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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to provide classroom teachers with background information about code switching and its role and function within a bilingual community. The many facets of code switching and its varying characteristics are described in some detail, as well as code switching in the classroom and the importance of the teacher's attitude toward this linguistic process. Code switching has been found to be neither random nor meaningless, nor does it necessarily reflect language weakness. Rather, code switching is a device that conveys social information (concerning, for example, role relationships) or that is used as a stylistic process (e.g., to add color or emphasis to an utterance). Code switching also seems to be rule-governed, with mastery of the structure of both languages a prerequisite. Code switching will not usually take place in the monolingual English classroom. In the bilingual Spanish/English classroom, it has been found that (1) code switching takes place primarily during Spanish instruction; (2) students seem to follow a teacher's switching pattern; and (3) Spanish is used essentially to teach the lesson, while English is used for classroom control. The implications for bilingual education are varied and complex. Policies concerning language use in bilingual schools must reflect the goals of the bilingual program. Until such goals are established, teachers should accept code switching as universal and creative verbal behavior among bilinguals. (AM)

LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION:

THEORY & PRACTICE

4 Code Switching and the Classroom Teacher

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PLURALIT

LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION: THEORY AND PRACTICE

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CODE SWITCHING AND THE CLASSROOM TEACHER

INTRODUCTION

Code Switching: Definitions and Examples

Code switching can be defined as the alternating use of two languages on the word, phrase, clause, or sentence level. Such alternation differs from linguistic interference and integration in that in code switching, there is ordinarily a clean break between phonemic systems. In essence, code switching involves introducing into the context of one language stretches of speech that exhibit the other language's phonological and morphological features. In other words, when bilingual speakers of English and Spanish are speaking Spanish and introduce a word, phrase, clause, or sentence that is recognizably English (in both pronunciation and form), they are said to have code-switched into English. The same bilinguals may code-switch into Spanish by introducing Spanish words, clauses, etc. into their English speech. The following examples will clarify the above definition:

1. No, yo sí brincaba en el trampoline when I was a senior.

   (No, I did jump on the trampoline when I was a senior.)

2. La consulta era eight dollars.

   (The office visit was eight dollars.)

3. Tenía un vestido que era como de lace.

   (I had a dress that looked as if it was made of lace.)

4. Well, I keep starting some. Como por un mes todos los días escribo y ya dejo. Last week empecé otra vez.

   (Well, I keep starting some. For about a month I write every day and then I stop. Last week I started again.)

TABLE 1.--Principal code-switching patterns

Patterns	Definitions	Examples
Switching Patterns That Occur in Response to External Factors		
Situational switches	Related to the social role of speakers	Mother uses English to chat with daughters but switches to Spanish to reprimand son.
Contextual switches	Situation, topic, setting, etc., linked to the other language	Students switch to Englis to discuss details of a math exam.
Identity markers	In-group membership stressed	Ese bato, órale, ándale pues used in English conversations, regardless of actual Spanish fluency.
Quotations and paraphrases	Contextual. related to language used by the original speaker	Y lo (luego) me dijo el Mr. Johnson que I have to study. (Remark was actually made in English.)
Switching Patterns That Occur in Response to Internal Factors		
Random switches of high frequency items	Unpredictable, do not relate to topic, situation, setting, or language dominance, occur only on word level	Very common words, such as days of the week or colors. Function like English synonyms: gal--girl, guy--fellow, etc. Fuimos al party ayer y estuvo tan suave la fiesta.
Switches that reflect lexical need	Related to language dominance, memory, and spontaneous versus automatic speech	Include the "tip of the tongue" phenomenon; item may be momentarily forgotten.
Triggered switches	Due to preceding or following items	Yo lo vi, you know, but I didn't speak to him. (Switch is triggered by the preformulation.)
Preformulations	Include linguistic routines and automatic speech	You know, glad to meet you, thanks for calling, no te molestes, qué hay de nuevo, etc.
Discourse markers	But, and, of course, etc.	Este..este..yo sí quería ir.
Quotations and paraphrases	Non-contextual. not related to language used by original speaker	He insisted que no me fuera. But I did anyway. (Remark was originally made in English.)
Stylistic switches	Obvious stylistic devices used for emphasis or contrast	Me tomé toda la cafetera, the whole coffee pot.
Sequential switches	Involve using the last language used by the preceding speaker	Certain speakers will always follow the language switches of other speakers; others will not.

5. Me tomé toda la cafetera, the whole coffee pot.

   (I drank the whole coffee pot, the whole coffee pot.)

