SOCIO-PRAGMATICS OF CONVERSATIONAL CODESWITCHING IN GHANA

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to deepen insight into the socio-pragmatics of conversational codeswitching in Ghana. It presents detailed textual analyses of the codeswitching that Ewe-English and Akan-English bilinguals employ in various social contexts, including informal interactions at home, semi-formal discussions in study group meetings at school, and interactions on talk-radio. We find that codeswitching appears to be predominantly unmarked (i.e. that it appears to fulfil little or no pragmatic and discursive functions in interactions beyond indexing speakers' solidarity). But upon closer look we realize that many codeswitching instances that could pass as unmarked are in fact illustrations of marked codeswitching, which bilinguals employ stylistically to convey specifiable social and discourse intentions.

The paper situates the discussion within an ongoing debate about the future of indigenous Ghanaian languages in intensive codeswitching contact with English. It specifically takes on the speculation that most of the local languages in this kind of contact will sooner rather than later transform into mixed codes. On the basis of the data analysed, the paper predicts instead that Ghanaians will manage to slow down any ongoing development of their languages into mixed codes if they continue to use marked codeswitching they way they do now. The prediction stems from the fact that bilinguals like them who use marked codeswitching alongside unmarked codeswitching normally have the mental capacity to keep their languages apart as codes with separate identities.

1. Introduction

1.1 Literature on the socio-pragmatics of codeswitching in Ghana

Educated Ghanaians' use of codeswitching (CS) involving a Ghanaian language and English, the official language and medium of instruction from primary four onward, has received extensive scholarly attention since the 1970s. The first major work was Forson (1979).[1] In that work, and in a 1988 paper based on it, he tells us

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[1] The only earlier work on CS that I am aware of was also done by Forson in 1968.

that CS was decidedly a marked code in any formal setting involving even educated bilinguals because in any such setting the unmarked or expected code was an unmixed local language or English:

> [A]ny speaker on a platform, in a pulpit or addressing the inhabitants of a community naturally speaks monolingually. If he can speak the first language of the people, he uses it without switching; if he cannot handle the local language truthfully, his most honest recourse is to speak in another language with an interpreter to deliver the message. Code-switching in such a situation is only an invitation to ridicule (Forson 1988: 183-4).

Even in their informal discourse bilinguals are said to use CS consciously to either construct their social identities or convey desired discourse intentions, e.g. to signal that a topic is of foreign origin (cf. Forson 1988: 185). The impression therefore is that CS (in the pre-1990s) was a marked code with clear social and discourse functions.[2] This is why Forson (1988) called CS the "third tongue" of bilinguals, i.e. beside their local language and English.

By the 1990s, however, CS was no longer characterized in terms of a third code even in bilinguals' informal in-group interactions. Starting from Asilevi (1990),[3] CS came to be consistently described as being used so pervasively in especially in-group interactions that Amuzu (2005b) suggests it be renamed the bilinguals' "first tongue". Its domains have expanded to several formal settings where the bilinguals freely utilize it to convey a variety of socio-pragmatic and discourse messages during interactions. For example, CS has come to be used pervasively in sermons and other church activities (Andoh 1997, Albakry and Ofori 2011, Asare-Nyarko 2012), in the classroom (Asilevi 1990, Amekor 2009, Ezuh 2009, Brew Daniels 2011), in students' academic discussions (Obiri-Yeboah 2008, Quarcoo forthcoming), in radio discussions (Yevudey 2009, Flamenbaum forthcoming), and in radio and television advertisements (Anderson and Wiredu 2007, Amuzu 2010a, Vanderpuije 2011, Chachu forthcoming). For example, Albakry and Ofori (2011) have this to say about

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[2] The *social function* of a language relates to its use as a strategy to express ones <u>social identity</u> (e.g. level of education) and/or <u>ethnic identity</u> vis-a-vis those of other interlocutor(s). The *discourse function* of a language relates to its use to achieve various interactional goals, including changing topic or addressee, accommodating to a (preferred) language of an interlocutor, drawing special attention to a concept by expressing it in another language, and switching to another language to express a concept that is tabooed in the default language of interaction. The *referential function* of a language is, in fact, the language's primary function because it relates to its use to talk about the world, i.e. to communicate everyday information.

[3] See also Dzameshie (1994, 1996); Amuzu (2005a, 2005b, 2010b).

CS involving local languages and English in Catholic churches in urban centers in Ghana:

> Findings revealed that, although it is mainly a second language in Ghana, English dominates Catholic Masses in urban centers like Accra, and is used extensively and in different combinations with indigenous languages, (p.515).

