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THE POLITICS OF CODESWITCHING AND LANGUAGE CHOICE

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Abstract Using data from ethnographic studies of the use of French and English in Ontario and Quebec (Canada) in a variety of settings (hospital, factory, school, etc.) over the period 1978–1990, I discuss language choice as a political strategy, especially as a strategy of ethnic mobilisation. More broadly, I argue that codeswitching must be understood in terms of individual communicative repertoires and community speech economies, particularly as these are tied to a political economic analysis of the relationship between the availability and use of linguistic varieties, on the one hand, and the production and distribution of symbolic and material resources on the other.

Introduction[1]

The purpose of this paper is to discuss language choice as a political strategy, in particular its role in processes of ethnic mobilisation. The major point I want to make is that the study of the distribution and use of language choices in multilingual communities (choices which include but are not limited to codeswitching) can reveal not only the extent of stability of intergroup relations, but, perhaps more importantly, it can reveal the ways in which the regulation of access to symbolic resources is tied to the regulation of access to material ones.

In a given setting, at a given historical moment, codeswitching may be conventional, or, on the contrary, anti-conventional. In other words, it may represent a normal, routine way to use language, or it may violate expectations about how to behave. In any case, it represents part of a range of linguistic resources upon which people can draw to define the value of the other resources they control and to regulate access to them: resources are distributed by specific groups in specific situations through the provision and evaluation, among other things, of symbolic, including verbal, performances. Conventional language practices represent relatively stable relations of power, while violations can be seen as forms of resistance.

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Such conventions are created, maintained or changed through social interaction; by examining such processes, we can understand how (and possibly under what conditions) groups mobilise to alter prevailing modes of regulation of distribution of valued resources, and, indeed, may contribute to the alteration of prevailing modes of assigning value to specific forms of symbolic and material resources. In other words, we can discover how dominant groups control who can participate in situations where important things happen and how they control what is to count as important; in addition, we can discover how subordinated groups acquiesce in or in different ways resist these processes. Methodologically, this implies examining codeswitching not in isolation, but as part of a range of linguistic practices which people create and deploy to accomplish social goals. The absence of codeswitching can be as significant as its presence, or as the various linguistic forms which it may take.

In order to support this argument, I will discuss material from my own work on French–English codeswitching in a variety of settings in Quebec and Ontario (Canada).[2] This example is designed to stand as an illustration, rather than as a model for universal processes of development and change in practices of codeswitching and language choice, since a crucial assumption here is that the processes in question, while they may possess common elements, are historically contingent. Further, any generalisations can only be based on comparative research across time and space (Gal, 1988); I am limited here to comparisons within a few regions of Canada and with relatively shallow historical depth. Broader generalisations require broader bases of comparison, and I hope that the framework I offer here might be useful for just such future undertakings.

Codeswitching, Resources, Repertoires and Ideology

The picture I want to draw here hinges on a notion of codeswitching as a means of drawing on symbolic resources and deploying them in order to gain or deny access to other resources, symbolic or material. This picture builds both on Bourdieu's concepts of symbolic capital and symbolic marketplaces, and Gumperz' concepts of speech economies and verbal repertoires (Bourdieu, 1977, 1982; Gumperz, 1982).

I will use Bourdieu's concepts in the following way. I take codeswitching as a means of calling into play specific forms of linguistic and cultural knowledge, forms which conventionally possess certain kinds of value. That value is linked to the extent to which those forms facilitate access to situations where other kinds of symbolic and material resources are distributed, resources which themselves have value based in the prevailing modes of organisation of social life in the community (and who controls them). Certainly some resources have a concrete, functional basis to their value (like food); but most are related in more indirect ways to the methods people have of not only acquiring the basic things they need to survive, but of also

acquiring various forms of power and solidarity (in the Weberian sense of acquiring the means to mobilise and allocate resources).

Groups which control valued resources (of whatever kind) also control the 'marketplace' (in Bourdieu's terms) in which they are exchanged, the set of social relations in which the value of resources is defined and resources themselves are exchanged. Beyond sheer force, such marketplaces operate through hegemonic practices, through symbolic domination, through convincing participants that the values and modes of operation of the marketplace are immutable and universal. To change metaphors slightly, specific groups set the rules of the game by which resources can be distributed. In other words, it is necessary to display appropriate linguistic and cultural knowledge in order to gain access to the game, and playing it well requires in turn mastery of the kinds of linguistic and cultural knowledge which constitute its rules. Buying into the game means buying into the rules, it means accepting them as routine, as normal, indeed as universal, rather than as conventions set up by dominant groups in order to place themselves in the privileged position of regulating access to the resources they control. Bourdieu has insisted over and over again that it is precisely through appearing not to wield power that dominant groups wield it most effectively (Bourdieu, 1982; Gal, 1989).