6. And he was laughing 'cause he saw me coming in. Se estaba riendo de mí.

   (And he was laughing 'cause he saw me coming in. He was laughing at me.)[1]

While a number of researchers have established varying classifications for types of code switching, the process can be characterized by the following features: (1) each switch into Spanish or English consists of *unchanged Spanish or English words*, and (2) these words are pronounced by the speaker *as a native speaker of that language would pronounce them*. It is important not to confuse code switching with the process of borrowing, illustrated in the following example:

7. Los muchachos están puchando la troca.

   (The boys are pushing the truck.)

In this case puchando (from the English verb push) has not only been given Spanish pronunciation but has also been transformed into a Spanish present participle. In the same way, troca is no longer identical with English truck but has been assimilated into the Spanish linguistic system. This is not the case in code switching, where all items are used exactly as they are found in the original language.

Code Switching and the Classroom Teacher: Some Possible Problems and Misinterpretations

An understanding of code switching is especially important for those classroom teachers whose students include Spanish/English bilinguals. While a great deal has already been said concerning the importance of acceptance of the child's home language by the teacher, such discussions have generally involved the different varieties or dialects of both English and Spanish that children bring with them to the classroom. Very little has been said about the characteristics of bilingual speakers who habitually alternate between two languages in their communities. Moreover, bilingualism itself is very poorly understood by most educators, and, for that reason, much of the literature available to the classroom teacher misrepresents language processes that are normal for bilingual speakers of every linguistic community. A typical instance is the labeling of the alternating use of English and Spanish in this country as "Spanglish," "Mex-Tex," or "Pocho," and the common belief, held by many teachers, that children who code-switch really speak neither English nor Spanish.

Clearly, such misunderstandings are serious. It is reprehensible for professionals to label children alingual simply because they do not have a clear understanding of exactly what such language alternation involves. It is particularly unfortunate to find that educators involved in bilingual programs have little knowledge of what such language alternation can reveal about (1) the language strengths of their students, (2) the real use of the two languages in the community, and (3) their own use of two languages within the bilingual classroom.

The purpose of this paper is to provide classroom teachers with background information about code switching and its role and function within a bilingual community. The many facets of code switching as well as its varying characteristics will be described in some detail, as these phenomena have been found to occur between several different pairs of languages. Also included will be a brief discussion of code switching in the classroom and the importance of the teacher's attitude toward this linguistic process.

TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF CODE SWITCHING WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A BILINGUAL COMMUNITY

Bilingualism: A Brief Overview of General Processes

Bilingualism is a widespread natural phenomenon. It has come about in different places for different reasons. Nevertheless, all natural bilingual situations have in common the fact that bilingualism will occur at those times when the speakers' first language will not meet all their communicative needs. As Einar Haugen has put it, "Necessity is the mother of bilingualism" (Haugen 1953). For example, a particular community may wish to trade with another community that speaks a different language. Under these circumstances, a number of citizens of both communities may become bilingual enough to carry on such trade. Or, a particular geographical area may be conquered by a group of people who speak another language. In this case, if the language of the conquerors is established as the language of education, commerce, and so forth, the newly conquered community (to the degree that it participates in these activities) must become bilingual. Or, a group of persons may leave their community and become members of another community that has a different language. Again, to the extent that these persons want to participate in the life of the new community, they will become bilingual.

The word bilingual, as used by linguists, is a general term that includes varying degrees of proficiency in two languages. Bilingual, from this perspective, does not mean that speakers are perfectly balanced in their use or strengths in both their languages,

but rather that they can function, to whatever degree, in more than one language. Bilingual individuals, then, may have in common only the fact that they are not monolingual.

It is also important to distinguish between the "academic" bilingual and the "natural" bilingual. The former becomes bilingual by choice, generally acquires such additional language skills in an academic context, and may or may not actually be a member of a bilingual community. Such persons normally interact with monolingual speakers of each of their two languages. The natural bilingual, on the other hand, is the product of a specific linguistic community that uses one of its languages for certain functions and the other for other functions or situations. In Spain, for example, Catalán-speaking communities generally retain Catalán for interaction within the family or with friends and employ Spanish as the "national" language of the country. Until King Juan Carlos's recent decree, all schooling in this area had been in Spanish. As a result, present-day Catalán speakers have become bilingual of necessity. They are natural bilinguals, products of an environment that requires that certain proficiencies be retained in one language and acquired in the other. Unlike academic bilinguals, however, natural bilinguals interact primarily with other bilingual speakers within their own community. However, they are also able (to a greater or lesser degree, depending upon the specialized use of each of their languages) to interact with monolingual speakers in each of their languages.

The language strengths and weaknesses of bilingual individuals cannot really be understood without a knowledge of the manner in which these two languages are used in their linguistic community. Indeed, everyone uses language according to certain sociolinguistic rules. While no one, except linguists, may be aware of such rules, they essentially determine who says what to whom and when. Part of belonging to a speech community involves knowing what to say, when to say it, how formal, friendly, or intimate to be, and under which circumstances to speak or to remain silent.

