¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.? : Code-Switching in a Bilingual Sitcom

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Abstract

Language plays an important role in shaping a person’s identity (Myers-Scotton, 1993). In this paper, I will examine one linguistic phenomenon, namely code-switching, and how it relates to identity. I examine code-switching in the bilingual TV show, ¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.?, filmed in Miami in the 1970s, focusing on two characteristics – sex and generation – of the interlocutors who engage in code-switching and of the grammatical structure of the code-switching itself. The analysis shows that code-switching is high in the middle-aged individuals in this setting and that males engage in code-switching slightly more often than females. Furthermore, intersentential code-switching is the most common grammatical structure of code-switching, followed by code-switching at verb-phrase boundaries and on vocatives. Throughout this study, I show how code-switching and identity are profoundly connected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table: Terminology</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interlocutor</td>
<td>A person participating in a dialogue</td>
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<td>Turn</td>
<td>A time during which a single interlocutor speaks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Code-switching</td>
<td>Changing from one language to another during a single turn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intersentential</td>
<td>Occurring between the end of one sentence and the beginning of the next</td>
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<td>Verb phrase</td>
<td>Syntactic unit comprised of a conjugated verb and the arguments dependent on it (e.g.: When Jennie arrives, we will head out. Turning around, she noticed him for the first time.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verb phrase code-switching</td>
<td>Inserting a verb phrase of one language in a sentence of the opposite language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocative</td>
<td>A word used to address someone else</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical item borrowing</td>
<td>Taking one word or small lexical item from one language and inserting it within a phrase or sentence of a different language</td>
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¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.?  
Code-Switching in a Bilingual Sitcom

In the 1960s, there was a large flow of Cuban immigrants to the U.S. following Fidel Castro’s rise to power. By the 1970s, this population was well established with their own communities and influence in the surrounding areas. The rising presence of Cuban immigrants in Miami, Florida, is reflected in the production of the bilingual sitcom, ¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.? (What’s Up, U.S.A.?) which ran from 1977 to 1980. This show focuses on a bilingual family who speaks English and Spanish and as one might expect, often alternates between the two languages. As one character in the show says, “I’m Cuban, yet I’m American, too.” The show addresses questions of identity that were commonly faced by Cuban immigrants and are still faced by immigrants today. Along with a mixed – Cuban and American – identity came a mixed – English and Spanish – language: code-switching (see the Appendix for a table in which key terms and their definitions are provided). As Brice and Anderson (1999) state, “language alternation is a normal, common, and important aspect of bilingualism” (p. 17). Because of its relevance to modern society and culture in which questions of identity are increasingly complex, and because bilingualism in America is becoming the norm (Shin and Kominski, 2010), examining the characteristics of code-switching in bilingual environments can shed light on the status of bilingualism in the community and the role that the two languages play in shaping the identity of bilinguals.
Background and Previous Studies

Code-switching is a rich area of research and has generated a plethora of insights and findings. However, it was not studied for a long time, as code-switching was seen as contamination interfering with the pure language underneath it. Even though code-switching was acknowledged in the beginning of the 20th century, it was not until the 1970s that it was viewed as a subject worthy of scientific research (Gardner-Chloros, 2009a, p. 4).

Code-Switching and Identity

One ubiquitous theme within research on code-switching is its connection to the identities of the interlocutors. Code-switching is affected by identity-related factors over which the interlocutors have no control, but it is also impacted by identity-related factors over which they wish to exert control (Gardner-Chloros, 2009a).

In the context of a conversation in a specific moment, factors over which the interlocutors have no control include age, sex, and bilingual ability (Myers-Scotton, 1993, p. 57). Women and men use language differently, and individuals of different ages display different characteristics in their language use. To illustrate this point, the phrase “That is too cute!” may sound strange from an adult male, and “I could have just died” may sound equally as strange from a five-year-old. It is clear to see that factors such as age and sex correlate with differing linguistic patterns and trends. Females have been found to adhere more frequently to standard, established linguistic forms (Gardner-Chloros, 2009a, p. 82), implying that they engage in code-switching less often. A study in Gambia, looking at 24 participants of both sexes and different socio-economic, educational, and linguistic backgrounds (provided they were proficient speakers of Mandinka and Wolof, the two languages in question), found that men used code-switching up to twice as much as women (Haust, 1995).
Regarding bilingual ability, code-switching is sometimes used to compensate for insufficient knowledge in one language (i.e., because the speaker does not know how to say a particular word in that language), but that is hardly the only context in which code-switching is used. In fact, bilinguals with a higher skill in both languages demonstrate more complex code-switching (Toribio, 2002) and more balanced bilinguals have been found in some studies to code-switch more often than their one-language counterparts (Gardner-Chloros, 2009a, p. 25). In studies of Arabic-French bilinguals, “the older, more balanced bilinguals displayed the ability to use sustained sequences of French in their [Arabic] discourse,” when compared with younger, Arabic-dominant speakers (Bullock and Toribio, 2009). The tendency for more balanced bilinguals to code-switch more often than less-balanced bilinguals will be one phenomenon discussed in this study. Even though it is not possible to determine the true bilingual ability of the interlocutors in this study, it is common for first-generation immigrants to have a higher confidence in both languages than generations that lived the majority of their lives in either one country or the other.