These notions tie into those of Gumperz in a number of ways. First, both have noticed that linguistic and cultural capital are not equally distributed in any given community, despite the fact that all members of the community might share (at least along some dimensions) the same scale of values, that is, they all might agree on the fact that it is the capital (and other resources associated with it) concentrated in the hands of one group that is what is really valuable in life. In Gumperz' terms, forms of language are distributed unequally across a speech community, that is, any individual member will have a verbal repertoire which draws on part, but rarely all, of the forms in circulation. Further, it is this unequal distribution and the way in which resources are deployed which drives the operation of the marketplace, and hence the reproduction of relations of power. Only some members of a population are in a position to decide what will count as appropriate behaviour in situations where resources are distributed, and to evaluate performances there; normally, it is the symbolic capital dominant groups already possess which is the key to participation and success in the situations they control. As Gumperz and others have shown, an inability to bring to bear appropriate conventions of behaviour on key situations in daily life where crucial decisions about one's access to resources are decided (a job interview, an exam, a courtroom trial, etc.) can result in the systematic exclusion of segments of the population from the resources distributed there (cf. also Erickson & Shultz, 1982; Heath, 1983; Michaels, 1981).

Many critics have pointed out that this thoeretical framework is helpful in exploring how relations of power are sustained, but not very helpful in exploring resistance and change. First, it assumes a form of collusion on

the part of subordinate groups in their own subordination, whether conscious or not; it does not allow us to explore ways in which subordinate groups may oppose hegemony, whether directly or through the setting up of alternative systems of value, alternative marketplaces (Williams, 1976; Woolard, 1985). Second, it limits our ability to locate the creative power of individuals in social interaction to define and redefine social relations through communication (Shirley, 1986; Giddens, 1984). Put more broadly, the framework makes it difficult not only to discover where symbolic capital comes from, but also to account for (and hence to influence) processes of change.[3]

Various researchers have taken up the challenge of responding to these critiques. Some, notably Mehan and Cicourel, explore these dimensions in institutional settings (Mehan, 1983, 1987; Mehan *et al.*, 1986; Cicourel, 1975, 1978, 1980; cf. also Collins, 1987, 1988; Davis, 1988). Others focus on ethnic boundaries in the distribution of resources (cf. e.g. Woolard, 1985, 1989; Gal, 1988; Hill, 1985). The approach oulined here is situated in this second line of research, and takes codeswitching as a point of entry into the exploration of processes whereby dominant groups use conventions of language choice to maintain relations of power, while subordinate groups may (at times simultaneously) acquiesce to or resist them, and may even exploit conventions of language choice to redefine them (whether by substituting one group for another in the hierarchy, or by more radically altering the value of the symbolic and material resources in the marketplace).

In what follows, I will describe first the ways in which language was historically involved in the establishment of anglophone dominance in Canada. This will serve as a backdrop to the discussion of the ways in which linguistic practices, codeswitching among them, then became available to some as a means of altering (or coping with altered) relations of dominance in order to achieve particular social and political goals, specifically, participation in, acceptance of or resistance to the collective mobilisation of francophones to gain access to the valued resources hitherto the privileged reserve of the anglophone élite.

French and English in Quebec and Ontario (Conquest to the 1960s)

We possess limited knowledge about the social distribution of bilingualism in Canada, particularly in the period before the 1960s, when other matters, such as religion, obsessed us more than the language questions which preoccupy us today, or when tensions which we now think of as language questions were thought of more as matters of nation or race. There is, of course, no consensus among historians regarding the exact nature of language contact over the last 250 years or so, but a general picture emerges of two groups aligned in shifting, but basically unequal, relations of political and economic power, the result of the British conquest of New France.[4]

Points of contact were limited, confined probably to the francophone élite

and to those who organised the participation of francophones in British-run economic activities (as *coureurs des bois* in the fur trade, or later as loggers and *draveurs* in the lumber industry); possibly a small urban commercial class may have been involved in contact as well, especially in Montreal, where the majority of English-speakers were concentrated (indeed, until the end of the nineteenth century, Montreal's population was predominantly anglophone; Lachapelle & Henripin, 1980). While some anglophones settled in rural areas (mainly in the wake of the American Revolution and the War of 1812), the nature and conditions of that settlement precluded much contact; whatever contact there may have been most likely involved the use by francophones of English (Cartwright, 1987).

In the nineteenth century, and then into the first part of the twentieth, francophones, originally predominantly involved in agriculture and forestry, became increasingly involved as labour in English-controlled manufacturing activities, or in other primary-resource extraction and transport industries (notably railway-building and mining). The few literary and sociological treatments of intergroup relations in this period, while focussing on other matters, give the impression that social stratification continued to limit actual contact between individual members of each group. Small businessmen and foremen in factories were probably the most likely to act as brokers, and hence to be bilingual, along with service personnel (shopgirls and maids, for example); most of these were probably drawn from among the francophone population, although the Irish working class, and later the Jewish commercial and service class, were probably also involved (MacLennan, 1945; Hughes, 1943).

Most typically, francophones had to learn English when they entered the workforce in order to interact with anglophone superiors, and even then, this was most important only for those who occupied positions at the interface between the groups. This picture is confirmed by a demographic study of bilingualism in Montreal in the early 1960s, which showed that French–English bilingualism was confined to francophone males between the ages of 18 and 60, that is, only those members of the subordinate group who were active in the commercial/industrial, anglophone-owned and run, workforce (Lieberson, 1965).

