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1 Introduction

This paper will deal with code-switching in a specific sense. The perspective I want to take is an important one, but it does not exclude others.

Bilingualism (including multilingualism) is often thought of as multiple linguistic competences, i.e., as a mental disposition which is accessible only indirectly by the usual techniques of psycholinguistic research. In the mentalistic framework of generative grammar, bilingual competence is also accessible via the analysis of well-formed sentences involving two languages which may be treated as a window on the bilingual mind. Yet both the psycholinguist and the generative grammarian treat bilingualism as something which – like competence in general – is basically hidden underneath the skull and therefore invisible; it can be, and must be, made visible by psycholinguistic methods, or the methods of generative grammatical research. Beginning with the discussion of compound vs coordinate bilingualism in its psycholinguistic reformulation (see chapter 12, this volume), and up to the present generative work on grammatical constraints on code-switching (see chapter 9, this volume), there is an impressive amount of research which has been gathered from such a perspective.

Contrary to this tradition of research, I will be dealing here with bilingualism from the perspective of the conversationalist. For him or her, it has its foremost reality in the interactive exchanges between the members of a bilingual speech community (as well as between them and monolingual outsiders), by which they display to each other, and ascribe to each other, their bilingualism. According to this perspective, it is the task of the linguist not to discover by tests or other methods something which is basically concealed from the naive language user, but to reconstruct the social processes of displaying and ascribing bilingualism. As a feature of conversational (inter-)action, bilingualism provides specific resources not available to monolingual speakers for the constitution of socially meaningful

verbal activities. The relationship between the use of two languages as a form-related property of one or more persons' speech and the conversational meaning of this speech is a relatively indirect and complicated one. It needs some theoretical background in order to be conceived properly, and it is this theoretical background which is the topic of this chapter. I will sketch a theory of conversational code-alternation which should be applicable to a wide range of conversational phenomena subsumed in the literature under such headings as code-switching, language choice, transfer/insertion etc., and to very different bilingual communities and settings. Such a theory of bilingual conversation obviously has to be complemented by another theory which explains who switches in a given community, why and when (cf. chapters 7 and 8, for such a micro/macro link). The resources available to bilingual conversationalists may be outlined independently, however, from their macro-social embedding. Needless to say, bilingual work on any concrete bilingual community has to refer both to micro and macro theories of code-alternation and to their interdependencies.

By reviewing some of the existing literature, and by referring to empirical work, it will (hopefully) become clear that any theory of conversational code-alternation is bound to fail if it does not take into account that the meaning of code-alternation depends in essential ways on its 'sequential environment'. This is given, in the first place, by the conversational turn immediately preceding it, to which code-alternation may respond in various ways. While the preceding verbal activities provide the contextual frame for a current utterance, the following utterance by a next participant reflects his or her interpretation of that preceding utterance. Therefore, following utterances are important cues for the analyst and for the first speaker as to if and how a first utterance has been understood. The sequentiality of code-alternation in the sense of this paper therefore refers both to preceding and subsequent utterances.

2 Preliminaries on definition and terminology

In view of the lack of a generally accepted terminology, it is necessary to define code-alternation in the specific sense in which the term is employed here, before entering into detailed discussion. *Code-alternation (used here as a cover term, i.e. hyperonym for code-switching and transfer) is defined as a relationship of contiguous juxtaposition of semiotic systems, such that the appropriate recipients of the resulting complex sign are in a position to interpret this juxtaposition as such.*

The criterion of contiguity excludes non-contiguous stretches of talk, for example, one occurring in the beginning, the other at the end of the conversation, or

speaker X using language A on one occasion, and language B on another, from being analysed as instances of code-alternation. The criterion of juxtaposition implies that gradual transitions from one code into the other cannot be classified as code-alternation. Thus, a gradual transition from dialect into standard ('style-shifting') may be a very important interactional event, but it works differently from code-alternation and should not be confounded with it. The requirement that semiotic systems be juxtaposed excludes the possibility of single parameter changes being analysed as code-alternation. The most important of all the definitional criteria for code-alternation is that of its interpretative reality. It is the users of the signs who decide on their status. When we compare the speech of bilinguals with that of monolinguals in either of their languages, we notice a high number of 'marques transcodiques', 'qui renvoient d'une manière ou d'une autre à la rencontre de deux ou plusieurs systèmes linguistiques' (Lüdi 1987b: 2). Yet inside this very large domain of language-contact phenomena, it is necessary to draw a very basic distinction: that between contact phenomena classified as such by the linguist, and contact phenomena seen and used as such by the bilingual participants themselves. The question 'Do bilingual participants see and use it?' takes us from structural systems continually referring to each other, to the speakers. It implies the shift from a structural towards an interpretative approach to bilingualism.

