6

Sociolinguistic factors in code-switching

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6.1 Introduction

Sociolinguistics is an extremely broad field within linguistics. It incorporates topics as different in scope as the study of policy in multilingual states, the role of "linguistic markets," the different linguistic behavior of women vs. men, middle-class vs. working-class and other social groups, and the analysis of individual conversations. Sociolinguistic factors are relevant to our understanding of code-switching (hereafter CS) at a variety of different levels, but obviously their impact at all these levels cannot be treated in one chapter. For the purposes of this chapter, a selective approach will be adopted to the study of relations between social factors and the speech of individuals, groups, or communities. The selection will draw on some of the macro-level factors as well as the micro-level ones, the purpose being to show how sociolinguistics can help us understand CS, as opposed to, say, factors deriving from linguistic similarities/dissimilarities between the varieties involved or psycholinguistic factors.

It is argued here that CS should be considered first and foremost from a sociolinguistic perspective, that is to say from a perspective where language behavior and use are related to speakers' (social) identity and characteristics, or to aspects of their social life in the broad sense. There are several reasons for this. First, the study of CS developed in tandem with the study of sociolinguistics and has therefore evolved in response to similar developments. Sociolinguistics took off in the 1970s and 1980s, when, particularly following the work of Labov, the study of "natural" vernacular speech, bearing in mind the Observer's Paradox, became a focus for linguistic study. This is not to say that nobody had studied language, or even CS, in a naturalistic context before that (see Benson 2001, on the neglected early history of CS), but such studies as existed were "one-offs" rather than part of a trend. This changed with studies of CS carried out by Blom and Gumperz (1972) and Gumperz (1982a), from an ethnographic perspective

on the one hand, and of Poplack (1980) from a grammatical perspective on the other. Both used data collected in natural conversational settings in order to analyze different aspects of CS.

Secondly, CS is in fact a construct derived from the behavior of bilinguals. In observing the daily interactions of people in plurilingual communities, linguists noticed that such speakers often appeared to be drawing on two or more different varieties and combining them in socially meaningful ways. Although, as this volume shows, CS is now studied from a number of different perspectives and with different methodologies, the primary source of data remains in the sociolinguistic arena.

Thirdly, as will be argued here, sociolinguistic factors are the prime source of variation in CS behavior. This can be seen most clearly in relation to the grammatical patterning of CS in different communities. Although there is evidence that different typological combinations favor different ways of combining varieties within the sentence (Muysken 2000), the same languages can be combined in radically different ways grammatically speaking when, for example, speakers of different generations are involved, or when the languages are combined in an immigrant, as opposed to a native multilingual, setting.

At a time when sociolinguistic approaches are sometimes under attack for positing correlations between language and society which are too simplistic and positivistic (Williams 1992; Cameron 1990), it is worth bearing in mind that such approaches retain some considerable explanatory power, which can provide a first step towards understanding the significance of CS in social life. In this chapter, various ways in which CS can be elucidated with reference to sociolinguistic factors will be reviewed. For example, studies that consider CS in relation to gender will be discussed, so as to clarify whether, and in what ways, the two can be related. The conclusion, however, warns against using sociolinguistic parameters in too direct a way as an explanation of CS.

6.2 Types of factor

A wide range of factors determine whether or not CS occurs at all in a given language contact situation. From a sociolinguistic point of view, three types of factor contribute to the form taken by CS in a particular instance:

1. Factors independent of particular speakers and particular circumstances in which the varieties are used, which affect all the speakers of the relevant varieties in a particular community, e.g. economic "market" forces such as those described by Bourdieu (1991), overt prestige and covert prestige (Labov 1972; Trudgill 1974), power relations, and the associations of each variety with a particular context or way of life (Gal 1979).

2. Factors directly related to the speakers, both as individuals and as members of a variety of subgroups: their competence in each variety, their social networks and relationships, their attitudes and ideologies, their self-perception and perception of others (Milroy and Gordon 2003).
3. Factors within the conversations where CS takes place: CS is a major conversational resource for speakers, providing further tools to structure their discourse beyond those available to monolinguals (Auer 1998).

There are many overlaps and inter-relations between the three sets of factors, and some understanding of all three is necessary in order to understand why particular CS patterns arise. The classification above provides a semblance of order within the huge range of factors that attach neither to the varieties themselves as linguistic entities, nor to cognitive/psycholinguistic factors that affect the individual. For example, the individual's competence in the relevant varieties is a product of their (reasonably permanent) psycholinguistic make-up; at the same time, it has sociolinguistic implications, as it is closely connected with factors such as age, network and identity. Thus, whether or not a second or third generation member of the Chinese community on Tyneside can converse fluently in Chinese determines the extent to which they can take part in conversations with the oldest members of the community, who may be to all intents and purposes monolingual Chinese speakers. At the same time, their social networking with people their own age is also partly determined by their linguistic abilities, and their association with English or Chinese speakers is likely to reinforce their preferences and abilities in those languages (Milroy and Li Wei 1995; Li Wei 1998).

