-Scotton 1992)²

Code-switching in Sign Languages: Reiteration

(Quinto-Pozos, 2002; Zeshan & Panda, 2015)

- **Quinto-Pozos (2002) American Sign Language (ASL) & Mexican Sign Language (LSM) on the Texan border**
 - Reiterative CS: semantically equivalent signs produced in both languages sequentially, e.g., TOMATO **TOMATE**
 - 58% nouns, 20% verbs, 13% adjectives
 - Some reiteration cases had similar functions to those found in spoken language, but *“there are also cases where the functions of [reiterative] switches are **not clear**”*

Our study investigates language contact between 2 sign languages in Israel
In particular, we focus on the difficulty of distinguishing code-switching and borrowing in sign language

The difficulty of analysing CS in SLs (Quinto-Pozos, 2012)

- Sign language researchers of CS are faced with challenges that may be unique to that modality: namely, how to attribute various signs or meaningful elements within an utterance
 - Language A
 - Language B
 - Both languages

The difficulty of analysing CS in SLs (Quinto-Pozos, 2012)

Sign languages share many properties:

- Classifiers
- Constructed action
- Pointing signs
- Iconicity

KQSL signer

The man runs up the pole. The woman runs after him and tells him to come down. He pretends to do acrobatics on the pole and finally slides down. “Ta da!”



The difficulty of analysing CS in SLs (Quinto-Pozos, 2012)

Sign languages share many properties:

- Classifiers
- Constructed action
- Pointing signs
- Iconicity

Language A (Kufr Qassem SL):

- MAN
- WOMAN

Language B (Israeli SL):

- WOMAN

MAN

RUN

CL:POLE

CA:(grabs pole)

IX

WOMAN

WOMAN

RUN

How do we distinguish a single-sign switch from a borrowed sign?

Code-switching

- No integration
- Unpredictable recurrence
- Not used widely
- Not used by monolinguals

Borrowing

- Integration
- Recurrence (individual)
- Diffusion (community)
- Used by monolinguals

English:

Report

Report-s

Arabic:

Taqreer

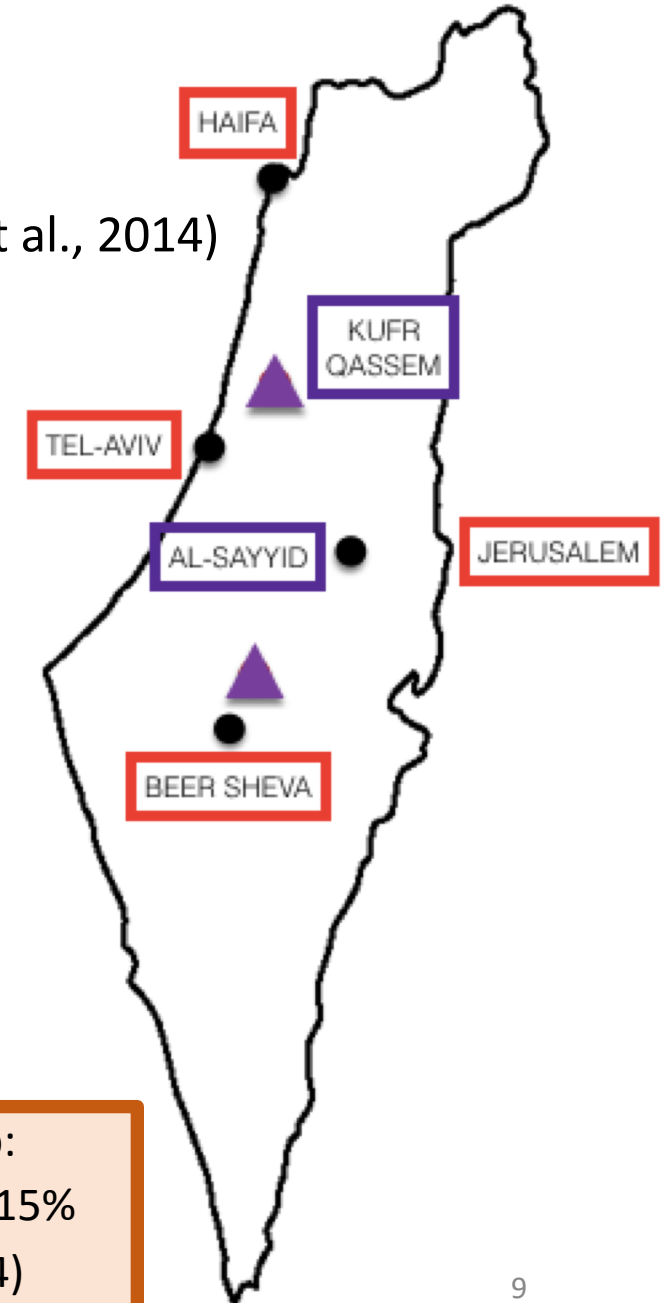
Rabor
(borrowed)

