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Code Switching, Identity, and Globalization

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0 Introduction

Although scholarship in discourse analysis has traditionally conceptualized interaction as taking place in a single language, a growing body of research in sociocultural linguistics views multilingual interaction as a norm instead of an exception. Linguistic scholarship acknowledging the diversity of sociality amid accelerating globalization has focused on linguistic hybridity instead of uniformity, movement instead of stasis, and borders instead of interiors. This chapter seeks to address how we have arrived at this formulation through a sociohistorical account of theoretical perspectives on discursive practices associated with *code switching*. We use the term broadly in this paper to encompass the many kinds of language alternations that have often been subsumed under or discussed in tandem with code switching, among them *borrowing*, *code mixing*, *interference*, *diglossia*, *style shifting*, *crossing*, *mock language*, *bivalency*, and *hybridity*.

Language alternation has been recognized since at least the mid-20th century as an important aspect of human language that should be studied. Vogt (1954), for example, suggested that bilingualism should be “of great interest to the linguist” since language contact has probably had an effect on all languages. Still, language contact in these early studies is

most often portrayed as an intrusion into the monolingual interior of a bounded language. Indeed, the century-old designation of foreign-derived vocabulary as *loanwords* or *borrowings* promotes the idea that languages are distinct entities: Lexemes are like objects that can be adopted by another language to fill expressive needs, even if they never quite become part of the family. Einar Haugen put it this way in 1950:

Except in abnormal cases speakers have not been observed to draw freely from two languages at once. They may switch rapidly from one to the other, but at any given moment they are speaking only one, [...]not a mixture of the two. Mixture implies the creation of an entirely new entity and the disappearance of both constituents; it also suggests a jumbling of a more or less haphazard nature. (Haugen 1950:211)

Haugen's defensiveness against the idea of "mixture" may be largely sociopolitical. To avoid backlash from reformers who reviled "mixed" forms and advocated language purity, he chose the term *borrowing* as the politically savvy alternative. Similar concerns motivated early researchers on code switching to focus on its systematic and rule-governed properties as a means of countering popular perceptions of bilingual speakers as cognitively deficient, if not socially belligerent. These decisions stand as a reminder that linguistic theories are always contextualized within the politics of their day. Similarly, recent scholarship focused on the rapid movement of texts and the diversity of speakers and ways of speaking, which Reyes (2014) has termed "the super-new-big," can be read in terms of the largely positive views of globalization in many segments of contemporary society, including academia.

In this chapter, we argue that the theorization of code switching has been importantly reliant on the theorization of identity, with both transformed through escalating contact set into motion by globalization. The transnational reconfiguration of media, migration, and markets has brought together in unprecedented intensity not just languages, but also the subjectivities of the people who speak them. The metalinguistic awareness produced through this intensification has always been foundational to the sociocultural analysis of code switching. The residents of a village in northern Norway, to borrow from Blom and

Gumperz's (1972) foundational study, will perceive their dialect as constituting local identity only if they become aware that they speak differently from a social group elsewhere.

Our review describes four traditions of research that suggest divergent theoretical perspectives on the relationship between language and identity. The first, established in the 1960s and 1970s within the ethnography of communication, situates code switching as a product of local *speech community identities*. Speakers are seen as shifting between in-group and out-group language varieties to establish conversational footings informed by the contrast of local vs. nonlocal relationships and settings. A second tradition, initiated in the 1980s in work on language and political economy, analyzes code switching practices with reference to the contrastive *nation-state identities* constituted through processes of nationalism. This research seeks to uncover the sociolinguistic hierarchies produced through language standardization, often focusing on the language practices of minority speakers in complexly stratified societies. A third tradition of research, established in the 1990s with the discursive turn in social theory, challenges our understanding of language choice controlled by preexisting indexical ties to identities. Scholars influenced by this critique discuss code switching as a resource in urban minority communities for the performance of *multicultural* and *interethnic identities*. This shift set the stage for a fourth tradition of research, developed since the millennium, that focuses on *hybrid identities* as the social corollary to the language mixing brought about through accelerated globalization.

Although the initiation of these four traditions can be traced to different time periods, with associated scholars often positioning their work against the assumptions of previous generations, all of them have contributed profound insights to the analysis of code switching that are still viable today. Our review aims to capture these insights, while highlighting what we see to be promising directions for future research in the field.

1 Speech community identities

The concept of the “speech community” is foundational to the understanding of code switching as an identity-based phenomenon. Scholars working within the ethnography of communication, the perspective most known for advancing this concept, view the bilingual and bidialectal practices of tightly bound communities as symbolic of local vs. non-local identity contrasts. The terms “we code” and “they code” (Gumperz 1982, 66) surface in this literature as the linguistic correlate of these identity relations, with the former conjuring affective positions associated with the home, such as intimacy and solidarity, and the latter status positions, such as formality, authority, and hierarchy across relations of greater social distance. The groups that are the focus of analysis are seen as sharing similar interpretations of the social meanings indexed by language choice. Indeed, the sharing of norms and expectations for language behavior is precisely what constitutes a speech community in the ethnography of communication model; hence our use of the term *speech community identities* to characterize how subjectivity is discussed within this tradition.

This section provides a review of some of the tradition’s earliest texts, with an eye to how authors position code switching as a product of an increasingly mobile society. The local communities that populate these discussions may appear far removed from processes of globalization, yet the linguistic reflexivity that informs language choice is almost always inspired by translocal movement of some sort, whether economic, ideological, or physical. Indeed, this early work often suggests the so-called “identity crisis” that globalization theorists later came to characterize as symptomatic of late modernity. As the tightly bound locales of previous generations became more porous and identification was dislodged from the usual coordinates of time and space, the speakers in these texts, like the subjects of “detraditionalization” in Giddens’s (1991) theorization of modernity, became increasingly reflexive about their self-identity and the expressive practices that constitute it. Far from

diminishing the importance of identity to everyday life, the coexistence of different language varieties provides more resources for its articulation.