Bilingual individuals also know from early childhood the appropriate conditions under which to speak each of their two languages. Some communities have a rigid separation of functions for their two languages: for example, language A is used at home and with family, and language B is used for school and work. Other communities show different patterns: for example, language A is used with certain members of the family and intimate friends and language B with bilinguals with whom there is less intimacy. In the United States, most immigrant bilingual communities slowly increase use of their English for all activities and functions so that by the fourth generation, the community has gone from predominantly bilingual to predominantly monolingual speakers.

The use of the two languages in a community will be reflected in

the relative proficiency of its bilingual members in each of the languages. For example, if all church activities are carried out exclusively in language A, bilinguals will be able to discuss religious topics with greater ease in language A than in language B. Bilinguals who have pursued an education exclusively in one of their languages and who have reserved the other language for non-intellectual, informal use will reflect this fact in the relative ease with which they can enter into academic discussions in one language versus the other.

Bilingual communities will also differ in regard to their attitude toward bilingualism, their loyalty to their first language, and their desire to resist any influence from the second or "outside" language. In many communities, speakers are encouraged to speak only one of their languages and to resist all borrowings from the other language. In most communities, however, the unique laws or principles of speech economy prevail, and bilingual speakers permit the use of either or both their languages to communicate with each other.

Hymes (1972), who developed the concept of speech economy, defines it as a highly structured system of communicative acts and events that is characteristic of a group. Such a system is influenced by cultural values, beliefs, institutions, and linguistic codes. The boundaries and rules for communication include such aspects as the use of different linguistic codes for different functions. From the work of Fishman (1964), it is clear that stable, intragroup bilingualism in any community is characterized by the fact that its members may use both languages for communicating with each other, with each language serving unique communicative ends. Each language, as we have stated previously, is not used for every type of exchange possible in the community. Such use would make one or the other of the languages superfluous. Compartmentalization of the functions, rather than duplication, is the rule. Members of such speech communities do not feel that each of their languages is threatened by the presence of the other; rather, they are generally quite comfortable using one language or the other, or unique varieties of both, in the manner accepted within their particular system of communication.

Another concept closely related to the study of bilingualism is language contact. Two languages are said to be in contact when they are used alternately by the same speakers. Recent research on bilingualism has demonstrated that language usage norms within communities in which languages are in contact are often significantly different from those prevailing in monolingual societies. As the effects or results of language contact are studied around the world, it becomes evident that when two languages are spoken by a group of bilinguals, certain changes develop in each of the two languages.

One of the common effects of such language contact is the phenomenon known as interference.[2] Interference is a momentary transfer from one language to another of elements from one of the languages spoken by a bilingual. There may be interference in the case of Spanish/English bilinguals from their English into their Spanish or conversely from their Spanish into their English, regardless of which language is dominant.

Integration is another phenomenon commonly found in bilingual communities. As opposed to interference, integration involves the regular use of items from one language in the other. Such regular borrowing takes place in all bilingual communities for a number of reasons. Norwegian immigrants to the United States, for example, did not have the exact equivalents in Norwegian for certain farming terms that they needed to use and so borrowed them from English. In another form of integration, words in the first language are extended to take on a completely new meaning, simply because they sound like words in the new language. For example, the word grosería (rude remark) is now used in some bilingual communities for the English word grocery. Finally, borrowing often takes place because the words of the new language are used so frequently that they become more accessible to bilingual speakers, even though there might be perfectly acceptable words in the first language.

The following examples show that interference and integration do not occur only on the lexical level.

1. Phonological Interference

   A. Spanish to English

      (1) bit (pronounced beet)
      (2) chip (pronounced cheep)
      (3) ship (pronounced cheep)
      (4) speak (pronounced espeak)

   B. English to Spanish

      (The following are characteristic of the native English speaker learning Spanish.)

      (1) mesa (pronounced maysa)
      (2) todo (pronounced towdow)

2. Syntactic Interference

   A. Spanish to English

      (1) Echo of the Spanish subjunctive:
          My aims are that I graduate from college
      (2) Grammatical order:
          Goes the class to the library.
      (3) Syntactic agreement:
          The people is...

B. English to Spanish

(1) Use of progressive aspect:

Dos direcciones donde se está vendiendo estampillas.
(Two addresses where stamps are being sold.)

Estamos teniendo cielos nublados.
(We are having cloudy skies.)

(2) Use of prepositions:

Es importante a comprar.
(It's important to buy.)

Está enamorado con ella.
(He is in love with her.)

