

Learner Code-Switching in the Content-Based Foreign Language Classroom¹

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Abstract: Using a framework based on conversation analysis (Auer, 1984, 1995, 1998), this article presents an analysis of learner code-switching between L1 and L2 in an advanced foreign language (FL) classroom. It was found that students code-switch not only as a fallback method when their knowledge of the L2 fails them, or for other participant-related functions, but also for discourse-related functions that contextualize the interactional meaning of their utterances. These uses strikingly resemble code-switching patterns in non-classroom bilingual settings and show that language learners are able to conceptualize the classroom as a bilingual space. Learners orient to the classroom as a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) through their code-switching patterns as manifestations of a shared understanding about their actions and about themselves as members of that community.

Résumé : Cet article présente une analyse d'alternance de code des étudiants entre la L1 et la L2 dans un cours supérieur de langue étrangère en utilisant un cadre fondé sur l'analyse de la conversation (Auer, 1984, 1995, 1998). Il en ressort que les étudiants changent le code non seulement comme stratégie de repli lorsque leurs connaissances de la L2 leur font défaut ou dans le cadre d'autres fonctions relatives au participant, mais également dans celui de fonctions liées au discours permettant de contextualiser la signification interactive de leurs expressions. Celles-ci font appel à des modèles d'alternance de code remarquablement semblables dans des environnements bilingues hors cours et indiquent que les étudiants en langues sont capables de conceptualiser la salle de cours comme un espace bilingue. Les étudiants s'orientent vers la salle de cours en tant que communauté de pratique (Wenger, 1998) par le truchement de leurs modèles d'alternance de code en tant que manifestations d'une compréhension partagée de leurs actions de et d'eux-mêmes comme membres de cette communauté.

Introduction and background

Recent contributions to the debate on the use of the L1 in the foreign language (FL) classroom (Blyth, 1995; Kramsch, 1995; Nizogorodcew, 1996; Castellotti & Moore, 1997; Antón & DiCamilla, 1999; Cook, 2001; Levine, 2003) have argued for a shift in approach, linking the use of the L1 to issues of language acquisition, identity, and the acceptance of the bilingual rather than the monolingual speaker as the norm. As a contribution to this side of the debate, this article addresses the issue of L1 and L2 use in the classroom by studying patterns of code-switching in a hybrid between a content-based classroom and an advanced FL classroom. In basing our analysis on the interactional model of code-switching suggested by Auer (1984, 1995, 1998), we tie the analysis of code-switching in the classroom to switching patterns identified in non-classroom data, with the aim of describing the patterns of language alternation in one classroom. We suggest that when the classroom is conceptualized as a bilingual space by both students and teacher, code-switching patterns emerge in the learners that are similar to those found in non-classroom data. We further argue that the members of this classroom as a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) orient to rules and shared views about their actions and about themselves as members of a community and, through their practices, show how such a community can facilitate their development from second language learners to bilinguals.²

Based on several decades of research on bilingual interaction, it is clear that code-switching – defined here as the systematic alternating use of two languages or language varieties within a single conversation or utterance – is a characteristic feature of bilinguals' speech rather than a sign of a deficiency in one language or the other (Li, 2000, p. 17). In interactional contexts, code-switching has been shown to serve both *discourse-related* functions, which organize conversation by contributing to the interactional meaning of a particular utterance, and *participant-related* functions, which are switches corresponding to the preferences of the individual who performs the switching or those of co-participants in the conversation (Auer, 1984, 1998). Although this distinction was originally made based on observations of bilingual interaction in non-institutional settings, Martin-Jones (1995, 2000) argues – based on the fact that classrooms often include groups of people with differing language abilities and communicative repertoires – that this distinction is particularly useful for research on classroom interaction.

It has been found that participant-related switching by learners in classroom interaction often consists of what Lüdi (2003, p. 176) describes

as an attempt to override communicative stumbling blocks by falling back on the L1.³ Participant-related switching is also used by teachers in a 'heterofacilitative' capacity (Nussbaum, 1990): anticipating that learners would not understand an upcoming utterance if it were in the target language, they fall back on the L1. Indeed, participant-related code-switching has been found to predominate among both learners and teachers in classrooms as diverse as bilingual education programs for linguistic minority children in the United States (Zentella, 1981), Anglo-Chinese secondary schools in Hong Kong (Lin, 1988, 1990), FL classrooms in Catalonia (Nussbaum, 1990), and primary classrooms in Brunei (Martin, 2003). In addition, teachers (but not learners) have been found to use code-switching in discourse-related functions such as making asides, quoting, and moving in and out of the teaching/learning context in several of these same classrooms (Zentella, 1981; Lin, 1988, 1990) as well as in secondary classrooms in Malta (Camilleri, 1996).