3 Theories of the pragmatics of code-alternation

It is useful to start the discussion with two somewhat extreme theories of code-alternation which are (for very instructive reasons) bound to fail. The *first theory* of the conversational meaning of code-alternation is based on the assumption that *certain conversational activities prompt the usage of one language or the other qua activity type*. A particular activity type is seen as being linked to language B, such that in the environment of language A, code-alternation occurs. For instance, Fishman (1971) introduces the chapter on 'Interactional sociolinguistics' in his introductory book with an example which is reproduced here in part as data extract (1), between two Puerto Ricans:

- (1) [Boss has been dictating a letter to Mr Bolger to his secretary,
Spanish in italics]
Boss: ... Sincerely, Louis Gonzalez
Secretary: Do you have the enclosures for the letter, Mr Gonzalez?
Boss: Oh yes, here they are.
Secretary: Okay

Boss: Ah, this man William Bolger got his organization to contribute a lot of money to the Puerto Rican parade. He's very much for it. *¿Tú fuiste a la parada?*

Secretary: *Sí, yo fui.*

Boss: *¿Sí?*

Secretary: *Uh huh.*

Boss: *¿Y cómo te estuvo?*

[etc., continues in Spanish] (Fishman 1971: 37ff.)

Fishman recommends finding systematic ('emic') correlations between what he calls speech events and language choice in order to analyse code-switching as in the data extract: 'The first question that presents itself is whether one variety tends to be used (or used more often) in certain kinds of speech acts or events whereas the other tends to be used (or used more often) in others' (p. 41). He does not really apply this research strategy to his example, but it is easy to see that he would expect us to find some correlation between the speech event of an informal chat and Spanish on the one hand, and between a business transaction and English on the other.¹

Note that in this approach, it is not the switching from one language into another which has meaning, but the association between speech activities and languages. Code-alternation is contingent on the juxtaposition of two activities associated with different languages. Had the 'boss' met his 'secretary' exclusively for the purpose of a chat, the whole interactive episode would have taken place in Spanish, but the usage of this language would have had the same social meaning, i.e., that of indexing a speech activity within the Spanish domain.

The weakness of this approach becomes apparent as soon as language choice is investigated empirically. In modern bilingual societies, the relationship between languages and speech activities is by no means unambiguous. Many speech activities are not tied to one particular language, and even among those which have a tendency to be realised more often in one language than in another, the correlation is never strong enough to predict language choice in more than a probabilistic way. (In Fishman's Puerto Rican case, it is certainly conceivable that the Puerto Rican boss might deal with his secretary in Spanish all the time; and he might well choose to use English even in talk about the Puerto Rican parade.)

Although the idea of Fishman and other scholars that specific speech activities are associated with specific languages receives some support from ritual language usage in 'stable' societies (as has been reported in a number of studies in the ethnography of communication), and although the associations between speech

activity and language are not completely free in 'mobile' bilingual societies or speech communities either, this relationship is far more complex than such a simple model would suggest (cf. di Luzio 1984). Many investigations have shown that the mere fact of juxtaposing two codes can have a signalling value of its own, independent of the direction of code-alternation; in such cases, it is obviously impossible to explain the conversational meaning of code-alternation by any kind of association between languages and speech activities. Striking evidence for such a contrastive signalling value of language alternation comes from one of the reportedly most frequent functions of code-alternation: the setting off of reported speech against its surrounding conversational (often narrative) context. Although one could think that the language of 'quoting is relatively predictable' and that 'all one needs to know to predict the language in which most quotes will be spoken is the language in which the original utterance was spoken' (as is indeed contended by Gal 1979: 109), this is in fact not the case. Instead it is not unusual for code-alternation to occur in cases where the language of reporting and the inferrable language used by the original speaker diverge.² As an example, consider the extract from an Italian-German bilingual conversation given in (2), where an Italian student is talking about his quarrels with German classmates:

- (2) [report about German pupils in his class, Italian in italics]
 wenn ä Italiener kommt gell – sofort äh: *guardate*
 Itakerstinker und so
 [*when Italians come you know – immediately (they say) look spaghetti heads and so on* (Auer 1984: 66)]

It is highly unlikely that the Germans would use an Italian phrase such as *guardate* when insulting their Italian classmates. In such cases, the only function of code-alternation is to provide a contrast between the conversational context of the quote and the reported speech itself. As the speaker is already using German, this can only be done by switching into Italian, at least for the beginning of the quote. Note that the beginning of reported speech is not explicitly marked; more indirect markers such as pausing and code-alternation fulfil this function.