One example of the latter type of factor – a factor over which an interlocutor wishes to exert control – is the rights-and-obligations set being adhered to in the context of the conversation. A rights-and-obligations (RO) set refers to an interlocutor’s understanding of the situation, his role in it, and the expectations of the interlocutors involved (Nilep, 2006). For example, the rights-and-obligations set between a teacher and a student (mutual respect, deference towards the teacher) is different from the rights-and-obligations set between two peers (acceptance of broken commitments, sharing of personal thoughts) and this is reflected in the language used in each respective scenario. In the teacher-student dialogue, we would expect more formal expressions and more correct grammar, while in the peer dialogue we would expect
more slang and less emphasis on correct grammar (for example, run-on sentences and “me and Mary” instead of “Mary and I”). In scenarios where the RO set is not already set in stone, interlocutors can choose the language that represents the rights-and-obligations set they wish to evoke. For example, they could use a language that emphasizes their shared heritage (perhaps making them peers or allies), or they could use a workplace language, which evokes a business relationship (perhaps maintaining a degree of separation or hierarchy).

Another factor that interlocutors can evoke through code-switching is solidarity. By using a language that is common to them, speakers can emphasize bonds between them (Heller, 1995). Language can also make a reference to a shared heritage, again reinforcing the shared bonds between two participants in a conversation. This is especially true in minority languages, which, when employed, reinforce the idea that the interlocutors share language abilities and a cultural background (Gardner-Chloros, 2009a, p. 4). Contrastingly, speakers can also use code-switching to show-off, demonstrating social prestige via capability in the more “prestigious” language, which other interlocutors can perhaps not understand (Myers-Scotton, 1993, p. 106). Speakers use linguistic behaviors reflective of the group with which they wish to be identified, or behaviors non-reflective of a group with which they do not wish to be identified (Myers-Scotton, 1993, p. 61).

Other Uses of Code-Switching

Myers-Scotton found that one common use of code-switching is that of quoting remarks uttered previously (Myers-Scotton, 1993, p. 17). Speakers use the same language in which the dialogue being quoted was originally uttered, in order to give a true rendering of the past occurrence. In addition, Myers-Scotton also identifies what she calls the “virtuosity maxim” (Myers-Scotton, 1993, p. 148). That is, in a conversation, interlocutors will tend to use a
language that all participants can understand, in order not to exclude or alienate interlocutors who cannot understand a particular language. In this present study, this would be reflected in the event of less code-switching occurring in exchanges with monolingual speakers. Finally, language use often can reflect cultural concepts. This is seen in the borrowing category of code-switching. Gardner-Chloros highlights several examples of this, such as the English phrase “Latin lover” being borrowed into a French sentence (Gardner-Chloros, 2009b). We will be able to see instances of this cultural connection between language choice and cultural references in the current study. By building on previous findings of tendencies in code-switching, the goal of the present investigation is to identify various trends of code-switching among characters in a Spanish-English bilingual sitcom.

**Current Study**

In the present investigation I will build on the previously discussed ideas of the relationship between code-switching and identity, and I will discuss the application of these ideas within the context of ¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.? This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the use of code-switching compare between women and men?
2. How does the use of code-switching compare across generations?
3. What are the common grammatical structures of code-switching?

**Method**

In this section, I describe the participants, data collection, data coding, and data analysis. For the purpose of this investigation, it was assumed that the linguistic patterns of the interlocutors on the bilingual show ¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.? reflect those of real-life Cuban-American families in Miami, Florida, in the 1970s. As evidenced in viewer statements available online
“Qué Pasa, U.S.A.?” Reviews and Ratings, n.d.), the show resonated with Spanish-speaking immigrants from myriad countries.

