NEUE ROMANIA

Veröffentlichungsreihe
des Studienbereiches Neue Romania

Herausgegeben im Auftrag
des Instituts für Romanische Philologie
der Freien Universität Berlin
von Ronald Daus und Christian Foltys

Redaktion: Brigitta M. Rohdewohld

ISSN 0177-7750

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Auflage: 200

Nr. 18 Berlin 1997

Herstellung und Bezugsmöglichkeiten:

Institut für Romanische Philologie
der Freien Universität
Habelschwerdter Allee 45
14195 Berlin
(Tel. - 030 - 838 2040; Fax -030 - 838 2235)

Kostenbeitrag:	Einzelheft DM 10,--	Doppelnummer DM 15,--;
im Abonnement:	Einzelheft DM 8,--	Doppelnummer DM 12,--
Postgiro:	Berlin West 228 08 - 109 Titel 01 / 119 01 / 1700	

NEUE ROMANIA

Veröffentlichungsreihe des Studienbereiches
NEUE ROMANIA
des Instituts für Romanische Philologie
der Freien Universität Berlin

QUÉBEC - CANADA
Cultures et littératures immigrées

édité par
Peter Klaus

18 * 1997

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Katalin Kürtösi

CODE-SWITCHING AND BILINGUALISM IN DRAMA: CANADIAN EXAMPLES

Code-switching strategies

Code-switching is the practical manifestation of bilingualism, a phenomenon that has triggered violent reactions, very often loaded with political overtones in Canada - but also plays a more and more important role in various fields of daily life in many other regions of the world. This *alternation of two languages* (Grosjean, 145) is an *extremely common characteristic of bilingual speech and some bilingual writers and poets reflect this in their works ... to enhance the content of the verse* (Grosjean, 146). Susanne Romaine approaches bilingualism using Gumperz's theory, for whom code-switching means the *juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two grammatical systems or subsystems* (Romaine, 111): code-switching therefore is possible on the level of two different languages as well as using varieties of the same language or style-levels within a language. In this paper, however, code-switching will be used in the sense that it is the alternate use of two languages within the **same** play.

The dimensions of code-switching can vary - it may involve a word, a phrase, a sentence or a whole passage. In the course of switching from one language to another - in contrast with borrowing a word or phrase from another language, and integrating it phonologically and morphologically into the base language - the switched element is not integrated (Grosjean, 146). While most bilinguals agree that on the level of everyday conversation they very often switch from one language to another spontaneously and inconsciously (Grosjean, 148), in literature code-switching is **consciously** done. Many of the general reasons for changing from one language to another also apply for literature, and especially for drama - like, e.g. the speaker does not find the appropriate word in a given language, or the language itself does not have it in its vocabulary, while at other times the speaker knows the word in both languages and uses them alternately. Code-switching can be used for quoting or addressing someone, marking and

group identity, conveying confidentiality, and/or exluding someone from the
, as well as for expressing emotions; at other times it can change the role
ker: raise his/her status, add authority, show expertise (Grosjean, 146).
ing therefore can also convey extra information linguistically, stylistically and
sjean, 153).

itching or code-mixing is generally considered a **discourse strategy** with
spects: grammatical (syntactic and discourse) pragmatic, with a basically
tivation. Code-switching itself can have different degrees and types,
on the level how far the second language intrudes the units of the base
The smallest degree is tag-switching, which does not involve a violation of
les. The second step, intersentential switching requires greater fluency, since
occurs at a clause or sentence boundary. Thirdly, intrasentential switching
nging from one language into another within a clause or a sentence,
even within word boundaries - carrying the greatest syntactic risk (Romaine

from the linguistic aspects toward literature, we can agree with G.D. Keller
switching has three basic categories: it can have **thematic reasons**, can be
aracterize protagonists, and finally, it can be a **rhetorical device** to achieve
stic effects (Keller, 172). I am inclined to put **experimentation** into this last
s a sub-group. While underlining the significance of G.D. Keller's paper as an
ble contribution to the analysis of literary texts from the point of view of code-
nd bilingualism, I also wish to point out that there are remarkable differences
lication of this method in different genres of writing. When he works out his
on system, he uses examples from chicano poety, therefore lays great
on its stylistic, aesthetic and rhetoric elements. **In drama** - even if these
are very often present - code-switching very often carries other layers, like
l ethnic implications.