6.3 Macrolinguistic approaches

As sociolinguistics covers a wide range of issues, CS can be studied at the level of multilingual societies (e.g. India), right down to the inter-individual and idiolectal level. Gumperz and Hernández (1971) wrote that, "CS occurs whenever minority language groups come into close contact with majority language groups under conditions of rapid social change." In the next section a few of the broader-based studies are described.

Heller (1988a) was perhaps the first volume in which CS was treated principally as a broad societal phenomenon. Heller's own paper (1988b) shows how CS can be used to manage and avoid conflict when different varieties are associated with different roles in a society. She gives examples from a Montreal company and a school in Toronto to show how CS allows people to gain access to different roles or "voices" by switching from French to English or vice versa, and thereby exploit various ambiguities inherent in the situation. In the same volume, Woolard (1988) describes

the use by a comedian, Eugenio, of Catalan–Castilian CS in Barcelona, not as a test of ingroup membership but rather as a way of addressing two audiences at once and thereby *leveling*, rather than maintaining, the boundary between them; and McConvell (1988) describes switching between dialects of an aboriginal language, Gurindji, and English in terms of the inter-related social "arenas" where these are used.

Gal's (1988) chapter points out that CS often involves one state-supported and one stigmatized minority language. Vernacular linguistic forms continue to be used because they represent a form of resistance to domination, so such patterns of use do not simply *reflect* the socio-political situation, they help to shape it. The latter point is an important one. Several others have also pointed out that traditional sociolinguistics tends to present the stratification which it portrays in society (e.g. class or gender based) as if it were the result of a consensus, and thereby to gloss over the fact that the observable differences may in fact embody conflict or dissatisfaction (Williams 1992; Cameron 1990; Pujolar 2001). As Cameron (1990:57) puts it, "The language reflects society account implies that social structures somehow exist before language, which simply 'reflects' or 'expresses' the more fundamental categories of the social."

6.3.1 Diglossia, markedness theory, and networks

Ferguson's description of certain linguistic situations as "diglossic" (1959, reprinted in Li Wei 2000), continues to form a useful basis for discussing bilingual situations. This is not because the diglossic communities described by Ferguson are unchanged – the description was not totally accurate even when first written – but because these proposals focused attention on the functional differences between different varieties of the same language and provided a set of structural parameters which allowed one situation to be compared with another. Language use in bidialectal situations – the model was subsequently extended by others to bilingual ones – is described in terms of complementary domains[2] of usage, of the varieties' relative prestige, their role in official life, religion, education, and literature. The schema was the subject of significant amendments by Fishman (1965, 1967, also reprinted in Li Wei 2000). Breitborde (1983) subsequently pointed to some difficulties with connecting the abstract notion of domain with its impact in actual interactions: the features which make up a domain are rarely a perfect fit, so in each case some aspects are likely to be more significant than others. The concept of diglossia was specifically related to CS by Myers-Scotton (1986). Myers-Scotton also developed the concept of markedness in order to explain the socio-psychological motivations for CS, using data collected in various settings in Africa, Kenya in particular (1983, 2002b). It was suggested that in any given situation, a language choice could be either unmarked (i.e. the expected choice for this speech act) or marked (i.e. a choice which

contributes in some way to the message because it is unexpected, and therefore carries particular implications or associations).

Li Wei et al. (2000) proposed social networks as an alternative means of relating CS and the language choices of individuals to the broader social, economic, and political context. They claim that a social (as opposed to sociolinguistic) theory that associates network patterns with the sub-groups that emerge from political, social, and economic processes remains to be developed. Højrup's (1983) division of the population into sub-groups described in terms of different "life-modes" provides one possibility. Li Wei et al. found that these life-modes corresponded well with the linguistic behavior of members of different types of network in their study of the Tyneside Chinese.

6.3.2 Comparisons between and within communities

One of the challenges posed by CS is to explain the variation within it, or, viewed another way, to decide how broadly it should be defined. It has been defined here as inclusively as possible, because, in the present state of knowledge, it has not been demonstrated that the differences between CS and other language contact phenomena are categorical differences as opposed to differences of degree. CS merges with lexical borrowing at one end of the scale, one of the most "minimal" manifestations of contact, and with convergence/interference/code-mixing at the other end, which can be seen as the last step before total fusion. If the process of language contact always started and ended in the same way and always proceeded along a similar path, it would be easier to divide it into distinct phases. Instead, our task is a messier one, namely, to try and apprehend the variations involved and to tie them in with the factors that may help explain this variety. Variation in CS can be divided for practical purposes into variation between communities and variation within communities or groups.

