I just mix: codeswitching and codemixing among bilingual Malawians*

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Introduction

This paper explores the functional differences between codeswitching (CS) and codemixing (CM). I will start by defining the two concepts, and then discuss individual bilingualism and the social significance of code selection. The third section outlines data collection methods. CS and CM evidence is presented and analysed in the fourth section. The analysis is intended to demonstrate that the two phenomena have different linguistic functions.

Terminology

The distinction between CS and CM has occupied many sociolinguists. Definition of these terms remains contentious, largely because these definitions are subtle and difficult to characterise. Kachru (1978: 28) views CS as a manifestation of language contact relating to the social context within which each code involved is allocated a functional role, whereas CM is the outcome or actual manifestation of CS. On this basis, he defines CS as the 'functional context in which a multilingual person makes alternate use of two or more languages', and CM as the 'manifestation of the functional uses of several languages by a multilingual person.'

A contrary view held by Sridhar (1978: 111) draws a clearer distinction between the two (CS and CM). Sridhar argues that, whilst CS corresponds to the social situation within which the switch occurs, CM is a process to which we cannot attach a social significance at every instance. He therefore defines CS as the 'alternate use of two or more languages or varieties, in distinct social or functional domains and that a switch from one code to another signals a corresponding switch in the social situation, but that CM is a rapid, frequent and almost unconscious process occurring within a single social

event, in fact several times within a single sentence.' Therefore 'it is a hopeless task to try to find distinct isolable sociolinguistic correlates for every instance of the shift.'

Scotton (1977: 5) refrains from making a distinction between CS and CM, offering a definition of CS as 'the use of two or more linguistic varieties in the same conversation or interaction.' In other words, CS is the selection by bilinguals/multilinguals of forms from an embedded language in utterances framed by a matrix language, during the same conversation. Stretches of codeswitched material may be intersentential — that is, switches from one language to the other between sentences — or intrasentential — switches within the same sentence from the single morpheme level to higher levels (Scotton, 1992b: 101). The switch may be for one word or several minutes of speech.

More recently, the distinction between CS, CM and borrowing has been seen as points on a continuum (Fasold, 1984: 180) or a scale (Salmons, 1990: 446), and not discrete. Fasold regards a person who speaks two or more languages and has to choose which one to use, as doing CS. To him, CM is a more subtle occurrence, where pieces of one language are used while a speaker is basically using another language. The language 'pieces' taken from another language are often words, but they can also be phrases or larger units. 'When they are words the phenomenon is called borrowing' (Fasold, 1984: 181). CS has been defined as the use of more than one language during one conversation to signal social, discourse and referential meaning. As Fasold (1984: 181) argues in order to resolve the issue, 'it is the case that these three kinds of choice cannot be clearly separated from each other.' The three kinds of choices are best viewed as points on a continuum, from relatively large-scale to relatively small-scale choices. The middle category, CM, is very difficult to distinguish from the other two.

This paper uses the terms CS and CM as employed by Sridhar (1978), Nwoye (1993), and others who have noted differences between the two phenomena from a functional and pragmatic point of view — despite both phenomena involving the use of more than one language in the one conversation or discourse. As argued by Sridhar (1978) and Nwoye (1993), CS is a conscious discourse strategy employed for specific objectives: solidarity, social distance, topic change, multiple identity, etc. By a conscious strategy Nwoye (1993: 366) means the 'premeditated course of action by the speaker rather than the examination of the discourse in the context of its production...' My personal experience, and my discussion with fellow Africans who evidence the two phenomena in their discourse, confirm that CS is a more conscious or deliberate effort to use a particular language for specific purposes (for exclusion purposes or the right to speak

one's language), while CM is a normal unconscious process in which a bilingual sometimes uses elements from different language(s) during the course of a conversation with bilingual interlocutors.

As CM is unconscious, it may even occur inadvertently when speaking with people who are not bilingual. For example, when interacting with fellow Africans who do not speak my language, I have unconsciously tended to speak to them in my language. Only when I do not get any response, or am told to speak in another language, do I realise the communication breakdown. My CM is normally characterised by English fillers or apologetics such as 'sorry, oh I forgot',[1] while my CS is deliberate; I do not owe the other participants an apology, because my discussion may not be intended for their ears, and it is assumed that they will view it as such. Emblematic switching (Poplack, 1980; Khati, 1992) will refer to the use of single words, tags or discourse markers from one language in another.

This paper also takes the new position which views the three (CM, CS, and borrowing) as related facets of the one phenomenon, since they all involve the use of more than one language in one conversation, although their functional and pragmatic use is somehow different. Whereas it is easy to pick out the base or matrix language from the embedded language in borrowing and CS, it is not easy to do so in a heavily mixed discourse; in CM, speakers are not conscious of what language they are using. I am using the term 'borrowing' to mean loan words which have been morphophonemically embedded in Malawian languages, and are used by all sections of the community, including monolinguals, regardless of education.

CS has been studied from the point of view of both functional and structural constraints. The latter view has been preoccupied with the possibility of using grammatical patterning or constraints to establish the predicability of the occurrence of the switch in a given verbal interaction (Poplack, 1980; Scotton, 1992b, 1992c). Apart from pointing out which grammatical categories or word classes are likely or unlikely to be involved in switching, or how CS does not violate the syntactic rules of either grammar (Salmons, 1990: 464), most of these studies have not been particularly successful in predicting where a switch is likely to occur at any time. This study adopts a functionalist approach, which should help us understand the social significance of CS and its occurrence as a boundary-levelling or boundary maintaining strategy, and its link to interlocutors' multiple role relationships (Heller, 1988: 1; Scotton, 1992a).