1.1. Situational and metaphorical switching

Sociocultural linguists generally trace the source of contemporary code switching theory to Blom and Gumperz's (1972) analysis of the use of two varieties of Norwegian: the standard dialect Bokmål and the local dialect Ranamål. This foundational text can also be read as a study of shifting relations of language and identity in a period of post-war migration, even if rarely recognized for this in literature reviews. Blom and Gumperz observe alternating uses of Bokmål and Ranamål by three categories of speakers in the Norwegian village of Hemnesberget: (1) artisans and workers; (2) wholesale retail merchants and plant managers; and (3) service personnel, among them professionals who relocated to the village to secure work. Speakers in each of these categories situate themselves differently on a local/non-local continuum, with immigrant shop owners, physicians, and educators in the latter category often preferring pan-Norwegian middle class values to those of the "local team." But all of these speakers, as members of the same speech community, share an orientation to both varieties as resources for identification along this continuum. Indeed, in Blom and Gumperz's reading, identity is the only viable explanation for why villagers would continue to treat two mutually intelligible varieties as distinct: "The dialect and the standard remain separate because of the cultural identities they communicate and the social values implied therein" (417).

By attending to social change and its effect on linguistic practice, Blom and Gumperz depart from earlier dialectology research that focuses on non-mobile subjects as carriers of dialect authenticity. Even core members of Blom and Gumperz's first category—the workmen who rarely leave town and "show a strong sense of local identification" (418)—

formulate their language practices in reaction to the mobility that surrounds them. As Hemnesberget was bypassed by economic reconstruction after World War II, local residents found themselves on “an island of tradition in a sea of change” (410). They experienced the world around them, and the varieties of speaking associated with it, in their daily interactions with people from elsewhere: shop owners and professionals from other urban centers, and even college students returning home. This mixture of peoples and dialects produce heightened reflexivity toward what Blom and Gumperz identify as the “social meaning” of language, leading locals to revisit their dialect metadiscursively as a point of pride, not habit.

Blom and Gumperz use the term *situational switching* to describe language alternations that reinforce a regular association between language choice and social events, such as when a community member uses standard Norwegian to deliver a classroom lecture but the local dialect to discuss personal matters with a friend. This kind of switch, which establishes a sequential relationship between two language varieties and two respective communicative contexts, extends Fishman’s (1967; cf. Ferguson 1959) understanding of institutionalized bilingualism in diglossic societies. Where diglossia views the use of “high” or “low” varieties as dictated by the social settings of church, home, and government, Blom and Gumperz explore code switching at the level of interpersonal interaction, offering a more dynamic portrait of its materialization.

Even more critically, Blom and Gumperz do not see language choice as dictated by the situation; rather, speakers *produce* the situation through the code switch. Their work set into motion a complex interrogation of bilingual behavior as both context-dependent and context-producing. Indeed, the idea that context is signalled through linguistic resources became the heart of Gumperz’s (1982) later theorization of *contextualization cues*. In this formulation, language choice is just one of many “surface features of message form” (131) that have the potential to signal new contexts in which an utterance should be understood,

paralleling the use of lexical, intonational, or prosodic markers in monolingual discourse. Blom and Gumperz analyze code switching as an agentive act, even if “patterned and predictable on the basis of certain features of the local social system” (409). The use of an alternative linguistic variety can establish a new situation, whether defined by formality, kinds of activities, settings, or relevant aspects of a speaker’s identity. In brief, code choice has the potential to change the definition of what the authors call “participants’ mutual rights and obligations” (425).

Blom and Gumperz additionally attempt to account for those instances in which different language varieties are selected within a single social event, such as when two Hemnesberget residents involved in an official transaction use the local dialect to inquire about family affairs. Because this alternation adds a second frame to the interaction and compels listeners to attend to two interpretive contexts in the same social event, Blom and Gumperz refer to this practice as *metaphorical switching*. The distinction between situational and metaphorical alternation has been the source of some critique (Auer 1995; Myers-Scotton 1993), but the latter term is meant to underscore how speakers make use of multiple language varieties to allude to more than one social relationship within the same situation. In the example above, the two residents switch between local and standard to enact dual relationships of intimacy and formality by recalling other settings without changing the goal of the current exchange.

The import of Blom and Gumperz’s theorization of metaphorical switching for the study of language and identity cannot be overstated. Goffman (1981) builds on their work when formulating his concept of *footing* for the roles and stances that individuals take up within monolingual interaction. For Goffman, footing and code switching are parallel phenomena in that they both enable the simultaneous display of multiple social roles. As Goffman puts it: “In talk it seems routine that, while firmly standing on two feet, we jump up

and down on another” (155). Recalling the idea of switching codes, Goffman uses the metaphor of “changing hats” to describe how speakers shift to secondary social roles while remaining in a primary one, such as when President Nixon breaks from the formal routine of a bill-signing ceremony to comment on UPI reporter Helen Thomas wearing slacks. Once discourse was seen as having the potential to establish a twofold relationship to the social world within a single conversation or even turn of phrase, speakers were viewed as having the ability to signal dual social positions in what Woolard calls “virtual simultaneity” (1999, 16). In her reading of the literature, Blom and Gumperz’s work advanced an understanding of social identities as “simultaneously inhabitable” (17), inspiring attention to the way speakers make use of language alternatives to “create, invoke, or strategically maintain ambiguity between two possible identities” (16).

1.2. The markedness model

One of the most influential uptakes of Blom and Gumperz’s theorization of code switching as a resource for identity is Myers-Scotton’s *markedness model* (1983, 1993). Building on the idea that different linguistic forms are associated with different identities and that social norms restrict the selection of linguistic variables, her analysis invokes the concept of *linguistic markedness* to explain code switching behavior. Like other work during this period, Myers-Scotton’s model relies on the assumption that there are locally shared understandings of indexical links between specific languages and social meaning. Members of a multilingual speech community must share an understanding of the function of each language; if they did not, interlocutors would be unable to make sense of particular instances of code switching. Most critically, speakers expect certain language varieties but not others to be used in a particular interaction. They may choose to follow or contest these unmarked norms, but either

decision “negotiate[s] a particular identity ... *in relation to* other participants in the exchange” (1993, 152).