6.3.2.1 Variation between communities

Making systematic comparisons between CS in different language combinations and different contexts is the best way to elucidate the contribution of typological factors on the one hand, and sociolinguistic ones on the other, to the patterns of CS in different communities. So far, only a few such comparisons are available. On the whole, researchers base their discussions of CS on their own data, collected in a single community, and do not have access to comparable data sets from other communities. The LIPPS Project has set up a database of CS texts coded according to a common protocol and thus facilitating such comparisons (Barnett et al. 2000). Meanwhile, some existing comparisons between communities or sub-groups are discussed below. Treffers-Daller (1994, 1999), Cheshire and Gardner-Chloros (1998), and Muysken (2000), also employ a comparative approach.

6.3.2.2 Comparisons between communities

6.3.2.2.1 McClure and McClure (1988)

McClure and McClure (1988) took a broader perspective than in much CS research when they described a multilingual Saxon community in Romania in terms of the macrolinguistic relationships between the groups. The Saxon and Romanian communities are quite separate, but unlike other minority groups, the Saxons do not occupy a subordinate position vis à vis the majority. Consequently, their CS is more limited in type than that described elsewhere. Situational switching, mainly dictated by changes in participant, is dominant over the conversational variety. Where the latter does occur, its main function is to highlight quotations.

McClure (1998) compared written CS – a more common phenomenon than might be supposed[3] – between English and the national languages in Mexico, Spain, and Bulgaria. The characteristic type of CS encountered in each of these countries reflects the functions of and attitudes toward English. In Mexico and Spain, English is widely known, and is used in the press in various expressions denoting concepts expressed more economically in English or using "English" concepts (e.g. "Latin lover"). But in Mexico, which shares a border with an English-speaking country and resents the latter's economic and cultural domination, CS is functionally richer than in the other two settings. It is used in ironic contexts to reflect a certain rejection of the US culture, as for example in the use of "by the way" in this quotation from the Mexican press:

(1) La hipocresia norteamericana no estriba tanto en los lamentos exagerados por la muerte de un agente de la DEA, y en la indiferencia o incluso el desprecio ante la muerte de decenas de agentes mexicanos (o, **by the way**, de miles de civiles panameños).
"The North- American hypocrisy does not rest so much on the exaggerated laments over the death of an agent of the DEA, and on the indifference or even the scorn with respect to the death of tens of Mexican agents (or, by the way, thousands of Panamanian civilians)."
(*Proceso*, January 15, 1990; cited in McClure 1998:141).

By contrast, in Bulgaria English has increasingly been used, since the fall of the Communist regime, as a symbol of the West, a cultural and economic world to which many Bulgarians aspire. English is not yet sufficiently well known for more subtle uses of CS, but is widely present in advertising and in other documents, such as the "yellow pages" for Sofia.

6.3.2.2.2 Poplack (1988)

Poplack (1988) made a three-way comparison between data collected in the Puerto Rican community in New York (Poplack 1980) and a later data-set from five neighborhoods within the Ottawa–Hull community in Canada, which is divided by a river that constitutes both a geographic and a linguistic border (not in the dialectologist's sense of "isogloss," but in a

sociolinguistic sense). On the Quebec side (Hull), French is the official and majority language, and on the Ontario side (Ottawa), it is a minority language. The comparison is of particular interest as the differences between the communities cannot be attributed to linguistic factors but only to the different status of French in the two communities. The method of data collection and the definition of what constituted CS was the same in both cases. For the purposes of this study, Poplack considered as CS the use of English material in the context of French conversations (i.e. in practice she operated with the notion of French being the *base language*). In keeping with her view as to the demarcation line between CS and borrowing (Poplack and Sankoff 1984), she did not count as CS single English words that were morphologically or phonologically integrated with French.

The most striking finding was that in the Ottawa communities, where French is a minority language, CS was "three to four times as frequent" as in Hull, i.e. the stronger influence of English in the environment was directly reflected in the amount of CS (Poplack 1988:226). The same switch-types were found in both communities, but the distribution of the four main types was radically different. In both communities the most common switches were *mot juste* switches, switches for metalinguistic comments, switches where the English intervention is flagged, as in (2a), and switches in the context of explaining/translating. This points to a fairly self-conscious use of English in both cases, with switches in Quebec being largely restricted to metalinguistic commentary, which, as Poplack points out, show the speaker's full awareness of using English, as in (2b).