s of bilingualism

ching presupposes a certain level of bilingualism. The issue of bilingualism has
lots of discussion, scholars do not even agree on what they mean by the term.
re, it has been present for thousands of years (Foster, Mackey 1971) and
ng the end of the 20th century, it still seems to be a question of great
e, enriched by special aspects as a consequence of changes in life and
es to writing (Iyer, 50-55). Of the many definitions of the term itself - carefully
commented upon by E. Simpson (4) - I find that of Weinreich as most
to our purposes. For him 'the practice of alternately using two languages will
BILINGUALISM, and the persons involved BILINGUAL' (Simpson, 4).
this phrasing, E. Simpson calls 'l'alternance de deux ou plusieurs langues
eme oeuvre ou plusieurs oeuvres ... par un auteur ou des co-auteurs' literary

bilingualism. She also points out that 'le bilinguisme en littérature créatrice n'est qu'un phénomène restraint ... l'unilinguisme semble etre la règle générale dans le domaine de la création littéraire' (Simpson, 5). Further on, I will focus my attention on the alternate usage of two or more languages **in the same work, by the same author**.

It is up to the bilingual author to decide which langugae to use as base language and whether to code-switch or not. It is generally accepted that there are different levels and degrees of bilingualism. Proficiency is the key factor in judging the level of bilingualism which may have different functions and uses and it manifests itself in **interference**, i.e. 'the extent to which the individual manages to keep the languages separate, or ... fused' (Romaine, 11). On the semantic level, bilinguals very often are able to 'express meaning better in one language than another' (Romaine, 13). Equilingualism (Mackey, 1978, 3) or 'balanced bilingualism' (Romaine, 14) is generally considered to be an exceptional case. Regarding the presence or degree of interference, the two main groups of bilinguals are **compound**: speakers not able to separate out the two codes, therefore mixing languages constantly, even within phrases and sentences, and **co-ordinate** bilinguals, who do not alternate codes involuntarily (Keller, 179).

Approaching the question of bilingualism from the **psychological** point of view, Hamers and Blanc make a distinction between **bilinguality**, i.e. the psychological state of the individual, and **bilingualism**, which includes bilinguality and also refers to the state of a linguistic community in which two languages are in contact (6). When analysing these multi-dimensional phenomena, they take into consideration the relative competence, the cognitive organisation, the age of acquisition, the exogeneity, and the social cultural status of the individual, as well as his cultural identity. Based on Lambert's theory, with regard to language competence they make a distinction between 'the *balanced* individual who has equivalent competence in both languages and the *dominant* bilingual for whom competence in one of the languages, very often the mother tongue, is superior to his competence in the other' (Hamers-Blanc, 8). Compound and co-ordinate bilinguality are the two ways of cognitive organisation, while the age of acquisition may be in childhood, i.e. before age 10 - within this group the two possibilities are simultaneous and consecutive - during adolescent years and as an adult. With regard to the presence of second language community in the environment, they speak of endogenous and exogenous bilinguality, based upon the presence or absence of L2 community. According to the relative status of the two languages, the two possibilities are additive, i.e. both languages socially valorized, resulting a cognitive advantage, and subtractive bilinguality, when L2 is valorized at the expense of L1, resulting a cognitive disadvantage. Finally, when speaking of cultural identity, the main divisions are bicultural bilinguality, meaning double membership and bicultural identity, L1 monocultural bilinguality, L2 acculturated bilinguality and deculturated bilinguality (Hamers-Blanc, 9). Looking at the social aspects of this problem, it is generally accepted that monolinguality is more commonly found in economically dominant groups, while members of minority or subordinate groups tend to be bi-or multilingual (Hamers-Blanc, 13). Canadian writers of ethnic origins - very often a minority within a minority - need at least three languages (Pivato, 31).

alism in Canada

ious aspects and implications of bilingualism in Canada have been elaborated by scholars of international recognition (Mackey 1987, 1975, 1988, Juhel, 1982). gard to the linguistic side, I wish to recall some points made by Jean Darbelnet. sult of the two languages that interact in Canada, firstly there are several **words** ed from one language into the other (most frequently from English into French); y, the contact may influence the **meaning** of words, as well as the word ment or sentence **structure**. French language in Canada is vulnerable to ence, i.e. semantic and syntagmatic infiltration from English. There are also typographical Anglicisms, very often in the form of abbreviations. logical interference also occurs, but the most widely spread manifestation of ence is on the **semantic level**, with a smaller number of examples on the ical level (Darbelnet, 12-14). Since of all literary genres, plays are the closest to ly language, we will find several examples for the interaction of the two ges.