Myers-Scotton’s (1993) analysis draws from multiple fieldwork sites in Kenya and other parts of eastern Africa to establish a highly agentic portrait of speakers as producers of “intentional meaning” (56). The markedness model posits that speakers are rational actors who use the linguistic form that is indexical of the social role they wish to present in a particular interaction. Code choice is operationalized by maxims subsumed under a *negotiation principle*. Speakers negotiate identity by changing what she calls *rights-and-obligations sets* that exist between participants and are indexed by language varieties (152). Myers-Scotton’s use of the term *identity* is thus meant to illuminate “this limited sense” (152) of interpersonal negotiation, even if controlled by broader expectations of markedness. Her discussions are largely responsible for the development of a new lexicon in sociolinguistics for describing speaker agency, bringing terms like *negotiation*, *choice*, and *strategy* to the fore of analysis.

Although not highlighted in the explanation of the markedness model, the effects of globalization—or more specifically, the movement of people and commodities—are visible across Myers-Scotton’s data. Even her early 1983 formulation describes the negotiation maxims through examples of global movement: the educated Kru man who speaks only English after returning from an overseas study trip (120); the Marathi taxi driver who refuses to speak Hindi with a Western tourist (121-22); the disfluent foreigner who compels listeners to suspend their markedness expectations (125). The region-wide lingua franca, Swahili, and the even more broadly shared English, feature frequently in her work as indices of non-local identities and as means to assert hierarchy or deny solidarity.

Myers-Scotton views her work as dynamic for analyzing code choice as a function of negotiation, not situation. Yet the markedness model has been extensively critiqued as

deterministic, precisely because it fails to incorporate Gumperz's idea of language choice as context-producing. Scholars have objected to the model's reliance on a static understanding of discursive meaning controlled by considerations that precede interaction. Auer (1995, 1998), drawing from insights in conversation analysis, calls for more attention to the sequential aspects of interaction that may influence language alternation, such as turn taking. Meeuwis and Blommaert (1994), drawing from insights in linguistic anthropology, contest the model's claim to universal validity and its neglect of community-specific ethnographic details. Certainly, empirical studies rarely find consistent, broadly shared understandings of the indexical link between language and social role. Even where particular activities are associated with language varieties, "the correlation is never strong enough to predict language choice in more than a probabilistic way" (Auer 1995, 118). One supposes that such ideological mismatches are even more common as speakers and texts move from one setting to another in periods of accelerated globalization. A model that assumes relatively static relationships between language varieties and social identities is unable to analyze, or even recognize, social change in progress.

Woolard (2005) suggests that a strength of Myers-Scotton's model lies not in its use of markedness but in its development of the notion of indexicality. The markedness model predicts that speakers will tend to use unmarked codes, and identifies unmarked codes as languages most frequently used in some social setting—a fundamentally circular definition. But repeated use in particular settings establishes the language as an index, a sign that gets its meaning from a connection with what it represents. As Woolard writes, "Through the accumulation of use in particular kinds of social relations, [language varieties] come to index or invoke those relations, taking on an air of natural association with them" (81). Myers-Scotton makes this relationship the basis of her theory to explain why certain forms are chosen and not others in the negotiation of interpersonal identity. But her work also reveals

that these same relationships are the backbone of social inequality. Through repeated use in particular settings, certain linguistic forms, together with the people who use them, become naturalized in ways that support social hierarchy. This process is the focus of a second tradition of research that analyzes everyday language practice as both reflecting and producing broader political relations.

2 Nation-state identities

The study of language and political economy emerged during the 1980s from parallel currents in several fields. Neo-Marxist scholars across the social sciences were increasingly interested in the symbolic and linguistic aspects of unequally distributed economic and political power. Where philosophers during the 18th century had posited an essential unity between language, nationality, and the state, 20th century studies viewed this unity as a product of ideology propagated by state institutions, among them publishing (Anderson 1983) and education (Bourdieu 1977). These theoretical discussions of inequality resonated with empirical sociolinguistic research on the stratification of privileged linguistic forms along class, gender, or ethnic lines. Inspired by these connections, a new generation of scholars took as their subject the investigation of boundaries between linguistic and social groupings within the nation-state. According to Gal (1988), code switching served in these analyses as a clear example of “systematic, linguistically striking, and socially meaningful linguistic variation” (245). Scholars in this tradition did not simply affirm the theoretical arguments advanced in social theory; rather, they viewed sociolinguistic research as providing an important corrective to some of the more grandiose claims circulating across academia. The strength of this tradition lies in its combined use of sociopolitical theory, conversational data, and detailed ethnography to understand language choice as an ideologically motivated and

historically situated response to the state's prioritization of certain language varieties over others.

Scholars of language and political economy seek to explain the ways that languages function in diverse settings both as markers and as constitutive elements of social structures. Identity is viewed as emerging within the stratifying systems of standardization associated with European-inspired models of nationalism. Where researchers in the first tradition deepened their investigation of identity as an interactional achievement, these scholars examined the historical contexts and political ideologies that made social identities inhabitable in the first place. Critical to this undertaking is the examination of everyday practice as a site for the production of social hierarchy. Language choice can reflect the understanding of "self" versus "other" within broad political, historical, and economic contexts, but it can also construct more localized groupings of ethnicity, gender, or social class within these larger contexts. We have chosen the term *nation-state identities* as shorthand for the treatment of subjectivity in this tradition.

2.1 Language and political consciousness

As Gal (1988) outlines in her review of research in this tradition, some of the earliest research in language and political economy investigates what Marxist scholars call "consciousness": individuals' understanding of the relationship between groups within the state, including their own position in relation to those groups. Because certain language varieties are legitimated and promoted by the state or other powerful political entities, the use of non-standard or non-local varieties may instantiate what Jane Hill, drawing from her research among Mexicano (Nahuatl) speakers in Mexico, calls "the symbolic practice of a structural position" (1985, 735). For peasant communities in the Malinche volcano region, Mexicano is the language of the community, while Spanish is associated with external forces of Puebla City and the

Mexican state, money, and the market. Evil characters in Mexicano myths use Spanish, and speaking Spanish to outsiders is a clear signal of social distance. Even so, within Mexicano speech, Spanish loan words function as markers of power, “the register of Mexicano through which important men mark their identity” and the authority of their discourse (727).

