

**Ho-Dac Tuc, *Vietnamese-English bilingualism: Patterns of Code-Switching*,
Routledge Studies in Asian Linguistics, 2003, 175 pp.**

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Tuc's 'Vietnamese-English bilingualism – Patterns of code-switching' was the first study to examine English-Vietnamese bilingual speech. The study was set in Victoria, Australia in 1994, comprising of a corpus of 60 bilingual speakers. This is a revised account of the study first published in 1997, which in its original form a PhD thesis.

The book posed a question of how the Vietnamese use code-switching in their bilingual repertoire. Acknowledging that code-switching is a controversial concept, Tuc decides to treat 'the alternate use of two languages' at all levels of constituents such as morphemes, phrase, clause, sentence as code-switching for the purpose of his study. Based on a comprehensive yet concise review of current literature, Tuc concluded that no single framework provides an adequate treatment of code-switching phenomena. He promised to utilize a multidimensional approach, which does not just describe the structural constraints and rhetorical function of the switched discourse, but also considers extra-linguistic factors that may influence the patterns found. Tuc claims right at the beginning of the book that, apart from linguistic factors, idiosyncrasies relating to Vietnamese language and culture also affect speakers' decision to code-switch.

Tuc fulfilled his promise of utilizing a multi-dimensional approach most clearly in Chapter 2, where he takes us through his research design and quantification of syntactic forms in code-switching data. I find this chapter particularly well presented with detailed description about the community under study, supported by appropriate statistics. This section gives readers a clear sense of the history and the characteristics defining the Vietnamese community in Melbourne: concentrated population, having both strong and weak ties within the community across different areas. The key concept being introduced here is 'social networks' based on Milroy's approach (1980), which he later uses to explain the code-switching patterns found. Tuc took the assumption that the variation in the structure of individuals' personal networks will systematically affect the use of two languages available in the community. This informs his use of questionnaires, interviews and natural speech as methods for data collection. While Tuc justifies all methods used appropriately, his explanation of some particular set-ups is less satisfactory. For example, he asked informants to record themselves and others in a typical daily conversation, and left the 'known' speakers free to decide whether other speakers should be made aware of the tape recorder or not. This raises some ethical concerns, which, without further explanation, left readers wonder why such ethical decision was made, and how was it necessary for the purpose of the research.

The next 3 chapters of the book discuss results found from the corpus, each focusing on a specific aspect. Chapter 3 focuses mainly on the nature and frequency of code-switching in the corpus; Chapter 4 analyses the relationship between Vietnamese tones and code-switching patterns; and Chapter 5 discusses how the Vietnamese system of person reference induces a codeswitch. I find the general remarks on Vietnamese syntactic forms, tones, and person reference at the beginning of each chapter respectively extremely helpful, as it gives readers, especially those not familiar with Vietnamese, the necessary contexts to make sense of the data.

Tuc's description of the quantified frequency and patterns in Chapter 3 is well laid out, albeit some limitations. Tuc's comparative analysis of code-switching patterns across three socio sub-groups towards the end of the chapter is particularly well done. Using appropriate statistical analysis, Tuc found no noticeable differences in types of code-switching across three geographical areas of Victoria where the study took place, and attributed this similarity to their similar types of interpersonal network. The finding, though not new, is significant, as it suggests the existence of a stable Vietnamese bilingual community, and that the similar quantitative code-switching patterns found indeed form an integral part of their repertoire in Melbourne.

Without wanting to discount the merits of this chapter, I identify three areas that readers could have benefited more from the book: First, Tuc's description of 'adjectives' in Vietnamese could afford to be more accessible. It is not immediately clear which criteria he uses to classify a lexical item as 'adjective', given his preceding remark that adjectival meanings in Vietnamese are chiefly expressed by nouns. Second, the invented examples that Tuc used in this chapter are subject to debate. For example, in example (7) on page 44, Tuc claimed that Topic and Subject can be both overtly marked in one sentence. However, based on what Tuc previously explained about Vietnamese sentences, this invented example appears to consist of two separate sentences rather than one: one interrogative (*'đi chợ à'* – 'Going to the market?') and one declarative (*'mày đi đường Church nhanh nhất'* – 'it is fastest to go the Church Road'). In absence of further explanation as to how a boundary of a sentence is defined, Tuc's analysis of Vietnamese sentence topic as a grammatical notion is dubious. Readers without knowledge in Vietnamese in particular, may not notice this as the interrogative marker *à* is not immediately obvious. Last but not least, some questions remain in relation to Tuc's conclusion that the empirical evidence found generally support Poplack's Equivalence Constraint. In order to reach this conclusion on a rigorous basis, one would need to compare the proportion of switches in utterances with corresponding versus non-corresponding word order. Although Tuc claimed that 'most switches of single words' in his corpus 'occur at points around which the word order of the two languages corresponds' (p.85), no comparative proportion was provided. This lack of data comparison could be a source of confusion to the readers, even more so when Tuc then cited both examples and counter-examples of Poplack's Equivalence constraints (pp. 64-5), and acknowledged that the constraint did not hold in cases of the switching of adjectives inside a noun phrase. In this sense, the issue at hand is perhaps more with data presentation than with Tuc's analysis.

Chapter 4 and 5 are refreshing, as they provide insight into areas that are normally under-represented in code-switching literature: the relations between tones, person-reference system and code-switching patterns. Tuc's analysis in chapter 4 reveals statistically significant proportion of high tones preceding code-switches, which in part suggests that code-switching is facilitated by mid to high level pitch Vietnamese tones. This is an intriguing finding, however Tuc cautioned us against taking this as absolute, because tonal facilitation is more a tendency than a universal rule that is applicable to all tonal languages. Tuc's conclusion of the correlation between pitch and switch point is well supported with statistical analysis.

Moving on from tonal facilitation, Chapter 5 applies the Markedness model to explore the behaviour of first-generation speakers' switching of personal pronouns. Tuc argues that the switching of personal pronouns was to signal a change in the social relationship between the interlocutors, thereby supporting the usefulness of the Markedness model in understanding the social motivations of pronoun code-switching. Although this provides useful insights into how English and Vietnamese personal 'pronouns' (including kin terms and proper nouns in Vietnamese) are switched in certain situations, the validity of the results remain questionable. The interpretation of the switches found is merely based on the researcher's emic understanding as a community member without any external validation. Specifically, Tuc examined the transcripts and assigned pragmatic motivations to instances of code-switching in pronouns with no clear independent evidence of a change in social relationship among the speech participants, other than the pronoun itself. While this is typical of the Conversational Analysis approach, Tuc's evidence for a relationship between 'idiocrasies relating to Vietnamese language and culture' and speakers' decision to code-switch is loosely presented and not utterly convincing. This presents a gap in his interpretation, and an opportunity for a study with better external validation on pragmatic motivation in bilingual discourse.

Overall, I found Tuc's book an impressive, accessible study which provides crucial empirical data on English – Vietnamese, a language contact pair that is not well described in current literature. The book addressed the research question in a thorough fashion, giving us a detailed description of how bilingual Vietnamese speakers code-switch. Despite being done twenty years ago, it remains one of, if not the only, most significant studies on English-Vietnamese code-switching. Researchers who are interested in language contact in general, or repertoire of the Vietnamese migrant communities in specific, will benefit greatly from this book. While the book inevitably leaves a few questions unanswered, it provides an opportunity for future research to build on the existing findings and continue this line of enquiry.