Individual bilingualism and the social significance of CS and CM

In helping to understand the relationship between linguistic forms and social process-es in the interpretation of experience and the construction of social reality, the discus-sion of CS and CM has been couched in the notion of multiple role-relations, which recognises that individuals assume different roles with other members of the social net-work. However, the assumption of these roles also takes into account the fact that mem-bers of such speech communities or networks are aware of the social connotations associated with each language, and of the appropriateness of using one language or the other according to the social context through the process of socialisation. This process ultimately leads to Hymes' (1974) cultural or communicative competence. Therefore a knowledge of the communicative functions (including emotive and attitudinal nuances) of each language is crucial in interpreting code selection in a given situation.

Individual bilingualism

The occurrence of CS and CM varies according to the degree of competence of the speakers in each of the languages. My 1992 survey on Malawi showed that most of my respondents could speak, understand, read and write Chichewa, the national language, English, the official language and their ethnic languages very well. The prescribed school languages in Malawi are Chichewa and English, both as media of instruction and subjects on the syllabus. Chichewa fulfils the role of medium of instruction for lower classes (Standards 1 to 3) and is a subject throughout the school system up to uni-versity level. It is also the lingua franca or inter-ethnic language in Malawi. English is for Standard 4 and beyond, government, administration and legislature. As a result of the language policy in Malawi, reinforced through the school system and personal mobility, the same survey showed that of the 445 respondents 97% were bilingual, 68% trilingual and 42% quadrilingual.

In such a situation the speaker's selection of one code over the other, or in conjunction with another in any given speech event, may or may not carry social meaning depend-ing on a number of situational factors such as topic, interlocutor and setting. Bilinguals, as I intend to show, are versatile at manipulating this aspect of communication. There is a general recognition of diglossia (Ferguson, 1959; Fishman, 1967) in terms of for-mal and informal language functions and use. For example, most of my respondents alluded to the fact that English, which is mainly learnt formally in schools,[2] is a presti-gious formal language normally used to establish socio-economic status in a network

or social distance. The vernaculars, which are learnt informally, encode intimacy and solidarity. Most educated Malawians will use vernacular languages with servants, clerks, cleaners, messengers, family members and in connection with traditional core value areas or in their daily lives.

This potential socio-psychological code selection is the main focus of this paper. The situation in Malawi (and Africa in general) is fluid, enabling Malawian bilinguals to switch to and fro between codes or languages. The data will show that lexical, grammatical and phonological terms can be switched according to language, so that an English clause can be embedded into an otherwise Chichewa discourse or vice versa, and extensive phonological restructuring of English words may or may not occur depending on the speaker's level of education.

Social meaning of code selection

It is generally recognised that some languages come into a speech community associated with a particular aspect of life. As argued by Heine (1990: 177), the horizontal media (indigenous languages) are associated with solidarity and social equality, while vertical media (colonial languages) imply distinctions in role expectations, status, prestige and socio-economic stereotypes. Consequently, colonial languages may signal authority or even superiority, while the indigenous ones may be employed to play down personal aspirations and emphasise egalitarian attitudes. In the African context, languages such as English, French, and Portuguese came with political power and western institutions, the possession of which gave one prestige and high social status. The indigenous languages, on the other hand, expressed the African way of life, one's relationship with members of one's family and members of the ethnic group.

Through historical, technological, and scientific processes, the western languages have become permanently associated with those domains that symbolised western influence. They are therefore languages of power, status and social distance, while the indigenous languages have remained as symbols of family ties, ethnic identity, intimacy and solidarity (Parkin, 1974a: 212-3; Bujra, 1974: 239). From his Kenyan data, Parkin (1974a: 212-3) states that 'in particular conversations English is seen to express...social exclusiveness as against Swahili which may express social inclusiveness.' Scotton (1982) found that in Kenya, ethnic identity is expressed through one's mother tongue; transethnic solidarity as Africans in Swahili; and power, education and high occupational status in English.

The analysis of my 1992 sociolinguistic survey of language use in Malawi confirms that English is the language of higher education, power and occupational status; Chichewa is the interethnic language; and other vernaculars signal ethnic conscious-ness and traditional values. Through this shared knowledge of the value system of each language, speakers are aware of the appropriate language to use. This further implies that code selection is intricately bound up with the value of the code, if the speaker wishes to consciously convey a particular message. As Goffman (1964) rightly observes, an attitudinal value is placed on each attribute as acknowledged in the situa-tion current at hand and the status of the interlocutors involved.

The markedness model

Scotton's model of marked or unmarked code use is based on the already discussed notion that speakers have a 'tacit knowledge' of internalised rules (Hymes, 1972), or a 'natural theory of markedness', according to which each language is unmarked or marked in certain contexts for the linguistic varieties spoken in their community (Scotton, 1992a). Basing her model on pragmatics, socio-pragmatics, social psycholo-gy and conversation analysis, Scotton (1992a: 169) argues that motivations for CS can be categorised using the Markedness model, whose premises are that:

> all linguistic choices can be seen as indexical of projected rights and obligations balances in interpersonal relations. When a speaker engages in CS it is a negotiation of some kind regarding the rights and obligations' balance (RO balance) between speaker and addressee. Speakers work out, based on the norms of their community, what RO balance is expected or unmarked for specific participants in a given speech community.
>
> (Scotton, 1992a: 167)

Using examples from Kenya and Zimbabwe, Scotton (1992a: 177) argues that CS is a socially motivated strategy employed for four purposes:

1. to produce a sequence of unmarked choices, by using a neutral lingua franca or the same ethnic language
2. to establish CS itself as the unmarked choice as used by educated Africans, who use both English and their local languages to signal their educational status and nation-al or ethnic identity
3. to move away from the unmarked choice by making a marked choice to signal social distance, superiority or authority
4. as an exploratory choice in uncertain situations, especially in situations where inter-locutors do not have sufficient information about each other's linguistic abilities

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That is, this strategy allows interlocutors to discover to what degree they share under-standings about the situation and their roles in it, from the alternative framework.