Rabor-at

The situation in Israel

(Meir & Sandler, 2008; Meir et al., 2013; Kastner et al., 2014)

Israeli Sign Language (ISL)	Kufr Qassem Sign Language (KQSL)
Larger heterogeneous population (Aronoff et al. 2008)	Smaller homogeneous population (Meir, 2012)
Used by ~10,000 people	Used by ~100 deaf and hearing people
Dominant sign language used within media, education & interpreting	Isolated until relatively recently
Population: Roughly 8 Million (CBS report, 2017)	Population: Roughly 23,000 (CBS report, 2017)



- Identical signs overlap:
 - KQSL & ISL: only 15% (Kastner et al., 2014)

The situation in Kufr Qassem

- First generation deaf people:
 - Did not go to school
 - Isolated from other sign languages and without access to spoken languages
- Second generation deaf people:
 - Attended the first deaf class in a public school in Kufr Qassem in 1985
 - Exposure to ISL, Arabic & Hebrew (less than the 3rd generation)
- Third generation deaf people:
 - Attended school
 - Exposure to ISL, Arabic & Hebrew
 - More mobile



Research questions

1. Is there evidence of language-contact phenomena in Kufr Qassem?
2. Is this an example of code-switching or borrowing?

Methods: Participants & Task

- Monolingual group (ISL):
 - 6 deaf people (22-54)
- Monolingual group (KQSL):
 - 6 deaf people (39-67)
- Bilingual group (KQSL/ISL):
 - 6 deaf people (21-42)
- Filmed in pairs with a matched signer
- Retelling of Charlie Chaplin
 - The Lion's Cage

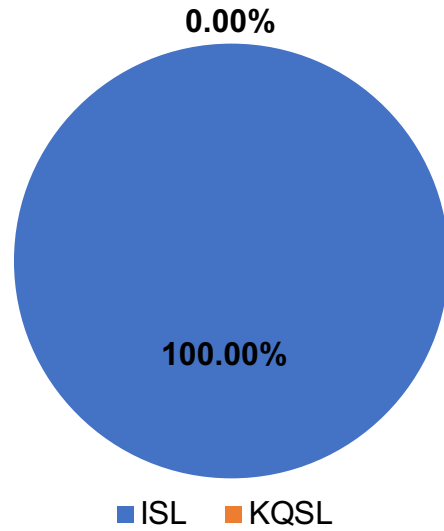


Methods: Data coding

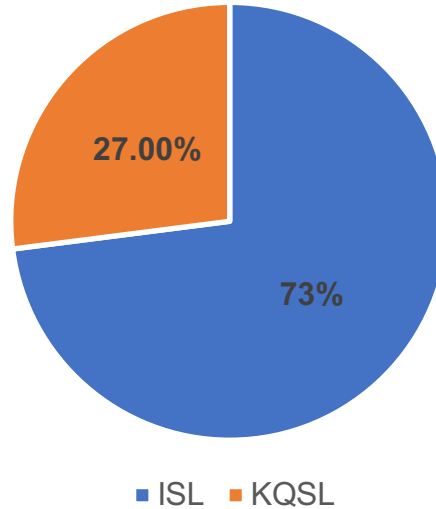
- All sign productions were coded into the following categories:
 - Constructed action (**not counted**)
 - Classifiers (**not counted**)
 - Shared lexical signs (**not counted**)
 - ISL lexical signs
 - KQSL lexical signs
- Lexical signs were decided based on dictionary entries & consultation with native signers within each community
- Switches were counted when the signer switched to their non-dominant language
- Coded in ELAN, a video annotation software