Hill adopts Bakhtin’s notion of “double voicing” to explain these apparently contradictory uses of Spanish. Examples such as (1) below, taken from the beginning of a story about a local hero, demonstrate the complexity of Spanish loan word incorporation into Mexicano discourse practices. (Spanish loans are underlined.)

- (1) *Nicmolhuil̄z cē cuento de in nēc antepasado ōcmihtahuiliāya in*
I will tell a story of that ancestor (that) they used to tell

tochholtzitzihuān nēca tiempo ōmovivirhuiliya īpan Mal̄ntz̄in cē
our grandfathers about that time when there lived on the Malinche a

cē persona itōca ōcnombrarohqueh Pillo.
a person his name they named him Pillo.
[Hill 1985: 730]

In addition to referential meaning, the use of Spanish loan words conveys seriousness and power, a connotation that comes from the place of the Spanish language in broader Mexican society. As Hill explains, the use of multiple Spanish loan words such as *cuento* (story) and *tiempo* (time) is appropriate to a serious telling. But Spanish loan words can also be fully embedded in Mexicano syntax and morphology, as in the words *ōmovivirhuiliya* (“there lived”) and *ōcnombrarohqueh* (“he was named”). Hill argues that such incorporations show speakers’ consciousness of ethnic and class positioning. The power-laden connotations of Spanish loan words are themselves an element of the Mexicano system of discourse; the same words would connote no such thing in Spanish discourse. It is the relationship between the Mexicano and Spanish languages in Mexican society—and by extension the position of Mexicano identity in that society’s ethnic hierarchy—that creates the connotative meaning.

At times, Hill notes, the relationship between Mexicano and Spanish languages and the ambivalent position it creates for the Mexicano speakers who use loan words as emblems of power comes to the surface. Mixed forms, such as Spanish loan words with Mexicano phonology or Mexicano lexical items with Spanish phonology, thus constitute what Hill calls a “translinguistic battlefield, upon which two ways of speaking struggle for dominance” (731). Although some scholars have taken pains to differentiate code switching from borrowing, Hill’s analysis illustrates how it can be informative to examine these behaviors together, without regard for their separability on grammatical or other bases. For Hill, these bilingual strategies, which differ across groups of Mexicano laborers, evidence the struggle to maintain Mexicano identity in an increasingly dominant Spanish-based capitalism, revealing “the role of human linguistic capacities in the dynamic of the world system” (725).

2.2 Language as symbolic domination

Where Hill views sociolinguistics as enhancing the Marxist theorization of consciousness, Woolard (1985) sees it as providing an important intervention into Bourdieu’s (1977) theorization of language and social class. Bourdieu’s highly influential work argues that certain forms of language—principally the standard language variety promoted through education and other practices of the state—endow their users with symbolic capital. These preferred varieties gain legitimacy from their use in powerful institutions and thus take on an authority that is recognized even by speakers who do not control the prestige variety. This produces an asymmetry in knowledge and evaluation, as those who do not speak the preferred forms recognize the authority associated with them and depreciate their own language practices in what Bourdieu (1982) labels *symbolic domination*.

Woolard’s work on language choice in Catalonia complicates Bourdieu’s theory. Regional Catalan dominated standard Castilian because of its association with business and

financial capital. Bourdieu uses a metaphor of “price formation” to explain the dominance of the standard language. Since not all speakers control the prestige variety, it becomes a scarce resource that gives those who do speak it greater access to labor positions. However, Woolard notes that this price formation metaphor breaks down in situations of *covert prestige* (Labov 1972) where nonstandard varieties are highly valued. Woolard introduces the term *alternative marketplace* to account for linguistic valuation systems built on parameters other than standardness.

Case studies such as Woolard’s inspired deeper ethnographic investigation of *language ideologies*, the beliefs held by speakers about the values of particular language behaviors. As Gal (1988) points out, the values that code-switching indexes are the result of specific forces that are both historical and local. To illustrate this specificity, Gal compares the position of the German language in two different settings. In Transylvania after World War II and through the 1970s, German speakers held a privileged position relative to Romanian speakers since their language abilities linked them to West Germany. Code switching was fairly rare in Transylvania among German-Romanian bilinguals, who mainly spoke prestigious German. In contrast, Gal (1979) found frequent code switching among German-Hungarian bilinguals during the 1970s in Austria, where historically Hungarian-speaking peasants were increasingly using German and working in the capitalist economy. “In a pattern exactly the reverse of the German-Transylvanian practice, the Hungarians in Austria insert in their Hungarian conversations the language of state power as a claim to expertise and social authority” (Gal 1988: 254).

2.3 Language and intersectionality

Gal moves the study of language and political economy beyond the bounds of the nation-state in her consideration of the prestige granted to certain languages “within the context of a

world system” (1988, 260). But she also sets into motion an examination of identity as emergent across localized intersections of ethnicity, class, and gender. For Gal, the prestige granted to German speakers in Romania illustrates that researchers cannot assume the class-based marginalization of ethnic minorities. Rather, the relationship between class and ethnicity, as well as other categories, must be analyzed as forged within localized sociopolitical histories.