In short, unmarked or conventional choices are those codes that index a balance which follows community norms in presenting the relationship of the participants. Making such an unmarked choice is a speaker's way of affirming community norms. Marked choices are deviations from the norm and, as such, are attempts to represent a marked, unexpected rights and obligations balance for the exchange (Scotton 1992a: 178). Marked and unmarked choices are made through CS to indicate either a desire to dis-identify, or to negotiate expected rights and obligations. Thus, marked choices may enhance the speaker's self image, create social distance, or indicate anger. In Kenya, a sister can use her unmarked mother tongue with her brother in a store when she expects special treatment, but the brother, who wants to treat her as a customer, would use Swahili (Scotton, 1986: 403-4).

Motivations for CS and CM

CS has been systematically investigated in Africa and elsewhere and some motivations for CS have been well documented (Abdulaziz Mkilifi, 1972; Parkin, 1974b; Scotton, 1988a, 1992a). Abdulaziz Mkilifi (1972: 207) reports that the CS and CM phenomena among the subjects he observed were difficult to characterise, and in most cases were frequent and unpredictable even in discussing highly technical subjects, such as zool-ogy, medicine or engineering. It was not a simple case of lexical borrowing to fill lex-ical gaps in given English or Swahili sentences. He noted that there were 'sociolin-guistic constraints in CS and CM as between the local vernacular, Swahili and English', and that the order in which these three languages appeared seems to suggest the 'exis-tence of a hierarchy of social distance: everything being equal, the vernacular express-es least social distance, English the most and Swahili in between' (pp. 209–10).

Other studies have shown that bilinguals codeswitch in order to impress others with their mastery of several languages (Parkin, 1974b), or to maintain identity or status with a prestigious group in the society. Scotton (1976) attributes CS to a lack of knowl-edge of one language; a bilingual therefore uses another language to facilitate commu-nication on certain subjects, or to exclude certain persons present from a portion of the conversation. Siachitema (1991: 480) investigated CS in Zambia and found that it was 'normal for people to hold a conversation in the mother tongue on one topic and change to English or Nyanja on another, or to switch from one language to another within the same topic.' Her analysis shows that the nature of the role relations between the inter-

locutors regulated the language choice (Siachitema, 1991: 486). If an angry man uses English to address his wife to whom he usually speaks in the mother tongue, it indicates that he wants to distance himself from the object of his anger. If she does not speak English, he thereby expresses hostility and superiority. A mother may use her L1 to enforce her traditional authority with a child, but when she uses English it may mean that she wants to appeal to a new order (Siachitema, 1991: 489). Thus a mother's choice of language may either have an inhibiting effect, or expose her authority to challenge and allow the child an equal footing, according to Siachitema.

Moser (1992: 219) found widespread use of CS and CM in the Central African Republic (CAR) between mother tongues and Sango, especially in domains where Sango and the vernaculars interact, such as with friends and chiefs, at the market, at funerals, at weddings and for prayer. She further noted that people in authority often know how to use the power of CS in order to shock, surprise or to exert influence on a particular audience. She cites Bingo (1988: 73) who states that Bokassa, a symbol and incarnation of the CAR in his early days in power and in the process of building an empire, deliberately and unexpectedly switched from his usual Europeanised speech to a fiery Sango at the market place, which gained him the favour and appreciation of the women because he spoke like a 'real person'.

Research by Nwoye (1993) in Nigeria showed that bilinguals deliberately switched from one language to another as a pragmatic strategy for solidarity, exclusion, topic change and next interlocutor selection, and to express multiple identity.

My 1992 Malawian survey showed that CS and CM are common but multifaceted phenomena, for reasons which can be accounted for in the markedness model. The unmarked choices would include those switches that have become a characteristic way of speaking for educated Malawians, who, as will be observed from the corpus data, frequently codemix languages as a result of high competence in English and other ethnic languages, as a mark of equal status and linguistic experience. However, most of the switches are marked for reasons of secrecy, confidentiality, exclusion of others or social distance, maintaining ethnic identity and acceptance, rebuke, desire to influence or impress, politeness, economy of expression, and self-deception. Lastly, the exploratory motivation for CS is clearly demonstrated by language used with strangers in Malawi, and how interlocutors reported starting with a local lingua franca (unmarked) and finally working out or negotiating the right code. From the discussion there is no doubt that the degree of interaction or role relationships in the linguistic market, interlocutor's status, knowledge of and competence in the language(s), setting and the significance of the code all serve as indicators to the right code choice(s). The

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use of a particular language(s) may be interpreted either as a status symbol, as a means to emphasise intimacy, social distance, or simply as a means of communication, with or without instrumental values.

Methods of data collection

Data was collected using interviews or self-reports (fieldnotes) on how respondents used their language(s) and their conversations. These were written down in a notebook I always carried during fieldwork from January to March 1992. Some of the casual conversations were recorded on tape in their 'natural' environment; others are reconstructions of reported conversations, or actually observed conversations or experiences. Secondary data (mainly recordings done by undergraduate students at Chancellor College, University of Malawi) are also used; the sources are acknowledged.