None of the existing studies, however, has focused on the code-switching of advanced language learners engaged in content-based discussion about another field of study, as opposed to activities centred on language learning. This has resulted in a potentially misleading treatment of code-switching in the classroom-based literature, in which one might easily assume that although both teachers and learners may code-switch for participant-related functions, only teachers may code-switch for discourse-related functions.⁴ One reason for this omission is certainly that it is still rare to find L2 classrooms that allow the use of L1 (Levine, 2003). If any single tenet has persisted throughout the Western language pedagogy revolutions of the twentieth century and beyond, it is that the use of the first language is to be avoided in the foreign language classroom. Arguments in favour of this banishment are based primarily on two ideals: that of duplicating native language acquisition as closely as possible, and that of compartmentalizing languages in learners' minds in a kind of coordinate bilingualism (Cook, 2001, pp. 406–408). In recent years, however, many scholars have questioned the monolingual norm in FL classrooms and have suggested that teachers should instead aim to 'create bilinguals' (Blyth, 1995; Kramsch, 1995; Cook, 2001). If the ultimate goal of language instruction is to create bilinguals, they argue, then the aim of incorporating systematic code-switching behaviour into the classroom is both worthy and appropriate.

One possible interpretation of this challenge is to conceptualize code-switching as a resource for L2 acquisition and to identify and formulate pedagogically meaningful uses of the L1 to foster L2 acquisition, as Macaro (2001) and Levine (2003) have suggested. Another is to conceptualize code-switching not as a resource for L2 learning, per se,

but as a resource for effective bilingual communication, and it is this idea that is the basis of our argument. The former interpretation focuses on strategies the teacher can identify and teach students as part of the acquisition process, and this may lead to a focus on code-switching strategies that can be taught to learners without looking at whether or not learners are already using them. In analyzing learners' code-switching in an advanced FL classroom, we hope to make a contribution towards identifying which code-switching patterns are used in classroom bilingual behaviour, in order to help identify what it takes to create bilinguals. We draw on work carried out in non-classroom conversation as well as in classroom interaction, since the former lets us cross the boundaries between institutional and non-institutional talk and reveals parallels between code-switching patterns in the classroom and similar patterns outside the classroom. Through our focus on learners' as opposed to teachers' code-switching patterns, and by studying an advanced content-based language classroom, we hope to provide new insights into the ways in which particular kinds of bilingual classrooms can be conceptualized.⁵

The classroom as a community of practice

The data for this study were collected between February and April of 1998 in a seminar for advanced learners of German at the University of Alberta (U of A). The U of A is located in Edmonton, a mainly English-speaking city of about 850,000 in Western Canada, and this study's participants were the 12 students who enrolled in the seminar, all of them women between 20 and 30 years of age. Eleven 45-minute segments of the 80-minute class sessions were recorded, including eight regular class sessions (consisting of discussions of readings) and three sessions where students gave presentations and the class discussed them. The students displayed the wide variation in language skills typical of such upper-level seminars in North America: five learned their German only in the classroom; five learned it mainly in the classroom, but with supplemental visits to German-speaking countries or other brief immersion experiences; and two learned German entirely in immersion environments. Despite their differences in proficiency, however, all were capable enough in German to take part in an upper-level content-based seminar. In such a context, discussion arises not out of language-learning tasks but from readings, including articles – all in German – about L2 pedagogy, language for special purposes, and translation, and it is this material on which students are tested. In analyzing learners' code-switching behaviour, we look at this particular

classroom as a *community of practice* (Wenger, 1998), or a group of people who are mutually engaged in a joint enterprise with a shared repertoire of styles. The concept of a community of practice provides us with tools that can lend depth to an analysis of code-switching in interaction because it informs us not only about what speakers do but about who they are and how they interpret what they do, since participation in a community of practice is 'both a kind of action and a form of belonging' (Wenger, 1998, p. 4).

In this evolving community of practice, learners possess shared views on certain things important to the community, such as ways of engaging in doing things together, the appropriateness of actions, specific tools, representations, and other artefacts (Wenger, 1998, p. 125). A number of factors contribute to this shared understanding. The class is offered in the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies by a professor of German, and students are required to have taken other German classes, including at least one upper-level language, literature, and culture class (in which the monolingual use of German is the prescribed norm), before taking this one. In contrast to these other German classes, the teacher of this applied linguistics course makes clear that the use of English is neither banned nor merely tolerated but, in fact, fully accepted.⁶ This rule is laid out in the syllabus,⁷ and the instructor explains it and the rationale for it on the first day of class. She also tells students that she herself intends to use German most of the time to discuss the subject matter, and German is the language of both the course syllabus and all but one of the readings in the course pack. The shared understanding for the community of practice evolving from these factors is that, while both German and English are allowed and encouraged by the teacher for discussions in the classroom, students may still use this class to practice and improve their German. While the very practice of code-switching in this classroom is an enactment of the rule of using both languages, as written into the syllabus and stated by the teacher, it also fulfils several other functions, as this study will show.