The prevailing convention of language choice, then, was to use English in interaction with anglophones, at least anglophone members of the ruling élite. Anglophone managers in factories, and their wives running households staffed by francophones at home, probably spoke some French, of a syntactically, morphologically and lexically limited variety. Anglophone (principally Irish)–French interaction within the working class was undoubtedly quite different; the high rate of intermarriage, and the existence today of people with English or Irish names who speak no English and French names who speak no French attest to a different, but largely undocumented, dynamic (cf., however, Fennario, 1980 for a literary treatment of French-English working-class relations in Montreal at that time).[5] Any codeswitching would

have had to have been here, in interaction between Irish and French, or among francophone bilinguals in the workforce (although not necessarily in the workplace).

Somewhere, in this distribution of linguistic proficiency and linguistic practice, as it is linked to participation in and control over economic (and political) activity, lies one key to understanding the dynamic of the maintenance of anglophone domination of francophones until the 1960s. What is certainly clear is the ability of anglophones to dominate through the establishment of a hierarchy of language values in which English was valued over French (and European French over Canadian French), and through maintenance of the hegemonic norm of English as the language of private enterprise and of public (including but not limited to intergroup) communication. These conventions of language use and language value were indexical of an ideology of ethnic relations in which 'national' character suited each group to its place in the economic and social order.

My purpose here, however, is not so much to explore that dynamic (which would require in any case empirical data which I do not possess), but rather to use it as a backdrop to understanding its destabilisation through francophone ethnic (national) mobilisation from the 1960s through to today. In the rest of this paper, I will explore, on the basis of the (admittedly limited) evidence available, the relationship between the speech economy of language contact in Quebec and Ontario, its manifestation in individual verbal repertoires, and the redefinition of distribution of access to symbolic and material resources through ethnic mobilisation. In particular, I will focus on the distribution and functioning of codeswitching as a means of reconstituting social relations of power, specifically through a re-evaluation of the value of the symbolic resources which are the French and English languages (more precisely, the various varieties of those languages in circulation) as linked to their role in regulating access to other valued symbolic and material resources.

Codeswitching and francophone ethnic mobilisation

A variety of economic and political processes, too complex to enter into here, underlay the beginnings of francophone nationalist mobilisation in the 1960s.[6] While Canadian francophone nationalism has a long history, the most recent manifestation of it is distinguished by its major focus: that of gaining francophone access to the economic resources hitherto controlled by anglophones, without sacrificing francophone identity. In other words, while through the 1950s and 1960s (and even to some extent, in some places, today) francophones who wished to gain access to management positions in private enterprise had to do so through assimilation, the 1960s saw the beginings of a collective mobilisation designed primarily to achieve that access for the group as a whole, and used both a sense of collective identity and evidence of collective oppression to achieve that mobilisation. Of course,

many nationalists have contributed to that movement for other reasons, with goals that have more to do with social transformation than with upward mobility within the current structure of society, but their goals have been largely eclipsed by the economic and political benefits for an emerging francophone private and public sector élite of the mobilisation processes of the last 30 years.

Economic and political conditions have been key in creating the possibility of francophone nationalist mobilisation (notably the expansion of the industrial base of Quebec and Ontario in the post-War period, a shift in focus among the anglophone élite from Montreal to Toronto, and the existence of a state apparatus at the provincial level controlled by the numerically-dominant francophones). However, the realisation of that mobilisation in the experience of individuals in their everyday life can be seen as having been equally accomplished through their ability to manipulate linguistic resources in order to alter the rules of the game.

Two dimensions of the political significance of codeswitching need to be addressed. The first has to do with its distribution in the community: who has access to what kinds of linguistic resources? The second has to do with the way in which people who are in a position to do so exploit those resources for the accomplishment of a variety of social goals.

The following discussion is drawn from data that I have been able to collect in an out-patient clinic and in a large company in Montreal over the period 1977–1979, in French-language minority schools in Toronto (Ontario) over the period 1983–1990, and among Franco-Ontarian women married to anglophone men and living in three different regions of Ontario in 1989. Political mobilisation of francophones really began in Quebec, and only later began to have an impact outside the province. The period of my fieldwork in Montreal was particularly interesting, since a nationalist government had been elected in Quebec in 1976. Among their initiatives was the Charter of the French Language (commonly known as Bill 101), enacted in 1977 with the intent of promoting the French language as an instrument of mobilisation, an instrument for redefining the system and locus of distribution of economic and social resources. Among its many provisions, it made French the language of work, in the private as well as in the public sector. My work in Ontario has allowed me to focus on an area which is bound up with the development of Québécois nationalist ideology in a number of complex ways. Some Ontarians are isolated from it; others are caught up in it, but must re-orient themselves within a new framework. While in the past francophone nationalism embraced francophones across Canada, the association of Québécois nationalism with a specific territory (more or less) contiguous with the current borders of the province of Quebec means that a distinction must now be made between francophones inside and those outside Quebec. In addition, the economic developments of the last 15 years have drawn increasing numbers of francophones from Quebec to Ontario.