These kinds of intersections are the focus of Urciuoli’s (1991) research on Spanish-English bilinguals in New York with ties to Puerto Rico. Urciuoli found that for New York Puerto Ricans, code switching with English-speaking African Americans on the Lower East Side of Manhattan is a very different experience from speaking with mostly white, middle class English speakers who do not live in the community. Outside the working class neighborhood, the opposition between working class and middle class is all important. Within the neighborhood, however, race, ethnicity, gender, and generation each exert some influence on language choice and patterns of interaction. Moreover, although it is acceptable for bilinguals to speak Spanish in the presence of African Americans and for African Americans to use Spanish, the use of both languages together—what people from the neighborhood call “mixing”—has a more complicated ideological position. Informants suggest that languages should be maintained as separate, an ideology that they seem to share with US government and educational authorities. One informant told Urciuoli, “If you start a sentence in Spanish, you should finish in Spanish” (300). When Urciuoli pointed out to him that in fact people from the neighborhood routinely switch between Spanish and English, he continued, “That’s just around here, everyone does it around here” (300). The idea of “around here” is an identity position that takes in not just location but also ethnicity, class, and minority patterns of interaction. People from the neighborhood do code switch among intimates, but they argue that the practice is improper, and they are careful not to do it around “Americans.” Heller

(1999) attributes such self-denigration of code switching to a pervasive ideology of “parallel bilingualism” fostered by institutions of the modern nation-state. Her ethnography of a French-language high school in English-dominant Ontario reveals how micro-linguistic practices in the educational system reproduce the idea that languages are discrete and bounded systems that need to be kept separate. Yet even if state power and political economic distinctions exert influence over patterns of behavior and identity, these influences are mediated by local history. This is seen in the bilingual practices of students in the same French-language high school when they hold conversations in domains characterized by less surveillance. Research in language and political economy thus reveals that the identity positions of bilingual subjects are locally specific as well as politically contingent. This perspective is assumed for a third tradition of scholarship that analyzes code switching as a contribution to the postmodern theorization of identity, the subject of our next section.

3 Multicultural and interethnic identities

The 1990s was an explosive decade for the theorization of identity, as scholars began to challenge static understandings of selfhood that riddled a previous generation of research. This shift, which ushered in nothing short of a sea change within linguistics in the way identity is viewed, can be attributed to a diversity of factors, only some of which can be recounted here. Postmodern challenges to the authoritative voice of the analyst coincided with the rise of digital communication, multiculturalism, deconstructionism, and the poststructuralist valorization of discourse as the site for the production of subjectivity. These developments all presented challenges to psychological understandings of the self as singular and unified. Critical gender theorists such as Butler (1990), for instance, advanced the idea that identity is performative: It produces itself anew by reiterating what is already discursively intelligible. For sociocultural linguists, this perspective forced closer attention to

how subjectivity might emerge within the constraints and allowances of interaction. As Bucholtz and Hall (2004a, 2004b, 2005) suggest in their review of this period, identity began to be viewed as a discursive construct that is both multiple and partial, materializing within the binds of everyday discourse.

During the same decade, a burgeoning body of research on the globalized new economy began to theorize identity as fragmented by processes associated with late modernity. The expansion and intensification of international exchange severed the connection between identity and locale that had been previously assumed. Whether discussed in terms of “detraditionalization” (Giddens 1991), “liquid modernity” (Bauman 2000), or “network society” (Castells 1996), identity had lost its deictic grounding in the temporal and spatial fixities that constituted an earlier era, including the nation-state. The full force of these theorizations did not surface in the code switching literature until after the millennium, but their reflexes can be seen in early sociolinguistic work on urban diasporic communities and minority groups constituted through transnational migration.

Noteworthy in this regard are two influential ethnographies published in the mid-1990s that launched quite divergent views of ethnicity as a social construct: Zentella’s (1997) *Growing Up Bilingual* and Rampton’s (1995) *Crossing: Language and Ethnicity among Adolescents*. Both perspectives are importantly informed by the discursive turn in social theory and offer highly contextualized discussions of identity as an interactional achievement, even if their conceptualization of ethnicity at the turn of the century differs. This ethnographically based generation of research offered renewed attention to the concern with language ideologies, advancing the idea that language contact brought about by global movement leads to heightened reflexivity toward the indexical links between language and identity.

3.1 Bilingual and multidialectal repertoires

Zentella's *Growing Up Bilingual* (1997) analyzes the micro-discursive moves that constitute identity within a New York community living on one block of the East Harlem El Barrio district, alongside macro-social processes of symbolic domination that structure everyday life. In keeping with the activist tenor of American multiculturalism, Zentella calls for an "anthropolitical linguistics" to counter popular US perceptions of bilingual communities as having impoverished language abilities. Her work thus seeks to portray code switching as a complexly agentive phenomenon that can be used as a resource to express "multiple and shifting identities." She details the extraordinary linguistic and cultural know-how that must be in place to master a robust multilingualism that includes standard and nonstandard Puerto Rican Spanish, Puerto Rican English, African American Vernacular English, Hispanicized English, and standard New York City English.

Zentella departs from a view of code switching as an "either-or" choice between two languages and replaces it with what she calls a "bilingual/multidialectal repertoire." Her reference to the work of Chicana feminist Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) is not incidental in this regard. Anzaldúa is well known for introducing into American academia the Spanish term *mestizaje* (the process of interracial or intercultural mixing) as a corrective to the kinds of binary thinking that dominate Western scholarship and sociality. Anzaldúa's "new mestiza" is reflexively aware of her contrastive yet intertwined identities and uses this awareness as a point of strength, not weakness. Similarly, the children of *el bloque*, marginalized in a diasporic borderland between the US and Puerto Rico, use their familiarity with multiple languages as a means of navigating the social world. For example, when outside the community, they use Spanish for people who appear to be Latino, English for others; Spanish for infants and the elderly, English for others. Inside the community, they address local residents in each resident's dominant language but use English at school.

about Delia's dual New York City-Puerto Rico identity, and highlighted particular conversational strategies at the same time" (100).

3.2 Language crossing

Shortly before Zentella (1997) published *Growing Up Bilingual*, Rampton (1995) published *Crossing*, a highly influential ethnography of code switching practices associated with urban youth in a multiracial neighborhood in the South Midlands of England. While both texts view ethnicity as a complex product of discursive exchange, they ground their work in quite different (and some may say opposing) theoretical paradigms. Zentella, inspired by an American-based multicultural feminism, is keenly sensitive to the lived experience of racism as it materializes in the New York Puerto Rican community, especially to the public derogation of bilingual practices such as Spanglish. Rampton, in contrast, focuses on linguistic movement across ethnic borders to capture how urban youth in late industrial Britain negotiate a collaborative sense of multiracial community, hence our use of the term *interethnic identities*.