Bilingual interaction in the classroom: Method of analysis

Following Auer (1984, 1995, 1998), we adopt an approach to bilingual conversation based on conversation analysis. In keeping with this approach, we pay close attention to the point within the interactional episode where code-switching takes place, considering where in a sequence of actions the switch occurs and its relevance to the turn-taking system (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). We also draw on Gumperz's (1982) notion of *contextualisation cues*, which focuses on the ways in

which speakers use code-switching to alert interactants to the social and situational context of the conversation. The following data excerpt is used to illustrate this approach and to present an example in which the same code-switch indexes participant-related as well as discourse-related functions. It is taken from a class discussion of an article about the theory of language for special purposes. S1 is a learner who did not begin taking German until she reached university but was raised bilingually in English and French.⁸

Example 1: Participant- and discourse-related code-switch⁹

- 1 TR: also es muß mehr dazu geben um das (.) linguistik zu nennen
well there must be more to it in order to call that (.) linguistics
- 2 S1: so vielleicht wie man (.) ähm (.) die fachsprache benutzt?
so maybe how you use (.) um (.) the scientific language?
- 3 TR: wie man die fachsprache benutzt?
how you use the scientific language?
- 4 S1: miteinander? (.) **with each other?**
with each other? (.) with each other?
- 5 TR: mm-hmm (.) okay

The student's code-switch in line 4 is what Alfonzetti (1998, p. 185) calls a 'reformulation,' which is a specific kind of self-repair.¹⁰ It is a strategy by which bilingual speakers reformulate the same utterance in a different code. We would like to argue that this code-switch has both participant-related and discourse-related functions, and for both arguments, we must consider the sequential nature of the interaction. S1's utterance in line 4 comes as the second response to a teacher's request for information in line 1. After S1 has initially offered an answer in line 2, contextualizing it through the use of 'so' as a response to the teacher's utterance in line 1, the teacher in line 3 recycles part of the student's turn and marks her turn as a repair, with question intonation. This could be a mock repair used to elicit more information from the student, as is often seen in teacher talk (McHoul, 1990), but it could also relate to an understanding within this community of practice that a question from the teacher may address the student's weakness in expressing herself in German.

The student orients to the repair by providing more information in line 4, rather than treating it as a request to reformulate her first response from line 2. This information is given twice, first in German ('miteinander') and then in English ('with each other'). This code-switch from German into English has a discourse-related function in that it adds emphasis to her answer. The student expands on her own turn at

a turn-transitional point, where speaker change becomes relevant. Arguably, she could have done this by repeating the German or by other means such as an increase in volume, but instead she uses one of the resources available to bilinguals in adding emphasis. As noted by Zentella, this is a common practice among bilinguals:

What monolinguals accomplish by repeating louder and/or slower [*sic*], or with a change of wording, bilinguals can accomplish by switching languages. Children learned to use translation for clarification within their turn at speaking, and also tapped into the emphatic power of repetition. (1997, p. 96)

The code-switch also has a participant-related function, which it acquires because this interaction takes place in a community of practice in which there is a common understanding about the students' and the teacher's purposes for their presence in the classroom. With the rising intonation at the end of her response in line 2 and the mitigation through 'vielleicht,' the student marks her response as less assertive and acknowledges the teacher as the authority. Both the German and the English in her second response in line 4, which follow the teacher's repair initiation, are also marked prosodically, by rising intonation, as less assertive. In both responses, it is unclear whether the expression of uncertainty resulting from these prosodic cues is focused on the content of her answer or on her use of German. The fact that she does not reformulate her first response after the teacher's repair initiation and instead adds new information may suggest that she is sure about her German, but adding the English to the German in her second response could also be an indication that she is orienting to the setting as a language learning environment in which everyone, including herself, is less proficient in German than in English. In adding the English, she may be trying to make sure she is understood.

The discussion of this first example shows – as Auer (1998, p. 8) has also demonstrated in non-classroom discourse – that a single code-switch may have participant-related and discourse-related functions at the same time. The first function in this example comes from students using other cues in addition to code-switch that contextualize the interaction as a classroom interaction, with which the code-switch as a contextualization cue interacts. The second function comes from the ways in which the code-switch interacts with the student's persona as a bilingual speaker and the ways in which students as emerging bilinguals code-switch in similar ways to bilinguals in non-classroom interactions. Therefore, the same code-switch in this content-based

classroom may indicate the student's relationship to two different roles, namely her institutional role as student and her social role as emerging bilingual.¹¹ These two roles relate to what Goffman (1979, p. 5) calls 'footing,' in that they imply 'a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance.' In the analysis that follows, we will pay attention to how students shift between classroom contexts and more informal ones through their code-switching practice. A single code-switch can have both participant- and discourse-related functions, as in Example 1, but may also have only one or the other.

Analysis of classroom code-switching

In the following presentation of our analysis, we first discuss an example of a participant-related use of code-switching, provide two examples where code-switching clearly fulfils both participant- and discourse-related functions, and then ultimately discuss several examples that are primarily discourse-related uses of code-switching. In Example 2, the first example in the category of participant-related code-switching, the student performs a reformulation similar to Example 1, but in the opposite direction, from English into German. This example comes from the discussion of an article on the teaching of language for special purposes that makes reference to different kinds of 'grammars' (the grammar in one's head, the grammar in a reference work, the grammar in a L2 textbook). S2 began her learning of German in a classroom context in high school, but spent three weeks in Germany a few years prior to this interaction.