What I possess, then, are in-depth views of specific social locales (Marcus,

1986), distributed across time and space, but linked in a variety of ways within broader social processes (Giddens, 1984). Comparison of language practices across those locales can therefore tell us something about the processes in question. Indeed, several patterns stand out both in terms of the distribution of codeswitching and in terms of its use. These patterns are directly concerned with the extent to which the individuals involved are in contact with both francophones and anglophones, the nature of that involvement, and most importantly the political response of individuals to their relationship to the language boundary. What counts most of all is the extent to which individuals can (because of the verbal repertoire they develop by virtue of their social position) exploit linguistic resources for fulfilling social aims, and, secondly, whether they see their interests as lying primarily in strengthening or rather in neutralising the boundary between the groups.

The patterns will be described in terms, first, of those who do not codeswitch, because they do not have access to the necessary linguistic resources or because their overriding concern is for the maintenance of the ethnic boundary, even if they do have access to the necessary linguistic resources. Secondly, I will discuss those who not only have the right kind of verbal repertoire, but find that it is in their interest to exploit it (through codeswitching, notably) in order to cross the boundary, level it, or neutralise the tension across it. I will focus mainly on the presence or absence of codeswitching, and less on the more subtle dimensions of variability across that continuum, although some mention will be made of different forms of codeswitching encountered, and the ways in which that formal variation can be understood both in terms of individual repertoires and political ideologies.

Non-codeswitchers

Two kinds of groups (whose membership may overlap) generally fail to codeswitch. The first kind consists of people who are too far from the language boundary to possess the resources (and the motivations) upon which codeswitching is based. Many of these are anglophones, especially those in Ontario, but there remain francophones both in Quebec and in Ontario whose contact with English is limited or nonexistent. This is true not only of rural populations and certain segments of the working class, as in the past, but, in Quebec at least, also of the increasing numbers of francophones who work in private and public sector enterprises and organisations now owned or at least controlled by francophones and where the language of work is French. It can also be true of people (so far, generally francophones) who are assimilated to such an extent that over the course of their lives they have removed themselves far enough from the boundary so as to make codeswitching impossible and in any case meaningless.

The second kind consists of people who are caught up in processes of mobilisation, whether to participate in it or to resist it. Whereas many of them possess bilingual verbal repertoires, their political strategy entails a

reinforcement, not a levelling, of the linguistic boundary. (Indeed, for many, it is precisely their experience of the boundary which underlies both their bilingualism and their mobilisation.) In order to challenge the dominance of English in Canada, it was felt to be necessary to challenge prevailing conventions of language choice, more specifically, to violate them. Rather than speaking English, then, where expected, it became necessary to speak French (and only French). As an explicit strategy, this was current among mobilising francophones in Quebec in the 1970s, and remains current among mobilising francophones in Ontario today. In our recent interviews of Franco–Ontarian women, several talked about how they do this. One woman, Louise, gave this example:[7]

Example 1 (Ottawa 1989)

. . . dans les magasins . . . je fais ma naïve jusqu'au dernier degré 'je ne sais pas l'anglais moi' j'ai pour dire à Orléans à Ottawa tu te fais servir en français [oui c'est vrai] point final [tu peux] c'est moi qui perds du temps je veux dire je perds énormément de temps parce que je là il faut qu'ils aillent me chercher quelqu'un que là je fais ma naïve je vais en tout cas si cela ne fait pas je vais protester 'je veux me faire servir en français' l'épicerie ici e c'est supposé être bilingue tu sais puis quelquefois il y en a qui ne le sont pas puis ils sont insultés parce que je là je me rends justqu'à la direction je leur dis 'ça me prend quelqu'un bilingue' pour {pause} ils sont supposés d'être bilingues tu sais ils sont supposés [mhum] d'avoir quelqu'un là toujours une qui parle tu sais je perds énormément de temps . . . (in stores . . . I act naive to the utmost 'I don't speak English' to say that in Orelans in Ottawa you can be served in French [yes it's true] full stop [you can] it's me who's wasting time I mean I waste enormous amounts of time because I then they have to find me someone I act naive I'll anyway if that doesn't work I'll protest 'I want to be served in French' the grocery here e is supposed to be bilingual you know and sometimes there are some who are not and they're insulted because I then I go all the way to the management I tell them 'I need someone who's bilingual' to {pause} they're supposed to be bilingual you know they're supposed to [mhum] have someone there at all times who speaks you know I waste an enormous amount of time)

But it is important to note a few things about Louise. She lives in Ottawa, a city right on the language border, and one where, as a direct result of francophone mobilisation, speaking French can be a major key to upward social mobility, through the federal civil service (Ottawa is the federal capital) or through service industries spinning off the civil service. Indeed, Louise's husband is in the Canadian Armed Forces, and although Louise herself was not working at the time of interview, she was accustomed to working periodically as a teacher of French (as well as sometimes of English, depending on the part of the country in which they are stationed). For Louise, and others like her with whom we spoke, French has become valuable, and the source of that value has to do with the creation of resources

which francophones exclusively control. It is in her interest to make sure the boundary is maintained. It is clearly not that Louise can't speak English, it is that it is not always in her interests to do so. Indeed, she also signals this symbolically in her language choice within the interview: she displays her stance by using only French throughout, except for a few, highly flagged occurrences limited to proper names or fixed expressions.