(2) (a.) Excuse mon anglais, mais les ***odds*** sont là
"Excuse my English, but the odds are there."
(b.) Je m'adresse en français, pis s'il dit "***I'm sorry***", ben là je recommence en anglais
"I begin in French and if he says, 'I'm sorry,' well then I start over in English."

Poplack comments that this reflects the fact that in Hull people believe that good French must of necessity exclude Anglicisms.

6.3.2.2.3 Reasons underlying the differences

The comparison with Puerto Ricans in New York is less direct. There is a wide range of differences between the two situations, such as the fact that the Puerto Ricans are of immigrant origin, and these differences could account for the differences in the prevalent types of CS. We are also dealing with another language combination, but as Poplack points out the linguistic distance between English and Spanish is not much more remarkable than that between English and French. It is probably more significant that different data collection techniques were used, the Puerto Ricans being studied through participant observation, whereas the Canadian

studies were conducted by means of interviews with out-group interviewers. The latter technique might mask the extent of CS and give rise to heightened purism on the speakers' behalf. Regardless of this, Poplack describes switching found in New York as fluent and varied, with many unflagged switches, as opposed to the limited, and more stilted, CS found in the two Canadian contexts. She ascribes this mainly to the fact that for the Puerto Ricans both languages are an intrinsic part of their identity and of their communicative practices. The cohabitation of the two varieties within CS is a natural consequence of this integrated duality.

CS therefore arises, in different forms, in a wide variety of sociolinguistic circumstances. There are also, more unusually, communities that appear to shun it, as in the case described by Sella-Mazi (2001). This is the Muslim, Turkish-speaking community in Thrace (Greece), who were afforded a special status and elaborate protection of their linguistic rights under the Treaty of Lausanne (1923). Although the younger members of this community are perfectly fluent in Greek, they are described as avoiding CS, owing to a high level of awareness of the need to protect their language and culture from Greek influence. A second reason given is that the two languages are of widely differing importance in terms of speaker attitudes. A similar avoidance of CS between two of the languages spoken in Nigeria, Igbo and Yoruba, has been described in the literature (see Goglia 2006).

6.3.3 The Gumperz tradition

John Gumperz, whose early work on CS put the latter on the sociolinguistic map, investigated it in contexts ranging from Delhi to Norway, from the point of view of its historical genesis, its linguistic consequences, its significance for speakers, and its conversational functions (see Gafaranga, this volume). Here, the discussion concentrates on two aspects of his analysis which continue to be influential: the notions of *we-code* vs. *they-code*, and the distinction between *situational* and *conversational CS*. Much of Gumperz's earlier work on CS, originally published in less accessible sources, was recapitulated in *Discourse Strategies* (1982a), so for the sake of convenience most of the references here are to that volume.

6.3.3.1 *We-codes* and *they-codes*

Gumperz (1982b) suggested that as a direct consequence of diglossia the ethnically specific, minority language comes to be regarded as a "*we-code*" and to be associated with in-group and informal activities, whereas the majority language serves as the "*they-code*," and is associated with more formal, out-group relations. However, he emphasized that the relationship between the occurrence of a particular set of linguistic forms and the non-linguistic context is indirect, and that there are only very few situations where one code exclusively is appropriate: "Elsewhere a variety of options

occur, and as with conversations in general, interpretation of messages is in large part a matter of discourse context, social presuppositions and speakers' background knowledge (1982b:66)." In CS, the *we-code* and the *they-code* are often used within the same conversation, as in (3), in which a Punjabi–English bilingual talks to a friend about the likely loss of Punjabi culture in Britain.

(3) culture tha aapna ... rena tha hayni ***we know it, we know it, we know it's coming***
culture [tha = stress marker] our ... stay [stress marker] is-not ...
"Our culture is not going to last, we know it, we know it, we know it's coming."
(Gardner-Chloros et al. 2000:1322)

The threat to Punjabi culture is poignantly embodied in the switch from the *we-code* to the *they-code* half way through the sentence, and by the use of the English word "culture."

From an early stage, variations on the *we-code/they-code* dichotomy were reported. Singh (1983) wrote that, although the minority language is usually the *we-code*, this is not always the case. In India, for example, speakers with social aspirations may use English as their *we-code* and Hindi with ironic intent, to show themselves to be a different kind of minority, whose apartness is based on privilege. Sebba and Wootton (1998) also state that even where there are two or three distinct codes available, a multiplicity of social identities may be evoked and manipulated through them, and the relationship between code and identity is far from being one to one. They illustrate the point by showing unexpected configurations of *we-* and *they-codes* in various contexts. Cantonese is the *we-code* in Hong Kong classrooms, where English is learned as an L2, but cannot be equated with an insider-code as Cantonese is the majority language. For British-born Caribbeans, London English and London Jamaican are both *we-codes*, since it is the ability to use *both* that characterizes the "Black British" speaker.