Example 2: Participant-related code-switch

- 1 TR: was (.) zum beispiel muß man (.) wissen wenn man (.) pass-
 what (.) for example do you have to (.) know when you (.) uh
 2 sive (.) äh äh (.) fähigkeiten in der sprache aufbauen möchte
 uh (.) would like to build up passive skills in the language
 3 (5 sec)
 4 was für grammatik
 what kind of grammar
 5 (4 sec)
 6 S2: man (.) muß nur (.) die formen (.) recognize? (.) wie man (.)
 you (.) have to (.) recognize? (.) the forms (.) how you (.)

- 7 erkennt und verstehen aber nicht (.) selbst (.) **produce it** (.)
 recognize and understand but not (.) produce it (.) yourself
- 8 produzieren
 (.) *produce*
- 9 TR: okay

In line 6, the student starts her turn in German and then switches into English with the word 'recognize.' Preceding this English word are a number of pauses, indicating a word search. Right after the English word, the student switches back into German¹² and provides a German reformulation of the English word in line 7 ('erkennt'). It is a participant-related code-switch, but one in which the student does not stop after uttering the word in her L1 but, instead, continues and produces it again in the target language. If students are given permission to use both languages, code-switching can provide them with a back-up language in situations where they cannot easily retrieve a word, a process that can also be observed with native speakers of a language and which often results in word searches. As Lüdi (2003, p. 176) argues, these kinds of translingual switches may occur when speakers want to avoid communication breakdown. Instead of leaving a long pause in searching for the German word, S2 continues her turn, and with it the flow of communication. From a psychological point of view, the switch into English may even help her in retrieving the German, functioning as a trigger (Clyne, 2000, p. 262). S2 uses this strategy a second time in the same turn, switching into English in line 7 with 'produce it' and then providing the German equivalent ('produzieren').

The direction of the switch tells us something about the way in which the speaker perceives the situation. The fact that the speaker switches from English into German makes this switch different than the one in example 1. S2 does not accommodate to the others' more proficient language here. In providing the German after the English, despite the fact that everyone in the room understands the English perfectly well, she makes an effort to use the L2, and therefore orients to the language learning situation. S2's treatment of the situation is one in which she marks the first item of the reformulation, the English, as 'inappropriate' (see Auer, 1984, p. 60; Alfonzetti, 1998, p. 186). In addition, the code-switch is similar to examples in Auer's (1984) non-classroom data where these reformulations are indications of a momentary lack of competence.

In Example 3, the code-switch is both participant and discourse related. This example comes from a class discussion introducing language for special purposes as a concept. The teacher is attempting to get the students to talk about the circumstances under which they might

already have used a language for special purposes. S3 is a European who has never lived in a German-speaking environment but was schooled partly in German in her native country before coming to Canada.

Example 3: Participant- and discourse-related code-switch

- 1 TR: im englischunterricht (..) wenn sie (..) aufsätze schreiben
in English class (..) when you (..) learn to write essays (..)
- 2 lernen (..) gibt es besondere regeln dafür?
are there particular rules for that?
- 3 oder kann man einfach schreiben wie man will
or can you just write however you want
- 4 S3: regeln
rules
- 5 TR: was für regeln
what kind of rules
- 6 (2 sec)
- 7 S3: äh die struktur? des aufsatzes? muß man (..) **you know your introduction**
uh the structure? of the essay? you have to (..)
- 8 **your thesis statement the last sentence of the introduction**
- 9 **(..) and whatever else then**
- 10
- 11 TR: okay? (..) also die struktur eines aufsatzes muß (..) besonders sein
okay? (..) so the structure of an essay has to be (..) specific

The teacher initiates the topic by asking whether there are particular rules for writing essays that they learn in English class. When the student insists that there are, the teacher asks her to elaborate on what these rules entail. The student starts this elaboration in German in line 7. She marks the beginning of her answer as uncertain through the rising intonation after 'struktur' and after 'aufsatzes' and then cuts off her German, leaving a pause before she switches into English (line 8). The prosody indicating uncertainty, the cut-off, and the pause certainly mark her speech as stumbling and looking for words in German. Thus, we might want to assume that this is why she resorts to English. S3, however, attended a German immersion school before coming to Canada, and it is therefore unlikely that she was completely unable to use the German in this context. In looking for other interactional functions of this code-switch, it seems striking that S3 resorts to English when talking about structuring an English essay. The code-switch into English evokes the Canadian cultural context, and the student may use

the code-switch to contrast essay writing in German with essay writing in English, which would make this code-switch discourse related. In fact, the teacher introduces the topic as essay writing in English classes (line 1) rather than in German classes, thus evoking the Canadian cultural context. In her response in line 11, the teacher switches back into German to summarize the answer to her question, using parts of the students' words. By introducing this summary with 'also' (*so*), the teacher marks this summary as a reformulation of S3's words. By using German, she relates this reformulation to content as well as the language; S3's code-switch into English appears as a gap in German to the teacher, who may be interpreting the student's switch as participant related despite the fact that the student seems to have intended it as a discourse-related switch.