On the other side of this mobilisation effort are anglophones whose privileged access to and control over resources are being threatened. They react in two major ways. The first set of strategies involves resistance to mobilisation through flight from boundary disputes or through attempts at reinforcement of existing boundaries. In the brewery in which I did field-work in Montreal, it was clear that some anglophones reacted by removing themselves from the boundary, whether by moving to anglophone areas of the country or by isolating themselves within the company. The most poignant example of this was a man in his thirties whose geographical mobility was restricted, largely because he did not hold a management-level job. Instead, he found himself a job within the brewery where he could work alone in a cubicle in the basement or make the rounds of the equipment and rarely talk to anyone.

In other cases, the reaction is one of passive or even overt resistance, for example, speaking English where others would now insist on French, and, in extreme cases, the organisation of English-rights movements (such as the Association for the Preservation of English in Canada, or the Confederation of Regions party). In Example 2, a routine exchange is rendered problematic by such political concerns. The hospital where this exchange took place is in downtown Montreal; as with almost all social institutions in that city it is historically affiliated with one of Montreal's two major language groups, in this case English. Whatever the first language of the actual participants in exchanges there (and when I worked there in the mid-1970s most low-ranking staff and patients were in fact non-anglophone), the convention of language choice had always been English. When francophone mobilisation began to call this convention into question, staff members were presented with a problem. We saw ourselves as being at the service of the public, and tried to find ways to engage in interactions without incurring the wrath of patients through inappropriate language choice. Since it is impossible to tell at a glance whether someone speaks French or English (let alone what their political position on the issue of language choice might be), we had to find ways around our dilemma. One was to codeswitch (see Heller, 1982a); another was to look at the name on the hospital card patients presented to us, and guess. As the example demonstrates, however, this did not always work smoothly; the patient's silence and demeanour signalled that a reanalysis of the political frame of reference was in order:

Example 2 (Montreal 1977; out-patient clinic):
Clerk: *Lombard, Anne-Marie?*

Patient: (Silence, Glare.)
Clerk: *c'est bien ça votre nom?* (That's correct isn't it, that's your name?)
Patient: (Silence. Glare.)
Clerk: is this your name?
Patient: yes.

The next example shows more overt forms of resistance. The exchange took place in Montreal in 1978, in the reception area of the provincial government office responsible for implementation of the controversial Bill 101. One of the provisions of the law was that members of certain professions had to demonstrate proficiency in French in order to be able to exercise their profession. One way in which this was evaluated was through government-designed and administered language tests. The man who comes up to the receptionist is, presumably, there in order to take one of these tests.

Example 3 (Montreal 1978; provincial government office):
Man: Could you tell me where the French test is?
Receptionist: *pardon?*
Man: Could you tell me where the French test is?
Receptionist: *en français?*
Man: I have the right to be addressed in English by the government of Quebec according to Bill 101
Receptionist (to a third person): *Qu'est-ce qu'il dit?* (what's he saying?)

Codeswitchers

The second broad set of strategies are ones which are designed to enable individuals to cross or level the boundary. Some anglophones attempt to gain access to the resources controlled by francophones (and distributed through the use of French) by learning French. These are the parents who line up all night to place their children in French immersion programmes, who themselves spend weeks in intensive language study in Quebec, or who learn French the way francophones used to learn English: on the job. For the most part, these are members of the middle class. They are the ones who have held the jobs in which French has now become important, and to which they do not want to lose access. They also have the material resources and the cultural knowledge necessary to enable them to acquire French, this new form of symbolic capital which has changed its value in the marketplace and its place there.[8]

In the brewery, this was the reaction of some of the anglophone managers, who, for a variety of reasons, preferred to stay and adapt rather than fight or flee. While their proficiency in French may have been poor, they deployed it strategically and symbolically (mainly through the use of French greeting routines and other fixed expressions) in situations in which they wanted to be able to participate and with francophones with whom they wanted to maintain good relations. They were joined in this strategy by a small group

of younger employees who had more to gain and less to lose by becoming bilingual, and, indeed, whose bilingual proficiency and use of codeswitching exceeded those of older anglophones.

They were also joined by some of the young and newly-arrived francophone managers, in some situations. While the position of these young francophone managers depended for its legitimacy on the exclusive use of French, they were frequently prepared to use some English in order to include individual anglophones in interactions. They were motivated in this in part by a need to gain access to the anglophones' expertise (based, usually, on years of experience), and in part by interpersonal considerations: there are, just the same, often limits to the extent to which people are prepared to allow group conflict to influence interpersonal relations. It sometimes makes more sense to maintain contradictory behaviour than to live with the consequences of being consistent.