Results

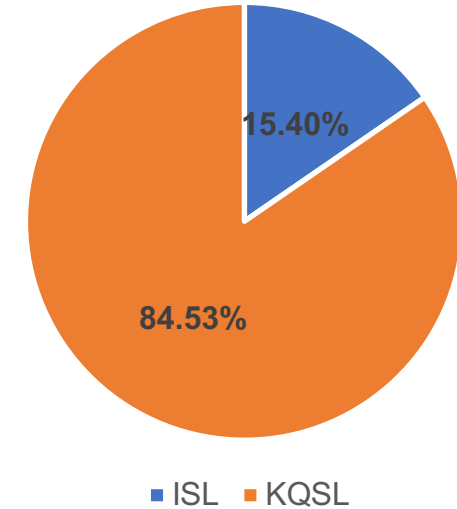
Monolinguals (ISL) - lexical signs division



Bilinguals - lexical signs division



Monolinguals (KQSL) - lexical signs division



- Bilinguals are predominantly ISL users
- Monolinguals are predominantly monolingual but surprisingly with 15% of ISL signs

Let's re-visit our example: Monolingual (KQSL)

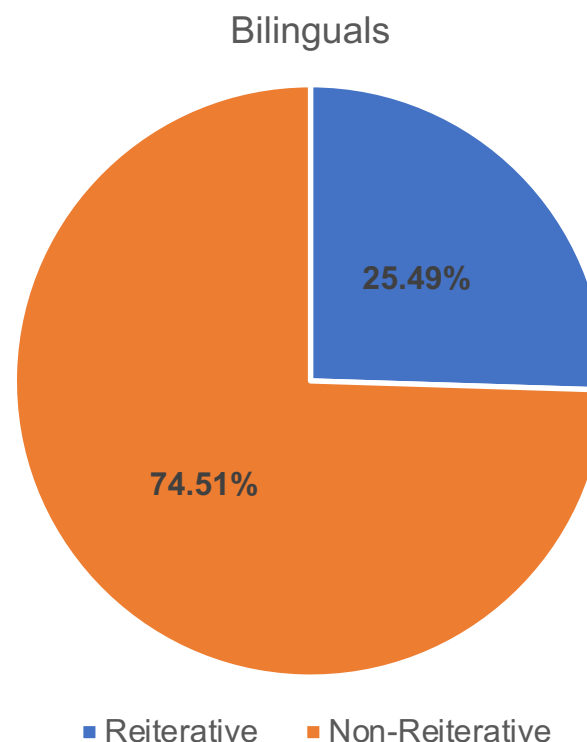
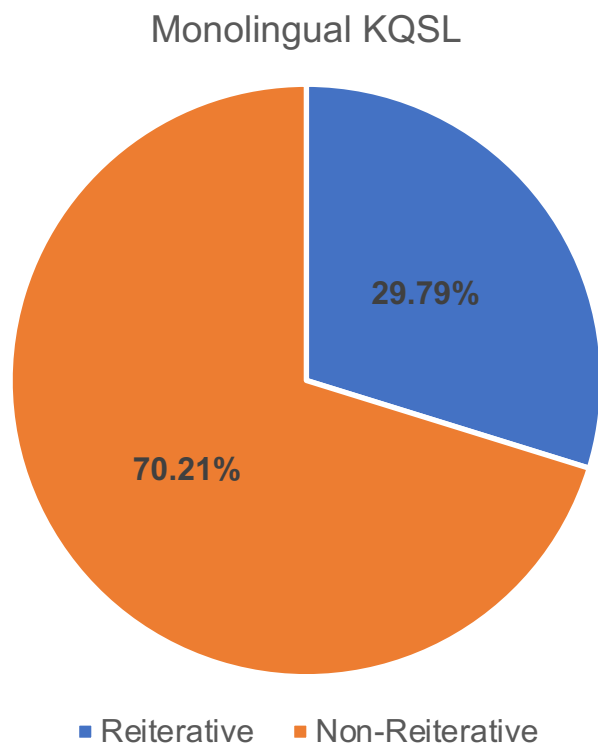
- **MAN** RUN **CL:POLE** **CA:**(grabs pole) **IX**
WOMAN **WOMAN** RUN **CA:**(woman
calls him down)
- **Translation:** The man runs up the pole.
The woman runs after him and tells him
to come down.