In Example 4, the student's code-switch also serves both discourse- and participant-related functions. This example is from a class discussion that followed S2's presentation on the pedagogical theories of Rudolf Steiner and his Waldorf schools. S2 is interacting with S4, a somewhat weaker student who has learned German only in classroom contexts.

Example 4: Participant- and discourse-related code-switch

- 1 S4: **so are – are Waldorf uh schools today (.) have they made**
 2 **reforms? or do they still follow the old (.) Waldorf theories**
 3 S2: {laughter}
 4 S4: **like have they made reforms to (.) for today?**
 5 S2: **yeah? (.) yeah (.) um (.)** eine von den ideen von Steiner ist
 6 *one of Steiner's ideas is that*
 7 *daß in jeder zeit ist es wichtig daß (.)*
 8 *in every time it is important that (.)*
 9 *der pedagog- (.) ähm (.) die schulen*
 10 *the pedagog- (.) um (.) the schools*
 11 *passen (.) zu der zeit*
 12 *fit (.) with the time*
 13 also (.) sie sollen (.) sie sollen zusammen sein
 14 *so (.) they should (.) they're supposed to be together*
 15 und – und das ist jetzt der wichtige fragen nach (.)
 16 *and – and that is now the important question after (.)*
 17 *fünfundzwanzig jahren (.) ähm (.) hat das zeit geändert?*
 18 *twenty-five years (.) um (.) has the time changed?*
 19 oder nicht also spricht er von (.) zeiten wie (.) wie ähm (.)
 20 *or not so is he talking about (.) time as in (.) as in um (.)*

- 13 **c-centuries?** oder spricht er von zeiten von (.) von (.)
c-centuries? or is he talking about time as (.) as in (.)
- 14 **decades** (.) danke [laughter] welche sprache (.) **um so** (.) **so**
decades (.) thank you [laughter] which language
- 15 **yes they make changes** (.) **yes they're controversial**

The example starts with a question in lines 1 and 2, in which S4 asks the presenter, S2, about whether followers of Steiner's theory have modified his pedagogy over time. Even though the presentation was in German, she asks this question in English, with insertions for the German proper name 'Waldorf.' After S2's laughter, which may or may not be in response to S4's question, she repeats her question in English, slightly reformulating it. In line 5, S2 starts her response to S4's question using English for the short version of her answer ('yeah? yeah') and then switches to German, the language of her presentation, in order to elaborate on her answer. S2 switches to English in line 14 in summing up ('so yes they make changes (.) yes they're controversial'), which is preceded by personal language negotiation on S2's part. In line 13, she inserts two English words in her German turn, preceded by word search markers. In line 14, she changes footing from discussing Waldorf schools to remarking on her word choice, indicating that she is not sure which language to use. The 'um so (.) so' are fillers to bridge the preceding and the coming talk. More precisely, 'so' functions as a discourse marker linking the upcoming talk in a causal relationship to something that has been said before. In continuing in English with 'yes they make changes,' S2 obviously links this part to S4's question, repeating the beginning of her turn: 'yeah.'

One of the functions of the code-switch in line 15 of Example 4 is discourse related in that it contextualizes this line as the summary or punch line. In this function, the code-switch in the example is similar to code-switches reported in non-classroom bilingual interaction to sum up the end of a narrative (Alfonzetti, 1998, pp. 194-195) and 'to evaluate some aspect of the story, or to deliver the punch line, or ending' (Zentella, 1997, p. 94), also called a *narrative frame break*. In addition, the code-switch also exhibits a participant-related function in that S2 switches to the language that S4 had used to pose her question. This may be an indication that S2 understands English to be the language S4 prefers.

Example 5, containing a code-switch that is discourse related, comes from the discussion of an article on the teaching of language for special purposes. This example directly follows the interaction in Example 3.

Example 5: Discourse-related code-switch

- 1 TR: okay? (.) also die struktur eines aufsatzes muß (.) besonders sein
okay? (.) so the structure of an essay has to (.) be specific
- 2 S3: ja ich glaub - ich nur - ich weiß (.) nicht genau
yeah I thin - I just - I don't (.) know exactly
- 3 für die es die - (.) die ähm like
for the it the - (.) the um
- 4 wie man (.) sie nennt die w- (.) **i don't know how to explain**
what you (.) call them the w- (.)
- 5 TR: okay
- 6 S3: es sind die wörter - die neuen wörter die man ben- benützt
it's the words - the new words that you u- use

S3's turn in which she code-switches starts in line 2, in response to a teacher's comment that is contextualized as a summary through 'also.' S3's turn is clearly marked by perturbation markers, false starts, and multiple pauses, indicating that she is having difficulty expressing what she wants to say. Her switch into English in line 4 may look like a simple case of a learner struggling with the target language, in which case this would seem to be a participant-related code-switch; but several factors favour the idea that it is in fact a discourse-related switch. First, the switch to English enables S3 to step out of the flow of her speech to explain the reason for her hesitations before continuing in German. The reason she states is not that she is having trouble coming up with the appropriate German words, but that she is having trouble finding a way to explain the idea she wants to express - the language may have nothing to do with it. Second, this switch sets off a brief metalinguistic comment from the argument she is trying to make. The classroom literature has shown that it is common for learners to use the L1 for thinking aloud (Antón & DiCamilla, 1999, p. 243), but in this example the switch serves a discourse-related function similar to examples found in non-classroom bilingual speech, namely to that of setting off an aside (Alfonzetti, 1995, pp. 188-190; Zentella, 1997, p. 94).