A promising alternative approach to code-alternation might therefore consist of analysing the signalling value of the juxtaposition of languages and deriving the conversational meaning of code-alternation from it. This is quite different from Fishman's approach, since no association between languages and speech activities needs to be presupposed. Obviously, it requires a sequential account of language choice, in which the language chosen for one speech activity must be seen against the background of language choice in the preceding utterance. From this

perspective, the question is not what verbal activities are associated with one language or the other, but instead: in which activities do bilinguals tend to switch from one language into the other. In answering this question, researchers on code-alternation have developed elaborate typologies of code-switching. They seem to converge across bilingual communities on certain conversational loci in which switching is particularly frequent, such as:

- (i) *reported speech*
- (ii) *change of participant constellation*, particularly addressee selection – this includes the use of code-switching in order to include/exclude/marginalise co-participants or bystanders
- (iii) *parentheses or side-comments*
- (iv) *reiterations*, i.e. quasi-translations into the other language, for example for the purpose of putting emphasis on demands or requests, or for purposes of clarification, or for attracting attention, e.g. in the regulation of turn-taking (also called 'translations', 'repetitions' or 'recycling')
- (v) *change of activity type*, also called 'mode shift' or 'role shift'
- (vi) *topic shift*
- (vii) *puns, language play, shift of 'key'*
- (viii) *topicalisation, topic/comment structure*.

Although lists such as this one are useful because they demonstrate that some conversational loci are particularly susceptible to code-alternation, the mere listing of such loci is problematic, for a number of reasons.

First, the conversational categories used for the analysis are often ill-defined. Frequently, we get lists of conversational loci for code-alternation and examples, but no sequential analysis is carried out to demonstrate what exactly is meant, for example, by a 'change of activity type', or by 'reiteration'. A more in-depth sequential study of, for example, reiterations would make it clear that this category subsumes a number of very different conversational structures. What is lacking is the proper grounding of the categories employed in a theory of interaction.

Second, so-called typologies of code-alternation often confuse conversational structures, linguistic forms and functions of code-alternation. For instance, 'emphasis' may be a function of code-alternation, whereas 'reiteration' is a (group of) conversational structure(s). Reiteration may or may not serve the function of giving emphasis to a stretch of talk; both categories are on quite different levels. Or, to give another example: interjections and fillers in language A are often observed to be inserted in language B discourse. Yet 'interjection' and 'filler' are names for linguistic structures, their conversational status and their function

are another issue. Or, a final example: mitigation and aggravation may be functions of code-alternation, but they are not conversational structures and therefore cannot be dealt with on a par with translations and repetitions (as attempted by Zentella 1981).

Third, lists of conversational loci for code-alternation, or typologies of functions, may give us an initial clue as to what is going on. There is every reason, however, to be sceptical about whether such listing will bring us closer to a theory of code-alternation, i.e., whether it can tell us anything about *why* code-alternation may have a conversational meaning or function. The list itself will hardly ever be a closed one, which shows that code-alternation is used in a creative fashion, and that it can have conversational meaning even if used in a particular conversational environment only once.

Fourth, and most important, the listing of conversational loci for code-alternation implies that code-alternation should have the same conversational status in both directions, i.e. from language A into B or vice versa. Now, although the conversational loci for alternation listed above may in fact be used for switching in both directions in one and the same speech community, the exact conversational meaning of these cases of alternation is often not identical. Consider a very simple example. Zentella (n.d.) lists among the types of code-switching, 'false start repairs' such as in (3):

- (3) *you could – tú puede hacer eso . . .*
(Zentella n.d.)

Obviously, the speaker is correcting his or her language choice here. But why? The following explanations may be proposed: the 'false start repair' could mean that the speaker is accommodating to the recipient's language preference, or complying with the community norms for language choice, or that he or she is distancing him/herself symbolically from the recipient, or from the community norms, by choosing his/her own preferred language. In order to pinpoint the conversational meaning of such a case of code-alternation, we need to know about the 'episodic external' preferences of speakers for one language or the other, or about the community norms for that particular kind of interaction.

The following examples from the literature may show how the direction of conversational code-alternation enters into its interpretation, by virtue of being related to knowledge about the episode-external language preferences involved.