The functional use of CS and CM: data analysis

Codeswitching for solidarity purposes

The following example illustrates the use of CS for solidarity purposes.

Conversation 1: Two Yao speakers who speak both Chichewa and Yao. Their conversation earlier on had been in Chichewa, but when one wants a favour from the other he switches to Yao (source: Mwalwanda, H. A., 1984: 3).

A: Wapita M'buno — *Ambe* fodya *nene.*
   (The Boer has gone — just give me a cigarette brother.)
B: *Nambo wachiYao* — Kupempha *daily, daily.*
   (But you Yaos, always begging.)
A: Mmmm! *Ambe* fodyayo *bwanawe* — **cigarette** — *jimo basi.*
   (Just give me the cigarette, friend — one cigarette — only.)
B: Uzigulako wako nawe—iya!—wayesa wa Fawo.
   (Buy your own sometimes — Ah! (sarcastically) — you think I am FAO.)
A: Tangoponya m'modzi yekha **I say.**
   (Just throw me one — I say (friend).)
B: Uyo, koma ugule wako — **lunch hour** wamva?
   (There—but buy yours — lunch hour — okay?)
(*Italics* = Yao, **bold** = English loans, plain = Chichewa)

CS for solidarity purposes can be explained through what I will call the *bakwithu* or *akwathu* syndrome.[3] In Conversation 1, speaker A starts the conversation in Chichewa, but switches to Yao when he wants to establish solidarity or a brotherly relationship in terms of ethnic identity. A calls upon ethnic identity as a means to justify the end, that of getting a cigarette from B. B, having noticed the bait, changes to Chichewa and ignores the hidden message by continuing the conversation in a neutral language. A, noticing that he is getting nowhere, continues in the solidarity language. B, realising the intention of A, breaks the solidarity by shifting permanently to Chichewa. A gives up and conversation ends in Chichewa, but A gets what he wanted by appealing to their brotherhood. Similarly in Fieldnote 1 the respondent's reaction shows that he consciously seeks to benefit by learning a language that makes him identify with people at their level, reducing social distance between him and his juniors by using the vernaculars rather than English.

> **Fieldnote 1**: The respondent felt that competence in all three languages (Chichewa, English and Tumbuka) balances, so that if he needs a word that is missing in one language then he borrows where necessary (spontaneous borrowing). He also felt that he could more easily identify with his colleagues and his juniors if they met at the vernacular level than in English. For this reason he endeavoured to learn Tumbuka to speak to his servants and juniors and friends in the north, a means of identification and of reducing social distance between him and those under him. In general he used less English and more vernacular languages to put his fellow workers at ease. 'You know this is Tumbukaland and the girls we go out with do not speak Chichewa so we have to learn the language.'

Similarly, the *bakwithu* syndrome is also demonstrated by the behaviour of some ethnic groups in Malawi. A mini-survey was carried out by Chirambo (1987) among Tumbuka students at Chancellor College, University of Malawi, to find out why they always wanted to use their language instead of Chichewa, the lingua franca. Chirambo found that Tumbuka was used to foster ethnic identity and solidarity. There was a high expectation among Tumbuka students to speak to fellow Tumbukas in their language in the presence of non-Tumbuka speakers. Failure to comply was met with hostility and rejection or being treated as an outsider, because it implied arrogance and a rejection of one's identity and culture.

Codeswitching for economy or precision

Conversation 2: This conversation is between two sisters, A and C, who are relating past events to C's daughter, B.

A: Ndimati ndikakumbulira m'mene ankatigendera muja, ndimakumbukira Banabasi.
   When I remember how they used to stone us, I am reminded of Barnabas.)

B: Amakugenderaninji?
   (Why were they stoning you?)

C: Uhu, eh, anthu a chipongwe omwewa.
   (Uh, eh, just some of these insolent people.)

B: Anali amisala?
   (Were they mad?)

C: Ayi.
   (No.)

A: **You know your mum's house used to be near** ujeni, nsungwi. Mseu umadutsa chonchi, **main road.**
   (You know your mum's house used to be near (filler) bamboos along the main road.)

C: Ukamapita uku (shows direction) inali nyumba yomalizila kupita ku **matea estate.**
   (It was the last house on your way to the tea estates.)

A: Basi anthu amaima mu nsungwi muja n'kumagenda usiku.
   (And people used to stand in the bamboos and they used to throw stones at us.)

B: Chifukwa?
   (Why?)

A: **Somebody was interested in your mum.**

C: Amalemba makalata oyipa pamene paja kwa **D.C.** ndi **police.**
   (They used to write nasty letters to the District Commissioner (D.C.) and police.)

A: **I remember** tinakapereka **statement.**
   (I remember we went to give a statement.)

C: A **police**, amene anali a **officer-in-charge** kumene kuja mwina amadziwa kuti ndi anzawo a m'boma **that's why he just left him.** Simpaka ndinabwera kuujeniku, ku **Ministry of Health,** then kuwauza kuti sindibwereranso **if that continues.**
   (It seems the police officer-in-charge knew that it was his government friend(s) were behind it that is why he just left him. I even went to Ministry of Health then to tell them that I was not going back if that continued.)

A: Koma ndiye kumaospyatu. **Every night**tu.
   (But it was very frightening. Every night.)

C: Ndiye **I think a Dr** ... akukhala ngati **he intervened.**
   (And I think Dr ... intervened it seems.)

Fieldnote 2: 'English is more precise than Chichewa in which one has to use several words to express the same idea. English is economical for somebody who speaks both languages.'