**Participants.** Data were collected from the dialogue of 14 speakers. Four were male and 10 were female. As seen in Table 1 the youngest generation (less than 30 years old, lived most or all of their lives in the United States) was coded as “Generation 1,” the “middle” generation (30-50 years old, born and lived in Cuba but moved to the United States and have been there for a while) was coded as “Generation 2,” and the oldest generation (older than 50 years, born and lived most of their lives in Cuba) was coded as “Generation 3.” Eight study participants belonged to Generation 1; four belonged to Generation 2; two belonged to Generation 3. I did not collect data on monolingual speakers, since they did not code-switch. However, the one quasi-exception to this is that I did collect data on the “grandparents” of the family. At the outset of the study, I thought the grandparents would be bilingual and code-switch with frequency. However, as the study went on, the grandparents proved to be essentially monolingual, engaging in only one instance of code-switching. Collecting data on the grandparents ultimately was useful because it allowed them to act as “control” groups, in order to compare the linguistic patterns of ostensibly monolingual characters with those of bilingual characters.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 1: Generation Coding Convention</th>
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<tr>
<td>Youngest Generation (0-30 years)</td>
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<td>Middle Generation (31-50 years)</td>
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<td>Oldest Generation (51+ years)</td>
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**Data collection.** The dataset comes from three 30-minute episodes of *¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.*, consisting of 680 total turns. I watched these episodes on Youtube.com between August and November of 2014. One aspect of this study to acknowledge is that data were taken on scripted dialogue. While the dialogue was not spontaneous, it can be considered a reflection of authentic code-switching, because the show was designed for an audience that would have been familiar with real-life code-switching. In order to make the dialogue relatable and seemingly authentic, true-to-life code-switching behavior was expected.

**Data coding.** Each turn was coded for various characteristics. The dependent variable was whether code-switching occurred in a turn. The seven independent variables were sex and generation (see the Participants section for the classification of the three generations) of the speaker, sex and generation of the other interlocutor(s), the language in which the turn began (English or Spanish), whether self-repetition or repetition of a different interlocutor occurred, and the linguistic structure of the code-switch (see the Data Analysis section for more information on the linguistic, or grammatical, structure or the code-switch).

Self-repetition occurred when a character said the same utterance twice, once in each language. For example, the “daughter” character, Carmen, says at one point, “Why not? ¿Por qué no?” “¿Por qué no?” means “Why not?” in English, so Carmen is saying the same thing twice, once in English and once in Spanish.

Repetition of a different interlocutor occurred when a speaker repeated something the previous interlocutor had said (in the same language as the previous interlocutor), and then switched to speak in the opposite language. For example, Joe, the “son” character, says, “All I want is a little privacy!” and the “dad” character, Pepe, responds with, “Privacy? ¿Y tú no tienes privacidad? [And you don’t have privacy?]” Pepe repeats what Joe has just said – in the same
language that Joe used – and then code-switches and continues his own dialogue in the opposite language.

**Data analysis.** The data was entered in Microsoft Excel, and it was subsequently broken down and categorized by (in succession) by seven independent variables mentioned previously: the sex and generation of the interlocutor and speaker, the starting language of the turn, whether self-repetition or repetition of a different interlocutor occurred, and the structure of the code switch.

The structures of almost all of the code-switches performed by the interlocutors were able to be grouped into five categories: intersentential code-switching, code-switching at verb phrase boundaries, code-switching on vocatives, code-switching on interjections, and lexical item borrowing. See Table 2 for definitions and examples of each. These categories will be referred to as Intersentential, Verb Phrase, Vocative, Interjection, and Lexical Item, respectively. There were several code-switch “outliers” that did not fit into any of these categories, and they will be discussed with the rest of the results. These instances were not analyzed with the rest of the data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tr>
<td>Intersentential</td>
<td>The code-switch happens between the end of one sentence and the beginning of the next.</td>
<td><em>No es este país. Es los tiempos. [It's not the country. It's the times.] Times change. Young people change.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb Phrase</td>
<td>The CS happens at the boundary of a verb phrase.</td>
<td><em>You better get used to living in this house,]porque aquí es donde tú vives [because this is where you live]</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocative</td>
<td>Speaker switches languages only for a vocative</td>
<td><em>Niña [girl], don't complain, I went out with a chaperone until I got married.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interjection</td>
<td>Speaker switches languages only for an interjection</td>
<td><em>Dios mio [My God], this is a welcome home party, Joel</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical Item</td>
<td>Speaker borrows a lexical item from one language and inserts it into dialogue in the other language</td>
<td><em>Estoy súper [Carmen, I'm super] excited con tu [about your] date. (2 instances)</em></td>
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Note: brackets indicate translation, not original dialogue.
Results and Discussion

In this section, I will present the findings, answer the research questions, and connect my findings to previous research where possible.