The *we-code/they-code* distinction also breaks down in situations such as that described in Meeuwis and Blommaert (1998). In the Congolese community in Belgium, CS can be a variety in its own right, with the same functions and effects as those usually attributed to "languages." In communities where this is the case, speakers vary in the extent to which they are able to speak the two varieties monolingually. All the national languages of Congo (Kinshasa) are spoken as CS varieties peppered with French (French being the official language in Congo). Lingala–French and Swahili–French CS varieties (Lingala and Swahili being the two most widespread national languages) have their own range of social, stylistic, and register-related variation. A similar situation is reported by Swigart (1992c) with respect to the CS variety known as Urban Wolof in Dakar. Such cases point to the dangers of viewing CS from a monolingual reference point in

which meaning is seen as being negotiated through the interplay of two differentially marked "languages." Beyond this, there are cases where the *we-code/they-code* distinction completely fails to account for the variation and CS that are observed. Instead, the contrast between the two varieties is used to bring about "local" meanings in a variety of ways, only some of which make use of the associations of the two languages. Similar criticisms can be levelled at the markedness model (see above), which also assumes that each variety indexes fairly clear values in a given society, although Myers-Scotton does allow that CS itself may be the "unmarked choice."

The adoption of CS may in itself be an "act of identity," a fact which is clearly illustrated in the phenomenon known as "crossing" (Rampton 1995). Rampton describes adolescents in Britain using features of Punjabi and Creole in order to create a trans-racial "common ground." By contrast with other types of CS, crossing, according to Rampton (1995:280), "focuses on code-alternation by people who are not accepted members of the group associated with the second language they employ. It is concerned with switching into languages that are not generally thought to belong to you" (see also Hewitt 1986). Franceschini (1998:56–57) gives a bilingual example:

> In a fashion house in Zurich, I am served by a ca. eighteen-year-old shop assistant in Swiss-German. After about ten minutes, a group of young men, obviously friends of the shop assistant, enter the shop. All of them use the common Swiss-German/Italian CS style, which is certainly not surprising. There is nothing unusual about the scene. The group seems to me to be one of many second-generation immigrant peer-groups. ... In order to exchange my purchase, I go to the same fashion house the following day. I am now served by the owner of the shop, a ca. forty-year-old Italian. In the course of our conversation, I am told that the shop assistant I overheard the previous day is not a second-generation Italian immigrant at all but a Swiss-German. She grew up in a linguistically strongly mixed area of the town and has had Italian friends since her school years.
>
> The young shop assistant code-switches, not out of linguistic necessity, but in order to identify herself with a particular peer-group. However, CS due to necessity and CS as the product of choice, are not always easy to separate. Many instances of CS are combinations of the two, or somewhere on the border *between* the two. Auer (2005) shows that it is not always easy in practice to disentangle *discourse*-related CS from such displays of identity.

6.3.3.2 Situational and conversational CS

Equally influential with the *we-code/they-code* distinction was Gumperz's subdivision of CS into *situational* and *conversational* types. Situational CS occurs when distinct varieties are associated with changes in interlocutor,

context, or topic, and is therefore a direct consequence of a diglossic distribution of the varieties. Conversational CS occurs when there are changes in variety without any such external prompting. Such switching is also termed *metaphorical* when the purpose of introducing a particular variety into the conversation is to evoke the connotations, the metaphorical "world" of that variety. Blom and Gumperz (1972) give the example of two villagers in a Social Security office in a Norwegian village, switching from Standard Norwegian to discuss business, to the local dialect to discuss family and village matters.

Although this type of switch and the compelling motivation for it are familiar to anyone who has observed CS in this type of minority situation, it was asserted by Mæhlum that the dialect and standard varieties taken as a prototype by Gumperz were in fact "idealized entities" which in practice are subject to interference at different linguistic levels: "Most probably, the switching strategies which Blom and Gumperz recorded in Hemnes actually represent some form of *variant switching* whereby, in certain contexts, single words, (idiomatic) expressions and grammatical forms from the standard are introduced into otherwise dialectal utterances (1990:758)." Mæhlum claims that the misapprehension is due to the researchers' insufficient knowledge of the ins and outs of the dialectal situation in that area. Gumperz himself (1982a:62) remarked that recordings of informal conversations in the same town, which *speakers* claimed were conducted entirely in the local dialect, "revealed frequent conversational switching into standard Norwegian." Along with classic diglossia, situational CS appears to be a somewhat idealised notion, rarely found in practice.