Rampton introduces the concept of *language crossing* in his ethnography to account for "the use of language varieties associated with social or ethnic groups that the speaker does not normally 'belong' to" (14). Much work on bilingualism, including Zentella's ethnography, focuses on single ethnic communities whose members have been socialized from childhood into the use of two or more languages. Crossing tends to fall out of such studies, since it is often produced through the truncated, if not stereotypical, use of an outgroup linguistic variety. But for Rampton, such practices represent challenges to the absolutist discourses of race and nation that inform a previous generation of speakers as well as researchers. With the requirement of language ownership off the table, he is able to stress the performative dimensions of race, detailing how British-born adolescents of Anglo, Afro-

Caribbean, and South Asian descent cross variously into Panjabi, Creole, and stylized Indian English in their everyday interactions. Like the drag queens of Butler's (1990) work who denaturalize the expected link between biological sex and social gender, Rampton's crossers destabilize commonsense assumptions about inherited ethnicity. Indeed, he suggests that this peer group—youth who view ethnic identity as negotiated rather than fixed—is exemplary of “new ethnicities” arising at the periphery of late twentieth century Britain.

Rampton's argument accordingly mounts a strong critique of the way the “we-code” has been operationalized in studies of code switching. In his data, linguistic solidarity does not derive from membership in a bounded ethnic group, but rather from an interethnic sensibility produced through boundary disruption. Anglo students use Panjabi obscenity to tease fellow students, while a stylized Asian English is used to suggest incompetence or immaturity on the part of the hearer. In the following example, two students of South Asian background rebuke younger students for running during break time, using stylized Asian English with exaggerated pronunciation.

- (3) 1 Sukhbir: STOP RUNNING AROUND YOU GAYS
 2 [(((laughs))]
 3 Mohan: [EH (.) THIS IS NOT MIDDLE (SCHOOL) no more (1.0)
 [ai dis iz ɨt^h mɪð nə mɔ:]
 4 this a respective (2.0)
 [dis iz ə ɹəspektɪv]
 5 (school)
 6 Mohan: school (.) yes (.) took the words out my mouth (4.5)
 (Rampton 1995, 144-45)

Students across this youth community collaborate on the appropriate placement of linguistic varieties, orienting to a shared code that supersedes any one ethnic group. They jointly recognize, for example, that Panjabi is used for joking, while stylized Asian English is used for social hierarchy. While Rampton acknowledges that many of these uses rely on stereotypes of minority communities, he presents a more positive view of racialization than

evidenced in studies that portray ESL speakers in London as victims of linguistic discrimination, such as Gumperz's (e.g. Gumperz, Jupp, and Roberts 1979) early work on *crosstalk*.

Subsequent work on crossing, particularly work produced by American scholars, provides less optimistic accounts of its place in systems of racialization. Lo's (1999) examination of a diverse peer group in Los Angeles in which "interethnic interactions are frequent" (461) shows how speakers can disagree about the metadiscursive meaning of crossing behavior and sociohistorically embedded language forms, leading to code switching behavior that is not reciprocated. Hill (1998) stresses the need for a fuller consideration of the sociohistorical ideologies that inform crossing behavior. Her analysis of "Mock Spanish"—the humorous deployment of Spanish by English-speaking Anglos in the American southwest—demonstrates that this cross-ethnic usage is controlled by the American racialization of Mexicans as violent, cheap, and vulgar. Bucholtz (1999) counters Rampton's claim that crossing builds interethnic alliances with an analysis of cross-racial African American Vernacular English produced by a white high school student in California. Because the white student's narrative recalls a longstanding association of blackness with hyperphysical masculinity, it does not break down racial categories but rather upholds them. Surely, the linking of stylized Asian English with pejorative appellations such as "you gays" in Rampton's own example above could be analyzed in similar terms, given the longstanding colonial stereotype of the effeminate South Asian.

Regardless of how these scholars see the potential for outgroup linguistic tokens to subvert the social order, all of them view ethnicity as a complex product of discursive interaction. As the 1990s reached conclusion, identities could no longer be conceptualized as discrete and homogenous, nor could the languages associated with them. This had profound consequences for the analysis of code switching, setting into motion a fourth tradition of

scholarship that supplants the idea of distinct codes with an analytics of linguistic hybridity.

4 Hybrid identities

Analysis of multilingual discourse in the first two decades of the 21st century challenges the understanding of languages as concrete, bounded entities. Research during the 1990s complicated received notions of identity and its connection to language behavior by focusing on the intersection of sociological categories (such as ethnicity and class in Urciuoli 1991) or illuminating behavior across such categories (Rampton 1995). More recently, scholars have approached this connection by challenging our understanding of languages as whole, cohesive objects. Work at the turn of the century has argued that monolingualism is an ideological apparition, objectified in the rise of European nation-states during the 19th century.

Recent research relies on a notion of *hybrid identities*, the image or self-image of people at national and linguistic margins. Scholars writing about the “superdiversity” of language in digital environments and metropolitan areas (e.g. Blommaert & Rampton 2011) tend to approach social mixture as given, not achieved, treating its materialization in discourse as normative for interaction in the new global economy. This research may include the analysis of speakers who transgress traditional sociolinguistic boundaries, taking as its focus the border-crossing practices marginalized in previous generations of scholarship. But other research in this tradition critiques the very idea of linguistic boundaries in the first place. For many scholars, even the terms *switching* and *crossing* misleadingly imply movement across discrete categories of language and identity. What unites research in this fourth tradition, then, is the analysis of language as fluid, mixed, and relatively unbounded, even if scholars differ on what this fluidity means for the analysis of social identity. This section provides a review of some of the key terms born of this tradition, among them

bivalency, transidiomatic practices, metrolinguism, and superdiversity. The discussions in which these terms are embedded call attention to the hybridity of language by shifting the focus of analysis to speaker repertoires, discourse hybrids, and the mobility of linguistic resources. The hybrid identities often left implicit behind these discourse practices are an important area for new research and theory.

