

# DYNAMICS OF CODE-SWITCHING IN THE BUSINESS DOMAIN

EMY M. PASCASIO  
Ateneo de Manila University

## 1. BACKGROUND

In a multilingual society such as the Philippines, the alternate use of 2 or more languages such as English and any one of the Philippine languages is not a matter of random choice. Rather the selection of a certain language to be used in a particular situation is patterned and governed by a set of cultural rules. That is to say, it is culturally appropriate to use one language in one situation and another in some other situation. Research studies on language choice and usage conducted at the Ateneo de Manila University, De La Salle University, and Philippine Normal College have shown that the choice of the language code to be used depends upon who speaks what to whom, when and where, why and how. Some of the findings are: (1) More Filipino than English is used in the domains of home, school, and community when casually conversing, asking and giving information with peer group as well as below peer. (2) More English than Pilipino is used in school with above peer on formal topics. In the domain of social gatherings, however, there is free code alternation in English and Pilipino. (3) The nature of the subject matter in a conversation or topic also determines the language choice. A Filipino Bilingual often talks about personal matters in Pilipino such as his home activities, his family, and personal experiences, but switches to English when the conversation shifts to topics about national and international events. Code-switching occurs mostly when speaking in informal situations, and more frequently in the Metro Manila area.

## 2. PURPOSE

In this study I am interested not only in finding out more about the socio-cultural factors affecting code-switching but also in investigating the dynamics of code-switching among Filipino bilinguals in business transactions in terms of function, occurrence, and linguistic pattern. I have chosen the business domain recognizing the fact that in order to achieve success in business negotiations one must be equipped with communicative strategies to facilitate social interaction. By investigating the dynamics of code-switching I hope to learn the appropriate cues used in achieving effective business communication in English and Pilipino. Furthermore, I have attempted to find out how borrowing can be distinguished from code-switching.

## 3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is a preliminary analysis of the conversational code-switching in the business transactions of some Metro-Manila firms. It is the first attempt in the Philippines at utilizing the Gumperz model where the primary focus is on the social interaction itself – the conversation (as opposed to labov's model which utilizes variation analysis). In the Philippines, the combining of Tagalog and English is referred to as 'Taglish'.

Questions on whether this is the beginning of creolization have been raised, but unless more in-depth analysis on the discourse level is done, the issue remains an academic one.

The studies conducted on the Filipino bilingual's code-switching patterns have been largely of the situational type. The data used for these studies have been gathered through questionnaires, interviews, language usage diaries or similar self report methods, and frequency counts of code incidence in actual texts. The findings of these studies have shown that code selection is contextually or situationally determined. We learn that the choice of Pilipino instead of English or vice versa is determined by domain, role relationship of interlocutors, speech functions, and topics. However, the functions of code-switching have not been thoroughly and systematically investigated; its occurrences have only been partially investigated; thus, there is need to pursue this direction further so that we can fully describe and understand the Filipino bilingual's code-switching process.

Data on conversational code-switching will provide us better insights into appropriate cues as well as into semantically significant information in verbal interaction. We will also find out how speakers and listeners utilize both social and grammatical knowledge in interpreting bilingual conversations.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

The data I have analyzed for this study are tape-recordings of actual conversations from selected business establishments, (San Miguel Corporation's Public Relations Department, Magnolia Dairy Plant, GSIS Claims and Information Divisions, a financing company, and Mirador Hotel). Only those passages which are clearly recognizable are used in the analysis; all others have been eliminated.

For purposes of clarification I have used Gumperz (1977a) definitions of *borrowing*, *code-switching*, and *conversational code-switching*, although I have provided Philippine examples to illustrate them:

*Borrowing* consists of the introduction of single words or frozen idiomatic phrases from one language into the other. The items in question are incorporated into the grammatical system of the borrowing language. They are treated as part of its lexicon, take on its morphological characteristics, and enter into its syntactic structures:

- (1) *titser* (English word but with Pilipino pronunciation)
- (2) *Tinatype pa niya ang kaniyang report.*

*Code-Switching*, in contrast, relies on the meaningful juxtaposition of what speakers must process as strings formed according to the internal syntactic rules of *two distinct systems*. An example is the following:

##### *Pilipino-English.*

- (3) O, di mabuti. . . papupuntahin ko sila doon, tapos bumalik sila// if it's not yet their turn. (//refers to code-switching from one language  $L_1$  to another language  $L_2$ )

*Conversational code-switching* refers to the juxtaposition of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub-systems, within the same exchange. Most frequently, the alternation takes the form of two subsequent sentences, as when a speaker uses a second language to reiterate his message or to reply to someone else's statement.