In essence, in bilingual communities, bilinguals interact primarily with other bilinguals, and the principle of specialization versus duplication prevails. Bilingual speakers are aware that each of their languages has certain strengths and that two languages can be used simultaneously to convey the most precise meaning. In order to take advantage of this fact, special verbal strategies are commonly developed by bilinguals when talking to each other. One such verbal strategy is code switching, which, as we defined above, involves the alternating use of two languages. In the following section, general characteristics of code switching will be examined in order to illustrate the complexity of this dynamic verbal process.

Code Switching as a Worldwide Phenomenon

Within the last decade, code switching between various pairs of languages has been studied in some depth. Such language alternation has been found to be characteristic of communities bilingual in Swedish and English, Greek and English, French and English, Yiddish and English, Italian and English, German and English, two dialects of Norwegian and English, two dialects of Hindi and English, Hindi and Punjabi, and, of course, English and Spanish. In essence, research in this area has sought to explore the following questions:

1. Is code switching random and meaningless?

2. Is social information conveyed by a change in language?

3. Is code switching used stylistically by speakers, that is, to add color to speech or for emphasis?

4. Is code switching related to the relative proficiency of bilingual speakers in each of their languages?

5. Is code switching rule governed, that is, do syntactic constraints operate on code switching on the word, phrase, and clause levels?

6. How do each of the above factors interact in the use of this verbal strategy by individual speakers?

There is little doubt at the moment about the first two questions. Code switching has been found to be neither random nor meaningless. Rather, it is a device that conveys important social information ranging from role relationships between speakers to feelings of solidarity, intimacy, and so forth. In the discussion below, a number of these communicative processes will be illustrated. While all examples have been drawn from the literature on English/Spanish code switching, each of these strategies has been found among several of the pairs of languages mentioned above.

Code Switching as a Means of Reflecting Social Information

It was established earlier that it is common for bilingual communities to use their two languages in different domains and settings. When this occurs, a specific language becomes identified with certain roles (for example, English for teachers, employers, and policemen, and Spanish for grandparents, the aged); with certain topics (family chit-chat, neighborhood gossip, and religion as opposed to the work domain, academic subjects, politics); and with certain settings (private versus public). Code switching, then, can signal the fact that two bilinguals are shifting their role relationship with regard to one another, are shifting topics, or are responding to the particular characteristics of the setting. For example, it is not unusual for a bilingual employer and employee to discuss matters relating to business in the language of the work domain, followed by a switch, within the same conversation, to the language of the home or neighborhood for a discussion of personal experiences or social talk. In the following examples, the strategy of such switches can be seen clearly:

Mother	:	Which dress are you going to wear to the dance, Barbie?
Barbie (12)	:	The white one.
Mother	:	[Looking at her eight-year-old son slurping a milkshake nearby] Which one?
Barbie	:	The one with the puffy sleeves.
Mother	:	[Interrupting to correct the boy] Leo, siéntate, mira lo que estás haciendo. Estás tirando todo el milkshake. (Leo, sit down, look what you're doing. You're spilling all the milkshake.)[3]

Here a mother is speaking to her adolescent daughter. Her eight-year-old son is playing nearby. The mother becomes more and more impatient with the boy when he fails to respond to her directions. Finally, to emphasize her annoyance (and her parental role), she switches into Spanish.

This same role-revealing switch has been found among Mexican American children by Erica McLure:

Pat (girl, 9)	:	Stop it, Roli. You're stupid!
Roli (brother, 3):		You stupid Pat.
Pat	:	[Laughing and holding R off] Don't hit me!
Roli	:	[Trips and begins to cry]
Pat	:	¡Ay Roli! Mi hijito, ¿qué pasó? (Oh, Roli, my baby, what happened?)[4]

The friendly banter of two children changes dramatically when the younger child is hurt. At that point, the older sister assumes the role of the comforting mother and switches into Spanish.

Obviously, these switches are neither random nor meaningless. Moreover, each took place on the sentence level, which is typical of switches of this kind. There is no question that insufficient language strength could have caused either of these switches. The following situations also illustrate how code switching conveys social information:

1. Two bilinguals speak Spanish in a restaurant until the waitress approaches. At that point they switch to English and continue to use this language with the waitress, even though she herself is Mexican American and bilingual.

2. Two bilinguals greet each other in public in English, and while most of the conversation takes place in this language, such Spanish expressions as "ándale pues" and "órale, órale" are frequently used in the conversation. Such switches are known as identity markers and are used to express solidarity and intimacy between two speakers of the same ethnic group.