Both Conversation 2 and Fieldnote 2 illustrate that CS can be used by bilinguals for economy or precision. Words such as 'main road', 'Ministry of Health', 'officer-in-charge' and 'tea estate' have Malawian equivalents (e.g. 'main road' = *mseu waukulu*, 'officer in charge' = *wamkulu wa polisi*; 'Ministry of Health' = *Unduna wa zaumoyo*; 'tea estate' = *minda yatiyi*). But the speakers choose to use the English equivalents when switching because they are shorter or have less syllables and express the idea more precisely than Chichewa.⁴ Thus English words, phrases or clauses which are shorter syllabically are normally used in place of a long Chichewa version. This, however, does not account for all the switches in this conversation, because some are clear borrowings in that they do not have a Chichewa equivalent — for example, words such as Dr, D.C., police. Other codeswitched clauses such as 'you know your mum's house used to be near', 'somebody was interested in your mum' and 'I remember' are due to the individual's psychological language processing.

CS for exclusion, secrecy, abuse, facade

Most respondents reported switching languages to suit their individual personal needs at that particular time, regardless of who was around. For example, to establish a higher degree of secrecy, confidentiality or privacy, a code unknown to the surrounding interlocutors was used to exclude them from the conversation and its contents. In families where parents spoke a different language from the children, that particular language was used for this purpose as a sanctuary in their home. The following examples taken from speakers of Chichewa among non-speakers serves to illustrate the point.

Situation 1. The speaker is Malawian with a foreign wife. He visited Malawi on holiday and wanted to change some money on black market. The reconstructed conversation went as follows:

A: **Hello.**
B: **Hello.**
A: **How much would you exchange one US$ to Malawian Kwacha (MK)?**
B: **About 4MK.**
 (While he consults his wife on the issue, the dealer turns to his Malawian friends and remarks to them in Chichewa.)

B: Ndim'bera ameneyu awona lero. Ndim'khaulitsa. Azichenjera.
(I'm going to cheat him. I will fix him. He should be careful).

This switch was deliberate and intended to exclude the customer who is about to be cheated or swindled. The dealer wrongly assumes his customer did not understand Chichewa.

Situation 2. A Malawian man is living together with a foreign lady in the hope of getting married. Their relationship has soured. Our conversation was initially in English, the common language to all of us. However, when he abuses or talks ill of her to his Malawian friends within her earshot, he switches to Chichewa thus:

Singam'kwatire uyu ah, awa ndi am'kwecha mapoto. Tonde azinunkha.
(I can't marry her, she is here just to clean up the place. A male goat should prove itself.)

A male goat should make his presence felt among the female goats, and brag about his infidelity. The image of the male goat (*tonde azinunkha*) is used to clinch a point (see Nwoye, 1993) in Malawian terms. The use of the proverb makes his point and intentions clear to his Malawian hearers and excludes the potential wife.

All these examples support the contention that CS is a strategy most bilinguals exploit deliberately to fulfil personal needs: secrecy, confidentiality, privacy or abuse, by barring others from the conversation. The switch to Chichewa by both the vendor and the husband-to-be is used for that purpose: exclusion for cheating a customer in situation 1 and exclusion for abuse in situation 2. In both situations 1 and 2 speakers deliberately switched from English, the unmarked language, to Chichewa, the marked language, to signal exclusion of their interlocutors, who did not understand or were presumed not to understand the marked language. CS was also used as a strategy for abusing others who also understood or did not understand the language.

> **Fieldnote 3:** The subject feels that 'English is neutral and I do not feel that I have used a strong word when wanting to abuse someone. Local languages have limited vocabulary and I have grown up and worked outside Malawi for a long time. I have spoken English more than any other language. To my children who were born in Tanzania we normally speak to them in Swahili, between my husband and I we mainly speak English and Tumbuka. I speak both Tumbuka and Chichewa to our servants.'

The above fieldnote illustrates that CS for abuse is used for euphemistic purposes because the words did not sound 'heavy in the mouth' (especially words to do with sexual organs or excreta), unlike the vernacular equivalent. This was done in order not to lose face or respect from members of the society, or not to sound uncultured, disrespectful or bad mannered. However some English words ('stupid', 'foolish', 'shut up' and 'bloody fool') may also sound harsh, insulting, domineering or autocratic when used with an uneducated person. For example most of uneducated female respondents reported their husbands abusing them in English, which left them powerless to answer back, because the social significance or value of English here is one of authority and showing off to put others down. This could be viewed as a desire by the husband to exert power and perpetuate his superiority over his uneducated wife, who cannot argue back, rendering her powerless, defenceless and unable to match his power and authority in the home. The use of English to an uneducated person will always be interpreted as showing off and an insult. In this case, English can be seen as a symbol of authority and oppression. However, the use of English between educated Malawians signals equal identity or status in terms of competence or proficiency in English. English may therefore not carry the same connotations as above.

CS for multiple identity

CS was also used by Malawian respondents to signal multiple identity (national, ethnic and socio-economic status) or to avoid being seen as arrogant as exemplified in the following extracts.

> **Fieldnote 4**: A respondent who speaks Chichewa and English at home and at work had this to say: 'One is seen as proud if you use English all the time.' So in order to disassociate oneself from that image people prefer to use both languages.