ecent years, literary bilingualism in Canada has been touched upon by more and scholars who most frequently analyse novels (Hodgson-Sarkonak, Simon, n). A special type of bilingual writing drew the attention of F. Loriggio who ed the relationship of ethnicity and the language use, based mainly on Italo-an examples. In line with the basic statements of other researchers - like, e.g. ngual is more than the sum of two monolinguals' (Hamers-Blanc, 15), or alism can be an asset to the creative writer even to the writer who learns a language as an adult' and 'bilingual expatriate writers have indeed been a g to the literatures to which they have contributed' (Mackey 1988, 20-21) - considers the **ethnic element** of a writing a carrier of extra meaning. Ethnicity, ew, is a perspective - it 'cannot be defined formally: any style, any genre can be (Loriggio, 55). Since Canada is a literature where all literature is hyphenated, in ntry more attention has been paid to ethnic writing, but there is still a lot to be because, using Loriggio's words, 'the fact is that literary theory has always ed that literature is produced in an environment self-evidently unitary. When we out German or Italian or French or English texts, we imagine them, as we have ccustomed to do, as components of an indivisible entity in which language, and sometimes territory coincide. Ethnicity introduces a series of wedges, of s in that homogeneity' (Loriggio 56).

alism in Drama

towards the presence of two or more languages in the same work in Canada, e to remember that it has been the case since the beginning of writing in this (Grutman, Kürtösi 1987, Kürtösi 1989). The degree and function of using more e language may vary according to the genre, the topic and the background of er, and the degree of his bilinguality. My general approach to the study of bi-or multilingual texts is following that of G. D. Keller who is convinced that 'bilingual literature in theory can display all of the stylistic features that have been unearthed in the literary analysis of monolingual literature at all levels, whether the structure, the sound-stratum, the imagery, rhetorical devices, diction, tone, or whatever, as well as some additional features not available to monolingual texts (Keller, 18O). In the course of my analyses, I will focus my attention on the **additional features** however hard they may be to describe.

Like in other genres, in drama, too, code-switching has been present for several centuries - it was very often a tool for the playwright to achieve comic effect, e.g. in *Maitre Pathelin*, or for suggesting the social role of a character or his nationality. Still, the best-known example from earlier times may be Shakespeare's *Henry V* where we can detect quite a few of the strategies to be used in our Canadian examples: speaking about the foreign language (III.iv 1-3) and the lack of language competence (III.iv.3), translating the words of a character to those who cannot speak the other language (V.ii 112-122, 382-385), making the first steps toward mastering another language (III.iv), speaking it with mistakes (V.ii 368, 385), and finally overcoming the difficulties posed by the problem (V.ii 41O-42O) (Kürtösi 1994).

Bilingualism in Canadian Drama

Within the corpus of Canadian drama, I am going to concentrate on plays of the past thirty years the texts of which are available in published or manuscript form, therefore, to my great regret, I have to exclude the shows done by e.g. Robert Lepage and Carbone 14, even if they also utilize code-switching - along with switching from one art into another - abundantly.

1. Code-switching as a means of characterization

Marcel Dubé and Gratien Gélinas are not considered to be bilingual Canadian playwrights, and I myself do not wish to change their general classification. Yet, while using **French** as their **base language**, each of them uses code-switching as a strategy in well-known plays of the mid 196Os. In Dubé's *Les Beaux Dimanches* four couples around their 4Os face a critical period in their personal lives. Some of the characters use English **loan words**, and one of them, Paul is frequently ready to say **phrases or short sentences** in English. (Dubé 5O, 57, 61) This habit of his helps us form an image of him as **different** from the other men in the company - sometimes he is showing off a bit, a man of the world with several ways to please women. Later on we can see that using English is more in his case than just a stylistic element for making his language more

. When it comes to political issues, his views are typical of the members of his
on, as opposed to the revolutionary young people (89).
en Gélinas in *Hier, les enfants dansaient* further elaborates two of the questions
upon by Dubé, as well: the relationship of Québecers with Ottawa, and the
fferences in the political views of the older generation and the young ones.
vo issues are intoduced in a monolingual passage (4O). At several points of the
guage is the topic of conversation, and not only a tool (112-113). **Code-**
ng proper occurs in a situation related to social hierarchy (55-57). Geographical
also has a symbolic role: the play takes place in Montréal, and in scene V of Act
has a phone call from Ottawa, because the Prime Minister would like him to
a position in the federal government. Parallel with Gravel's enthousiastic English
ation on the phone, his son André and the girl friend of the latter comment on
e news in French in a quite different manner (56). Soon Gravel joins them,
g into French and this is the point where the conflict of the whole play becomes
The choice of language and the readiness to switch underline **political**
ints and help us get a fuller picture of the characters. The rhythm of code-
g helps elevate the tension of the play: Gravel changes into English, then the
guages are side by side, finally we return to French, the base language. André,
esentative of the young generation - unwilling to obey Ottawa - speaks French,
h he can speak English, too, but is ready to code-switch only with an **ironical**
e, pretending to quote someone (137). In André's view, if his father betrays his
tongue, he cannot expect faithfullness toward himself from the other side.