It is this pervasive use of CS that has led some scholars to conclude that what they are witnessing is the rapid evolution of mixed codes that may replace local Ghanaian languages eventually. Asilevi (1990) could not have voiced this sentiment better:

> This linguistic symbiosis has increasingly become a communicative praxis, socially accepted as a feature of daily conversational discourse in all aspects of informal interactions of the Ewe-English bilinguals. In essence this speech habit has become an integral part of their communicative performance and has so permeated the informal speech of the bilingual youth that one can rightly speculate that it will be no distant time when an Ewe native speaker ought to have some knowledge of English before he can function in his own speech community. (Asilevi 1990: 2).[4]

But his sentiment is in fact a candid representation of public opinion in Ghana. Forson in 1988 described Ghanaians as having a "love-hate affair" with codeswitching; i.e. they hate it because they are convinced that it has the potential to undermine their competence in local languages but love it because of its socio-pragmatic and discursive functions. This tension shows no sign of waning, for in a forthcoming article based on "sociolinguistic interviews and ethnographic observations carried out in Accra in 2005", Flamenbaum reports that "the same speakers offered contradictory assessments of codeswitching in actual practice".

1.2 Focus of the paper and the data studied

The purpose of this paper is to provide detailed textual analyses of conversational CS with an aim to deepen insight into the socio-pragmatics of the phenomenon. This

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[4] See Guerini (forthcoming) for similar predictions about the Akan spoken by Ghanaian immigrants living in Italy. Guerini is clear about the fact that the immigrants, who are first generation adult Ghanaians, exhibit bilingual speech habits they had acquired in Ghana. Her claims may therefore be said to apply to the Akan spoken in multilingual urban settings, e.g. Accra, where it has become the major lingua franca beside English.

will be done bearing in mind the sentiments that have also been expressed about the phenomenon.

The paper will concentrate on data from just two groups, Ewe-English and Akan-English bilinguals. As will become clear, the uses to which the speakers put CS betray them as loving, i.e. more than hating, the phenomenon. And it is precisely this situation which prompts our research question, *Will this 'love affair' automatically lead to the development of the local languages into mixed codes?* An answer is given in the concluding section of the paper.

Many of the data are bilingual conversational exchanges I recorded since 1996 in various social contexts, including informal conversations among family members and friends. Data analyzed also come from the literature on CS in Ghana as well as from radio and television advertisements targeted at Ghanaians. These latter are duly acknowledged.

1.3 Theoretical Framework: Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model

The theoretical framework employed in this study is Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model. This model emphasizes the social and pragmatic context as well as speaker-orientation in the kind of explanation it offers for bilingual CS. The key theoretical concept that underpins the model is 'markedness' understood here as synonymous with the concept of 'indexicality'. Linguistic varieties are assumed to be always socially indexical, i.e., through accumulated use in particular social relations, linguistic varieties come to index or invoke those relations (also called rights-and-obligation sets / RO sets), taking on an air of natural association (Myers-Scotton 1993: 85). According to Myers-Scotton, "as speakers come to recognize the different RO sets possible in their community, they develop a sense of indexicality of code choices for these RO sets" (Myers-Scotton 1993: 88). Because of this, a speaker who is a socialized member of his multilingual speech community is aware of an underlying set of rules that determine why he should choose one code rather than another to the extent that whether he follows the rules or breaks them, he is in effect making a statement about the RO set that he wishes to be in force between him and the addressee(s). In other words, according to this model, the linguistic choices speakers make in CS situations are motivated by the social consequences that (they know) may result from making those choices. The said rules, called "maxims" (Myers-Scotton 1993: 114ff.), are:

1. The unmarked-choice maxim: "Make your code choice the unmarked index of the unmarked RO set in talk exchanges when you wish to establish or affirm that RO set".

2. The marked-choice maxim: "Make a marked code choice which is not the unmarked index of the unmarked RO set in an interaction when you wish to establish a new RO set as unmarked for the current exchange".
3. Exploratory-choice maxim: "When an unmarked choice is not clear, use CS to make alternate exploratory choices as candidates for an unmarked choice and thereby as an index of an RO set which you favour".

The unmarked choice occurs under certain conditions (Myers-Scotton 1993: 119). First, the speakers must be 'bilingual peers', i.e. speakers who see their mutual bilingualism as a marker of their solidarity. Second, the interaction must be of an informal type (in that the speakers are only in-group members). Thirdly, the speakers must be relatively proficient in the languages involved in the CS. Finally, if proficiency in the languages used in CS is not sufficient, the participants must possibly evaluate the social values attached to those languages.

In discussing the unmarked-choice maxim, Myers-Scotton makes a distinction between sequences of unmarked choices and CS itself as an unmarked choice. Sequences of unmarked choices concern the inter-changeable use of two or more codes which are, in their respective right, unmarked or expected for the given interaction type. If CS itself is an unmarked choice, it means that the bilingual language variety in itself is the default medium of the given type of interaction. If speakers make unmarked choices there are chances that they will succeed in invoking only the expected social relations (RO sets) between them and their addressees.

In contrast to the unmarked variety, the choice of a marked variety makes a statement with respect to the expected RO set, consciously pushing addressees into recognizing newly negotiated RO sets which the marked choice represents. That is to say that marked varieties are employed to "negotiate a change in the expected social distance holding between participants, either increasing or decreasing it" (Myers-Scotton 1993: 132). Specifically, "the use of marked choices can clarify social distance, provide a means for ethnically based exclusion strategies, account for aesthetic effects in a conversation (i.e. highlighting a certain creativity in language choice) or emphasize a point in question through repetition" (Losch 2007: 28).