6.4 Gender

Gender is considered one of the most important sociolinguistic categories. Studies of the interaction of gender with linguistic performance have become increasingly subtle, avoiding the broad generalizations of some earlier studies of the 1970s. Gender has assumed more prominence within the discipline rather than less, as the ways in which it is studied have become more diversified. Various studies show that CS cannot be correlated in any direct way with gender, but intersects with a large number of intervening variables which are themselves connected with gender issues. Following a brief survey, one study (Gardner-Chloros and Finnis 2004) is presented slightly more extensively to show how CS is woven in with female discourse strategies and discourse needs, via the notion of politeness.

6.4.1 CS and gender in various communities

The long-established finding that women use more standard forms than men (Labov 1972; Trudgill 1974; Chambers 2003) arose in monolingual

settings. In its simplest form, it can usefully be tested in bilingual contexts. First we need to know whether, in a given case, the choice of one or the other variety corresponds with a choice between the vernacular and the prestige code. In some cases, as we have seen, it is the CS mode itself that carries the "in-group" connotations and may be considered the "local" type of speech (Swigart 1992c).

Given the generally negative judgements of CS, a study was carried out to find out whether the widespread finding that women use more standard and less non-standard language than men was reflected by a clear gender difference in the amount of CS they used. The finding would gain support if women were found to code-switch substantially less than men (Cheshire and Gardner-Chloros 1998). Transcribed recordings from two immigrant communities in the UK, the Greek Cypriots and the Punjabis, were used to test the hypothesis. The results were negative – there were no significant differences between men and women in either community regarding the use of any kind of CS, though there were substantial differences *between* the two communities, both as regards quantity and type of CS. Other studies, however, *have* found differences in either the amount or the type of CS used by women and men within the same community (Poplack 1980; Treffers-Daller 1992). In a study in the Gambia, Haust (1995) found that men used CS twice as much as women, especially using discourse marker insertions, whereas women tended to change varieties outside the turn unit.

Such differing findings in different communities may be accounted for given the shift which has taken place within language and gender studies from essentialist to constructionist views (Winter and Pauwels 2000). As Swigart (1992c) argued, women, even *within* a given society, do not all behave as a monolithic group. Gender is no longer viewed as a fixed, stable, and universal category whose meaning is shared within or across cultures. It cannot be separated from other aspects of social identity and its meaning varies in different domains: "A non-essentialist view sees gender as a dynamic construct, which is historically, culturally, situationally, and interactionally constituted and negotiated (Winter and Pauwels 2000:509)." Conversely though, the variation within these findings should lead us to relativize the usual pattern of sex differentiation, which Chambers (2003) referred to as a "sociolinguistic verity." This can come about if we look not only at statistical information about how many instances of variable X are produced by women or men, but at the discourse context and the reasons why particular choices are made.

Furthermore, use of particular linguistic forms does not always signal the same underlying motivations. Traditionally polite or indirect forms do not necessarily indicate underlying compliance. Brown (1993) found that in Tenejapan society, even when women are not being polite in essence, characteristic female strategies of indirectness and politeness are nevertheless manifested in their speech. Brown suggests that this might help us

make sense of the finding that women appear more cooperative than men in interaction. While cooperative strategies are being used, what is being achieved may be opposition and disagreement. But the way in which this is done in particular instances, the strategies which are typical of women or of men in specific communities, and the particular types of discourse where CS is brought to bear, are often associated with different genders in a given community.

6.4.2 CS, gender, and politeness

In Gardner-Chloros and Finnis (2004), the link between language and gender is explored by considering whether *certain specific functions* of CS are more common among women or men in the Greek Cypriot community. Findings from Cheshire and Gardner-Chloros (1998), mentioned above, provided a starting point. The earlier study did not eliminate the possibility that, although the overall switching rate between the sexes did not differ significantly, women and men were code-switching for very different purposes. Two sets of data were used: thirty interviews carried out in the London Greek Cypriot community (Gardner-Chloros 1992) and transcriptions of recordings carried out at meetings of a Greek Cypriot youth organization (Finnis 2008). These meetings were informal, and took place at a range of venues, including a community centre, a coffee shop, and the home of one of the participants. The participants were five males and five females between the ages of twenty-three and twenty-nine who had all completed higher education.