In the following example, Albert and Bob are taking part in a regular weekly meeting of one sector of the brewery. The sector manager and management staff had always been mainly English-speaking, and the meetings had always occurred in English. The one francophone who had worked there for some time used only English with his colleagues. About six months before this exchange took place, this situation changed in a number of ways. Most importantly for our purposes, the sector manager received a transfer to Ontario. Bob was the next-highest ranking member of staff, and the one with the most seniority. He was, however, passed over for promotion in favour of Albert, a young, educationally-qualified francophone. While this situation certainly contained all the seeds of conflict, Albert and Bob adopted a different approach, and tried to work together in a context of mutual respect. One important way in which they constructed this context was through strategic use of codeswitching, often framed as light-hearted joshing (despite the seriousness of the content of what was said):

Example 4 (Montreal 1979; management meeting, manufacturing company):
Albert: Uh it's like passing the buck the somebody but uh (laughs) **can you spend some time with Pierre** {xx} **Monday it could be a good thing.**
Bob: *avec plaisir* **. . . okay I'll do that uh I charge Anne** *rien* **but** *spécial pour toi* **forty-five dollars an hour.**

In my data, two other groups not only had access to bilingualism but also used it in this boundary-levelling way. The first group consists of some of the Franco-Ontarian women married to anglophone men whom we interviewed in 1989. Unlike Louise, these women tended to live in parts of the province where there were fewer white-collar jobs in which French was valued, or to not possess the qualifications necessary for them to gain access to those jobs even where they existed. They were, however, conscious of the importance of French for their children's future, and, while English dominated their lives in their nuclear families and in the workplace, French

remained an important link to the emotional and material support provided by their extended families of origin, and to whom they retained close links.

Within that francophone world, conventional linguistic practice was defined as *bilingue*; the normal way to talk among francophones is to mix (*mélanger*) languages, and the normal way to identify members of the group is as *bilingues*. As one woman says of talk in gatherings of her birth family:

Example 5 (Ottawa 1989)
. . . *on parle français c'est comme bilingue tsé mélangé* (we speak French it's bilingual y'know mixed)

This practice is also reflected in the discourse of the interview, in which English is used much more extensively, and in a more smoothly integrated fashion, than it is in interviews with women like Louise, Further, English is used strategically in the interviews to symbolically signal a double affiliation. Annette says:

Example 6 (Ottawa 1989)
. . . *même si ça change c'est tout anglais je serai toujours française comme* {pause} **that's me** (even if it changes it's all English I'll always be French like {pause} that's me)

Julie says:
Example 7 (Sudbury 1989)
je suis une Canadienne-française **I guess** (I'm a French-Canadian I guess)

Later, talking about the fear among monolingual anglophones that all government jobs will be bilingual, she says:

Example 8 (Sudbury 1989)
c'est ça qui choque tout le monde asteur **it's creating hard feelings** *avec les Anglais pis j'aime pas ça* **because** *moi j'en connais trop des Anglais* . . . (that's what's upsetting everyone these days it's creating hard feelings with the English and I don't like that because I know too many English people)

Codeswitching allows them to participate in both French and English worlds, and, in the French networks, it is a sign of that ability to participate in activities controlled by anglophones. It is the codeswitching of the *bon vieux style*, with a twist: in Ontario, more so than in Quebec, social change has opened up opportunities for assimilation to English. Many have gone that route. But some have become aware of the importance for their children of retaining French for purposes of upward mobility; the value they place on their mother tongue now goes beyond the local in-group resources of a subordinated group to which they have access, to open up new vistas of opportunity, if not for themselves, then for their children.

Indeed, their children are among those who frequent the French-language minority schools where I have done fieldwork since 1983. In these schools it is possible to see in microcosm many of the issues I have just discussed.

There are students who in fact speak only one language well (whether English or French), because they just arrived from a monolingual French region in Canada or abroad, because they come from families where language transfer has already taken place, or because they are children of the anglophone middle class seeking bilingualism. There are others whose experience of life includes participation both in domains where French dominates and in ones dominated by English.

Official (i.e. adult-run) school activities are normatively conducted in French (on the same grounds that Louise insists on being served in French at the grocery store); peer-group activities are normatively conducted in English. In order to participate in both, one has to be bilingual. The first set of children, the French- or English-dominant ones, either withdraw into monolingual networks (to the point of being marginalised either by peers or by the school) or learn enough of the other language to get by.

The second use both, codeswitching at points where the different frames of reference of their experience collapse. For these bilingual children, what is important is to retain access to both French and English worlds, and so it is necessary to neutralise tension between the languages when they clash, but otherwise keep them separate. Sometimes, this has to be dealt with explicitly. In one instance, a group of 7-year-olds were playing in English in the schoolyard. A classmate, who, for the purposes of our research, was wearing a tape-recorder, wanted to join in. One of the boys told her she couldn't; his problem was that, since she was wearing a tape-recorder for adults who were clearly associated with the French-only explicit norm of the school, she would be expected to speak French, but the game was taking place in English (*'on joue en anglais* (we're playing in English)').