In response to this switch, the teacher acknowledges S3's use of English through an approving 'okay' in line 5 but does not continue her turn after this minimal response, which gives S3 a chance to take the floor again. In line 6, S3 then uses German rather than English to continue her argument rather fluently, with only a few false starts and with no perturbation markers or pauses. The brief metalinguistic

comment gives her the chance to vent her frustration at her inability to put her ideas into words (in either German or English) before finishing her argument. She also signals through the code-switch a stepping out of her argument before switching back into German to go on. This contributes to the contextualization of the community of practice as a foreign language classroom, in which S3 wants to use her German and reserves English for specific discourse-related uses only. Since S3 is a highly fluent speaker of German, it is unlikely that she would have been unable to think of how to say the words 'I don't know how to explain' in German. Instead, it seems clear that she uses code-switching to mark the content of her metalinguistic comment as an aside, separate from her argument, an action that would have required gestures or a change in pitch or volume had she used only German.

Example 6 is from an interaction between students arising out of a discussion of the role of grammar instruction within the teaching methodology of suggestopedia. This discussion follows S3's end-of-semester presentation on suggestopedia, given in German, which she began by passing out a handout illustrating some of the principles she wanted to discuss. Apart from S3, the participants in this interaction are S5, a European who lived in Germany for many years before coming to Canada; S6, who has learned German only in classroom contexts; and S7, who has German parents and acquired some German at home before beginning formal instruction in the language in high school.

Example 6: Discourse-related code-switch

- | | | |
|---|-----|--|
| 1 | S5: | es stand bei uns im course pack daß die ersten beiden
<i>it said in our course pack that the first two</i> |
| 2 | | dieser konzerten dann (.) das ist schon grammatik
<i>of these concerts then (.) that's already grammar</i> |
| 3 | S6: | ja acht stunden oder so
<i>yeah eight hours or so</i> |
| 4 | S5: | ja ja
<i>yes yes</i> |
| 5 | S3: | ja wahrscheinlich (.) ich bin (.) nicht so weit
<i>yes probably (.) I'm (.) not that far along</i> |
| 6 | | (1 sec) |
| 7 | S7: | can you explain (.) your little (.) c- clo[sing line? |
| 8 | CL: | [
[[laughter ...] |
| 9 | S3: | I don't know it's just a continuation from the other ones |

The discussion about grammar instruction at the beginning of this example, arising from the content of S3's presentation, is entirely in German. Following S3's statement in line 5 that she has not come far enough in her outside reading about suggestopedia to confirm that the information they read in their course pack is correct, there is a rather long pause (line 6). S7 uses this pause to take the floor in line 7 and shift the topic of discussion from grammar instruction to a question about the handout that S3 passed out at the beginning of her presentation. This question is in English, and the code-switch helps S7 to focus the class on something other than the discussion of grammar by marking a topic shift. The fact that the handout is in English may have motivated S7's code-switch into English, suggesting a possible relationship between code choice and topic. Evidence that S7 succeeds in re-focusing the class's attention is provided by the laughter from the class and by S3's response to S7's question in line 9, which is in English, thereby making her turn and that of S7 coherent. S3 thus aligns herself with S7 by accepting her code choice. The connection between code-switching and topic shift is well documented in non-classroom bilingual discourse (Zentella, 1997, p. 94; Alfonzetti, 1998, p. 197). This discourse-related use also seems to occur in Example 6, rather than a switch to English for participant-related reasons of imperfect German, especially since both S7 and S3 are very fluent speakers of German.

Following is another example where the code-switch into German can be used to mark a change of footing. Example 7 comes from a stretch of conversation about the use of English in German computer-related jargon, in the context of discussing an article about language for special purposes. S8 is a confident speaker of German who sometimes uses German outside the classroom to communicate with her partner, a native German speaker.

Example 7: Discourse-related code-switch

- 1 S8: **all of this stuff is in English like I write my**
 2 **in-laws and** (.)ich hab diesen wunderbaren (.) **site**
 (.) *i found this wonderful (.) site*
 3 gefunden [(.) **like how do you get (.) the German? (.) out of**
 [
- 4 CL: [(laughter)]
- 5 S8: **the English (.) because most of these things are now done**
 6 **in English**

7 S2: [(laughter ...)]

In her initial turn in line 1, the teacher is making a comment about the unusual legal language in a long text the students have spent the first half of the class discussing. After a rather long pause of four seconds, during which nobody answers the teacher's question, S2 code-switches into English to ask whether there will be anything like this exercise on the exam. The switch into English contextualizes the student's turn in line 3 as something other than the expected answer to the teacher's question. It lets the student step out of her expected role in the present situation and into the role of a future test taker. The turn marked by the code-switch could also be seen as an aside, similar to the function of the code-switch in Example 5. S7's turn after the long pause is certainly seen as a comment on this pause, by which S7 volunteers to speak for the rest of the class in suggesting that there should not be anything like that on the exam, since they have a hard time answering this question. The resulting laughter from the rest of the class seems to acknowledge the role shift, as well as being a reaction to the fact that the student is defining their purpose for being there as learning for an exam rather than learning for its own sake.