Sifianou's (1992) comparative study of politeness in England and Greece also proved a useful starting point. It was pointed out there that different cultures place emphasis on different values, values which are moreover interpreted differently. Basing her work on Brown and Levinson's (1999) theory of positive and negative politeness, Sifianou argued that, "Politeness is conceptualised differently and thus, manifested differently in the two societies; more specifically that Greeks tend to use more positive politeness devices than the English, who prefer more negative politeness devices (1992:2)." It is not the case that some cultures or societies are *more* polite than others. The difference is the quality, rather than the quantity of politeness strategies, in that speakers are polite in different, culturally specific, ways.

In particular, Greek speakers are more direct when it comes to making requests, when giving advice or making suggestions. The cultural norm in England requires a more distant code of behavior, and requests, among other speech acts, are expressed more elaborately and indirectly. Sifianou argues that, in England, requests are perceived to a greater extent as impositions, and as such, need to be accompanied by more elaborate politeness strategies. Therefore a variety of options are available to the interlocutor when making a request, allowing the imposition created

by the request to be minimized, e.g. *You don't have a pen, do you?* (1992:140). In contrast, Greeks define politeness in very broad terms. Sifianou found that their definition included attributes that might be better described in English in terms of "altruism, generosity, morality, and self-abnegation" (1992:88). Greeks reported that "a warm look, a friendly smile, and in general a good-humoured disposition and pleasant facial expression are integral parts of polite behaviour (1992:91)." Her overall message is that English culture values distance, and Greek culture values intimacy.

This is supported by several examples in Gardner-Chloros and Finnis (2004), which indicate that, when being direct, Greek Cypriot speakers prefer to switch to Greek, as directness is more acceptable in Greek culture. This seems especially to be the case for women, of whom, as in many western societies, there is an expectation that they will be more polite and consequently more indirect than men. At the same time, because Greek is a more positively polite language, when being intimate, speakers may also prefer to use Greek. Similarly, Zentella (1997) notes that in the Puerto Rican community in New York, commands are often repeated in Spanish, after being delivered in English, in order to soften their impact or harshness.

Three of the functions that are noticeably associated with CS, which are labeled *humor*, *bonding*, and *dampening directness*, are illustrated below. There are significant overlaps between the three, which reinforces the idea that there is a general politeness function associated with CS. For different reasons that are discussed in each case, it was considered that these uses of CS were particularly typical of women in the community, though by no means exclusive to them:

(4) CS used for *humor*

1. M1[4] . . . Happen to know anyone that has like a colour laser jet?
2. F1 I know a place where they do.
3. M1 Yeah.
4. F1 ???
5. M1 What make are they?
6. F1 En ixero, en leptomeries.
   "I don't know, these are details."

(general laughter)

(Gardner-Chloros and Finnis 2004:524)

The speaker is relying on her interlocutors' familiarity with Greek culture, in that she adopts the "voice" of a particular Greek stereotype, that of a laid-back type who won't bother with too much detail. The fact that she is playing a part is indicated by a change in voice quality for the remark in Greek. In this way, she justifies her ignorance of the technical details of the photocopier by adopting a "voice" that represents this particular Greek attitude.

(5) CS used for *bonding*

CS was often used to indicate identification or intimacy. In the following example, the speakers are talking about a conference they are organizing. Speaker F1 suggests the topic of arranged marriages, a traditional aspect of Greek Cypriot culture. She refers to her own mother's concern about her finding a husband and getting married:

1. F1 Am I the only person that gets??? by their parents already?
2. M1 What, about getting married?
3. F1 Yeah, she started today.
4. F2 ???mana sou?
   "Your mother?"

(Gardner-Chloros and Finnis 2004:525)

In line 4, Speaker F2's intervention in Greek can be viewed as an act of positive politeness, or identification with F1, as another female Greek Cypriot. She uses the language of the culture in which such traditional maternal attitudes towards the marital status of daughters prevail. Gender therefore plays an important role in this switch. While the topic of marriage within the community is relevant to all its members, it has much greater consequences for women, and, as such, requires more positive politeness strategies in order to indicate solidarity.

(6) CS used for *dampening directness*

In this example, speaker F1, after asking the same question in English twice and failing to get a response from speaker M1, switches to Greek to elicit a response. Having succeeded in doing so, she then switches back to English.

1.	M1	All right.
2.	F1	Stop, how many days is the conference?
3.	M1	Guys, I wanna finish at seven o'clock.
4.	F1	I'm asking! How many days is the conference?
5.	M1	??? It's half past six.
6.	F1	Kirie Meniko, poses imeres ine?
		'Mr Meniko, how many days is it?'
7.	M1	It will be around four days, I imagine.
8.	F1	OK, four days, good ... and what time?