Other times, the collapse of frames can be dealt with implicitly through codeswitching or otherwise embedding different cultural and linguistic elements within a single frame. These are usually moments when students must perform in front of an audience which consists both of their teachers and of their peers (these are mainly teacher-controlled situations, like oral reports or dramatic skits), or groupwork involving student collaboration in the accomplishment of a teacher-defined task.

In the following example, a Grade 6 student interrupted a Grade 7/8 class in the middle of a lesson, in order to make a request of the teacher.

Example 9 (Toronto 1983; French-language elementary school, Grades 7–8):
Student: *Uh Monsieur je m'excuse de vous déranger* **I know I better be** *mais est-ce que je pourrais avoir le poids rond?* (uh Sir I'm sorry to disturb you . . . but could I have the round weight?)

The student's sarcastic side comment is clearly intended not for the teacher but for the other students looking on; he may have to be overtly polite to the teacher, but he can show the others that he is not a 'suck'. By using English for this purpose, he also accomplishes a certain degree of deniability:

his official exchange with the teacher is in French, and anything else is off the record.

In examples 10 and 11, students are engaged in small-group work in the classroom. In example 10, three students are in the process of putting together a poster, glueing on pictures they have cut out of magazines.

Example 10 (Toronto 1986; French-language elementary school, Grade 3):
Marie: *eh colle bien* (hey glue well).
Walter: *oui* (yes).
Sophia: It's good enough.
Marie: It's all crooked.
Walter: Crooked.
Marie: Oh gosh *oh j'ai presque mis à l'envers* (oh I almost put upside down).

Here, the codeswitching moves are not necessarily significant in and of themselves; rather, the relatively free combination of the languages allows the students to conduct (French-associated) classroom tasks without overly contradicting their (English-associated) peer relations.

In example 11, two older students are trying to put together, and, later, practice, a skit. The skit is in the form of a television advertisement for an Oriental sauce; one element revolves around a waitress bringing the sauce to customers in a restaurant, and tripping over a chair.

Example 11 (Toronto 1987; French-language elementary school, Grade 8):
Irene: Wait, then what happens? *okay ça vole dans les airs . . . non ça vole dans les airs* **and then what happens? falls? breaks?** (. . . okay it flies through the air . . . no it flies through the air . . .)
. . . . . .
Anna: *Okay on pratique on pratique? on* **move** *les* **chairs (okay we practice we practice? we move the chairs).**

While Anna's use of codeswitching resembles in many ways those of the younger students, Irene (here as elsewhere in the transcript) tends to use codeswitching not only to neutralise the tension flowing from collapsed frames of reference, but, further, to organise her discourse. In particular, she offers candidate pieces of script in French (the language in which the script will have to be written in any case), while her comments on it are in English. Elsewhere, I have argued that these differences among students can be attributed to the different forms of their individual repertoires, shaped by their socially-constrained experience of French and English (Heller, 1989b). Irene indeed has had much opportunity to use both French and English in her life, and has a broader set of resources in French to draw on than does Anna. The other side of the coin, however, is that the social situation at hand provides opportunities for using these resources (and not others) in different ways. It is significant in this regard that both Irene and Anna speak a third language, Irene Italian and Anna Farsi. Irene, however, never has an opportunity at school to make use of her (in any case

limited) Italian, while the presence of several other Iranian students makes it possible for Anna to use Farsi.

The last example shows how codeswitching can frequently be bound up in wordplay and punning. While humour, of course, is an excellent resource for neutralising tension or creating role distancing, it also points to the benefits of bilingualism shared among those on the language border (I use the term in a sociological, not strictly geographical, sense). It can also, of course, become a pleasurable end in itself.

Example 12 (Toronto 1983; French-language elementary school, Kindergarten):
Student: *Est-ce que tu sais qu'est-ce que 'je m'en fiche' veut dire?*
Teacher: *Quoi?*
Student: *Je m'en poissonne!*
Teacher: ???
Student: *Fiche*, **fish!**

In this example, a 5-year-old boy demonstrates considerably more metalinguistic bilingual sophistication than his hapless teacher. While she does in fact speak English, she thinks of herself primarily as a francophone, and, in keeping with school policy and the general ideology of mobilised francophones, she carefully protects the French-only domain of school. Her separation of the languages, however, makes it impossible for her to understand the boy's joke, and he is reduced to practically spelling it out for her (*fiche* sounds like 'fish', in French 'fish' is *poisson*, so fich-er leads to fish-er, and finally to poisson-ner).

In this section, I have tried to show how the distribution and use of French and English, and within that, of French–English codeswitching is part of a process of francophone ethnic mobilisation in Quebec and Ontario. That process directly involves some (but not all) individuals, whether they are engaged in it, resist it, or adapt to it (that is, try to position themselves in such a way as to take advantage of its consequences). That involvement is made possible (or at least facilitated) by virtue of their social position, and they go about it, in part, by drawing on and exploiting in specific ways the resources which form part of their verbal repertoire. Others, usually because they were too far from the boundary to begin with, are either insulated from the process altogether, or are left behind unless they can organise themselves (collectively or individually) either to fight for the value of the symbolic capital they do possess, or to acquire new forms of capital whose value is increasing.