> **Fieldnote 5**: (Yao male respondent married to a Lomwe woman; their children speak Chichewa. Mzuzu City. Respondent works as a community and social welfare officer). 'I feel that using Chichewa makes me closer and less distant with the respondent. It feels closer and easy to communicate and emphasise my point. At home, I use Chichewa more than Tumbuka, which I only use with the vendors. My child goes to a private school but we seek a balanced competence in both Chichewa and English. English is the least used language in our home but we sometimes mix languages and this depends on our visitors and their competence in the languages. Since I deal with villagers sometimes, I prefer to come down to their level and be simple and I constantly check myself so that I do not use any English to the old peo-

ple in the villages. I strictly speak either in Tumbuka or Chichewa to be accepted and I do not mix. I find it easier when I'm giving talks on AIDS to mention private parts in the foreign language than in the mother tongue. I find their vernacular terms too heavy for me to use. My language use therefore could be categorised as follows: I basically use Tumbuka to Tumbuka people both at home and here at work with my colleagues and juniors. At the market it usually depends on the language spoken by the vendor in order to negotiate or bargain properly because if I pose as a foreigner then they will raise the price for me. If I go to the market soon after work, I usually take off my necktie and dress plainly in order to identify with the people. At the hospital and post office I also follow the language initiated by the nurses or the doctors or teller but I go for the English church service for convenience purposes. Issues at work are mainly discussed in English and general ones in Tumbuka. For business meetings, Tumbuka or Chichewa is sometimes used, but minutes are strictly taken in English but we can crack jokes in Tumbuka or Chichewa depending on the quorum. For emphasising points, proverbs in these languages are also used. When I go home to the village then most of the conversations with my relatives and other villagers are mainly in Yao and sometimes in Chichewa.'

This fieldnote illustrates that people can signal multiple identity by CS from one language to another. Specifically, a switch to English in such a circumstance usually signals high education or socio-economic status, while the vernacular emphasises traditional status quo or ethnic identity, or even deference. In the workplace most educated Malawians are faced with the dilemma of what language to use along with the prescribed official language, English. The dilemma is often resolved by using a vernacular language with the less educated, which encodes deference.

The distinction between CS and lexical borrowing

Studies on CS and CM have tried to distinguish between CM and CS and lexical borrowing, though the distinction is often problematic. Goke-Parola (1983, cited in Siachitema, 1986) argues that the study of CM among the Yoruba-English bilinguals he conducted showed that he was dealing with a case of linguistic borrowing from English to Yoruba, because the items involved were no longer recognisable as English as such, but assumed Yoruba prosodic and grammatical features. As already noted, Abdulaziz-Mkilifi's (1972) study shows that CS and CM are more than just a case of lexical borrowing. Pfaff (1982), Scotton (1992c) and Appel (1987 cited in Salmons, 1990: 466) among others have distinguished borrowing from CS or CM using four central criteria: frequency of occurrence, phonological integration, morphosyntactic integration and lexical status.

1. Frequency of occurrence is the most central criterion, in that frequent items tend to be considered borrowings as opposed to infrequent borrowings, which represent codeswitches or nonce borrowings (Salmons, 1990: 466).
2. Phonological integration is taken as an indication of borrowing, and lack of integration, as an indication of CS or CM.
3. Morphosyntactic integration is taken as an indicator of borrowing, as opposed to lack of integration, which is understood to be CS or CM.
4. Lexical integration can be determined by asking questions (Pfaff, 1982: 269-73): (a) does the equivalent exist in the other languages? (b) If so, is it in use in the community? (c) Is the equivalent in the other languages known to the speaker? (d) To which language does the individual regard the word as belonging?

Salmons concludes that frequency of occurrence points very clearly toward borrowing. Pfaff's lexical considerations would also generally support arguments for borrowing over CS and CM. He found phonological and morphosyntactic considerations useless in his German/English language contact situation. He concludes tentatively that the discourse markers he analysed appear to represent borrowing, although he agrees with Pfaff and Appel that a clear line can hardly be drawn between borrowing, CM and CS.

Based on these criteria, it can be argued that some English words frequently appearing in the Malawian corpus may be borrowings because of their frequency, their integration and embeddedness in Chichewa and other Malawian languages, and their wide range of use across the board regardless of education. For example, a number of English words have been borrowed into Malawian languages due to scientific, technological, economic and cultural differences between indigenous and Western societies. Thus the language and cultural contact, and the subsequent borrowings, can be ascribed to these cultural, scientific and technological changes. Most Malawian languages do not have equivalents to technological or English words, and sometimes Malawians substitute a simpler English word for the long Malawian word.

It is clear from the corpus that borrowed words are fully embedded in Malawian languages and assume Malawian phonological shape. They have thus become part of the language; speakers no longer see them as switches. These borrowings typically assume morphological and phonological patterns of Malawian languages, although sometimes, when used by educated Malawians, they retain their English pronunciation. In academic circles most scientific words do not have Malawian equivalents, and therefore can be regarded as clear borrowings.

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English	Chichewa	English	Chichewa
hello	halo	bathtowel	bafataulo
kettle	ketulo	table	tebulo
matches	macheso	telephone	telefoni
paper	pepala	business	bizinesi
dress	dilesi	jacket	jekete
pencil	pensulo	tractor	thekitare
cheque	cheki	bus	basi
soap	sopo	sweater	swetala
blanket	bulangete	mattress	matilesi
lorry	lole	glass	galasi
file	failo	grocery	golosale
windows	mawindo		

Table 1. Some English borrowings in Chichewa

CM as an unconscious language processing strategy

Analysis of manifestations of CS, CM and borrowing in Malawians' casual conversations suggests that the use of languages or codemixing by Malawian bilinguals is unconscious. For example, Micheta (1984) cites examples of a conversation between two third-year university students discussing a mathematical problem.

Conversation 3
A: Kodi wagwiritsa ntchito **formula** yanji yopezera **mean**?
   (Which formula have you use to get the mean?)
B: Ya **frequency**.
   (Using frequency.)
A: Ayi, **standard deviation** wapezayo ndiyolakwa.
   (You have found a wrong standard deviation.)