e-switching used for thematic reasons
torical parables

alutin, a follower of Brecht in Toronto often uses historical analogies to answer the
n of our age, and this is what happens in *Les Canadiens* commissioned by
r Theatre of Montréal one year after the victory of the PQ in 1976. The French
the play does not mean that it is in French - on the contrary, the base language is
, with only a few words or phrases in the other language, and even these are
ted into English in the appendix of the published version (Salutin, 179-186). The
elf gives a survey of the history of the relationship between English and French in
a, and in these scenes of retrospection several dialogues are **about language**:
ficulties of understanding as well as the process of mastering a language, and
s have got an important role in characterizing people
Salutin's play it is the anglophone hockey players who have to learn some French
er to be able to communicate with the francophone members of the team. As the
Anglophone Canadian puts it, 'Nous travaillons avec des gars qui parlent anglais a
Et nous voulons parler francais a ... a ... a ... to them!' (Salutin, 127). Due to his
ties in using the proper form of the pronoun, he makes **intrasentential code-**

switching, i.e. finishes a French sentence in English. In this situation it is clear that this type of code-switching can occur not only in the case of fluent bilinguals, but also when a speaker has only a limited knowledge of a given second language. Even if there are signs of intolerance from the point of view of language, Salutin's political standpoint is that language is an important tool of co-operation, trying to speak the other language 'is a tradition. It's a legend, the unity between the French and the English on the club' (Salutin, 129).

Jean-Claude Germain in *A Canadian Play/Une plaie canadienne* also offers us a survey of different events in Canadian history, using the initiation ceremony of a freemason group as a frame. The bilingual title already suggests that the language issue is in the focus - the base language is French with several versions and phonetically transcribing different accents of French, like e.g. in the case of Queen Victoria: 'elle parle avec un fort accent britannique' (Germain, 58). The ceremony requires a very formal language with many rhetorical elements. Language has multiple roles - it can evoke the atmosphere, the style and pronunciation can contribute to the characterization of a person and the choice of language can itself convey extra meanings, since language choice has economical and political implications: 'en anglais, c'est toujours l'a-r-g-e-n-t qui parle!' (Germain, 82), 'ROLAND T'as coulé trop dbeton, Charles! On parle pus a meme langue! CHARLES Es-tu sur que cé-t-a-cause du beton, Roland? Parsque moué, chparle toujours le francais d'une industrie de chez nous! Mais toué, ca fait longtemps qutu parles l'américain dé-z-unions internationales!' (Germain, 130). Duality is present in every aspect of life, including culture. For some characters this is the most natural everyday reality, like in the case of Lord Durham: 'Ce n'est pas deux tetes ou deux cultures! C'est deux coeurs qui bettent sur le meme rythme! *il enchaine naturellement sur l'hymne folklorique canadian* ... I went to the market, mon ptit panier sous le bras/The first girl I met, was la fille d'un avocat!' (Germain, 115). In the first line, code-switching occurs at the boundary of two clauses, while in the second, the verbal element of a compound predicate is English, the noun element French, thus showing us an example of the most complex code-switching variety.

Marianne Ackerman's play of 1992 also has a bilingual title: *L'Affaire **Tartuffe** or The Garrison Officers Rehearse Moliere*. Like in the case of the previous plays we have looked at, here, too, the scenes evoking history are embedded in a frame of contemporary events - this time, it is a party in which intellectuals discuss mounting a film, when, due to a blackout we go back in time to 1774 when English officers decided to stage *Tartuffe* in French. *L'Affaire **Tartuffe*** therefore uses the method of play within a play, together with a second language (French) within the base language (English). In the opening scene, the dialogues are in both languages, the same character speaking once contemporary colloquial French, another time contemporary English, sometimes **translating** or **summarizing** for another character in the other language. Act I scene ii takes us back to the rehearsal of the play by Moliere: this is a switch to his text, i.e. 18th century French with some comments on how to understand or play it in twentieth century English or French. 'OUI, il y a des moments, voyez ... What about the part where .. Moi, je porte une jope, et tu dis ... Have you read the play, Edward?'