- (i) Sebba and Wootton (1984) show on the basis of a careful sequential analysis that:

participants in a conversation orientate to L[ondon] J[jamaican] stretches embedded in a basically L[ondon] E[nglish] turn as having differential status from the adjacent LE material, providing the principal message content. On the other hand, LE stretches embedded within a basically LJ turn correspond to material of secondary importance, such as speakers' comments on thematically more important material, or diversions from the main theme of the turn, for instance those involving speaker-initiated insertion sequences. (p. 3)

Here, sequential analysis of code-alternation warrants an ascription of conversational meanings or functions to the varieties involved (foregrounding/emphasis = London Jamaican; backgrounding = London English); in order to come to an interpretation of an individual instance of alternation, these meanings/functions (i.e., based on a linguistic-stylistic, yet extra-episodic, knowledge) have to be invoked.

(ii) In a study on one particular kind of reiteration, i.e. recycled first pair parts, I have shown (in Auer 1984b) that code-switching may occur on the recycled first pair part if the language chosen by the present speaker is not the 'unmarked' language of interaction between these participants, or if the co-participant is seen to have a preference for the other language. The extra-episodic knowledge necessary in order to interpret correctly the meaning of code-alternation is about language preference in particular speaker dyads.

(iii) In her study on Hungarian-German bilingualism in Oberwart, Austria, Gal (1979: 112ff.) observed that switching from Hungarian into German regularly occurred in a particular sequential position: it was used as a 'topper' in escalating angry arguments. Whenever a speaker switched into German, he or she marked the point of culmination of disagreement and hostility, 'a last word that was not outdone' (p. 117). She concludes from this and other conversational usages of switching into German that, according to the Oberwarters' conception of the languages in their repertoire, German connotes prestige, urban sophistication and authority, but also social distance. These attitudinal values of German are indexed and invoked by switching into this language in turn and contribute to its conversational meaning.

Let me summarise the argument so far. Up to now, two approaches to code-alternation which represent opposite extremes have been sketched and critically evaluated. According to the first, languages are said to be linked to verbal activities such that code-alternation is contingent on switching between two activities associated with different languages. According to the second, it is the juxtaposi-

tion of the two languages that constitutes the conversational meaning of code-alternation, but the direction of this alternation is irrelevant. As the discussion has shown, both approaches are empirically inadequate. In the typical bilingual speech community, the correlation between language and activity is not strong enough to make code-alternation predictable, but the direction of switching is nevertheless important for reconstructing its conversational meaning. How can this situation be accounted for?

4 The sequentiality of code-alternation

A framework for analysing code-alternation which is able to handle this kind of situation is available in the theory of contextualisation.³ If we look upon code-alternation as a contextualisation cue, it is but one of an array of devices such as intonation, rhythm, gesture or posture which are used in the situated production and interpretation of language. Code-alternation works in many ways just like these other cues, a fact that calls for a uniform analysis. Treating code-alternation as a contextualisation cue also explains why the functions of this cue are often taken over by prosodic or gestural cues in monolingual conversation.

It is not possible to outline the theory of contextualisation more than superficially here. In very general terms, contextualisation comprises all those activities by participants which make relevant/maintain/revise/cancel some aspects of context which, in turn, is responsible for the interpretation of an utterance in its particular locus of occurrence. Such an aspect of context may be the larger activity participants are engaged in (the 'speech genre'), the small-scale activity (or 'speech act'), the mood (or 'key') in which this activity is performed, the topic, but also the participants' roles (the participant constellation, comprising 'speaker', 'recipient', 'bystander', etc.), the social relationship between participants, the relationship between a speaker and the information being conveyed via language ('modality'), etc., in short, just those aspects of context that have been found to be related to code-alternation (see above).

Contextualisation cues have the following characteristics.

- (i) They do not have referential (decontextualised) meaning of the kind we find in lexical items. Instead, contextualisation cues and the interpretation of the activity are related by a process of *inferencing*, which is itself dependent on the context of its occurrence. The situated meaning of code-alternation therefore cannot be stated unless a sequential analysis is carried out. The same cue may receive a different interpretation on different occasions.

(ii) The way in which inferring leads to contextual interpretation is twofold: by contrast or by inherent meaning potential. In the first, most simple, case, contextualisation cues establish contrasts and influence interpretation by punctuating the interaction. The mere fact of (usually abruptly) changing one (or more than one) formal characteristic of the interaction may be enough to prompt an inference about why such a thing has happened. In this process of inferring, it is necessary to rely on information contained in the local context of the cue's occurrence. The only 'meaning' the cue has is (to paraphrase Jakobson's definition of the phoneme) to 'indicate otherness'. The direction of the change is irrelevant.