The base language in this conversation is Chichewa. Another conversation between two sisters in a home with their daughter went as follows:

Conversation 4
A: **I am sure you want to sleep** eti?
   (I am sure you want to sleep, right?)
B: (inspecting the child's leg) Zikuthano zam'myendo. Anam'patsa **zinc**.
   (The eczema on the legs is clearing. Did he give her zinc?)
A: Poyamba paja sanam'patsanso **zinc**?
   (Didn't they give her zinc at first?)

B: Ee. **Actually** palinso ka container kena koyera chonchi. **This is different.** Osati **whitefield** uja?
   (Eh, actually there's another white container. This is different. Isn't this whitefield?)
A: Iyayi **kabotolo** kena ka **greyish** choncho **with a white top.**
   (No, its another bottle; a greyish one with a white top.)

The highlighted unintegrated English words in Conversation 3 are statistical concepts or terms resulting from lack of appropriate words in Chichewa, and can only be found in English. They represent clear borrowings, as do words such as 'zinc', 'container' and 'botolo'⁵ (bottle) in Conversation 4. From Conversation 3 we can conclude tentatively that this type of switching occurs in utterances or discourses in which Chichewa is the base or matrix language. We may then hypothesise that these isolated English loan words ('formula', 'mean', 'frequency', and 'standard deviation') are statistical concepts or ideas accessible only in English, and used to fill gaps in an otherwise dominant Chichewa verbal context. The borrowed words are not phonologically integrated into Chichewa, the borrowing language; rather, they remain English phonologically. Similarly the medical terms 'zinc', 'whitefield' and other words such as 'container' are clear borrowings with no Malawian equivalents, and would be used by most people, even monolinguals.

However, not all English words found in a Malawian's repertoire can be accounted for within the borrowing framework, which only shows the difficulty of categorising the two manifestations as can be seen in Conversation 4.⁶ Other switches cannot be accounted for in that manner, because it is not clear whether the speaker is borrowing or the switch is due to their competence in the two languages (Chichewa and English), as is the case in Conversation 5 among three university graduates (a lawyer, administrator and lecturer) in Lilongwe. The conversation moves from getting some maize, through lack of electricity to allergies (hay fever) suffered by two of the participants.

Conversation 5
Three graduates: a lawyer working as a company secretary, an administrator holding a managerial position and a university lecturer are having an informal chat in the administrator's home. Their conversation, which was tape-recorded, went as follows:

1A: Simungathyole chimanga?
    (Can't you cut some maize?)
2B: Kulibe magesi.
    (There is no electricity.)

3C: **I was just thinking of making some tea and** thyolaling chimanga.
(I was just thinking of making some tea and cutting some maize.)
4A: Makala mulibe?
(Don't you have some charcoal?)
5C: Makala ake omwewa?
(Which charcoal?)
6A: **What medicine is that?**
7B: **It's for my allergies.** Ukakhala **blocked you just take two puffs, twice a day**.
8C: Zimathandiza?
(Does it help?)
9B: Eh, kwabasi. **The only problem is that** palibe **cure, so this just suppresses the symptoms** kuti **you don't sneeze** pafupi pafupi.
(Eh, very much. The only problem is that allergies have no cure, so this just suppresses the symptoms so that you don't sneeze all the time.)
10A: **That's why they say allergies** zilibe **cure**.
(That is why they say allergies have no cure).
11B: Eh, zilibe **cure**.
(Yes, they have no cure.)
12A: **And then what troubles me is that** ndikapanda kusamala…ndiye zimachita ujeni, zimachita affect mamuscles a ujeni, apa **throat** apa, ndiye **you feel suffocated**.
(What troubles me is that if I'm not careful, they affect my throat muscles and you feel suffocated.)
13B: **Your symptoms are like mine**.
14A: M'mene kwasinthila **weather** chonchi apa basi, **you get them** [symptoms].
(The way the weather has changed, that's it, you get them.)

The speech corpus indicates that Chichewa-English intra- and inter-sentential switching is not only a frequent phenomenon among bilinguals, but that it also involves all lexical categories. Unlike in Conversation 3, some switches are spontaneous and cannot be categorised as loans. In Conversation 4, speaker A uses more English than speaker B, and we find chunks of phrasal or clausal switching ('I am sure you want to sleep', 'This is different', '…with a white top') instead of isolated words. In total, there are eight switches to English from Chichewa. Most of the switches in this conversation involve short interjections, question tags or conversational expressions, fillers, or discourse markers. The connotational meaning these switches impart (apart from being discourse knitting devices) is not clear or marked, except that this could be a case of switching as a characteristic or norm of bilingual utterances. Other switches express colour terms ('greyish'), shorter versions of the Chichewa expression ('with a white

top' vs *chivindikilo choyera*) or longer English version of a shorter Chichewa text ('I am sure you want to sleep' rather than *ukufuna kugona*).

Conversation 5 exemplifies the unmarked use of code selection. All speakers are comfortable in the two languages in the conversation and freely switch from one to the other. The conversation starts in Chichewa about getting some maize and continues in Chichewa until participant C initiates a switch to English when introducing a new topic (making tea). The conversation continues in Chichewa when inquiring about the availability of charcoal. A switch to English is initiated by participant A when inquiring about a drug. B explains the use of the medicine to A in English and immediately switches back to Chichewa and then English when explaining the conditions under which the medicine is used and how often. Together there are 20 switches to Chichewa and 18 switches to English. Again as in Conversation 4 and unlike Conversation 3, it is difficult to tell in this conversation which is the base or matrix language.