**Sex.** First, the sex of interlocutors was examined as it relates to frequency of code-switching. Overall, females had more turns. Females uttered about 60 percent of the total turns. It makes sense that females had more turns overall, as there were more female characters in the episodes. However, males had a higher percentage of turns involving code-switching. As Figure 1 illustrates, males showed a slightly higher rate of code-switching than females.

By a slight margin, males exhibited a greater tendency to engage in code-switching than females. As seen in Figure 2, excluding characters with less than 15 lines of dialogue, three of the four individuals with the greatest number of code-switches (“Pepe,” the father, “Joe,” the high-school age son, and “Umberto,” a high-school age friend) are males.
Furthermore, what if we take into account the sex of the opposite interlocutor, that is, the listener in the conversation? As Figure 3 shows, when looking at one-on-one conversations, code-switching is most likely to happen in male to male conversations, and least likely to happen in female to female conversations. Thus, as seen in previous studies, men are more inclined than women to engage in non-standard language use (Gardner-Chloros, 2009b). This tendency is corroborated in the current study.
**Generation.** Secondly, the generation of the speaker was analyzed to see how it affected the tendency to code-switch. As seen in Figure 4, the middle generation (Generation 2) engaged in code-switching with the highest frequency.

![Figure 4. Percentage of Turns Involving Code-Switching, by Generation of Speaker](image)

What if we take into account the generation of the opposite interlocutor also, that is, the listener in the conversation as well? As Table 3 shows, when looking at one-on-one conversations, code-switching is less frequent when speaking to the oldest generation, while it is most frequently employed in conversations involving the middle generation.

This finding is corroborated by existing literature. As found by Bullock and Toribio, “more balanced” bilinguals show more masterful use of both languages, whereas individuals with a less balanced skill set in one language speak with lexical insertions, rather than sustained passages (Bullock and Toribio, 2009, p. 7). In fact, Generation 3 (oldest generation), who are self-described as low English proficiency (“me no speak English”) displayed only one instance of code-switching. Adela, the grandmother, says (Spanish is italicized; translation in brackets follows): “Joe ya tiene un trabajo full-time. [Joe has a full-time job.]” As one can see, the code-switching here contains simply an English lexical item inserted within a Spanish sentence.
Moreover, Table 3 is a clear example of what Myers-Scotton calls the “virtuosity maxim” (1993, p. 148). This is the idea that interlocutors switch to the language that all of the conversation participants can understand. In one-on-one conversations involving a member of the oldest (heavily Spanish-biased) generation, this means using Spanish and avoiding use of English. Table 3 shows that when Generation 3, who are more comfortable in Spanish, is involved in the discourse, there is less code-switching occurring.

**Language.** McClure’s 1977 report on code-switching and code-mixing stated that children employed lexical-item borrowing more frequently in Spanish (the minority language). As Figure 5 shows, in this study, code-switching occurs fairly equally between both languages when not differentiating by generation.
However, drilling down to just Generation 1, looking at just lexical item borrowing (Figure 6), the youngest generation borrows more words from English than from Spanish.

Why would the youngest generation borrow words more frequently from English? As referenced previously, Bullock and Toribio found that “more balanced” bilinguals were able to more thoroughly mix both languages, while less-balanced speakers spoke with lexical insertions rather than sustained passages (Bullock and Toribio, 2009, p. 7). This could be indicative of the fact that the younger speakers in this study do not currently have the grammatical competence in both languages necessary to employ code-switching in a more complex manner than borrowing isolated words (similarly to the grandparents’ borrowing of isolated English word). Moreover, Gardner-Chloros showed examples where borrowing was used when referring to concepts culturally more connected with one language than with another (2009b). A great example of this occurs in the following line from ¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.?: “Carmen, estoy súper excited con tu date.” (Spanish is italicized; borrowed items are bolded.) The high-school aged speaker, referencing the ideas of being excited and a date, two items highly related to American culture, borrows lexical items from English in order to metaphorically bring along the images and references associated with each item. Another instance of this occurs in the utterance when
talking about a basketball game, “Nosotras jugamos y hacemos los cheers. [We’ll play and we’ll do the cheers.]”