nan, I.ii) These switches from one language to another are accompanied with ions of language compatibility and different approaches to learning a second je 'to learn a second language is to find a new and sometimes frightening door ... oui' (Ackerman, I.iv). In the course of this process, several mistakes may occur. Ah! Excusez-moi. En tout cas, I will like to practice my English....You mind to ıy bad accent? Ah oui, c'est ca le probleme quand on essaie de parler une je értangere. L'accent écorche les oreilles.' (Ackerman, I.vii).

de-switching as the expression of immigrant experiences

cases immigrants have to master a new language in order to find their place in ntry that receives them. Even if they keep their mother tongue for family life and -group activities, it is their second language that is socially valorized: they dominant compound subtractive bilinguals. The plays written by second on immigrants Marco Micone and Pan Bouyoucas show that they are pied with the frustration and often humiliating situation of people who are not ɔ the country. Their characters face a multiple humiliation - it is a result of tion, the lack of language competence and sometimes of being a woman.

icity - as F. Loriggio puts it - cannot be defined formally, but there are recurrent which gain extra meaning in ethnic writing: **generation** 'designates sub-types, ree of distance toward the cultural past and the cultural present' (Loriggio, 57), readiness to code-switching also depends on which generation the given er belongs to. Their **roots** in the old country are frequently mentioned - 'the noration of geneology acts as a magical antidote to displacement', and this s underlined by the vocabulary, too. Each play makes a point of showing or ing the **acquisition of a foreign language**, 'language in its cognitive, nicational function' (Loriggio, 61-62). But the first important question to arise is choose the **base language** of the play. Obviously, it cannot be the language of country since it would result in total isolation from the new country environment. appens, therefore, is writing in the majority language - this, again, results in mplications. Firstly, 'in ethnic literature language has a sort of indeifiniteness l to it. Yet when the writer uses an official language he or she is accepting its (Loriggio, 65). As residents of Montréal, both Micone and Bouyoucas use as the base language of their plays, but this French really stands for the mother Italian, or rather, Calabrese and Greek, respectively - and code-switching takes relation to this already switched code. The base language is the second e of the writer in both cases, further switches involve English, i.e. their third e, and occasionally the mother tongue.

d on the analysis of three plays - *Gens du silence* and *Addolorata* by Marco and *Le Cerf Volant* by Pan Bouyoucas -we can state that all the main code- g strategies are manifested in them. The characters themselves are conscious of language as an issue. While French is the language of the street and of the workplace, in their value system English is the language that might facilitate the next generation to achieve a higher social position. 'I'faut qu'i'apprennent a gagner. C'est pour ca qu'i'faut les envoyer a l'école anglaise'. (*Gens* ... Micone, 46). The result is that - in contrast with the parents' generation who are fluent only in their mother tongue and learnt a bit of French to be able to arrange their daily things - the young generation speaks three languages. In *Les Gens du Silence* Gino says, 'Je parle le calabrese avec mes parents, le francaise avec ma soeur et ma blonde et l'anglais avec mes chums.' (Micone, 76).

Colloquial Montréal French is the base language of *Le Cerf Volant*. Georges, the representative of the second generation of immigrants often switches into English, and in a key scene acts as an **interpreter** between his parents whose French is very limited, and Céline, their Québécois tenant. But his translation is not correct: ashamed at his parents and their simple way of thinking he **mistranslates** in both directions, this way abusing his priviledged position among first generation immigrants and the local people (Bouyoucas, 66, 75-76).

The vocabulary of all these three plays contains several elements which refer to the basic experiences of immigrants, like 'ce pays', 'notre propre pays', 'chez nous', 'déraciné', 'autres', 'immigrants', 'langue', naming languages, mentioning important figures of historical or cultural heritage, e.g. 'Alexandre le Grand', 'Nana Mouskouri', 'Athen', 'Zorzes Moustaki', etc.

As a conclusion, we can state that the language pattern of plays by immigrant playwrights is a complex one: the base language is their second language, and the switches are both into the first language, and into a third language, English which has an air of authority about it. These plays manifest many of the general feature of bi or multilingual plays: speaking about language and language competence, learning or teaching another language and therefore speaking it with mistakes, trying to include, or exclude characters in the conversation, translating or mis-translating. Language therefore occupies a **central place** all through these plays.

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