3. Two bilinguals are speaking rapid Spanish but when joined by a third bilingual, they switch to English. Again, this switch is not meaningless. Possibly the two bilinguals switch because: (a) the third bilingual is not an intimate with whom they wish to speak the "home" language; (b) the third bilingual feels uncomfortable speaking Spanish and has previously made this preference known; (c) the third bilingual represents a role identified with English; or,

(d) the conversation switches to a formal level (English use predominates), and the reintroduction of Spanish (the informal register) is left up to the new speaker.

Clearly, such switching reflects the language use of the community of which the bilinguals are members. As such, code switching can be studied and analyzed by those persons who wish to learn more about the appropriate rules for speaking within a certain community. Such information can be of great benefit for those involved in the planning or implementation of bilingual education programs. For the classroom teacher, it is extremely important to emphasize that this type of code switching does not reveal language weakness but, rather, a high degree of sophistication of the speakers in the various uses and functions of each of their languages.

Code Switching as a Stylistic Process

Unlike switching that conveys social information, stylistic switching is dependent upon the individual speaker's personal preference for one or the other of two languages, provided that the social situation in question permits either code. Such stylistic switching takes place more commonly within the same sentence (on the word, phrase, or clause level) but can also be found on the sentence level. Essentially, stylistic switching is used as a personal rhetorical device to add color to an utterance, to emphasize, to contrast, to underscore a context, to create new poetic meanings, and the like. The following examples will clarify this distinctive strategy:

1. The repetition of the same item in two languages:

   Me tomé toda la cafetera, the whole coffee pot.
   (I drank the whole coffee pot, the whole coffee pot.)

   (Spoken with the intonation used in the TV ad, "I ate the whole thing.")

2. The use of one language as the language of narration and the other language as the language of paraphrase:

   Y le dije, I really don't want to go. Y me dijo, well I guess I can take Elsie. Así es que se fue y ya no lo vi.

   (And I said, I really don't want to go. And he told me, well I guess I can take Elsie. So he left and I didn't see him again.)

3. The use of items in one language that do not have equivalents of the same strength in the other:

He was like muy antipático (very unpleasant) and nobody liked him.

4. The use of items in one language to emphasize their ethnic content:

   The chicana has got to know that her familia (family) comes first.

   Every September we would go out and get some membrillos (quince).[5]

5. The actual poetic use of both languages:

   Ayer
   mi padre también salio
      solito
   and crawled a gatas
   on burning sands of time.

   (Yesterday
   my father also went out
      alone
   and crawled on all fours
   on burning sands of time.)[6]

In the above example, the poet (Jesús Maldonado) creates a strong poetic image by combining crawled a gatas, which cannot be equaled either by the English crawled on all fours or by the Spanish anduvo a gatas. Much of contemporary bilingual poetry written by chicanos is unique in its exploitation of the resources of both languages to create poetic imagery.

Again, stylistic switching occurs not because the speakers lack an equivalent in one of their languages, but rather because they wish to convey a precise meaning. Such switching occurs when all participants are bilingual and when the social situation allows the use of either code.

Although current research has concentrated primarily on the use of code switching as a reflection of a social situation, some researchers have sought to explore the different code-switching styles of bilingual speakers. Preliminary work suggests that certain speakers switch codes to emphasize statements, to paraphrase and narrate, or to convey factual information, while others tend to be natural mimics and adapt the switching patterns of the person to whom they are speaking. Unfortunately, most bilinguals are not aware of the complexity of the strategies they use, and when questioned will often agree with their critics that they switch because it is a sloppy habit, or because they do not know the right words or cannot think of them quickly enough, etc. It has occurred to very few

bilingual speakers that such stylistic switching is a reflection of language strength rather than weakness. The recent work of Erica McLure and James Wentz (1975a, b), who recorded children's narratives, shows that certain stylistic processes, such as narration in one language and quotation in another, are developed in children between the ages of 9 and 12.

Code Switching and the Overall Proficiency of Bilingual Speakers

Switches of the type we have examined presuppose a degree of proficiency in two languages that enables speakers to alternate between them meaningfully, depending upon the requirements of the social situation or their own expressive needs. It must be emphasized, however, that not all speakers have the resources needed to switch in the patterns that have been described. Many bilinguals switch only when speaking their weaker language in order to add color or emphasis in the stronger language. Others use high-frequency words (such as colors, days of the week, common nouns) interchangeably in either language but without regard to their connotative or affective meanings.

As stated earlier, bilingual speakers have in common only the fact that they are not monolingual. Members of different communities will display different proficiencies, depending upon the frequency of use of each of their languages. If the community is typical of the immigrant community described by Fishman (1964), then the various generations will reveal clear differences as follows:

1. Initial stage. Immigrants learn English through their mother tongue. English is used only in those domains (such as work) where the mother tongue cannot be used.