**Structure of code-switching.** Finally, within instances of code-switching, the structure of the code-switch was analyzed. As Figure 7 shows, intersentential code-switching was by far the most common, at almost 75 percent of the total code-switching instances. It was followed by verb phrase boundary code switching and vocatives.

![Figure 7. Code-Switching by Grammatical Structure](image)

To further illustrate the structure of code-switches used by the interlocutors, examples are shown below. Spanish dialogue is italicized and followed by a bracketed translation. The examples of each type of code-switching are in bold.

**Intersentential.** The following are examples observed of intersentential code-switching.

- *Y de contra, aun la gente que no conozco* [And, in fact, people I don’t even know].
  - Who is this?

- *No, Pepe, no es este país. Es los tiempos.* [No, Pepe, it’s not the country. It’s the times.]
  - Times change. Young people change.

- *Why not? ¿Por qué no?* [Why not?]
One interesting phenomenon within the context of intersentential code-switching was the frequency with which interlocutors either repeated themselves, using the opposite language, or repeated the previous interlocutor, using the same words (and therefore same language).

Examples:

- Interlocutor 1: “Look, I don’t need a lock and key. I just need a little privacy.”
  
  Interlocutor 2: “Privacy? ¿Y tú no tienes privacidad? Hasta tienes tu propio cuarto. [And you don’t have privacy? You even have your own room.]”

- Yo nunca me equivojo. [I never make a mistake.] I never make a mistake.

- Why not? ¿Por qué no? [Why not?]

The former instance makes sense, as, when repeating dialogue, interlocutors wish to truly mimic the original words, in order to underscore the fact that they are repeating someone else and not creating their own original dialogue. In fact, Myers-Scotton found that quoting remarks from someone else in a previous conversation is a common example of code-switching (1993, p. 107). The latter instance can be seen as an effort on the part of the interlocutor to ensure that all listeners understand, or it can even be an example of code-switching being used as a tool of its own in order to emphasize an idea that is important to the speaker.

**Verb phrases.** The following are examples observed of code-switching occurring at verb phrase boundaries.

- Yo no se qué idea te metieron en la cabeza [I don’t know what idea they put in your head], but let me tell you something, you better get used to living in this house, ¡porque aquí es donde tú vives [because this is where you live]! (2 instances)

- Ni yo a ti tampoco [you neither], and I want you to take it back.
Interlocutor 1: “Carmen, well, I told you what I felt, instead of what I meant to say.” Interlocutor 2: “¿Entendiste eso, Carmen? Dice que te pide perdón porque te dije la verdad, cuando te debería haber dicho una mentira [Did you understand that, Carmen? He says he’s sorry because he told you the truth, when he should have told you a lie], and I hope you understand that, because I sure don’t.”

**Vocatives.** The following are examples observed of code-switching for vocatives. The vocative is bolded.

- *Niña [girl]*, don’t complain, I went out with a chaperone until I got married.
- *Papi [Dad]*, I want to talk to you.

An interesting finding was that, within the code-switching on vocatives, without exception, all vocatives were Spanish vocatives. For instance, the family members refer to each other as “mami,” and “papi,” instead of “mom” and “dad.” This hearkens back to the rights-and-obligations set (Nilep, 2006), and the idea that code-switching can be employed to reaffirm the solidarity between interlocutors. As seen in the examples above and in Table 4, in some instances, the speakers are making statements that could affront or alienate the listener, although the speaker desires the support and openness of the listener. By using Spanish-language vocatives, characters appeal to a rights-and-obligations set (such as that of father-daughter or that of kinsmen) that emphasizes their shared heritage, evokes images of “home” for Generations 2 and 3, and kindles feelings of partnership between both parties.

**Interjections.** The following are examples observed of code-switching on interjection. The interjection is bolded.

- *Dios mio [My God]*, this is a welcome home party, Joe!
• Let go? ¡Dios la libre! [God save her!] I’m counting on her to take care of me in my old age.

• Ay, Juana [Oh, Juana], don’t tell me it’s the times. It is this country!

• Well, of course; yo no paso ni un solo día en que me toca pagar todo [not a day goes by in which I have to pay for everything].