4.1 Bivalency

Kathryn Woolard's (1999) influential essay on "simultaneity and bivalency" is a turning point toward analysis of discourse at what an earlier generation of scholars viewed as linguistic margins. Woolard argues that by insisting on a point where one language switches off and another switches on, studies of code switching that underplay its complexity contribute to an image of monolingualism as normal, and to a misidentification of bilingual discourse as anomalous. Woolard's work recalls Grosjean's (1989) warning regarding cognitive and neurolinguistic studies of bilingualism. As Grosjean's holistic model suggested that the linguistic ability of multilingual individuals is not simply two incomplete copies of (monolingual) grammatical competence, Woolard's analysis of simultaneity shows that bilingual discourse is not two monolinguals in one text. Rather, by strategically employing the forms and practices available through multiple language systems, bilingual speakers can produce multifunctional discourses that can be understood in multiple ways simultaneously. This includes the use of *bivalent* forms—words or other linguistic elements that belong to more than one language, such as cognates or loan words—or forms traditionally discussed as *interference*—elements from various lexical, morphological, phonetic, or syntactic systems.

Woolard illustrates bivalency in the catch phrase of a Catalan comedian named Eugenio. His habitual opening line, "*El saben aquel...*" (Do you know the one...) begins with a Catalan word, *el*, and ends with Castilian Spanish, *aquel*. The middle word, though,

exists in both languages. This bivalent word, an element of both languages, serves as the hinge that yokes the two languages together and makes it impossible to tell precisely where the switch from Catalan to Castilian occurs. Such bivalent forms challenge the common sense notion that languages are separate systems and that speakers must choose either one or the other. This indeterminacy was crucial to Eugenio's subversive humor in late twentieth-century Catalan, where the choice of one or the other language suggested a speaker's positions on issues of Catalonian autonomy and the Spanish state. Speakers can also draw on elements of "different" languages simultaneously through a process of interference, as when a Galician speaker pronounces Castilian sentences with Galician prosody (Alvarez 1990). Where earlier researchers overlooked bivalent forms in favor of distinct codes or relegated talk of interference to prescriptive discourses, Woolard argues that they should receive equal attention in sociolinguistic analysis. By deploying elements indexically linked to more than one language within the same utterance, speakers can invoke multiple identity positions simultaneously.

Bakhtin's (1981) work on heteroglossia and hybridity, cited heavily in Woolard's article, has become increasingly critical to this tradition's rethinking of the hybrid roots of all language practice, including monolingualism. Woolard reminds us that for Bakhtin, "language is heteroglot from top to bottom" (291). Since a language exists only through its use by people across time, it contains within it the contradictions of different individuals, groups, and historical moments. Writing almost a century before code switching scholars embraced hybridity as paradigmatic, Bakhtin criticizes the tendency in linguistics to consider the "neutral signification" (281) of particular utterances and to view languages as discrete entities. Rather, he suggests that an attempt to understand "actual meaning" must be aware of the multiple, contradictory significances that all discourse contains. Far from being marginal or erroneous, bivalency and interference allow speakers to draw from and to present multiple

languages at the same time. Woolard's call to place hybridity and simultaneity within theoretical approaches to discourse inspired various scholars to move such practices from the margins to the center of research.

4.2 Transidiomatic practice and metrolingualism

Despite perceptions of compressed space in the era of globalization, discourses are nevertheless produced and perceived in a particular setting—albeit not always the same one. Studies of globalization across the social sciences highlight several consequences of recent social and economic arrangements that are important to the analysis of language, society, and culture. Scholars such as Rubdy and Alsagoff (2013) trace effects of globalization on linguistic and cultural hybridity. Increased speed, volume, and intensity of communication have contributed to a sense of connection not only with local communities but also with interlocutors across what were previously perceived as barriers of space and time. Jacquemet's (2005, 2009) work points out that despite the apparent “deterritorialization” (Tomlinson 1999) of language within globalization, all language behavior takes place in some locality: “Since all human practices are embodied and physically located in a particular lifeworld, the dynamics of deterritorialization produce processes of reterritorialization: the anchoring and recontextualizing of global cultural processes into their everyday life” (Jacquemet 2005, 263). Jacquemet analyzes *transidiomatic practices*, new forms of interaction drawing from multiple languages. Examples include workplaces where speakers of multiple languages interact with one another, or multilingual individuals' engagement with “globally” circulating texts such as television broadcasts or popular music. The presence of multiple languages in the same space can give rise to *recombinant identities*, a sense of simultaneous identification with multiple groups across transnational territories.

Jacquemet's (2009) analysis of asylum hearings shows how transidiomatic practices can conflict with ideologies of bounded languages tied to discrete nation-states. Interviewers transcribe the complex explanations offered by applicants for refugee status into a text written in the national language of the receiving nation, stripping out ambiguities and multiple voices in a way that erases evidence of lived experience and may present the applicants as less credible candidates for refugee status. Blommaert (2009) likewise illustrates how the ideologies of national language impinge on the lives of asylum-seekers. He describes the case of "Joseph," a young man from Rwanda who was not fluent in Kinyarwanda or French, but spoke elements from several languages in a style that Blommaert labels *truncated multilingualism*. After his parents died, Joseph lived near the border of the Democratic Republic of Congo with his uncle who spoke Runyankole. The British Home Office reasoned that since Joseph also spoke this language, he was likely Ugandan rather than Rwandan, and therefore was ineligible for asylum. Blommaert argues that rather than focusing on languages as discrete objects centered on nation-states, analysis should consider the speech resources of individuals, reflective of lived experience and patterns of interaction.

Otsuji and Pennycook's *metrolinguistics* (2010) attempts to move beyond monolingualism or multilingualism by treating discourse as a fluid practice, but one that exists within ideologies of fixity. Language users re-use and re-mix elements in order to create positions for themselves relative to the nation-state or other regimes of language and culture. People's relations to these ideological positionings are complex: The same individual may sometimes treat a national language as a monolithic entity coterminous with the nation-state, while at other times mixing elements from a diverse language repertoire to constitute a cosmopolitan identity or to construct a local group.