Exploratory CS is the least common form of CS. It occurs when neither a marked nor an unmarked choice is appropriate for an interaction. Speakers are compelled to resort to the alternation of codes as a means of searching for the right one to use. It is thus the product of search in situations of social uncertainty. It may occur in exchanges between strangers as well as in exchanges between acquaintances who meet in unconventional or unfamiliar settings.

It should be mentioned that the model's emphasis on speaker-orientation distinguishes it from e.g. Giles' accommodation theory or Levinson/Brown's

politeness strategies, which instead focus on audience orientation (Myers-Scotton 1993: 141; see also Myers-Scotton 1998).

The unmarked choice maxim and the marked choice maxim are illustrated in the sections below with data from various social contexts. I have not seen any case of exploratory CS because the participants in each conversation were already familiar with one another.

2. Unmarked code choices

As noted, there are two kinds of unmarked choices, i.e. CS itself as an unmarked choice and sequences of unmarked choices. We begin with the former, which is illustrated in example 1 below.

Example 1:
A and B are brothers in their early twenties. The discussion took place in Accra in October, 1996, less than two months before the general elections in Ghana that year. Both were university students but would like to earn some income by serving as polling assistants for the Electoral Commission. The discussion revolved around the fact that the upcoming elections were going to clash with the examinations at school.

A	Nukae dzɔ hafi?	What happened?
B	Oo, nyemegblɔe na wòa? Wova dam ɖe keke nu yi **sixth December** ɖe.	Oh, didn't I tell you? They've put me as far away as this thing, **sixth December**.
A	**Sixth December** (laughter).	**Sixth December** (laughter).
B	Eẽ, **seventh** ko wo **vote** ge.	Yes, **seventh December** and we will **vote**.
A	**That's seventh,** uũ.	**That's seventh**, yes.
B	Eya matso dɔme.	And I will be coming from work.
A	Ke megate ŋu ewɔ ge o.	Then you can't do it.
B	E-**disturb**-nam lo. Ne mawɔe ɖe ke ènya ale yi mawɔa, ele be magbɔ **immediately after the paper** alo magbɔ **dawn**, uhũ.	It **disturb**-s me. If I want to do it, do you know what I will do? I will come back **immediately after the paper** or I will come back at **dawn**, yes.
A	Ne èɡbɔ **dawn**-a, mewɔ tukaɖa?	If you come back at **dawn**, won't it be hectic?
B	Ewɔ tukaɖa vɔa gake ega nyae.	It will be hectic but this has to do with money.
A	Eganyae, ne ga nya gbe le asiwò koa	It is money issue, if only you have money.

B	Ehẽ. **It's only one day job**.	Yes, **it's only one day job**.
A	**One day job!** Nyitsɔ meyi nu yi, **Mister** Karikari gbɔ.	**One day job!** The other day I went to this thing, **Mister** Karikari.
B	Ee.	Yes.
A	Ebe ee wobe yenedze **orientation**-a gɔme kaba ta **middle of October** ne mava.	He said yes they said he should start the **orientation** early so by **middle of October** I should come.
B	Eẽ?	Yes?
A	Ta **middle of October** mava ne yewoadze nu ya gɔme, **orientation**-a gɔme.	So **middle of October** I should come so they can start this thing, start the **orientation**
B	Uũ, uu. **October middle**?[5]	Yes [in reflective mood]. **Middle** of **October**?
A	**Middle of October**. Abe **sixteen** mawo.	**Middle of October**. About **sixteenth** or so.
B	Oo, ke mate ŋuti ayi **orientation**-a. Eẽ, me… me **orientation**-a yige.	Oh, so I can go to the **orientation**. Yes, I... I will go to the **orientation**.

It is evident in this interaction that the two brothers assumed their shared bilingualism (in Ewe and English) and focused on the subject matter at hand. There is no attempt by either of them to pay special attention to any of the individual switches. But from the point of view of the Markedness Model, it can be argued that as they used the Ewe-English CS in this manner to talk about their world, the brothers were, without much ado, communicating to each other their awareness of having a shared social identity, of being Ewe speakers who are educated.[6]

The same kind of social message is echoed in the following use of unmarked CS.

Example 2:

This conversation also took place in Accra in late 1996 between a different set of brothers who are also bilingual in Ewe and English. Speaker A had just returned from abroad and was being briefed by B about his (A's) building project, which B was overseeing. The interaction was at the point where A wanted information about progress made so far in the construction of a septic tank.

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[5] Ewe, rather than English, constrains the word order in this post-positional phrase in which **middle** occurs where some Ewe post-positions occur. The Ewe equivalent of **middle**, i.e. *dome*, is a post-position that may occur in this slot, as we see in *afe-a (fe) dome* 'middle of the house'.

[6] We regard a speaker as being educated (following Forson 1979) if he/she has completed senior high school. The assumption is that he/she would normally have had enough exposure to the English language by this stage since it is the medium of formal education and of government business.