Yet, many contextualisation cues do more than that. Therefore, we have to distinguish a second case where contextualisation cues establish a contrast and thereby indicate that something new is going to come; but they also and at the same time restrict the number of possible plausible inferences as to what this might be. This is so because cues may have (received) an inherent meaning potential. This may be 'natural', e.g. when we observe a correlation between diminishing fundamental frequency on the one hand, and 'rest' or 'termination' on the other, which is exploited for marking unit closure (e.g. turn termination), or it may be conventionalised (as in the case of code-alternation).

(iii) Contextualisation cues often bundle together, e.g. there is a certain redundancy of coding which has specific interactional advantages. For the analyst, this redundancy provides methodological access to the conversational functions of one cue (e.g., code-alternation), since other cues supporting the same local interpretation can be used as 'external' evidence for the meaning of conversational code-alternation.

Code-alternation can and should be investigated on the conversational level as a contextualisation cue because it shares the above-mentioned features with other contextualisation cues. Yet code-alternation also has some characteristics of its own. For this reason, we need a specification of the contextualisation value of this cue, i.e., a theory of code-alternation.⁴ According to my own approach to such a theory (see Auer 1984 and subsequent publications), the situated interpretation of code-alternation as a contextualisation cue is strongly related to sequential patterns of language choice. Four such patterns have to be distinguished.

A first pattern is that usually associated with conversational code-switching of the proto-typical case, such as in Fishman's example (1). In this case, a language-of-interaction (base language, unmarked language), A, has been established; at a certain point, speaker 1 switches to language B; this new language choice is accepted by speaker 2 as the new language-of-interaction so that beyond the switching point, only B is used. Schematically:

Pattern Ia: A1 A2 A1 A2//B1 B2 B1 B2

As a variant of this pattern, language alternation may occur within a single speaker's turn:

Pattern Ib: A1 A2 A1 A2 A1//B1 B2 B1 B2

The interpretation which code-alternation of this structural type usually receives is that of contextualising some feature of the conversation, e.g. a shift in topic, participant constellation, activity type, etc. It contributes to the organisation of discourse in that particular episode; for these types of switches, I use the term 'discourse-related code-switching'.

Another basic pattern looks like this:

Pattern IIa: A1 B2 A1 B2 A1 B2 A1 B2

Here, speaker 1 consistently uses one language but speaker 2 consistently uses another language. While such patterns of language choice have been reported for some bilingual communities (c. Gal 1979; Alvarez 1990), the more usual one is a variant of IIa:

Pattern IIb: A1 B2 A1 B2 A1//A2 A1 A2 A1

After a time of divergent language choice, one participant, 2, accepts the other's language, and the sequence continues with language A as the language-of-interaction. This pattern represents schematically what I call 'language negotiation'. It may occur at the beginning of an interactive episode or after a switching of type I.

Contrary to type I switching, type II tells us first something about speakers' 'preferences' for one language or the other, i.e., instead of redefining the discourse, it permits assessments of/by participants. I have therefore called this type of switching 'preference-related'; here, the term 'preference' must not be understood as a psychological disposition of the speaker, but rather in the more technical, conversation-analytic sense of an interactionally visible structure. The reasons for such a preference are an altogether different issue. By preference-related switching, a speaker may simply want to avoid the language in which he or she feels insecure and speak the one in which he or she has greater competence. Yet preference-related switching may also be due to a deliberate decision based on political considerations (see Heller, this volume). What surfaces in conversation will be the same sequential arrangement of language choices, interpreted differently in different social contexts.⁵

Up to now sequential patterns of language choice have been considered which start from the assumption that a speaker's turn, or at least its final part, is unambiguously in one language or the other; only in such a case is the recipient able to take up the present speaker's language choice. However, it is frequently observed that bilingual speakers keep language choice open by switching between languages within a turn in a way that makes it impossible to decide if language A or B is the 'base language'. The recipient of such a turn may continue in this mode (Pattern IIIa) or choose the language he or she thinks is appropriate or preferred (Pattern IIIb). The turn-internal switches that occur in such an ambiguous turn may have a conversational function, such as in the case of other-language reiterations for emphasis, or topic/comment switching (see below, p. 131); but the fact of keeping the language choice open also provides information about the speaker and his or her conceptualisation of the situation. Therefore, switching of this turn-internal type is often discourse-related and at the same time participant-related.