(Gardner-Chloros and Finnis 2004: 527)

The potentially face-threatening act – an escalation of repeated questions that had been phrased pretty directly from the beginning – is carried off thanks to the switch to Greek, which not only allows greater directness but is also the *we-code* and the language of humor. CS is shown to offer a powerful toolkit for women in the community, who can get away with jokes and strong repartee without appearing aggressive or unfeminine.

Among the London Greek Cypriots, women seemed to make use of these strategies to get around some of the traditional constraints on female

discourse, such as the expectation that it will be less forceful, pressing, or direct than that of men, or that making jokes is unfeminine. Women also use CS for solidarity in certain contexts that are directly relevant to them, e.g. in talking about mothers and their attitudes towards their daughters' marital status. It would not be surprising to find that, being more directly concerned, women talked about these issues more than men, and so had occasion to use these strategies to a greater extent.

To the extent that one can show that gender differences are contingent upon culturally determined norms, the role of gender as such is relativized. It is shown to be mediated by other factors, such as the power relationship between the speakers and the conventions governing behavior – which of course include gendered behavior – in the community. "We must criticize explanations of difference that treat gender as something obvious, static and monolithic, ignoring the forces that shape it and the varied forms they take in different times and places ... Feminism begins when we approach sex differences as constructs, show how they are constructed and in whose interests (Cameron 1992:40)."

6.5 Conclusion

Broadly, "sociolinguistic" approaches to CS are extremely varied and cover multiple levels of engagement with plurilingual data, from the societal to the intra-individual. Dividing these approaches up is a partly arbitrary exercise, since the societal level and the individual are in constant dynamic interaction. The issue of gender is a case in point: whereas one might think of it as a broad sociolinguistic differentiator, it turns out in practice to have some potential explanatory power only through its interaction with finely tuned conversational factors which require a close knowledge of the community.

We should also bear in mind that CS is the plurilingual embodiment of techniques that have equivalents in the monolingual sphere (Gardner-Chloros et al. 2000). Theories linking the social phenomenon of register and style variation to individual performance are highly relevant to CS (see the papers in Eckert and Rickford 2001). Barrett (1998), for example, has illustrated style alternation, largely in phonological terms, amongst African-American drag queens, identifying three basic styles (African-American vernacular English, gay male style, and a style based on stereotypes of white women's speech) and showing how the subjects' performances are "tuned" to highlight the audience's assumptions about sex, class, and ethnicity.

The concept of "audience design" developed by Bell (1984, 1997) and Coupland (1985) can help explain many cases of why bilinguals code-switch. Speakers may for example explicitly account for their own CS with reference to similar CS on behalf of their interlocutor. A speaker

recorded in a Strasbourg insurance office during the course of a working day switched between several different styles of CS and monolingual speech depending on her audience (Gardner-Chloros 1991:92–94). The effect of audience design/accommodation on CS is also well illustrated in Zhang (2005), where callers to a radio phone-in program in a bi-dialectal area of China are addressed in Cantonese by the host unless they themselves reply in Putonghua, in which case the host switches to match. It is to be hoped that in the future there will be more studies systematically comparing CS and dialect- as well as style/register-shifting.

More recently, the linguistic *styles* adopted by individuals have become an important focus of interest in sociolinguistics. Broad, quantitative approaches that obscure the differences between individuals are being put into perspective by approaches such as that of Eckert (2000) based on the notion of "community of practice." This notion too could prove extremely useful in relation to CS: research has shown that CS is only in exceptional cases to be understood as alternation between externally defined "languages," and more often represents an amalgam determined by the individual as rooted in their community practices.

To sum up, we have seen that CS embodies, or corresponds with, a wide range of sociolinguistic factors that interact or operate simultaneously. We should therefore be wary of ascribing particular "reasons" to particular instances of CS, as these are likely to present only a partial picture. Methodologically speaking, this dictates a pluralistic, interdisciplinary approach, in which, ideally, both quantitative and qualitative methods are combined, and the research is "triangulated." CS is indeed a major sociolinguistic indicator, but we should not underestimate the complexity of its interaction with the numerous factors that allow individuals to produce discourse "in their own image."

Notes

1. Sections of this Chapter will appear as Chapters 3 and 4 of *Code-switching*, by the same author, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming. CUP's permission to reprint these sections is acknowledged with thanks.
2. Fishman defines domains in terms of "institutional contexts and their congruent behavioral co-occurrences," e.g. family, employment (1972:441).
3. CS in written texts occurs copiously nowadays in advertising all over the world, and in email and text messaging. Before the spread of nationhood and compulsory education in the nineteenth century, it was found in texts of all kinds, from sermons to poetry to personal letters.
4. In this study M1 indicates the first male speaker, M2 the second male speaker, F1 the first female speaker, etc. "???" indicates inaudible speech.