A	**Tank**-a ɖɛɛ, fikae woɖo?	The **tank**, where have they reached?
B	Nuka?	What?
A	**Tank-**a	The **tank**.
B	Oh woɖo **ground level**	Oh, they've reached **ground level**.
A	**Ground.**	**Ground**.
B	Woɖo kpea ɖe eme va do ɖe **just outside, just on level with the ground. The last time I, not the last** kura, hafi wòyi dɔme etsɔ yi vayi. Ta **by now** a, ne kpe galia, ke eyi **above ground level.**	They've laid blocks in it up to **just outside, just on level with the ground**. **The last time I, not** even **the last**, before they went to work yesterday. So **by now**, if there are still blocks, then they've reached **above ground level**.
A	Ekpe lia, alo?	There are blocks, or?
B	Eyi wo dzodzom a, kpe ma ayi **above ground level** wohĩ. Ta ne wogblɔ n'wo be eyi **above ground level** a…	When they were leaving, the blocks remaining would take them to **above ground level** or so. So if they told you that they've reached **above ground level**...
A	Enuyi wɔ gee... **it's okay**.	You are going to do er... **It's okay**.

Once again, the rapid alternation of Ewe and English with no obvious attempt to attach special significance to any individual switches implies that the speakers were treating their CS as their default medium of communication. In other words, their CS marks their solidarity in being educated Ewe speakers. (They would not have used CS were they not aware they are like-bilinguals.)

It is not uncommon to hear this kind of unmarked CS on talk-radio. The following exchanges, cited in Yevudey (2009: 63), were made on Radio Jubilee, an FM station whose hearers are predominantly Ewe speakers in the Volta Region of Ghana. Yevudey supplies the following details about the context:

> The programme under discussion was done on the 9th of March 2009... [T]he topic discussed was about a man who was part of an armed robber group. On one of their operations, they stopped a driver whom one of them recognized was his pastor. The armed robber then removed the mask from his face and asked for forgiveness from the pastor. The question [discussed by the host and the guest] was whether the pastor should report the robber to the police and keep the issue secret and pray over it or not, because he was not attacked or harmed in any way.

The exchanges came toward the end of the discussion when the host was evidently in a hurry to conclude the program:

8

Example 3:

Host	Miaƒe kaƒoma koe le fu ɖem **but trust Jubilee Radio,** ne 'A' gble miaza 'B'.	It is only our telephone that is causing some problem **but trust Jubilee Radio**, when 'A' is not working we will use 'B'.
Guest	**OK**, nye me nya fikae **compassionate ground** vale duhese me o. **Social psychology** gblɔ be... Ke esia nye **probability**.	**OK**, I do not know where **compassionate ground** has come to reside in the laws of the land. **Social psychology** says… But this is a **probability**.
Host	**Wonderful**… (laughter) **time, time, time—fifty seven after five.**	**Wonderful…** (laughter) **time, time, time—fifty seven after five.**
Guest	Gake me dzi be magblɔ be **topic** ya le **very interesting**.	But I want to say that this **topic** is **very interesting.**
Host	**OK, trust Radio Jubilee, we will try and organize that.** Miele agbagba dzege adzi amemawo woa va. **And** mieƒe kaƒomoa wo koe le fu ɖem nami.	**OK, trust Radio Jubilee, we will try and organize that**. We will try and look for those people to come. **And** it is only our telephone lines that are creating problem for us.

Yevudey (2009: 63) explains, quite correctly, that "the pervasive use of CS on radio" is "due to the fact that hosts and callers project their interpersonal, informal, relationships onto their interactions on air".

The next interaction exhibits a sequence of unmarked choices, the second category of unmarked CS. Incidentally the people engaged in this conversation were the same two brothers who were involved in example (2) above. This time, the two were trying to work out financial details of contributions that A and another brother, Seyram, had made toward a joint building project meant for their mother. They had before them a statement of account that B had prepared. The first three turns in the extract were in unilingual Ewe followed by a switch to Ewe-English CS from turn 4. In the CS in turns 4 to 6, Ewe is the more dominant language. However, English's input increases from turn 7 and by the time they reached turn 10 they made almost unilingual use of English. The situation again changes in turn 15 with a switch back to Ewe-English CS. But note that in turn 18 speaker B returns to unilingual Ewe.

Example 4:

1	A	[Looking at the statement of account.]	
		Ke mega nyi fe ɖe.	Then I am in debt again.
2	B	[Non-verbal communication showing agreement.]	
3	A	Ehe mako nu yia ɖe, eko ɖeka tso afia loo.	Okay. Let me take some of this; you have taken one from here.
4	B	Nu ka ee, mía kple Seyram ƒe nu yi **agreement-**ia ɖe? Nenie wohia be mia **contribute** hafi?	What is it? What about the **agreement** between you and Seyram? How much does each of you have to **contribute**?
5	A	**Finally**-a? Ao ɖe! **we are just ….**nyemenya be megagbɔna **five hundred….**	You mean **finally**? No! **We are just**… I didn't know that I will come to [contribute] **five hundred** again…
6	B	Ao la, me eya gblɔm mele o.	No, I am not talking about that.
7	A	Ao, **we are just doing it**.	No, **We are just doing it**.
8	B	Menye **thousand thousand dollars** ye mie **contribute this last time** oa?	Is it not **thousand dollars** apiece that you **contribute**d **this last time**?
9	A	Ee.	Yes.
10	B	**But** ur… **I noticed you didn't pay all your money**.	**But** ur.. **I noticed you didn't pay all your money**.
11	A	**How much did I pay? I don't know, I… I paid. The only thing that you owe me now, I owe you, you owe me now** ye nye **twenty dollars**	**How much did I pay? I don't know, I… I paid. The only thing that you owe me now, I owe you, you owe me now** is **twenty dollars.**
12	B	**Twenty?**	**Twenty?**
13	A	**Yah twenty dollars**	Yes **twenty dollars**
14	B	**Twenty** alo **seventy?**	**Twenty** or **seventy?**
15	A	Ega ɖee, meva ŋe ɖe me afi aɖea? **Seven hundred** ya meɖo ɖa, **earlier on** aɖe… nyemeɖo ga aɖe ɖa?	The money, isn't there a short fall somewhere? The **seven hundred** I sent **earlier on**… didn't I send some money?
16	B	**You sent one hundred and fifty first time.**	**You sent one hundred and fifty [the] first time.**
17	A	**One eighty** aɖe ɖee? **One eighty** ya meko nɛ Gavivi ɖee?	What about some **one eighty**? Where is the **one eighty** I gave to Gavivi?

18 B	Ee; mele afima oa?	Yes; isn't it there? [*pointing at a figure in the statement of account*.]

There is, however, more to the switch to unilingual English in turns 10 to 14. Upon careful scrutiny, one finds that this exclusive use of English coincides with the most emotionally charged turns of the interaction—the content of the exchange in those turns and the presence of several false starts and reformulations display the speakers' heightened emotional involvement. At that stage in the interaction, then, English seems to function as a marked choice which indexes the tension and hence the increased emotional distance between the speakers.[7] This aspect of the example therefore illustrates the embedding of a marked choice within a sequence of unmarked choices. In other words, the example demonstrates that more than one of the categories of language choices identified by the Markedness Model may be attested in such a quick succession of utterances. We take up marked code choices in detail in the next section.

3. Marked code choices

A marked code choice, as noted, makes a statement with respect to the expected RO set, consciously pushing addressees into recognizing newly negotiated RO sets which the marked choice represents. The following represents several uses of marked choices.

3.1 Using a marked code to signal the desire to add a new identity to the prevailing identity symbolized by an unmarked code

The illustration below is an extract from an academic group discussion by third year Nutrition students at the University of Ghana. The recording was made during the end-of-semester revision week in April 2008. As such, the students were in 'serious' academic mood; they had before them a past examination paper from which some read aloud questions to which others tried to supply answers. The unmarked code for the discussion was, of course, English and the students duly stuck to it until speaker A interjected in Akan with *Yɛn toa so* 'Let us continue'. Akan was a marked choice for this interaction in spite of the fact that all the participants are ethnically Akan. Note that most of the Akan switches, including the one cited above, are not directly addressing the topic under discussion; they are basically side comments which the students made in order to encourage one another to remain serious with the business at hand. (English versions of CS or unilingual Akan sentences are in square brackets.)

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[7] English may indeed be said to be marking this kind of tension because it is the default language of formality among the educated in Ghana.

Example 5:

A   Another thing I want us to look at is the different definitions of acid.

B   The different definitions are protein…Oh leave me alone ah. You are laughing at me.

C   I am not laughing at what you are saying. You left one dash and you…

B   Oh, no, no, no; it can't be that. It can't be that.

C   Oh, ok. Ok.

B   As at now the most important thing is understand.
    (Laughter)

C   The way you were saying protein, protein; that is why I was laughing, not at you, I was like 'However did you place it like that?'

B   Oh, ok, ok.

C   The cover does not mean anything.

B   Yes, yes.

C   Oh, ok, ok.

B   After laughing at me.

A   **Yɛn toa so.**   [**Let us continue.**]

C   An acid can act as a buffer and receive changes dash. (*pauses for a response*) No one knows? Ok. Let's go on. The capacity of a buffer to receive such a change is greatest at dash equal to the dash.
    (An answer is given which is inaudible.)

C   Of the what?

B   Am not following.
    (A long pause)

C   Ok, let us check the answer in the book.
    (*Sounds of pages being flipped*)

C   Have you seen it?

B   Yes. C is the answer, isn't it?

C   Yes, I think so. The three most important buffer systems are the dash, dash and dash buffer systems.

B   Something hemoglobin.

A   Ammonic acid and this thing…. Well the hemoglobin **no, ye frɛ no sɛn**? Is it PH or NH?

                         [Well, the hemoglobin, **what is it called**? Is it PH or NH?]

B   NH

A   Let's go to the next set of questions. And be serious this time.

B   I am serious.

C   Which of these carbohydrates will give a positive test for reducing sugar?

D   Glucose.