Israel Sign Language
Kufr Qassem Sign Language



Reiterative “Code-Switching”

**25-30% of all
CS examples
are Reiterative**



But, is this code-switching?
or it is borrowing?

The case of 'the married one' in KQSL

The case of 'the married one' in KQSL

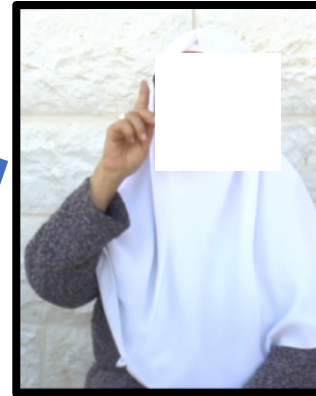


man



male

Any
combination...



woman



female



mother



+



= 'the married one'
(adult)

The case of 'the married one': Monolingual (1st gen)

KQSL (monolingual)



The man (husband) quickly leaves.



mother
(KQSL)

man
(KQSL)

= 'husband' (adult)

The case of 'the married one': Monolingual (2nd gen)

KQSL (monolingual)



The woman fainted.



female
(KQSL)

woman
(KQSL)

= 'wife' (adult)

The case of 'the married one' in KQSL



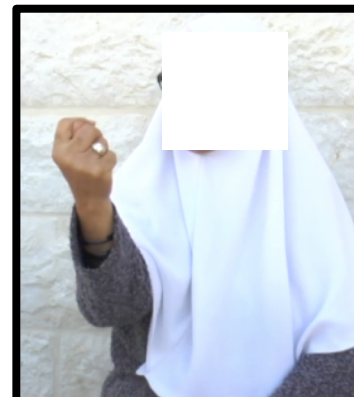
man



male



woman



female



mother

**Reiterative
compound**

**= 'the married one' =
(adult)**



+



The case of 'the married one': Contact with ISL

KQSL (monolingual)



female
(ISL)

woman
(KQSL)

= 'wife' (adult)

The case of 'the married one': Borrowing



man



male



woman



female



mother

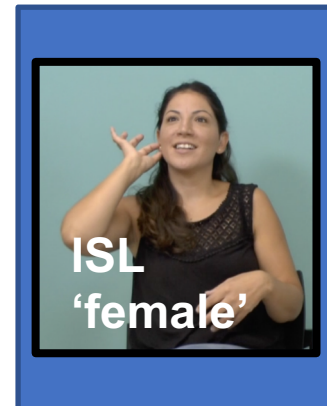
+



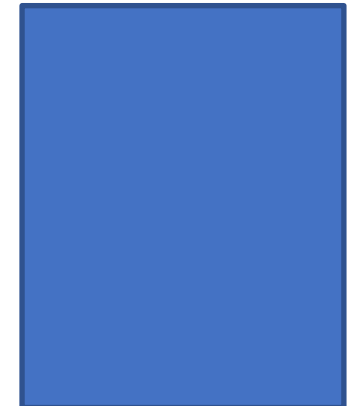
(husband)

= 'the married one' =
(adult)

(wife)



+



Integration of ISL sign into KQSL compound

Compounds may reduce to the optimal prosodic word form, monosyllabic (Sandler, 1999)

Bilingual



The woman fainted.