**Lexical items.** The following are examples observed of borrowed lexical items. The lexical item is bolded.

• Carmen, estoy súper [Carmen, I’m super] **excited con tu** [about your] **date.** (2 instances)

• Otherwise known as, “la maldición cubana” [“the Cuban curse”].

• Y si no quiere salir conmigo [and if he doesn’t want to go out with me], it’s his **loss.** (Also an example of code-switching at a verb phrase boundary)

• Chauvinist **puercos [pigs]!** (Interesting to note: this is almost an example of a Spanish borrowed lexical item (“puercos”) within an English lexical item (the English phrase “chauvinist pigs”). This example came from an English-speaking monolingual character, so it was not included in the rest of the analysis, but is an interesting instance of code-switching.)

**Miscellaneous.** There were three code-switching instances that didn’t fit into any of the above categories. The first two instances showed qualities of one or more of the categories, but, along with the third, could not truly be placed into any of the categories based on the category rules. They were:

• I haven’t received a single invitation, **ni una sola invitación** [not a single invitation].
In the above, we see an example of code-switching for a phrase that does not include a verb, and it shows repetition within the same interlocutor, but in the opposite language.

- The truth: *que tus padres son anticuados* [*that your parents are old-fashioned*].

In this example, the code-switch happens for a noun syntagm, which from one perspective could be considered a lexical item, but on the other hand, Spanish also has the phrase “*La verdad.*”

- There will be a dinner party, in your honor, *mañana* [*tomorrow*], the Big 8 Club.

Here, the code-switch happens momentarily for an adverb and then returns to the original language.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: More Examples of Turns with Spanish Vocatives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <em>Papi</em>, I want to talk to you!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <em>Carmencita</em>, go and see if anything is wrong in your brother's room!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. You'll take me shopping? <em>Tío Pepe</em>, you're wonderful!</td>
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</table>

**Note:** *Papi* is the equivalent of "Dad," *Carmencita* is a nickname for Carmen, and *Tío Pepe* means "Uncle Pepe."

I have been able to determine a cross-section of the characteristics of the grammatical structures of the code-switching behavior of this context and population. The grammatical structure of the code-switching generally falls into one of five categories (Intersentential, Verb Phrase, Vocative, Interjection, or Lexical Item). Furthermore, the younger generation is more likely to borrow words from English, suggesting that in some contexts they are not fully able to express themselves in Spanish. This reflects findings that are similar to those of Bullock and Toribio (2009), who found that more balanced bilinguals use longer sustained sequences in each language, and to those of Gardner-Chloros (2009a), who found that language choice reflects cultural concepts. In addition, Spanish vocatives are used more frequently than English vocatives.
when used in the context of code-switching. This may be related to the idea of using code-switching to reaffirm solidarity between interlocutors (Heller, 1995).

**Code-switching, identity, and prestige.** As mentioned above, code-switching is inextricably tied to questions of identity. One salient facet of an individual’s identity is the prestige that they wield. Myers-Scotton, for example, details an example of an interlocutor attempting to use a more “prestigious” language to “show off,” (1993, p. 106) and she also asserts that the more potential a group has for upward mobility, the more likely its members are to make unexpected code-switching choices in interactions allowing for status raising (153). In ¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.? there is at least one main instance where we can see characters attempting to exert influence over their perceived prestige by using code-switching.

The “nosy neighbor” bilingual character, Marta, makes an appearance in most episodes of the show. This character enters to a mixed reception of the characters trying to be hospitable, but knowing that she probably brings gossip or a backhanded compliment. This character only has 12 turns total in the analyzed data, but six of them involve code-switching. As seen in Figure 8, when her data is compared next to the data of the rest of the characters, she has the highest code-switching rate.
Marta uses code-switching to assert her prestige. For example, she often goes out of her way to tie in English greetings or phrases in the presence of the grandmother, thereby excluding the grandmother from the conversation, exerting power over her, and making her news more of an in-demand resource. In another episode, the son, Joe, wants to move out of the house, and Marta finds out before the Peña family that Joe has rented his own apartment. Marta arrives to the Peña’s home and Adela, the grandmother, asks, “¿Por qué vienes por aquí? ¿Tienes alguna comunicación de última hora? [What brings you here? Do you have some latest piece of news?]”. Marta ignores Adela and turns to Juana, the mother, saying (in English), “You’re just the person I wanted to see.” Then Juana asks, “¿Y qué puedo hacer por ti, Marta? [What can I do for you, Marta?]”, endeavoring, it seems, to keep the conversation in Spanish so that Adela is not excluded. Marta replies, “¿Por mí? [For me?] I came here to help you”. When Marta delivers the most dynamic piece of news, she does so in English: “Joe has run away!” A frenzy descends on the Peña household, but Adela is left inquiring what happened. It appears that Marta uses code-switching to exclude non-English speakers, flaunt her English abilities, and raise her perceived prestige.