2. Second stage. Immigrants learn more English and can speak to each other in this language or in their own. Interference increases, although there is still a dependency on the mother tongue.

3. Third stage. Speakers function in both languages with nearly equal ease. Languages function independently, and domains overlap.

4. Fourth stage. English has displaced the mother tongue, except for the most intimate or private domains. This stage is the exact reverse of the initial stage.

Bilinguals in the fourth stage would not have the language resources in the mother tongue for elaborate stylistic switches. They would probably switch only when the conversation was in the mother tongue and on a topic for which they had no vocabulary in that language. Bilinguals in the first stage, however, would be expected to do

exactly the opposite. Because their second language would be quite weak, they would not be capable of introducing long or meaningful sentence-length switches into this language. They would probably switch only when speaking the new language or during those moments when they were speaking their first language and using technical terminology from their new language.

The classroom teacher should be aware that the use or lack of use of code switching by bilingual students can very rarely suffice as an index of language strength or weakness. Indeed, it would be difficult even for a trained linguist to make assumptions concerning the proficiency of particular speakers from the use of different code-switching patterns in their two languages. In some cases, the direction of language switching might be revealing, but here again, what may be revealed is the pattern and use characteristic of the community rather than the skill of the individual speaker. There is no evidence in the existing research that suggests that word-level switches are characteristic of one level of proficiency or that sentence, clause, or phrase switches indicate a different level of skill development. In fact, a switch at the word level may be far more complex in its indication of precise meaning than several sentence-length switches used for the same purpose. The function and pattern of switches would have to be analyzed case by case before a conclusion could be reached concerning their complexity or their relative weakness or strength.

Code Switching as a Rule-Governed Process

Several linguists who have studied code switching have concluded that there may be syntactic limits to language alternation within a given sentence. One researcher (Timm 1975) has noted that certain segments of speech are never switched internally. It is evident, moreover, that bilinguals who code-switch as a general rule consider certain sentences unacceptable and ill formed (conventionally marked with an asterisk). For instance,

*El man old está enojado (The old man is mad.)
*El man viejo está enojado
*El hombre old está enojado

were all considered unacceptable as opposed to

El old man está enojado
The hombre viejo is mad

which were considered well formed.[7]

Recent work in linguistics has established the fact that native speakers of a language have the ability to recognize immediately when specific sentences do not constitute possible utterances in

that language. A speaker of English would consider the following sentences ungrammatical or ill formed:

*He is polyglot, aren't they?
*She was near the stream, wasn't it?

and at the same time find the following sentence acceptable:

She was near the stream, wasn't she?[8]

These examples suggest that there is a specific rule in English (here involving tag questions) that is being violated by two of these sentences. While most native speakers may not be able to verbalize such a rule precisely, it is evident that a certain set of rules (or linguistic competence) accounts for judgments about a language as well as the actual production of utterances in that language. Gingràs (1974) states that

> There seems to be a set of rules or constraints that are operative and in order for a person to code-switch effectively, he must control these constraints.

Other researchers have agreed with this hypothesis, and efforts have been made to determine exactly what these rules encompass. Two researchers (Timm 1975 and Pfaff 1975) have explored the question in some depth. The following selected examples of restrictions have been suggested by Timm:

1. Switches that involve pronominal subjects and objects and the finite verbs to which they belong:

*Yo went.	(I went.)	*Him mira.	(He sees him.)
*El wants.	(He wants.)	*She sees lo.	(She sees him.)
*Mira him.	(Look at him.)	*Lo she sees.	(Him she sees.)

2. Switching between finite verbs and their infinitive complements:

*They want a venir.	(They want to come.)
*Quieren to come.	(They want to come.)
*I'm going a decidir.	(I'm going to decide.)
*Voy to decide.	(I'm going to decide.)

3. Switching in which the negating element does not correspond to the verb undergoing negation:

*I do not (don't) quiero.	(I do not want.)
*I do no want.	
*I no want.[9]	

Evidence of restrictions was also found recently in the work with Mexican American children carried out by Wentz and McLure (1975).

Their research shows that rules underlying the language alternation process are internalized during early childhood by speakers who code-switch within their communities. After a detailed study of a number of syntactic features among Mexican American children, these authors conclude:

> The fluent bilingual chicano child, on the other hand, appears to take both syntactic systems into account equally when switching codes rather than favoring one or the other. For the fluent bilingual, two disparate linguistic systems are managed separately or blended, according to need...the results are far from chaotic.

For the classroom teacher the evidence in favor of the interpretation of code switching as a rule-governed process is important in that it suggests that a child who code-switches effectively between English and Spanish and between Spanish and English, rather than being alingual, nonlingual, or a speaker of a senseless language mixture, is actually operating within the rules of both systems in a uniquely complex manner.