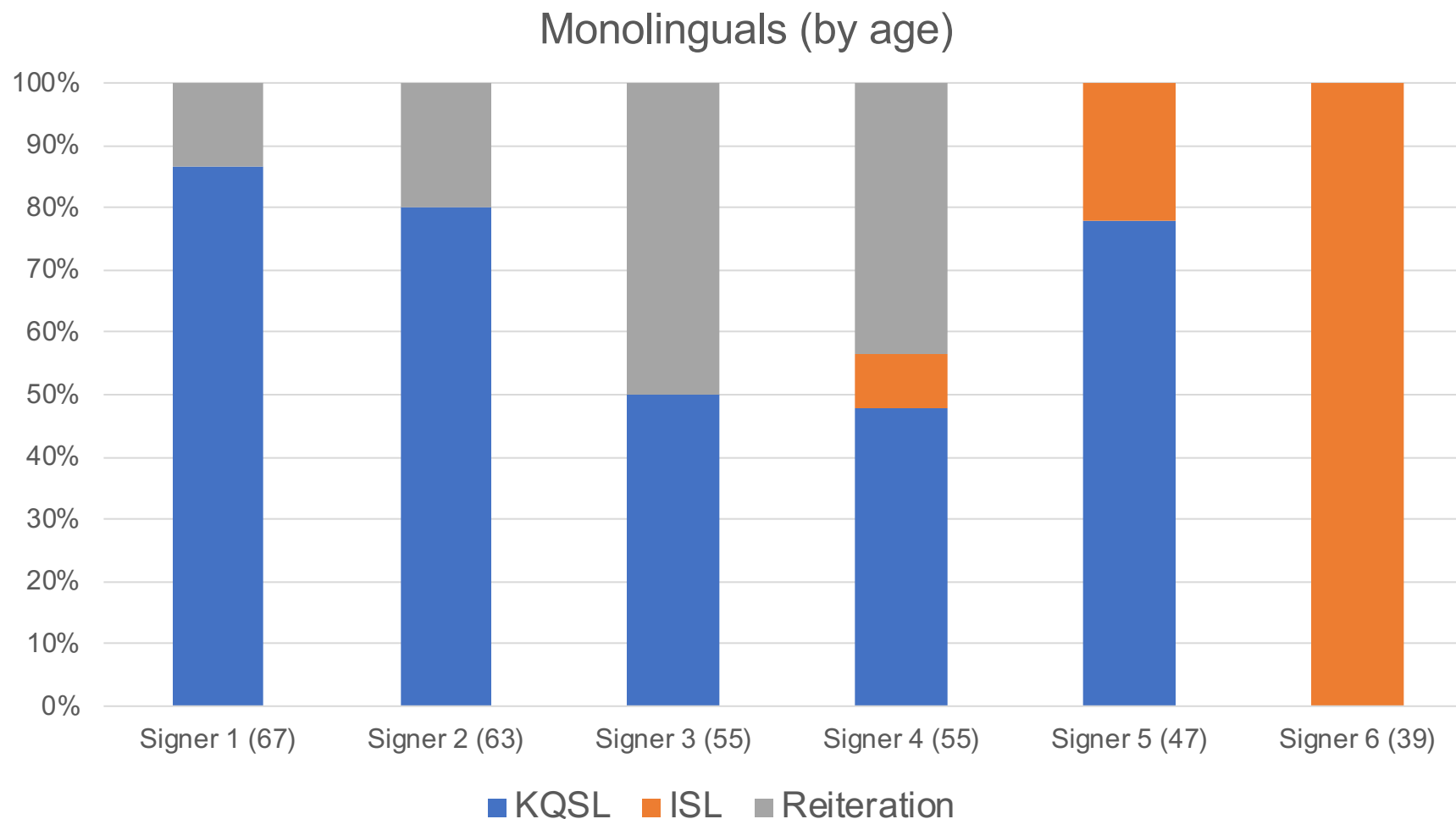
female
(ISL)

girl
(KQSL)

= 'wife' (adult)

Recurrence & Diffusion: Borrowing

All monolinguals use either the reiterative form (ISL+KQSL) or they use ISL alone



Discussion: Is this code-switching or borrowing

- KQSL has a compound sign 'MAN+WOMAN' translated as 'the married one'
- Over time, the compound components have changed, 'WOMAN+WOMAN', 'MAN+MAN'
- Reiteration appears to be an example of borrowing of ISL into KQSL's existing compound, rather than code-switching (Quinto-Pozos, 2002)
- Signers retain the compound template and, through increased contact with ISL, borrow in the ISL form to fill one slot
- Integration of the ISL form into the KQSL compound template and its recurrence and diffusion across the monolingual group serves as a good indicator of borrowing

Conclusion

- Sign languages offer us a different perspective on code-switching
- What appears to be an obvious example of code-switching at first, may in fact be something else entirely when looked at more closely
- In this study, the behaviours of monolinguals and the presence of integration are important indicators of whether a single-sign switch is code-switching or borrowing

Thank you!

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