Pattern IIIa: AB1 AB2 AB1 AB2

Pattern IIIb: AB1//A2 A1 A2

Finally, code-alternation may occur in the middle of a speaker's turn without affecting language choice for the interaction at all. Such momentary lapses into the other language usually occur because a word or another structure in language B is inserted into a language A frame. The insertion has a predictable end; code-alternation defines a unit instead of a momentary departure from the language-of-interaction. Such a type of code-alternation I have called *transfer* (as opposed to code-switching).⁶ Schematically, this pattern is represented as IV:

Pattern IV: A1[B1]A1

Transfer may be discourse- or participant-related. In the latter case, it may display a speaker's bilingual competence (for details, see Auer 1981).

The cross-cutting dichotomies of discourse- vs participant-related code-alternation on the one hand, and code-switching vs transfer on the other, provide a theory for the ways in which code-alternation may become meaningful as a contextualisation cue. This theory has been used empirically in a number of studies on Italian-German and Italian-(Canadian) English bilinguals (Auer 1983, 1984a, 1991), but also in partly refined versions in studies by Hannan (1986) and by Panese (1992) on (British) English/Italian data, by Alfonzetti (1992) on Italian standard/dialect data, and by Li (1994) on (British) English/Chinese data. Examples may be found in these publications and papers and will not be repeated here.

5 Code-alternation and language negotiation

What has been called discourse-related code-switching here (Pattern I) usually runs under the heading of conversational code-switching in the literature, and it has received much attention. On the other hand, matters of language choice for interactive episodes, processes of negotiation of a language-of-interaction between bilinguals, or patterns of language alternation due to a lack of competence (Pattern II, partly Pattern III) are usually not subsumed under conversational code-switching but considered to be either determined by societal macrostructures or by psycholinguistic factors. Thus, while discourse-related switching is analysed within conversational episodes and partly in conversation analytic terms, matters of language choice and language negotiation for an episode are relegated to ethnographic description.

In this section, it will be shown that it is not only discourse-related language alternation that must be given a conversational, sequential analysis, but other types of language alternation as well.⁷ As examples, language negotiation and 'code-switching as an unmarked choice' will be discussed.

Why does language negotiation occur at all? The model underlying some approaches to code-alternation (including Blom and Gumperz's distinction between situational and metaphorical code-switching and Fishman's approach mentioned earlier, see above, pp. 117-18) seems to be that language choice is determined by situational parameters such as topic, participant roles or overall speech event. Within the situation defined by these parameters and determining language choice, deviations from the expected or unmarked language may occur for stylistic purposes; but conversational language negotiation has no place in such a conception.

There are at least two empirical problems with this approach (leaving aside theoretical problems concerning the notions of situation and context). First, in many if not all bilingual speech communities situational factors underspecify language choice, i.e. there are at least some situations in which language choice is open; the number of linguistically underspecified situations is particularly high in the 'new' bilingual communities that have come into being in Europe as a consequence of work migration. Here, language choice often ties up with individual histories of interaction in which patterns of language choice may have developed, or is simply a matter of individual preferences, which are, in turn, related to linguistic competences and personal linguistic biographies, as well as to complex matters of bi-cultural identity. The point is that these communities are too young and culturally unstable to have developed shared norms of language choice.

Second, there are many cases in which the situation is simply not defined unambiguously. In such a case, co-participants not only have the task of finding a language; they have to define the situation, among other things, by choosing a language. Carol Myers-Scotton has shown very convincingly for the African context how this can be done and how code-switching can be used in order to 'negotiate interpersonal relationships', instead of being determined by them (e.g., in Myers-Scotton 1990; Scotton 1988).

Due to undefined situations or non-determined language choices, processes of language negotiation occur and are open to conversation analytic treatment. Conversational sequences in which a base-language is negotiated have structural properties of their own. Consider the following examples, one from the Franco-Canadian context (4), the other from Galicia (5):

(4) [at the reception of a hospital]

01 Clerk: *Central Booking, may I help you?*

02 Patient: *Oui, allô?*

03 Clerk: *Bureau de rendez-vous, est-ce que je peux vous aider?*

04 *May I help you?*

05 (Silence)

06 *Est-ce que je peux vous aider?*

07 (Silence)

08 *Anglais ou français?*

09 Patient: *WHAT?*

10 Clerk: *MAY I HELP YOU?*

11 *Oh yes, yes, I'm sorry, I'm just a little deaf*
(Heller 1982)

(5)