12

A	It's true. **Eye ampa.**	[It's true. **It's true.**]
C	Why?	
B	Because it hasn't gone under any change. Let's go ahead. Compared to animal fat, molecules of vegetable oil contain more double bond.	
All (except B)	True	
B	Compared to animal fat, vegetable fat has higher melting point. True or false,	
A	The long chain, **fa ma no ma me.** (getting back to the discussion at hand)	[The long chain, **give it to her for me.**]
A	**Yɛ bɛ wie seisei-ara.**	[**We will finish right now.**]
B	The long receiving end. They mark the visible end.	
A	**ɛyɛ ɛno ara.**	[**That is the one.**]

(Source: Obiri-Yeboah 2008)

By using English for the actual academic discussion, the students wore their default academic identity for the occasion. But the momentary switches into Akan have the effect of complementing that identity (which has an air of formality about it) with a feeling of solidarity (as noted, all the students are ethnically Akan).

The benefit of signaling a social identity through marked CS must have caught the attention of advertisers in Ghana, for they have utilized it skillfully in pointing out their target clients in several advertisements in recent times (see in particular Anderson and Wiredu 2007, Vanderpuije 2011, and Chachu forthcoming). The television advertisement cited below was one of Vodafone's[8] first advertisements when they entered the Ghanaian market in 2008. When the advertisement starts, one sees a group of young people having a noisy house-party. A mobile phone rings and the owner, a boy who turns out to be the host of the party, answers it. At the other end of the line is the boy's mother, in a moving vehicle:

Example 6:

	(a phone rings)	
Boy	*(to friends, pointing to his phone)* Hey!! Mum!! *(into phone)* Hello mum.	
Mother	Hi Kwame, how's your study going?	
Boy	*(inaudible reply, then the sound of the popping of champagne)*	
Mother	Are you having a party? *(silence)* **Hai** Kwame, **wo yɛ** party?	[**Hey** Kwame, are you

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[8]Vodafone is an international telecommunications company that entered the Ghanaian market in 2008.

partying?]

In this advertisement, Vodafone utilized symbolic language to describe their product and to identify their target clients. The popping of champagne heard by the mother is intended to draw viewers' attention to how clear reception can be on Vodafone's network. The code choice in the last turn identifies the clients as modern-minded Ghanaians. Note that until the last sentence the exchanges between mother and son are in English. With party background one may be tempted to situate the speakers in any English-speaking country. However, the use of Akan-English CS in the last turn reveals the speakers' ethnic background and there is thus the suggestion that they are typical of Vodafone's Ghanaian clients. The two languages are genuinely the only nationwide lingua francas, so the advertisement demonstrates that its creators are conscious of the following social meanings of code choices in the country:

- English represents prestige, modernity, affluence, and a membership of a worldwide community.
- Akan represents being a Ghanaian.

3.2 Marked code as a strategy for including a third party

The following dialogue includes an example of a switch to a marked code in order to deliberately include a third party who would otherwise be excluded from the ongoing interaction.

Example 7:

Nana Akua, who is a neighbour, has stopped by to say hello to Mansah. She arrived just when Mansah was giving instructions to her daughter during the preparation of a meal. Mansah and her daughter are from the Ewe ethnic group but Nana Akua is not and does not speak Ewe. Note that Mansah had been using Ewe when Nana Akua arrived. So she switched to English as all three speak English.

Mansah	*(to daughter)*	
	Gbo dzoa ɖe ete sẽ hafi na ga blui.	Fan the fire a little longer before you stir it (the food in a pot) again.
Daughter	*(She nods and complies)*	
Mansah	*(Sees Nana Akua approaching from the main gate)*	
	These days, even at eighteen, you girls want to be supervised to prepare simple meals.	
Akua	**Is that a complaint?** *(laughs)* **You are**	

14

> **lucky yours is even helping you. Come to
> my house and see modern drama**.

Evidently, Mansah's comment is meant for her daughter. But the switch to English is meant to include Nana Akua, who thus joins in the interaction.

3.3 Marked CS as a strategy for excluding a third party

With this type of CS a speaker seeks to exclude a third party from participating in the conversation. In the following illustration, John and Victoria, who are fellow workers, had been talking about a mutual friend when Victoria's phone rings (it is her brother calling). Three languages are involved: Ewe shown below in normal font, English in bold, and Krobo underlined.

Example 8:

John	Nye hã me se nya ma **but I couldn't ask him about it**... *(Victoria's phone rings)* Me nɔ bubu-m be...	I also heard about that issue **but I couldn't ask him about it**... *(Victoria's phone rings)* I was thinking that...
Victoria	*(to John)* Me gbɔna sia. Nye **kid brother**-e ma. *(to caller)* Egba katã me **pick** nye **call**-wo o.	*(to John)* I am coming, please. That is my **kid brother**. *(to caller)* The entire day you did not **pick** my **call**-s.
Caller	*(inaudible reply)*	*(inaudible reply)*
Victoria	<u>Eke mini be? De lɛ kẽ imi lɛɛ, pɔtɔ mi.</u>..	<u>He said what time? Tell him that as for me, I am tired</u>...