Chichewa	English	
ukakhala	when you are	(adverbial marker)
eh kwabasi	very much	(emphasis)
palibe	there is no	(prepositional)
kuti	so that	(connective)
pafupi pafupi	quite often	(temporal adverbial)
zilibe	does not	(aux. verb)
Ndikapanda kusamala	if I'm not careful	(clausal switch)
ndiye zimachita	and they do	(repetition)
ujeni	and so	(filler)
ma-(muscles)	intra morphological	(noun class marker)
apa	here	(preposition)
ndiye	and	(connective)
m'mene kwasinthila	the way it has changed	(clausal switch)
chonchi apa basi	just like this	(clausal switch)

Table 2. Chichewa switches and their English equivalents

What is also interesting is the location where switches occur. Most of the switches in this conversation point more to a psychological or pragmatic way of language processing. The Chichewa chunks or phrases that cannot be characterised as borrowings or marked CS are words used to knit the discourse together or to emphasise a point.

The passage further exemplifies the occurrence of CS, CM and borrowing in one conversation. CS is exemplified by sentence 3, where C switches from Chichewa to English when she introduces a new topic.[7] Also in sentence 6, A codeswitches to

English when introducing a new topic, medicine. A few words can be clearly isolated (allergies, weather, symptoms) which are borrowings in sentences 7, 9, 10 because they do not have an equivalent in Chichewa. CM is however clear in sentences 9, 12 and 14. In these three sentences (which are typical of most bilingual Malawians) both Chichewa and English are used. Sentence 12 has a whole sentence in both English and Chichewa joined by many Chichewa prepositions (*apa*) and fillers (*ujeni*). What is also interesting in sentence 12 is the Chichewa morphological marker (*ma-*) attached to 'muscles' instead of 'the'. This is the only example where a borrowed word remains in English with a Chichewa morphological prefix. The word is partly integrated into Chichewa but preserves its English phonology.

We can tentatively argue from this data that for most competent multilinguals it is difficult to separate the three phenomena (CS, CM and borrowing). While it is easy to isolate some occurrences of borrowing, instances of CM and CS are difficult to characterise and differentiate. If the phenomenon is done consciously or deliberately for a particular purpose, it can be described as CS. We have both emblematic switching (single words, tags, discourse markers) and phrasal or clausal (syntactically complex) switching in sentences 9, 12 and 14, occurring at major grammatical constituency boundaries. We can conclude that borrowing is clear in instances where the base language in a conversation is Chichewa and the speaker uses terminology that has no equivalent in the base language. Even if they are not phonologically or morphologically integrated, such borrowings may or may not be recognised by monolingual Malawians. As to what triggers English or Chichewa, this is a complex issue which can only be accounted for by the high competence speakers have in these languages and the psychological processes of language processing, which are beyond the scope of this paper.

In analysing CS in Malawi, the focus has been on both individual instances of switching and on the functions of CS. Data on CM shows that it is meaningless to talk in terms of base or matrix language or embedded language. The type of switching in Conversation 3 appears to be due to metaphorical switching (Gumperz, 1972) or borrowing, whilst in Conversation 4 and 5 there is mutual accommodation of the use of two languages due to competence in both. It is clear from Conversation 5 that there is a distinctive and sophisticated way of using both languages as separate linguistic systems. It is also difficult to determine what triggers English or the vernacular in this conversation. When asked how they use more than one language in one conversation most of my respondents said, '*Ndimangophatikiza*': I just mix.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the pragmatic or functional use of CS and CM and borrowing, and has provided an analysis of various discourse structures. The two uses have been distinguished as conscious and unconscious use of languages for pragmatic purposes, and for what the rational speaker or language user hopes to gain from the conversation or switch. The conversations quoted have shown CS is a deliberate strategy used to fulfil personal needs or motives: solidarity, economy, exclusion, abuse (or euphemism), and multiple identity and deference. In contrast, CM has been shown to be used by bilinguals with high proficiency in the languages; their psychological language processing makes CM their characteristic way of speaking. Since bilingual speakers themselves are unaware of how this process occurs CS and CM should be treated as functionally or pragmatically separate but a related phenomena since both occurences involve the use of more than one language in a discourse.

Notes

* An earlier version of this paper appeared in the *University of Melbourne Working Papers in Linguistics*, 1994, 14.
1. The fillers or apologetics also depend on the language known or shared by both the interlocutor and myself.
2. At the time of writing, Malawi did not have universal education, and only a privileged few who could afford school fees learnt English, which is intricately bound up with employment opportunity. The educational qualifications attained by an individual determine occupational opportunities and socio-economic status.
3. *Bakwithu* (Tumbuka language) or *akwathu* (Chichewa) means 'my ethnic or regional brother or sister'. These terms are frequent identity (exclamations) markers, which makes some people switch from the neutral lingua franca to their ethnic language.
4. The terms *mseu waukulu* and *mkulu wa polisi* are more general than the specific terms 'main road' and 'officer in charge' respectively.
5. Note that the word 'bottle' is integrated into Chichewa phonologically and takes the morphological prefix *ka-* (small), proof of its full integration in Chichewa. This is confirmed by the fact that the speaker is competent in English and could have used unintegrated 'bottle'.
6. There is equal use of both English and Chichewa in this conversation unlike Conversation 3, making it difficult to tell which is the base or embedded language.
7. The author believes that if it was a question of economy, this switch to English is not necessary, since the Chichewa version (*Ndimati ndi pange tea*) of this utterance

would have been more economical or shorter than the English version. This further shows that economy is not the always the issue in CM or CS.

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