Code Switching as a Dynamic Verbal Strategy

The above sections have only superficially presented the most important aspects of code switching as a verbal strategy among bilingual speakers. A number of other factors interact with the processes described here to result in a dynamic linguistic process as yet imperfectly understood. The difficulties of analyzing particular code switches may be made more evident by Table 1, in which a working classification of code-switching patterns is presented. The categories in this table have been used by Valdés-Fallis (1975) to differentiate between the use and function of various patterns of language alternation. These categorizations further emphasize the difficulties of making generalizations about the form or length of such switches and their actual purpose or effect.

CODE SWITCHING IN THE CLASSROOM

Code Switching in the Monolingual English-Speaking Classroom

Among Mexican American bilinguals, code switching takes place predominantly when the base language (the language being spoken) is Spanish. Generally, the alternating code is used exclusively with other bilinguals and is seen as an informal and perhaps intimate mode of speaking. Very rarely do Mexican American adult bilinguals code-switch when involved in conversations with English-speaking monolinguals or when in settings in which English monolin-

guals may momentarily join in the conversation. It could be conjectured, then, that children, following the rules of their community, would also be unlikely to code-switch into Spanish when speaking English in a classroom where only English is spoken. The obvious exceptions would include the monolingual Spanish-speaking child who might venture forth to express a need in very limited English and then have to use Spanish to continue. Such a situation might involve an emergency of some sort, since monolingual Spanish-speaking children generally remain silent in the classroom unless forced to speak or until convinced that they can communicate in English. The monolingual English-speaking teacher need not ordinarily worry about language alternation in the classroom.

Code switching will take place, however, on the grounds among the children themselves and with certain adults with whom they may have established some rapport. Indeed, much of the Spanish interaction between peers seems to involve code switching, regardless of the base language. It is not uncommon, for example, to find that Mexican American boys, involved in playing a game in which English is predominantly used, will suddenly switch into Spanish for certain displays of hostility that include selected insults and threats. Such switching clearly follows the patterns seen among adults in which different roles or situations are reflected by momentary language shifts.

For the monolingual English-speaking teacher who is interested in interpersonal or community dynamics, the observation of such playground or otherwise "private" interaction among bilingual children can be most informative. As noted earlier, however, the teacher should avoid making generalizations about language strength and weakness.

The situation for the bilingual "Anglo" teacher or for the bilingual Mexican American teacher in the monolingual English-speaking classroom is somewhat different from that described above and can be said to parallel the situation of the teacher in the bilingual classroom. The following section will discuss a number of factors concerning switching in this latter context.

Code Switching in the Bilingual English/Spanish Classroom

Generally speaking, bilingual education involves the use of two (or more) languages as instructional media for the teaching of subject matter other than language per se. Current bilingual education programs range from those in which bilingualism is seen as a transitional device to those in which biliterate bilingualism and language maintenance are fundamental goals. The bilingual classroom, in turn, varies according to the type of program of which it is a part, the specific structure of the dual language instructional process (different teachers for different languages, alternate days

for different languages with the same teacher, morning and afternoon alternation between languages, etc.) and, ultimately, the individual language proficiencies of the teachers in question. Teachers should consider any discussion of code switching within the bilingual classroom against the background of the program of which they are a part. This section will raise a number of questions rather than prescribe behaviors for teachers in the bilingual classroom. These questions should be answered by individual teachers as they examine their own function and role within the classroom and its impact upon the children with whom they interact.

Perhaps the most important question to be answered by the teacher and by those who plan to establish a bilingual program is the question of appropriateness of register. Recent work in sociolinguistics bears out Hymes's (1972) statement that

> No normal person, and no normal community, is limited to a single way of speaking, to an unchanging monotony that would preclude indications of respect, insolence, mock seriousness, humor, role, distance, and intimacy by switching from one role to the other.

In other words, all speakers, whether members of monolingual or bilingual speech communities, control a number of varieties or modes of speaking that range from the most intimate to the most formal. A speaker of English very clearly selects different styles when lecturing before a large audience, meeting a person for the first time, joking with a spouse, or selling insurance. These different styles (or registers) may be characterized by such factors as the amount of information that is left in or out, the preciseness of pronunciation and intonation, and the like. Martin Joos (1961) has designated the various speech registers as intimate, casual, consultative, formal, and frozen.

Language interaction within the classroom involves the use of a variety of styles by the teacher and by the students in response. In general, however, the classroom has been identified (certainly with regard to the use of nonstandard dialects) as a domain wherein a variety of language is used other than that found in ordinary conversation. The decision as to how formal or informal the language use in a specific classroom will be rests primarily with the teacher, who by attitude or example will set the tone for what is considered "appropriate." As we have stated previously, code switching is a mode of speaking that is generally considered appropriate for use in informal, casual, or intimate speech among bilingual speakers. Normally, only one of the speaker's languages (generally the prestige or majority language) will be chosen for the most formal interaction.