Note that the first two turns were in Ewe-English CS, which John and Victoria share as their unmarked code and language of solidarity. Victoria initially addressed the caller in this code. But after the caller's response, Victoria switched to Krobo, a language John did not understand. When consulted about this exchange, Victoria explained that she and her siblings frequently used Krobo in addition to Ewe and English because they learned it (Krobo) when they were growing up at Kpong, a Krobo dominant town. Two things therefore happened when Victoria switched to Krobo: (i) it marked her unique solidarity with her sibling and (ii) it marked exclusion of John from her world with her brother (note that she used unilingual Krobo).

3.4 Using specific instances of a marked code to communicate given social or discourse messages

There are instances where speakers signify with specific switches that they intend to convey an important social or discourse message. Example (9) illustrates a singly-occurring English verb in Ewe grammatical context to convey a desired social

identity. According to Asilevi (1990: 77), the utterance was made by "a fairly elderly man (middle school drop-out)…in the ritual settings of libation to the ancestors". Asilevi observes that the old man decided to use codeswitching "in his bid to identify himself with us (six of us – university students and other folks of high social status resident in Accra, on a visit to the village)".

Example 9:

Old man	Enye mia vi…. Wo **choose**-m be ma ƒo tsi ɖi na mi	I your child… I have been **chose**-n to pour libation to you.

Unmixed Ewe is the unmarked code for this setting because it is the language ancestors and gods of Ewes understand. Thus, the old man, who certainly knew this fact, could not have intended his bilingual utterance directly for the ancestors' ears. He obviously used the English verb, as Asilevi observes, to identify himself with the young educated people who were his out-group.

Asilevi's interpretation of (9) was corroborated in interviews with twelve consultants who were contacted in early 2012. The consultants were separately interviewed about what they thought about this old man's use of the verb **choose** in this specific context: i.e. they were to say whether they thought the old man's use of this verb was an instance of CS or that of lexical borrowing. The consultants, four of whom are above fifty, were unanimous in the view that the old man would have used the Ewe equivalent verb, *tia*, if he did not have other ideas. The significance of this corroboration lies in the fact that it arrives almost two decades after Asilevi wrote. It means that not much has changed in the conventions that guide Ewe speakers in their interpretation of the kind of marked CS that this old man resorted to.

Let us consider another example of the use of a single word from a marked code with an aim to express a discourse message.

Example 10:

Barbara's mother returned home (in Accra) to find that all the outside doors were left open while Barbara slept soundly in her bedroom. The family used English and Ewe, but Mother must have settled for English in order to show the level of seriousness she attached to what she was saying and to, thus, assert authority over her daughter.

Mother:	Barbara, get up! So you are sleeping! I see. So because **ewo** [you] Barbara, you are at home, armed robbers can't come into this house. Hasn't it occurred to you that if **ewo** Barbara, you were not at home, the doors would have been locked? Why do you think that because **ewo** Barbara, you are in the house sleeping with the doors unlocked, no armed robbers can come in here? Aã? Tell me.

16

By repeating the second person singular pronoun *ewo* 'you' and juxtaposing it each time to Barbara's name, Mother seems to be directing Barbara's attention to herself so that she can assess the appropriateness of her behavior.

A similar use of single-word switches to underscore discourse points is illustrated in the next example, which is a television advertisement that was aired in 2008 and 2009. The product is a mosquito coil called 'Rose Flower'. In the opening scene, a woman came knocking at the door of her neighbour, a man by name Favour. She saluted Favour politely by using the Ewe address term *Efo*, which roughly translates as 'mister' or 'master'. As it turned out, she was not an Ewe speaker and Favour duly switched to Akan, the local lingua franca that is probably in use in the compound house they shared as co-tenants. There is an inescapable phonological distinctiveness about Favour's Akan—it is marked by heavy Ewe accent. It appears the advertisers mean to show by it that everyone, Akan, Ewe, etc, are included in their target market. But what make this advertisement a good example of the use of specific instances of a marked code to communicate given social or discourse messages are the momentary switches from Akan to English and Ewe toward the end of the exchange.

Example 11:

Woman	***Efo*** Favour	***Mister*** Favour
Man	(*with Ewe accent*) Ohoo, hwan koraa?	Ohoo, who is that at all?
Woman	***Efo*** me serɛ wo, mentumi nda. ntontom eeha me.	***Mister*** I am begging you, I am not able to sleep. Mosquitoes are worrying me.
Man	Me, me **use**-u **Rose**. Enyɛ wo **Rose**. Eyɛ **Rose flower**.	As for me, I **use rose**. I am not talking about your **Rose**. It is **Rose Flower**.
Woman	Me pa wo kyɛw, ma me baako na me **use**-u.	I am begging you, give me one to **use**.
Man	Me ma wo ***nuka***?	I should give you ***what***?
Slogan	**Angel Mosquito Coil**: epamo ntontom ma wo da hatee. Sɛ wo pɛ dodo atua frɛ **zero-two-one, six-six-six, seven-three-six**.	**Angel Mosquito Coil**: it expels mosquitoes so that you can sleep deep. If you want to buy plenty, call **zero-two-one, six-six-six, seven-three-six.**

The first English word in the advertisement is the action verb **use**. It comes up in Favour's response to the woman's complaint that mosquitoes are plaguing her. Favour says she should 'use' **Rose**, the brand name of the product on sale. It is significant that the woman repeats this verb. Viewers are likely to take note of what they must do if they find themselves in the woman's shoes: **USE ROSE!** The second use of a single-word marked choice to make a business point in the advertisement is in Favour's

retort: "Me ma wo *nuka*?" This CS is atypical, for few would use Ewe and Akan intrasententially. But by occurring at the end of the sentence (i.e. at sentence-final), the Ewe question word *nuka* points viewers toward what comes next: the slogan.