Conclusion

In the particular case discussed here, codeswitching is part of a process of ethnic mobilisation which is characterised less by social transformation than by a realignment of the relations of power between ethnic groups. The

mobilisation of francophones has mainly been about substituting francophone (or in some cases bilingual) control of resources hitherto controlled by anglophones. It has not been about the creation of alternative markets where different kinds of resources acquire value and are exchanged.

The success of the mobilisation has been brought about in part through the establishment of new conventions of language use, that is, by the ability of francophones to impose French as the key to gaining access to situations in which the resources they now control are distributed. Codeswitching used to be about participation in anglophone-controlled networks where crucial economic goods circulated and participation in francophone-controlled networks where members of a subordinate group provided each other with the means to live with their subordination. Now it is about participation in circles where the same kinds of goods circulate, but are differentially controlled.

This process is not without its ironies. English has not totally lost its value in the marketplace, not only because of the power which anglophones retain in Canada, but because of the role of English in the global economy. Francophones have mobilised in order to gain access, as francophones, to that economy, in order to control the way its benefits are distributed among them. However, in order to participate successfully there, they must learn and use English. The way to the top may have been monolingual, but bilingualism has come to meet the new francophone élite at the summit.

Second, competition for bilingualism between francophone and anglophone élites has emerged. As the francophone élite manoeuvres to acquire English, the anglophone élite rushes to learn French, in both cases in order to gain or retain privileged access to precisely the same kinds of jobs and class positions in both the private and the public sector.

Finally, francophone mobilisation has been built not only on the simple re-evaluation of French as a symbolic resource, but on the development of a particular variety of highly-valued French. This variety is a Canadian standard which distances its speakers from (and establishes their legitimacy with respect to) both European French and the still stigmatised vernacular Canadian varieties. Finally, French is now set up, parallel to English, as a crucial linguistic resource to which not only powerful anglophones may aspire, but so must relatively powerless groups such as members of native groups and immigrants. What this does, of course, is create the kinds of social inequalities within francophone society against which mobilisation was directed in terms of the broader frame of Canadian society.

However, this only serves to reinforce my major point. In order to understand the role and significance of codeswitching in the kinds of political processes described here, it is essential to understand not only its distribution in the community, but, more importantly, how that distribution is tied to the way groups control both the distribution of access to valued resources and the way in which that value is assigned. Further, the study of language choice and codeswitching can shed light on the ways in which groups

struggle over resources, and on the ways in which individual members of a community contribute to that struggle by creatively and strategically exploiting their linguistic resources in key interactions.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and at the Third Workshop on Codeswitching and Language Contact of the European Science Foundation, Brussels, November 1990. I am grateful to all the participants in that workshop for their extremely helpful comments and suggestions, and, in particular to Georges Lüdi, Peter Nelde and Piet Van de Craen.
2. Most of this material has been published or presented elsewhere. In this paper I draw most heavily on material discussed in greater detail in Heller, 1982a,b, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1989a,b; Heller *et al.*, 1982; Heller & Lévy, 1992. The research on which this paper draws was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Quebec Ministry of Cultural Development, the Multiculturalism Directorate of the Secretary of State (Government of Canada), the Ontario Ministry of Education Transfer Grant to the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and a school board. Their support is gratefully acknowledged.
3. Of course, Gumperz, drawing on ethnomethodology, has always focused on communication as constitutive of social reality. He has, however, less frequently examined the processes which link communication in face-to-face interaction to broader questions of social relations of power and solidarity.
4. The purpose of this paper is to concentrate specifically on the relationship between speakers of French and speakers of English in Canada. In adopting this stance, I do not mean to imply that these were, or are now, the only groups involved in Canadian society. Certainly, it is important to keep in mind that even that dynamic is embedded in important ways in the relationship of both groups to others, whether to the indigenous population or to more recently arrived immigrants from other parts of the world, or even, beyond Canada's borders, to people elsewhere. Exploration of these relationships is, however, beyond the scope of this paper.
5. Of course, intermarriage with Irish members of the working class was not the only way in which francophones could lose their language, but it was one element in a more complex process.
6. Indeed, political scientists and historians continue to debate the nature and significance of those processes, notably the extent to which class interests (and the emergency of new class formations within francophone society) were central to the mobilisation process (Anctil, 1990).
7. The French original is given in italics, followed by an English translation in regular typeface. Where examples contain utterances in English, these are given in boldface. The interviewer's comments or back channel responses are inserted into the quotation in square brackets. Features of the discourse are in curly brackets; unintelligible speech is indicated as {xx}.
8. In a recent article, Cartwright (1987) has examined aggregate manifestations of shifts in patterns of bilingualism between 1971 and 1986, the period of most intense francophone mobilisation. He points out that it is certainly possible to discern a shift among Quebec anglophones, particularly younger ones (between the ages of 5 and 25), towards a greater degree of bilingualism; nonetheless, this may be due in part to an exodus of unilingual anglophones from the province, leaving behind those who either were already bilingual, or who were for some reason more open to the idea of becoming bilingual.

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