**Code-switching, identity, and solidarity.** One other interesting example of code-switching in this study was executed not by a bilingual character, but by a monolingual English-speaking character, Sharon, a high-school-age friend. Sharon utters the line referenced above (the last example under “Lexical Items” code-switching) as an example of lexical item borrowing: “Chauvinist **puercos [pigs]!**” Franceschini relates a very interesting instance of code-switching that he encountered in which a native Swiss-German living in Germany engaged in code-switching between German and Italian to such an extent that she was mistaken for a second-generation Italian immigrant. As stated above, linguistic choices can be made in order to
align an individual with a particular group, or to distance an individual from a group. In this instance where Sharon engages in code-switching, although she is not a Spanish-speaker and could easily use the phrase “chauvinist pigs” completely in English, she chooses to code-switch into Spanish to highlight her status as a member of the peer group, the rest of which is comprised of Spanish-English bilinguals.

As shown above, I found that within the context of ¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.?, males code-switch slightly more frequently than females, Generation 2 individuals code-switch more frequently than Generations 1 or 3, and that there are common grammatical structures of the code-switching. Furthermore, I was able to show instances of code-switching as it relates to prestige and solidarity. Thus, there appears to be a notable connection code-switching has with identity. Factors deeply linked with identity, such as sex, age, and social position affect and, in turn, are affected by use of code-switching.

**Conclusion**

The data and analyses presented above display themes of code-switching being used as a reflection of, and influence on, an individual’s identity. In particular, among Cuban families in Miami in the 1970s, first-generation immigrants tended to code-switch more often than the generations before or after them, and males tended code-switch slightly more than females. Furthermore, it was seen that intersentential code-switching was the code-switching structure that happened most frequently. In addition, code-switching was used in attempts to affect a characters’ perceived prestige and solidarity in their own eyes and the eyes of others.

There are some limitations on this study. First, the data came from a scripted television show. However, it is assumed that this is a reflection of real-world spontaneous language use, or at least the writers’ perceptions of real-world language use. Therefore, it is probable that the
linguistics observed in the data can be insightful to real-world linguistics. Also, it is important to note that two of the 10 speakers on whom data was taken, the “grandparent” characters, are probably monolingual. The other eight characters consistently speak to the grandparents in both Spanish and English, indicating that the grandparents were perceived to have at least some bilingual competency. However, the grandparents had only one utterance that was in English, while the rest of their dialogue was solely in Spanish.

Fruitful future studies could compare the use of code-switching in the show ¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.? with real-life language data. If bilingual dialogue data from Miami in the 1970s could be found, it could be compared with the data used in this study to verify that the code-switching characteristics in ¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.? are reflective of natural, real-life code-switching. Also, future studies could look at vocative use in all dialogue, not just dialogue involving code-switching. Are Spanish vocatives more common all the time, or just in the context of switching between two languages?

Code-switching is intrinsically linked to issues of identity. The identities of the producing interlocutor and the receiving interlocutor affect and are affected by the use of code-switching. Although code-switching was late arriving to the party of linguistic research, it can offer rewarding insights into how language shapes and is shaped by the everyday, unconscious, ever-changing environment.
References


Appendix

Terminology

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interlocutor</th>
<th>A person participating in a dialogue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turn</td>
<td>A time during which a single interlocutor speaks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Code-switching</td>
<td>Changing from one language to another during a single turn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersentential</td>
<td>Occurring between the end of one sentence and the beginning of the next</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verb phrase</td>
<td>Syntactic unit comprised of a conjugated verb and the arguments dependent on it (e.g.: When Jennie arrives, we will head out. Turning around, she noticed him for the first time.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb phrase code-switching</td>
<td>Inserting a verb phrase of one language in a sentence of the opposite language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocative</td>
<td>A word used to address someone else</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical item borrowing</td>
<td>Taking one word or small lexical item from one language and inserting it within a phrase or sentence of a different language</td>
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