Otsuji and Pennycook illustrate this complex mixture of elements in social positioning with a conversation among James, Heather, and Adam, non-Japanese people who work

together in Australia at a firm that often does business with customers in Japan. Speaking Japanese, James notes that he recently bought “ワインを 16 本” (sixteen bottles of wine). Heather responds with the English back channel, “Yeah”, while Adam continues in Japanese, asking “どこからもらったの?” (Where did you get them from?). Although this type of code switching behavior is common in multilingual settings, this conversation occurs in a corporate setting in Australia where none of the participants has Japanese ethnicity or citizenship. Likewise the topic—buying Australian wines—is not particularly tied to Japan or the Japanese language. In this case, the languages used appear not to be tied to specific indexicalities of speaker identity or discourse topic, but licensed by the speakers’ presence in a workplace where mixed-language discourse is common. Otsuji and Pennycook suggest that the occurrence of such exchanges, not licensed by ethnic or territorial ‘ownership’ of languages, points to increasingly complex mappings between forms of language and notions of similarity or difference. This work suggests that rather than displaying plural identities indexed to multiple, discrete languages, contemporary speakers draw from hybrid repertoires to “play with and negotiate identities through language” (246).

A spirit of play in the negotiation of identities is also visible in Nilep’s (2009) work with foreign language learners in Japan. Members of Hippo Family Club learn several foreign languages at the same time. For the club’s middle-class learners, drawing from multiple languages within a single utterance indexes not a lack of competence in the languages being learned, but a growing mastery of the club’s own discourse style. Nilep argues that members see the club and themselves as transcending the nation, an image he calls *cosmopolitan citizenship*: “Cosmopolitan citizenship is imagined as a relationship with fellow club members that transcends states, borders, and cultures. As members come to see themselves as part of the club, and to see the club as transnational, they see themselves as cosmopolitan by virtue of membership” (222). Both cosmopolitan citizenship and metrolingualism recognize

the fixed associations of languages as systems, but remix their elements in playful ways to create fluid identities.

4.3 Superdiversity

Recent research undertakes to move beyond the model of code switching altogether by engaging with Vertovec's (2007) model of *super-diversity*. Superdiversity displaces *multiculturalism* as the presence of distinct cultures drawn from two or more ethnic, religious, or local groups. Instead, it suggests that analyses should consider the multiple dimensions of ethnic, economic, gender, age, education, and citizen or immigrant statuses co-present in urban populations. Just as much contemporary work in sociocultural anthropology transcends earlier visions of cultures as bounded entities (Appadurai 1996, among others), research on *language and superdiversity* attempts to move beyond the ideas of languages as bounded systems and speech communities as groups with unified norms of language behavior. Like much of the work discussed throughout this chapter, Blommaert and Rampton (2011) argue for empirical investigation of context and meaning as language users construct and signal it. In this respect, language and superdiversity is not a new approach, but an agenda and label for the investigation of what we describe above as elements in hybrid repertoires.

The intensification of global movement has necessitated a repositioning of hybridity to the center of analysis and theory. Blommaert describes language and superdiversity as a “paradigmatically different approach” (2010, 20). Given the research presented in this review, however, it is not exactly clear how language and superdiversity exemplifies a new paradigm. Reyes (2014) suggests that the approach may reflect a change in scholar's attitudes as much as data. Moore (2013), writing from the perspective of an established tradition of research on language contact in indigenous communities, suggests that scholarship has been converging

on the empirical and theoretical challenges of the emergent nature of discourse practices for at least 30 years. Language and gender research, for example, has long emphasized the intersectionality advocated by superdiversity theorists, from Barrett's (1999) work on the "polyphonous" style shifting of African American drag performances to Hall's (2009) work on multiple indexicalities of Hindi-English code switching with respect to social class, masculinity, and sexuality in the transnational space of a New Delhi NGO. Blommaert (2013, 24) compares language and superdiversity to quantum theory's relationship to Newtonian physics. Perhaps a better comparison is the "raisin bread model" of cosmic expansion. This analogy explains how it is possible for all bodies in the universe to be moving away from one another by imagining the metric expansion of space as a rising loaf of raisin bread, and gravitational bodies as the raisins which separate as the loaf expands. Like the raisin bread model, language and superdiversity is useful as a metaphor for explaining and a lens for re-examining existing theory, but it does not fundamentally change scholarly paradigms.

5 Conclusions

In writing this review, we have necessarily had to present reductive characterizations of the richly complex work associated with these four traditions of scholarship. Nevertheless, we have attempted to show how each trajectory contributes to a holistic understanding of code switching as social practice. Two trends become apparent from the history presented here. First is a shift in focus from linguistic systems toward language users. The earliest research in the field viewed languages as discrete systems in contact. Studies under the heading of code switching or related terms shifted analysis first toward the people at the edges of communities and languages, and then to discourse practices straddling such edges. More recent work centers on repertoires drawn from lived experiences that may disrupt presumed connections between language, community, and spaces.

The second trend is in the analysis of links between forms of language and subjectivity. If *superdiversity* defines language in late capitalism, *hypersubjectivity* is its corollary for the analysis of identity. Globalization theorists often use the prefix *hyper-* to underscore the intensification of processes already at play in diminishing the sovereignty of the nation-state. Sassen (2000), for instance, analyzes how the rise of the global city was facilitated by the “hypermobility” of labor, capital, and information. Our related term *hypersubjectivity* invites us to consider how processes of identification are also shifting as a result of movement across these same channels. In the early analysis of speech community identities, encounters with others led to heightened reflexivity about language and the construction of “we codes” and “they codes.” Work on nation-state identities shifted focus to marginalized factions within the national “we” group, illuminating the ideological construction of similarity and difference in the process. Language research in diasporic communities revealed how identity is produced metadiscursively in sites of intensified multicultural and interethnic contact. Current work on hybrid repertoires must also consider what these combinations of discourse mean for the theorization of identity: How are new ideologies of self and other constituted through an urban workforce of previously unacquainted peoples (labor), the commodification of language in new service economies (capital), and the rapid circulation of discourse across distant social groups (information)? Such analyses should not neglect discourses seen as monolingual, since views of linguistic hybridity are inevitably formulated in relation to ideologies of monolingualism.

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