[informal conversation between three Galician men; A, an elementary school teacher, has given a lecture on the history of Galicia; R, the researcher, is known to study in the USA; he has been introduced to A by P, with whom he is acquainted personally]

[after talk by A in Galician, with P as the primary addressee, A turns to R, introducing a new topic; there is a (discourse-related) switching into Spanish at this point; Spanish is marked by italics]

01 A: [gazing at R, high] *y: qué tal el nivel de la*

02 *Universidad/ es alto no?*

03 R: *si:*

04 A: *y qué qué haces? filología inglesa? o:*

05 R: *nom . . . e:: . . lingüística . . pero estou interessado no*

06 galego

07 A: *ai, no galego/ bueno y fuiste becado, becado para allá? o-*

08 *o-*

09 R: *eh? si, bueno ali estou tamén traballando na universidade*

10 *e:: . . . despois derom-me umha beca pra vir aqui a galiza*

11 A: *ai, pra vir a galicia*

12 R: () . . . (e despois) *marcho para alá*

13 A: *e e a- vas outra vez para alá*

14 *e [high] qué te- quê anos tes que estar ali*

[etc., continues between A and R in Galician]

A: *amnd, what about the standards of the universities? They are high aren't they?*

R: *yes.*

A: *and what what are you studying? English Philology? or . . .*

R: *no, uuh, linguistics, but I'm interested in Galician.*

A: *oh, in Galician. So you went there with a scholarship? Or, or -*

R: *uh? yes, well, there I'm also working in the university and later they gave me a grant to come here to Galiza.*

A: *oh, to come to Galicia*

R: () (and then) *I'm going back there.*

A: *and and uh- you're going back there. So how many more years will you have to stay there?*

[etc.]

(Alvarez 1990: 152f.)

In the first case, the clerk at the reception has the professional duty to accommodate to the client's preferred language, although he or she has to provide the first turn in the interaction. She does so by reformulating her English opening phrase in French after the client's French quasi-response in line 02. In the second case, there is an open clash between A's preference for Spanish and R's preference for Galician. In both cases, political and social considerations go into these preferences. The important point to make here, however, is that the politically, socially, or simply personally motivated preferences for one language or the other are made visible in conversational sequences of language negotiation, and are therefore amenable to sequential analysis. A closer look at such sequences of language negotiation does indeed reveal a number of structural features.

The Canadian example demonstrates one of them: an absence of response after first pair parts such as questions (see, for example, after lines 03, 04, 06) prompts first speakers' inferences, made visible through the repair type carried out by these speakers in order to locate and overcome the recipients' 'problem'. Whereas in monolingual inferences reiterations of first pair parts may lead to reformulations, or to speaking louder, locating 'problems' such as 'misunderstanding', 'not enough detail', or 'too soft', the foremost inference in the bilingual situation analysed by Heller is that of a wrong (inadequate) choice of language.

From the Galician example, we can learn how a language negotiation can be won. A starts to address the visitor from America in Spanish, although the latter has displayed at least passive competence of Galician in the prior discourse. R refuses to take up this language choice, insisting on Galician. There is a conflict over conversational language choice, which is 'won' by R; it is instructive to see how. For this, compare A's and R's language choice in responsive turns. A starts to yield in turns consisting of or containing repetitions, i.e. 07, 11, 13. R, on the contrary, sticks to Galician in his responsive turns (03, 05/6, 09/10). Now, it is a general feature of bilingual language negotiation (c. Auer 1983: 93ff.) that there is more pressure to accommodate to co-participant's language choice for turns or turn components with a high degree of cohesion with previous turns – such as reformulations, repairs and second pair parts – than in initiative turns or turn components, showing little cohesion with previous turn. R wins because he insists on 'his' language even in responsive turns; and he can be said to have won as soon as A uses Galician even for an initiative turn – such as the question in 14.

Language preference and language negotiation are also at play in Pattern III above, i.e., in *code-switching as an unmarked choice*. Scholars of code-switching from Labov (1977: 31) to Heller (1988a) and Scotton (1988) have suggested that frequent conversational code-alternation may be used for creating 'strategic ambiguity' (Heller) or because 'the speaker wishes more than one social identity to be salient in the current exchange' (Scotton). Code-alternation according to this pattern is given a participant-related meaning, indexing globally an ambiguous social situation. This is surely correct. However, it seems from the examples given for this type of alternation that the individual switches, although they are not 'socially meaningful', nevertheless may have individual discourse-related functions. Consider example (6):