- (4) Hotel Situation: An interchange between a guest and the Hotel Clerk  
*English-Pilipino*

Guest: I'll not check-out.

Clerk: Ah, hindi kayo// check-out?

- (5) Two friends greeting each other  
*Pilipino-English*

A: Hi, ano, kumusta ka!

B: Hi, long time no see

Each of the above exchanges forms a single unitary interactional whole. There is nothing in the exchange to indicate that the speakers do not understand each other. Apart from the alternation itself, the passages have all the earmarks of ordinary conversation in a single language.

The tape recorded dialogues are transcribed, and utterances exemplifying code-switching are picked out and grouped according to functions. Borrowings are also grouped according to their structure and occurrence. Then a comparison is made of the frequency of the English and Pilipino utterances.

Observations and interviews have been conducted to identify and describe the socio-cultural factors affecting the code-switching process.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

These findings are based on the conversational functions observed by Gumperz (1976).

### 5.1. QUOTATIONS

In many instances the code switched passages are clearly identifiable either as direct quotations or as reported speech. In the examples given below, code-switching serves to make a direct quotation.

- (6) *Pilipino-English*. At the hotel information desk, the desk clerk is explaining to the researcher the usual conversational exchange between him and an incoming hotel guest:

Sasabihin lamang namin//Do you have a reservation, Sir?

- (7) *Pilipino-English*. At a business meeting the chairman repeating himself.  
Sabi ko// you remove all the supplies.

### 5.2. ADDRESSEE SPECIFICATION

Code-switching also serves to direct the message to one of several possible addressees. In the following examples the switch is made when directing the message to the third addressee.

- (8) *English-Pilipino*. The hotel information desk clerk talking to one of the guests, at the same time giving instructions to his co-worker:

Sorry, I thought you're checking out now//

Cancelin mo na. Mrs. lang pala ang aalis.

- (9) *Pilipino-English*. The chairman of the committee addressing a question to the whole group, but actually directing the question to one of the members:

Ano // last year? How was it last year?

### 5.3. INTERJECTIONS

In other cases, the code switch serves to mark an interjection or utterance filler.

- (10) *English-Pilipino*. Two public relations writers talking about the latest issue of their company's publication. When the speaker expressed his surprise he switched from English to Pilipino:

Hmph. . . what page is this? // Ha! Aba! hindi yata 'yan nakita ni Caloy.

- (11) *Pilipino-English*. Speaker A replying to Speaker B in the same situation:  
Ay, teka! // the whole text is in one page.

- (12) *Pilipino-English*. A public relations photographer (A) telling his co-worker (B) about keeping an appointment for the next day. Here the main message is in Pilipino and the switch to English is for emphasis:

A: Magkita na lang kayo doon.

B: O, sigé // I'll be there mga nine!

### 5.4. REPETITION

Frequently a message is repeated in the other code, either literally or in a somewhat modified form. In some cases, such repetitions may serve to clarify what is said, but often they simplify or emphasize a message.

- (13) *English-Pilipino*. A public relations officer asking a secretary of a particular unit within the department about certain information pertaining to the contest that their company is sponsoring:

How do we get the names of the band members for the certificates? // Papaano namin makukuha 'yong names. . . . Ididikta na lang niya// just dictate.

- (14) *English-Pilipino*. The chairman presenting a statement of accounts at a meeting:

We have so much collectibles. // Marami pang collectibles.

- (15) *Pilipino-English*. The hotel desk clerk explaining how a registry machine works:

Pero this one blinking, nililinis yan.// It's being cleaned right now.

### 5.5. MESSAGE QUALIFICATION

Another very common function of code-switching is qualifying a previous statement by sentences, clauses or phrases.

- (16) *Pilipino-English*. A male personnel manager giving instructions to the public relations officer:  
 O, di mabuti. . . papupuntahin mo sila doon, tapos bumalik sila// if it's not yet their turn.
- (17) *Pilipino-English*. The hotel desk clerk describing the nationalities of those checking into the hotel:  
 Maraming Chinese sa amin// most of them . . . from Singapore.
- (18) *Pilipino-English*. The same hotel desk clerk in the same situation, but this time explaining their procedure regarding payment of bills:  
 Pag nakawala 'yan, charge sa amin. Kaya // we keep on asking the bell boy if the key is turned in already.

### 5.6. PERSONALIZATION VERSUS OBJECTIVIZATION

The speaker, at times, distinguishes between opinion and fact by code switching. This function is somehow difficult to describe, but the following illustrative utterances may clarify this function.