This kind of marked CS is discussed extensively by Flamenbaum (forthcoming) in her study of Akan-English CS in talk-radio. Flamenbaum observes in her data several instances in which a speaker would employ the strategy by which he "metalinguistically frames" his utterance with an English pragmatic marker at the outset so that he orients his addressees to his stance on the argument he pursues in the rest of that utterance. Below are some of the examples she cites; they come from different speakers in different stages in the same show:

(12a)	**Obviously** aban biaa nni hɔ a ɔbɛtumi a **maintain nine million cedis a ton**.	**Obviously** there is no government that can maintain [a subsidy of] **nine million cedis a ton**.' [that is, per ton of cocoa].
(12b)	**Definitely** no, yɛ be tɛ so.	**Definitely**, we will reduce it.
(12c)	**No no no no no** *me, me nka ho.* **For the sake of argument**, *ma* **withdraw,** *nti na* **for so many years…**	**No no no no no**, for me, I am not included as part of it. **For the sake of argument**, I have **withdraw**n [my statement], that is why **for so many years**…

Highlighting the socio-pragmatics of CS in these utterances, Flamenbaum writes that, "by framing their statements as *obvious* and *definite*, and as merely *for the sake of argument* rather than an argument itself, they strongly suggest that their comments are immune to counterargument."

4. Discussion and concluding remarks

In the previous section, we analyzed CS data I gathered from 1996 onward as well as data from the literature on CS in Ghana. While most exchanges analyzed exhibit CS involving either Ewe or Akan and English, some of them exhibit the use of more than one local language alongside English. The selection of data was guided by the intention to show that the socio-pragmatic characteristics of CS that were discussed do not pertain only to the use of English and a local language but also to the use of more than one local language alongside English. The analyses, which were done within Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model, showed that two kinds of CS, marked CS and unmarked CS, are used routinely by the bilinguals. In example (4), for instance, we saw that what began as a sequence of unmarked CS gave way briefly to

18

instances of marked CS prompted by speakers' heightened emotion during the interaction before a return was made to unmarked CS.

An important point that has emerged in the analyses, and which confirms what one finds in the recent literature, is that CS involving a local language and English may no longer be characterized as a "third tongue" (i.e. a marked code used sparingly by bilinguals in only their informal interactions when they wish to convey some socio-pragmatic and discourse intentions). Such CS has come to be used more freely in bilinguals' in-group interactions in ways akin to unmarked CS, as we saw in examples (1) to (5). But we also saw that the same bilinguals use CS as a marked code presumably more frequently than in Forson's days, judging from the plethora of examples from my recordings and from the literature. One may even say that bilinguals in Ghana 'love' CS—specifically marked CS—because of the stylistic possibilities it offers them. For example, Victoria (example 8) must have felt relieved that she could keep her talk with her brother private despite the presence of John who was listening; the old man (example 9) most likely felt thrilled by his expedition into the world of his young educated audience with his one-word switch; the creators of the advertisements in (6) and (11) are most probably hopeful that their target clients appreciate the essence of the advertisements and that they will choose to patronize the advertised products; and the talk-radio panelists who uttered the examples cited in (12) most probably felt self-assured that by placing certain English pragmatic markers at the outset of their otherwise Akan utterances they can succeed in orienting their addressees to their stance on their arguments.

As noted, there are fears that local languages in intensive CS contact with English can soon become mixed codes. A key characteristic of a language that has developed into a mixed code via CS is that its speakers are no longer able to tell that they are using CS. Swigart's observation about Dakarois' use of what she calls 'Urban Wolof' fits this description. She notes that Dakarois

> […] had little notion of codeswitching at all. That is, when more than one language was used in the course of the same conversation in a mixed way, they tended to view this speech as a variety of one of the constituents, Wolof or French depending on which language was dominant (Swigart 1992:7).

In other words Dakarois use only unmarked CS. The bilinguals whose interactions we discussed in this paper do not fit this description because at least in the examples of marked CS, we see that they not only exhibit awareness of the fact that they are using CS, they are also conscious of the socio-pragmatic and discourse relevance of the specific code choices they make.

It is being predicted in this paper that Ghanaians will manage to slow down any ongoing development of their languages into mixed codes if they continue to use

marked CS as routinely as they seem to do now. This is because bilinguals like them who make conscious use of marked CS, i.e. alongside their unmarked codeswitching, normally have the mental capacity to keep their languages apart as codes with separate identities (see e.g. Myers-Scotton 1993 on Swahili-English bilinguals in Kenya). In other words, the use of marked CS is a language maintenance phenomenon.

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