Chapter 5

Language Choice
& Code Switching
It’s All About...

‘Who speaks what language to whom, when’ and why...

Fishman 1965
Marlow 2008
Codeswitching Defined

Bilingual speakers mixing two or more languages in a single conversation
American Chinese back in China

(Father is a computer engineer, lost his job... may move back home: Mother and son speak little or no Chinese...)
How to Transcribe...

- yeo   hou   do   yeo   CONTACT
  have   very   many   have   contact

  *We have a lot of contacts*

- Top line = romanization of speech
- 2nd line = word for word translation
- 3rd line = idiomatic translation
Whaddya Think?

In the example above, is "contact" an example of codeswitching.

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Accommodation Junction...

- ‘A’ for effort (accommodation) ...
- BUT... sarcasm alert...
- Accommodation by stereotype
- Identity management
- Status & power
Key Vocab

- Turn
- Bilingual
- Language Variety
- Divergence
- Convergence
- Accommodation

“Gina is by lingual... that means she can say the same thing twice, but you can only understand it once.”
Whaddya Think?

People who codeswitch typically calculate their switching carefully and intentionally to produce desired rhetorical effects.

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Codeswitching can be used to display &/or manipulate:

A. Solidarity
B. Interpersonal distance
C. Personal Identity
D. Relative power
E. All of the above
Which of the following does NOT communicate meaning in conversation between two or more bilinguals?

A. General inclusion of codeswitching in a conversation
B. The language one chooses to use for a topic
C. Whether or not one follows the language choice of one’s interlocutors
D. The points at which switching occurs
E. All of the above communicate meaning
*Whaddya Think?*

Listeners are prepared to evaluate people on the basis of their language variety...

*Lambert, et al., 1960*

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Which of the following does NOT affect language choice in bilingual communities?

A. Setting  
B. Topic  
C. Addressees (Interlocutors)  
D. Comfort level  
E. All of the above are choice factors
Whaddya Think?

...far from being anomolous, bilingual communities are salient instances of a universal phenomenon: the multiplicity and functional distinctiveness of language varieties in speech communities.

Gal, 1979
Key Point

- Codeswitching is “not just a haphazard mixing of two languages brought about by laziness or ignorance or some combination of these…”

- It *is* people “with a sophisticated knowledge of both languages who are also acutely aware of community norms.”

  *Wardhaugh 2000*
Multilingual Hierarchy

- Native / Indigenous Language (s)
- Lingua Franca
- Alien

Typical Colonial Setting

Official Language

Trade Language

What are the primary functions of each?
Typical Immigrant Scenario

Immigrants’ Home

- Grandparents
  - Monolingual – Home country’s language

- Parents
  - Bilingual – Home language dominant
  - Except, perhaps, ‘stay-at-home-Moms’

- Kids
  - Bilingual – Host language dominant
Whaddya Think?

- Bilingualism is like a Trojan horse... attractive, but fatal...

Wardhaugh 2000: 99

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Soapbox points

- “If we can comfortably control a number of codes, then we would appear to have an advantage over those who lack such control.”

- “Codeswitching allows a speaker to meet someone else half-way, establish common ground, and show flexibility and openness.”
Language Learner’s Quandary

If you want to learn to speak another language, especially an ‘exotic’ one, you may find it hard to practice on others. People in your target language may prefer to speak English... *Wardhaugh 2000: 99*

- Why?
- How might you work around this issue?
Variation Revisited...

- Labov & Trudgil:
  - ♦ attention = ♦ vernacular
  - Single continuum Formal ↔ Informal

- CS Researchers:
  - Languages/language varieties
    - Different groups of people
    - Different value sets
    - Identity Management (inclusion // exclusion)
Bilingual Example

- Yuan (My wife)
  - Native Mandarin Chinese Speaker
  - Worked in Japanese business for 6 years
  - Living in US for >10 years
- What language would she use w/me:
  - Speaking about her family back home?
  - Discussing international business issues?
  - Talking about church friends?
- When might she deviate from the norm?
Males may drink in Guaraní but use more and more Spanish as they feel the influence of alcohol, for Spanish is the language of power

*Wardhaugh 2000 p. 98*

*Drinking in the US tends to increase use of:*

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Group Activity

- When do you code/style/dialect switch?
  - Come up with an example of switching within your group
    (~2 minute sketch)

- Present for us...
  Let us analyze the interactions...
Pulling It Together

- Codeswitching be used in a single speech community?

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Pulling It Together

- Both Sapir and Whorf were long dead before codeswitching was noticed.
- If they were alive today, would they have to adjust their hypothesis?

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Up Next...

Chapter 9