- (19) *English-Pilipino*. The same hotel desk clerk replying to an inquiry about hotel reservations:  
 Yeah, that's right.// Ito ang ano namin, Ma'am. Dito namin nacoconfirm ang reservation.
- (20) *Pilipino-English*. A lady client following up her application for a public relations officer:  
 You calculate also from a certain place to a certain place// kung magkakano ang aabutin'nung transportation// and then we meet halfway. . . .

### 5.7. INQUIRY VERSUS GIVING INFORMATION

Code-switching frequently occurs in making inquiries as well as giving information, instructions, or directions. Some illustrative examples are given below:

- (21) *Pilipino-English*. A lady client is following up her application for a medicare I.D. at the information section:  
 A: . . . .wala pa pong dumadating?  
 B: Na I.D.? Kasi, Ma'am, talaga pong matagal 'yan.// It takes mga four to five months before an I.D. can be issued.  
 A: September pa po.  
 B: Oo, iniipon din namin.// Would you like to fill up another form na lang? A sort of follow-up.
- (22) *Pilipino-English*: A client inquiring from a business executive of a financing company regarding the possibility of getting a loan:

- A: A, gusto ko lang malaman, a puwede kaya akong makakuha ng loan din?//
- B: Ah, normally, it's the other way around. You have a business . . . but in your case you want to get the machine for financing.

(23) *English-Pilipino*. The same situation and the same interlocutors:

- B: Do you plan to enter also leasing or financing?//
- A: Kung alin ang mas magaling, kung alin ang mas madali.

(24) *Pilipino-English*. A boss giving instructions to his secretary to take care of explaining the situation to the client whose application has been rejected.

- A: Pinapirma ko ito dito, cancel ano, ngayon sabi niya, a . . . ipagpatuloy iyan// but then April pa// O, bahala ka na diyan. Siguro// for reinvestigation// na 'yan.
- B: Oho, at saka ano ba ito?
- A: A, Naty, bahala ka na huh, all for investigation// sabihin mo na lang.

## 5.8. EXPRESSIONS OF POLITENESS

Other examples of code-switching are expressions of politeness as illustrated in the following examples.

(25) *Pilipino-English*. A telephone conversation through the office intercom between the personnel manager and the supervisor. The personnel manager asking the supervisor to excuse one of the latter's employee and send him over to his office for an interview:

Ngayon na, huh// Thank you.

(26) *English-Pilipino*. A male-co-worker calling the attention of a female co-worker about something:

Jean// excuse me// ano ba ito, tatanggapin ba natin?

The above examples, although by no means exhaustive, illustrate some of the common uses of code-switching. The identification of these conversational functions constitute the initial step in our analysis of code-switching. It enables us to examine code-switching directly and to discuss the relevant problems of interpretation with members who ordinarily do not verbalize the phenomenon. If members agree on the interpretation of a code-switched passage, one can assume that this agreement is based on similar linguistic perceptions. Then one can proceed to investigate code switching as part of the contextualization cues which give rise to these perceptions.

Yet a list of functions cannot by itself explain what the linguistic bases of listeners' perceptions are and how they affect the interpretation process. It is of course always possible to postulate extra linguistic social factors or items of background knowledge which affect the incidence of switching, yet to attempt to set up language usage rules which predict or reliably account for the incidence of code switching appears to be a highly complex task.

## 5.9. LINGUISTIC PATTERNS IN CODE-SWITCHING

If code switching is meaningful it must have some forms of linguistic regularity. Some of the linguistic patterns found in the code-switched passages of the data used in this study are presented here:

### 5.9.1. WORD LEVEL

(a) Interjections/Greetings

(27) *Sige* // bye

(28) Hello // *A, puwede*

(b) Pilipino affirmative answer

(29) *Oo* // and then to prepare thirty five chairs for the stage.

### 5.9.2. PHRASE LEVEL

(30) English Infinitive Phrase

*Ikakabit doon sa panel na isasama sa parada*// to attract the crowd.

(31) English Adverbial Phrase

*Wala na bang place basta* // within the compound.

(32) English Adverb + Prepositional Phrase

*Nakacordon . . . . 'yong areang 'yon sa* // right in front of the stage.

(33) English Noun + Prepositional Phrase

*Kasi may isang ano* // PR lady from *Makati*// na iinterviewhin ang mga taong ito na binanggit ko.

### 5.9.3. CLAUSE LEVEL

(34) Pilipino + English Relative Clause

*Nandito ngayon si Miss Lucido*// the most illustrious lady from Public Relations. . . .

Conjoined Pilipino Clause and English Independent Clause

(35) *Yong dalawa sa main thoroughfare pang-attract ng crowd*// and then we will need dalawa with the same text.

(36) *Ipalagay na din 'yong streamer sa tabi* // and then on the day of the fiesta it will be used again.