- (6) [(Non-standard) Swahili-English-Lwidakho code-alternation.] A
Luyia man is interviewing a Luyia woman who works in Nairobi as
a nurse. They come from the same home area and he is a friend of her

husband. As a long-term resident of Nairobi, she now uses Swahili as her main language for informal interaction in Nairobi. [English in italics, Lwidakho underlined]

- 01 Int.: unapenda kufanya kazi yako lini? Mchana au usiku?
02 Nurse: *as I told you, I like my job,*
03 *sina ubaguzi wo wote kuhusu wakati ninapofanya kazi.*
04 *I enjoy working either during the day*
05 *au usiku yote ni sawa kwangu.*
06 *Hata family members wangu wamezoea mtindo huu.*
07 *There is no quarrel at all.*
08 Obubi bubulaho.
09 Saa zengine kazi huwa nyingi sana na.
10 *There are other times when we just have light duty.*
11 Valwale vanji, more work;
12 valwale vadi, hazi kidogo.

- 01 Int.: When do you like to work? Days or nights?
02 Nurse: *As I told you, I like my job,*
03 I have no difficulty at all regarding when I do work.
04 *I enjoy working either during the day*
05 *or at night, all is ok as far as I'm concerned.*
06 Even my family members have gotten used to this plan.
07 *There is no quarrel at all.*
08 There is no badness.
09 Sometimes there is a lot of work and
10 *there are other times when we just have light duty.*
11 More patients, more work;
12 fewer patients, little work.
(Myers-Scotton (1990))

Surely, the interviewee here wants to leave language choice open; Swahili, English and Lwidakho are used one beside the other. However, the alternation between these three languages is not random. Instead, it seems quite clear that the speaker uses code-switching in order to structure her turn. Among the discourse-related functions of code-switching for this speaker are the following: (a) building up contrasts as in line 04 (English: 'during the day') vs line 05 (Swahili: 'at night'), or in line 09 (Swahili: 'times of hard work') vs line 10 (English: 'times of little

work'), or in line 11 (English: 'more work') vs line 12 (Swahili: 'little work'); (b) for grammatically unmarked (asyndetic) 'if/then' structures as in line 11 (protasis: Lwidakho; apodosis: English) and line 12 (protasis: Lwidakho; apodosis: Swahili); (c) for reformulations for the purpose of giving emphasis to a statement, as in lines 07/08 (switching from English into Lwidakho). Leaving the language choice open therefore does not exclude the possibility of using code-alternation for discourse-related purposes.

6 Conclusion

I have tried to argue that between the grammar of code-alternation on the one hand, and its social meaning for the bilingual community at large on the other, there is a third domain that needs to be taken into account: that of the sequential embeddedness of code-alternation in conversation. This domain is relatively independent of the others. Its autonomy is given by the fact that the basic principles by which code-alternation is used in conversation as a meaningful semiotic resource can be stated independently of both the grammar and the macro-social context of code-alternation. Its autonomy is only relative, however, particularly with regard to the social meaning of code-alternation, because in a given bilingual speech community, the conversational patterns of code-alternation and indeed the local meaning given to an instance of code-alternation in a particular context will vary as a function of the status of the codes in the repertoire of the community.

Notes

- ¹ Other researchers have tried to find similar correlations, such as Sapiens (1982) for bilingual classroom interaction. See the critical summary of this research by Martin-Jones in chapter 5.
- ² See Gumperz 1982: 82; Auer 1984a: 319ff.; Alvarez 1990: ch. 4; Sebba and Wootton 1984.
- ³ Cf. Gumperz 1982, 1990, 1992b, etc. For a theoretical summary, c. Auer (1992). Also c. Loke (1991) for an application of Gumperz's theory of contextualisation to code-alternation.
- ⁴ Again, I can only give a very short summary here (for details, c.: Auer 1983, 1984a and b, 1987; for a summary: Auer 1988).
- ⁵ Note that in a sequence of language choices such as Ilb, switching recurs from one turn to the next following the dyadic pattern of a two-party conversation. Alternatively, if we focus on one speaker only, the shift of language in this person's speech occurs at the point where he or she 'yields' to the other party's preferred language (the point indicated by double slashes in Ilb).

⁶ Because of this term's unfortunate association with a certain theory of second language acquisition, it may be advisable to speak of 'insertion', rather than 'transfer'.

⁷ Also c. del Coso-Calame *et al.* 1985; Nussbaum 1990; Auer 1981.

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One speaker, two languages

Cross-disciplinary perspectives on code-switching

Edited by

LESLEY MILROY and PIETER MUYSKEN

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