As is true for most classes, good grades and exams are goals of this classroom community of practice (and for some students they may be the ultimate goal), even though students and teacher do not directly talk about this fact. In fact, the student in Example 8 may be 'speaking the unspeakable,' that is, bringing to light a common-sense understanding underlying the purpose of their interaction that nonetheless is not supposed to be the sole purpose of it in the context of an institution that promotes the ideology of learning for its own sake. While students often adopt the language suggested by a fellow student, as in Example 6, the teacher in Example 8 switches back into German in line 6, thus not adopting the language used by the student, placing herself outside the students' community of practice in this case. Although the teacher responds in German, she plays along with the role shift and comments that she may very well test on this, eliciting further laughter from the class. This is similar to the use of code-switching to mark role shifts in non-classroom bilingual discourse (Zentella, 1997, p. 94).

Example 9 comes from the same discussion of different kinds of 'grammars' as Example 2. The article being discussed describes how people make an image of ('abbilden') the grammar, and, as comes out later in the interaction, S3 has misinterpreted that word as meaning 'abbauen' (*to get rid of*).

Example 9: Discourse-related code-switch

- 1 TR: dann gibt zwei unter – tei – es gibt eine unterteilung (.) ja?
then there are two under – pie – there's a subdivision (.) yes?
- 2 S3: ich hab nur – I – ich – I disagree with you (.) when you say
I only have – I – I –
- 3 **the abbildung (.) of the grammar I think that's very essen-**
image
- 4 **tial to have and i don't think you want to abbild it**
make an image of

S3, instead of answering the teacher's question, voices a disagreement with the teacher. In her disagreement turn, she starts out in German and then switches to English, after going back and forth between German and English, expressing indecisiveness about which language to use. The student's code-switch has several discourse-related functions. One is that the speaker attracts attention through the code-switch when asserting her opinion (see Li, 1998, pp. 160–161). As such, the student uses code-switching as one technique that students use to make their subject position stronger, that is, to exercise *agency* (McKay & Wong, 1996; Swain, 2002). The code-switch also organizes turn-taking, in particular speaker change (Auer, 1995, p. 120; Zentella, 1997, p. 95).

Example 10 comes from a discussion about the differences between language instruction and instruction in other subjects, such as literature or history.

Example 10: Discourse-related code-switch

- 1 S8: information über eine be- ein bestimmtes (.) **what is fach**
information about a pa – a particular (.) what is 'fach' der
- 2 der die das
die or das
- 3 S5: da[s
 [
- 4 S8: [das {laughter}über ein bestimmtes fach?
about a particular subject?

S8 is in the middle of a German sentence when she realizes that she is unable to put the correct adjective ending on 'bestimmt' without knowing the correct definite article for the noun 'fach.' At that point, she initiates a repair in English, asking anyone who can answer whether

'fach' is 'der,' 'die,' or 'das.' S5 responds, and S8 repeats the answer as an acknowledgement of her response before continuing in German. This is a discourse-related code-switch in which the switch serves to mark the need for the required information as outside of her argument, made in German. As previously stated, S8 is a confident speaker of German who uses it outside of the classroom. It therefore seems unlikely that she did not know how to say 'what is' in German. Rather, she uses the code-switch to contextualize the switched talk as an aside before continuing her argument in German. This is similar to switching in order to mark a change in topic, as has been found in non-classroom data (e.g., Alfonzetti, 1998, pp. 197-198).

Implications and directions for further research

Within the debate about allowing the use of the L1 in FL classrooms, we have analyzed code-switching patterns between English and German as constitutive of bilingual language practice. We have focused on student patterns of code-switching in one content-based German language classroom, in which applied linguistics is the subject matter of the course. In basing our analysis on the interactional model of code-switching suggested by Auer (1984, 1995, 1998), we have been able to show that while some of these learners' code-switches are participant related, they also use code-switching in discourse-related functions previously identified only in teacher talk and in non-institutional conversation among bilinguals. We have also shown that participant-related uses largely address the roles of students and teacher in the classroom and the teaching context, whereas discourse-related uses clearly resemble bilingual practices outside the classroom environment.