(37) Conjoined English Prepositional Phrase and Pilipino Independent Clause

So, before the day of the contest // *yong mga streamers ikakabit sa main thoroughfare.*

### 5.9.4. DISCOURSE LEVEL

(38) Client: *Wala bang resibo para malaman ko.* // or anything.

Secretary: *Would you like me to make a letter* // na lang.

- Client :     Something // na lang // received. . . .  
 Secretary: I don't have that form kasi e. . . .  
 Client:     Can I have a piece of paper?  
 Secretary: Teka, sandali

As illustrated in the above examples code-switching occurs at the word, phrase, clause, and discourse levels. It is putting together two or more meaningful strings belonging to two distinct linguistic codes. The code-switching process then makes use of two different linguistic systems put together in an utterance or within an exchange.

## 5.10. BORROWING

Another characteristic of bilingualism shown in this data is borrowing. Borrowing, as distinguished from code-switching, is a process of lexical insertion or branching of the lexicon of one linguistic system. The process involves the use of only one linguistic system which is that of the borrowing language. In this study the borrowing language is Pilipino. Borrowing takes the following patterns:

### 5.10.1. WORD LEVEL

- (39) Dito namin naco-*confirm* ang *reservation* . . . . .kung anong *airlines*. . . . , dito na-i-*indicate* kung saan *charge*.  
 (40) Itong *number* ng *guests* namin, 189 . . . . yan ang mga *guests* namin ngayon *for today*.  
 (41) Mayroong *feedback* diyan.  
 (42) Anong oras ang *appointment* mo kay *Boss*.  
 (43) Nakapag-*fill up* ka na ba ng ganitong *form*?  
 (44) *Actually*, kay Mrs. San Jose mo kukunin 'yan.  
 (45) Sige, *Sir*, pakiiwan mo na lang diyan.

### 5.10.2. PHRASE LEVEL

- (46) Magkikita tayo doon mga *nine thirty to ten*.  
 (47) Papirmahin mo ito sa *chief of office* niya.  
 (48) Pupunta na lang siya *a little later* kasi pupunta muna siya dito.  
 (49) Wala, walang *corresponding voucher* yan. Ang *voucher* kasi nasa *main office* dito 'yong kuwan lang – *receipt*.  
 (50) Kasi 'yong itinawag ko diyan, dahil sa *supposedly Monday* ang *appointment*, eh nagkaroon ng *immediate changes* talagang *beyond control* ng *anybody else*.

Most of the borrowings found in the examples are English words and phrases. They follow the Pilipino morphological rules. The most common structure of verb form borrowings are rootword (base) + affix.

Examples:	Structure	
(51) Nakapagfill-up	nakapag + fill-up	'was able to fill up'
(52) naiindicate	na- + indicate	'is indicated'
(53) nococonfirm	na- + confirm	'is confirmed'



As for noun borrowings, the markers *ang*, *ng*, *sa*, or their equivalent personal markers – *si*, *ni*, *kay*—occur before the noun; *mga* as a noun marker signifies either plurality or uncertainty.

Examples:

(54) <i>Mga</i> nine thirty to ten	'about 9:30 to 10:00'
(55) <i>ang mga</i> guests namin	'our guests'
(56) <i>kay</i> Boss	'to Boss'
(57) <i>ang</i> appointment	'the appointment'
(58) <i>ng</i> anybody else	'of anybody else'

One significant difference between borrowing and code-switching that can be posited at this point is that borrowing is mainly a process of lexical insertion or branching of the lexicon of one linguistic system. The process involves the use of only one linguistic system, that of the borrowing language. Our data has provided ample evidence that Pilipino is the borrowing language here. Code-switching, on the other hand, is putting together in a single utterance or exchange two or more meaningful strings belonging to two linguistic codes. The two linguistic systems involved here are Pilipino and English.

It is seen that borrowings are limited only to words and phrases. At this point it is rather difficult to predict when they occur. It has been observed that when there are no equivalent Pilipino terms, then English borrowings are used. However, there are also occurrences of English borrowings even when there are equivalent Pilipino terms. If the interlocutor is fluent in English and Pilipino, we attribute his choice of the use of borrowings to personal communicative style. Code-switching seems to be more predictable. The functions that have been discussed in this paper constitute part of its predictability.

There are other sociocultural factors that affect code-switching. In this particular study, six of them have been identified, namely, (1) role relationship of the interlocutors; (2) age, (3) sex, (4) topics, (5) speech functions, and (6) domain.