It is important to bear in mind again here that immigrant bilingual communities tend to become monolingual within four generations. In

the United States, pressures toward assimilation are amplified by the overall use of English in most everyday experiences; this usually leads children to feel somewhat less secure in their home language in the course of time. On the other hand, it has been noted that if there remains even one domain in which children must use this home language, the probability of their retaining it is increased significantly.

The following questions should be considered by teachers in order to determine their policy about code switching in the classroom:

1. What is their own attitude toward this mode of speaking? Do they habitually switch? Or do they find it distasteful? Do they switch when speaking both languages or only when speaking Spanish?

2. How proficient and confident are they in Spanish? Do they prefer to teach in English and often feel insecure when giving an advanced lesson in Spanish?

3. How proficient are the students in both English and Spanish? If the role of the program is to bring about bil'terate bilingualism, is this being accomplished? Or does most instruction in Spanish get "switched" to English in the course of the lesson? Are the students comfortable in discussing academic subjects in both languages, or do they seem to lack Spanish vocabulary in the higher grades? Has a transition actually been taking place?

4. How prevalent is the use of Spanish in the community? Is it still primarily the home language? What is the attitude of the community and the parents toward their own code switching?

5. If the community is slowly shifting from English/Spanish bilingual to English monolingual, how important is it to provide in the bilingual program a domain in which only Spanish is used?

6. If code switching is not considered appropriate in the classroom, is this ban limited to recitations and presentations by both teachers and students, or does it include group work or other in-class peer interaction? Can language use by students with students actually be controlled by the teacher?

7. Finally, what is the present overall policy (stated or unstated) for language use in the program?

Phillips (1975) examined code switching in a bilingual education program and found that (1) code switching took place primarily during Spanish instruction and seldom during English instruction; (2) students seemed to follow a teacher's switching pattern; and (3) Spanish (during instruction in Spanish) was used essentially to

teach the lesson, while English was used for classroom control. The implications of such language choice (the power and efficiency of English as opposed to Spanish) were certainly important for both students and teachers.

Choices concerning actual language use are complex. It is difficult to know how much influence a bilingual program may have on the language of a bilingual community. It is possible, however, that well-planned programs may be important in the preservation and maintenance of minority languages in this country. Policies concerning the use of one language or both within the same classroom and rules for the use of each must be logically established according to the purpose for which the bilingual program was implemented. If the community and its educators see language maintenance as a distinct goal, the policies concerning the use of the minority language will be of one sort, while if the goal is simply for the children to achieve proficiency in the majority language as quickly as possible, the policies will be quite different. Until such goals and policies are made clear for all bilingual programs, the most important consideration is that teachers accept code switching as a universal bilingual verbal strategy. The complexity of this process suggests that rather than being alingual and limited, its users are in a unique position to use language creatively.

NOTES

[1]From the bilingual corpus collected at New Mexico State University, Las Cruces by the author.

[2]Not all researchers in the area of bilingualism agree that the concept of interference is a useful one. Fishman, for example, has suggested that the languages of a community wherein in agroup bilingualism obtains be studied not as two pure and distinct languages that have "rubbed off" on one another but rather as unique varieties (perhaps combinations of language X and language Y), each with a definite structure, each utilized by specific persons for specific purposes, goals, interactions, etc. Another researcher, Gumperz, has proposed the term linguistic repertoire to speak of the varieties of language or languages used by a particular speaker. As Fishman has stated, the term interference has unfortunate pejorative connotations and suggests that the language of bilinguals has not been approached in an unbiased fashion.

[3]Corpus, New Mexico State University.

[4]Erica McLure, Aspects of code switching in discourse of bilingual Mexican American children (paper presented at the Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, Washington, D.C., 1977).

[5]Corpus, New Mexico State University.

[6]From the poem "Under a never changing sun," by Jesús Maldonado, Literatura chicana: texts y contexto, eds. A. Castaneda Shular et al. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972), 33-34.

[7]From Rosario Gingràs, Problems in the description of Spanish-English intrasentential code switching, in Southwest areal linguistics, ed. G. Bills (San Diego: Institute for Cultural Pluralism, 1974).

[8]From A. Akmajian and Frank Heny, An introduction to the principles of transformational syntax (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1975).

[9]From L.A. Timm, Spanish English code switching: el porque y how-not-to, Romance Philology 28, 473-82.

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[1]Documents identified by an ED number may be read on microfiche at an ERIC library collection or ordered from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service, P.O. Box 190, Arlington, VA 22210.

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