Further, by envisioning the classroom as a community of practice, we found that the students manifest their conception of the classroom as a bilingual space through their code-switching practices. When given permission to code-switch, these students did not merely fall back on the L1 when they encountered a deficiency in their L2 learning; they also made frequent use of language alternation to indicate changes in their orientation toward the interaction and toward each other. They did this despite the fact that the teacher did not deliberately model code-switching behaviour and, in fact, only rarely spoke English to them at all. The particular functions of code-switching emerged as a consequence of the students' participation and membership in this community of practice, allowing shared understandings about the purpose of the interaction to enter into the language practice. When there is a

shared understanding among both students and teacher that, in addition to learning the subject matter, one of the main goals is L2 use, permission to use the L1 can be granted without fear of jeopardizing the language learning endeavour through overuse of the L1. Code-switching strategies similar to non-classroom patterns may be found only if the conditions are right – that is, if learners feel comfortable using both the L1 and the L2 in the classroom – and envisioning the foreign-language classroom as a bilingual space gives them opportunities to behave as fluent bilinguals do. The question then becomes whether teachers need to use the L1 'deliberately and systematically' (Cook, 2001, p. 418) or whether, under the circumstances of allowing students to use the common L1 together with the L2, students will develop their own patterns along the lines of bilingual interaction. The evidence presented here seems to indicate that the latter is the case.

Since we have focused on one particular advanced language classroom, a question arises: To what extent can students in beginning classes develop these functions on their own, or does the instructor need to teach or explain to them how code-switching can be used as a resource, as suggested by Macaro (2001) and Levine (2003)? More research on interaction in introductory FL classrooms (especially on content-based group discussions) or in immersion settings that allow for the use of the L1 is needed to see whether discourse-related functions can be identified or whether, as current research on this subject suggests, students' code-switching in these classrooms is generally participant related. Also open to investigation is whether previous immersion experience with the L2 or previous experience of code-switching between other languages in natural settings help students to learn these skills more quickly. Finally, while this study has not attempted to show how code-switching contributes to L2 acquisition, this is a worthwhile question to address in the future.

Envisioning the FL classroom as a bilingual community of practice necessarily entails envisioning the members of that community as aspiring bilinguals. While this may seem to be a shift in perspective with potentially frightening consequences, it is important to remember that it also transforms the task of L2 learning into an attainable goal. While students will never be monolingual speakers of the L2, it is quite possible for them to become bilingual speakers of both an L1 and an L2. Allowing students to code-switch in ways that resemble uses in non-classroom bilingual interaction, therefore, not only gives them the opportunity to become more comfortable with the L2 but also gives them free rein to experiment with using two languages, like the bilinguals they hope to be some day.

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After doing her PhD at the University of Michigan, **Jennifer Dailey-O'Cain** came to the University of Alberta, where she is currently Associate Professor of German applied linguistics. In addition to the interests she shares with Dr Liebscher, she also works in sociolinguistic variation.

Notes

- 1 The authors would like to thank three anonymous reviewers and Glenn Levine for their extremely helpful comments on an earlier version of the paper.
- 2 Since we consider 'dimensions of practice as dimensions of identity' (Wenger, 1998, p. 21), we define bilingualism on the basis of the students' linguistic practice.
- 3 Lüdi (2003) refers to this phenomenon as *translinguistic wording* and acknowledges the existence of the same pattern among fluent bilinguals.
- 4 Hancock (1997) may have identified discourse-related code-switching functions in group work in the language classroom, although he does not explicitly analyze his data in these terms.
- 5 Because this article is not a study of the relationship between code-switching and language learning per se, we do not attempt to catalogue any potential cognitive or performance benefits of allowing the use of the L1 in the classroom.
- 6 The two languages were primarily used in discussion. Exams were written in German, and students were expected to respond in German, although some students did use some English in exams without penalty. Presentations were in German for majors and in either German or English for non-majors.
- 7 The exact wording in the syllabus is as follows: 'Weil wir alle Deutsch und Englisch sprechen können, und weil es in diesem Kurs um das Material geht, und nicht unbedingt um die Sprache an sich, dürfen Sie in der Diskussion immer entweder Deutsch oder Englisch wählen - es ist Ihre Wahl.' [Because we can all speak both German and English, and because this course is about the material and not necessarily about the language itself, you may always choose either German or English in the discussion - it is your choice.]

- 8 There may be a relationship between students' ability to code-switch and their membership in other bilingual communities of practice where they are used to code-switching. Though this relationship is not demonstrated through our analysis, we consider it necessary to present some information about the students' language backgrounds, since this may inform the meaning of the code-switches themselves.
- 9 Transcription conventions are as follows: German utterances are in roman type, while English utterances are in boldface type. English glosses of the German appear in italics beneath the German text. Conversational overlap is indicated with square brackets. Pauses lasting a beat (.) or two (. .) are indicated as shown; longer pauses are indicated in seconds. Students (S8, S3, etc.) are numbered in order of appearance; TR is the teacher, and CL is the whole class.
- 10 Conversational repair is defined as a mechanism 'addressed to recurrent problems in speaking, hearing, and understanding' (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). A discussion of the repair mechanisms used in this particular classroom can be found in Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain (2003).
- 11 For a similar distinction between institutional and social frames, see Simon (2001, p. 317-318).
- 12 The immediate switch back into German makes 'erkennt' a specific kind of code-switch in Auer's terminology, namely an *insertion*. Since the distinction between an insertion and a code-switch is not relevant for our argument, we use the term 'code-switch' to refer to both.

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