The interlocutors in the dialogues are male and female with an age range of 18 years old to 49 years old. The role relationships are identified as *peer*, *above peer*, and *below peer*. These are viewed in terms of their status and position, i.e. their rights and duties assigned by the culture. Role relationship is therefore defined as the implicitly recognized and accepted sets of mutual rights and obligations between members of the same socio-cultural system. In our data the above peer role relationships are assumed by the department manager, the personnel manager, and guests. These interlocutors seem to prefer English in conversations at the office. The below peer role relationships are assumed by the secretary, the hotel desk clerk, and the supervisor (in relation to the manager). It is interesting to note in the findings, that the role relationship between client and employee seems to be transitory as shown in the conversation between a sales representative and a customer as well as between a store owner and a buyer. Since the sales representative and store owner are anxious to sell they implicitly give the customer higher status. The same holds true in the conversation between a company employee and a client. The client is given higher status, for instance, when getting some information from the company employee.

## 6. RECAPITULATION.

This study has been limited to the business domain. Domain is defined here as a socio-cultural construct abstracted from the topics of communication, relationships and interactions between interlocutors in accord with the institutions of a society and the spheres of activity of a culture in such a way that individual behavior and social patterns can be distinguished from each other and yet related to each other (Fishman 1967). The data used in this study have been gathered from the Hotel Mirador, the public relations department of San Miguel Corporation, the claims and information division of GSIS, the financing division of Industrial Finance Corporation, the Magnolia Dairy Plant, the production unit of a garment company, and an insurance company. These business establishments are all located in the Metro Manila area.

The speech functions or functions of the interaction have to be defined in their contexts of use, since what might be a command for the speaker might be interpreted as a request or a mere piece of advice to the listener. The speech functions identified in the data are giving information and instructions, casually conversing, requesting, and persuading. When requests are made even between those of unequal status such as the boss asking his secretary to do something, the affix *paki-* or 'please' is used by the above peer. In the exchange between the manager (above peer) and a supervisor (below peer) as illustrated in this example: *Puwedeng unahin natin itong sa . . .* 'Could we possibly attend to this first', the use of the pronoun 'we' and the word *puwede* are the request forms commonly used.

The common topics in the business domain as indicated in this study (although this is not exhaustive) are inquiries, application for loans, follow-ups, and business reports. Topic as a socio-cultural factor affecting code-switching seems to be independent of the other socio-cultural factors. When explaining applications for loans and other such technicalities English seems to be predominant unlike other speech functions which are dependent primarily upon role-relationships, age, and sex.

My findings in this code-switching research have certainly opened up other directions for sociolinguistics in the Philippines. Business negotiations rely so much on communicative strategies which include not only a good command of English and Pilipino but also an awareness of such sociocultural factors as role-relationships, speech functions, and topics since they are important in verbal interaction.

## REFERENCES

- AZORES, F. 1967. A preliminary investigation of the phenomenon of language change in the Philippines. Unpublished MA thesis. Ateneo de Manila University.
- BARRIOS, MARY ANGELA, et. al. 1974. The greater Manila speech community: Bilingual and/or diglossic? Unpublished manuscript. Ateneo-PNC Consortium.
- BAUTISTA, MA. LOURDES. 1974. The Filipino bilingual's competence: A model based on an analysis of Tagalog-English Code-switching. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Ateneo-PNC Consortium.

- FISHMAN, JOSHUA. 1971. *Bilingualism in the barrio*. Bloomington: Indiana University and The Hague: Mouton and Co.
- . 1967. Bilingualism with and without diglossia; diglossia with and without bilingualism. *Journal of Social Issues*, ed. by J. Macnamara. Vol. XXIII, No. 2. April.
- GUMPERZ, J. 1977 (a) The conversational analysis of interethnic communication. Berkeley: typescript. To be published in: *Interethnic Communication* E. Laman Ross, ed. Proceedings of the Southern Anthropological Society, University of Georgia Press.
- . 1977. The sociolinguistic significance of conversational code-switching. Manuscript. University of California, Berkeley.
- . 1971. *Language in social groups*. Stanford University Press.
- . and D. HYMES. 1977. Individual and social differences in language use. Manuscript. University of California, Berkeley.
- PASCASIO, E. 1978. Where is sociolinguistics now in the Philippines and what is its direction? Paper presented at the First Philippine Linguistics Congress, May 29-June 3. U.P. Diliman, Quezon City.
- . (ed.) 1977. *The Filipino bilingual: Studies on Philippine bilingualism*. Ateneo University Press.
- . 1976. The language behavior profile of Ateneo College bilinguals. Manuscript.
- . 1973. *Language in its socio-cultural context: A sociolinguistic approach*. East-West Culture Learning Institute. Honolulu, Hawaii.