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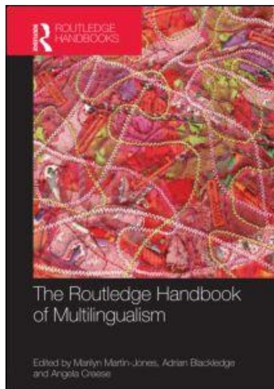

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28
Crossing

Ben Rampton and Constadina Charalambous

This chapter discusses 'language crossing', the use of a language or variety that feels anomalously 'other' for the participants in an activity, involving movement across quite sharply sensed social or ethnic boundaries, in ways that can raise questions of legitimacy. The chapter begins by linking research on crossing to a more general shift in the assumptions governing linguistics and the study of multilingualism, and it then differentiates 'crossing' from other kinds of mixed speech. Our third section identifies several major themes emerging in recent empirical work, and in the fourth, our focus shifts from sites of urban migration and popular culture to educationally sponsored crossing in a conflict-ridden context (Cyprus). Our final section points to areas for further work. Other overviews of crossing can be found in Auer (2006), Coupland (2007), Quist and Jørgensen (2009) and Rampton (2001, 2003).

Crossing and the regrounding of linguistics

For much of the twentieth century, linguistics was dominated by two assumptions: (1) language study should be centrally concerned with regularity in grammar and coherence in discourse; and (2) these properties derive from community membership – people learn to talk grammatically and coherently from extensive early experience of living in families and fairly stable local social networks. Mary Louise Pratt characterizes this approach as 'the linguistics of community', sees it in a good deal of sociolinguistics in the 1970s and 1980s, and argues that it is built on an idealization of the nation-state, obscuring its social hierarchies and divisions (1987). Instead, she calls for a 'linguistics of contact', which (1) extends the focus of language study beyond convention and cooperation to improvisation, conflict and resistance; (2) investigates the impact of media culture and not just home socialization; (3) attends to the unevenness in a person's abilities to produce, recognize and understand language; and (4) looks beyond intragroup language to the use of language *across* social boundaries. Pratt's programme for a 'linguistics of contact' has a great deal in common with Bakhtin's pragmatics (1981, 1984), as well as with post-structuralism much more generally (Rampton 2006: Part 1, 1.2).

Crossing involves white Londoners using quasi-Jamaican, or youngsters of Caribbean descent using Punjabi, or majority ethnic Germans using Turkish in peer group interaction, and as such, it is a salient interactional practice that contests preconceived ideas about

family rootedness, makes extensive use of (non-family) material from public and popular media, and involves elements of unexpected improvisation, which are highly problematic for any linguistics that takes structural regularity and tacit systematicity as its governing preoccupations. In this way, crossing provides a vivid *empirical* illustration of the relevance of Pratt's 'linguistics of contact', and it refutes any accusation that in linguistics, post-structuralism (or post-modernism) is necessarily theory-obsessed and unable to connect with language in the real world (Davies 1999: 131, 142). In crossing, people foreground the sociosymbolic connotations/indexical values of particular linguistic forms, implying that they have special relevance to some aspect of interaction in the here-and-now, and for researchers, crossing requires multilayered, case-by-case analysis to understand the significance of this, running the range of descriptive levels and concepts, from linguistic structures and conversational sequences through stances, genres and participant constellations, to personal and group relations, social networks, institutions and historical junctures (Rampton 1999a; Alim 2009: 10).

So crossing provides an empirical warrant for the philosophical reorientation associated with Pratt's 'linguistics of contact'. This need not lead to a rejection of every description of bilingualism and codeswitching influenced by the 'linguistics of community', but it does encourage a reassessment of the assumptions underlying a good deal of the research on multilingualism. Urla, for example, notes that the promotion of minority language bilingualism is often based on monolingual models of literacy, schooling and language codification – 'the nation or linguistic community is imagined in the singular and envisioned primarily as a reading and writing public' (1995: 246) – and Auer argues that

> research on code-switching … tends to start from the assumption that the languages used in a bilingual encounter are … equally accessible and available to all participants, and the participants belong to one bilingual community in which a common repertoire of resources is shared. Often, the languages of this repertoire are organized along such dimensions as we-code/they-code, minority/majority language or standard/non-standard.
> *(2006: 490)*

'This assumption', he says, 'is justified in many cases, [but] it amounts to a considerable idealization of the facts in others' (ibid.). In cases where the facts *do* fit the conventional model, it is just as important to attend to the historical and ideological processes that produced this relatively 'focused' pattern as it is with situations where speech forms and relations are more diffuse (as LePage argued from the 1970s onwards, motivated by his research on Creole in the Caribbean (e.g. LePage 1980; LePage and Tabouret-Keller 1985)). And to challenge the default status often given to the idealization of bi- and multilingualism as the shared command of two or more languages-as-bounded-systems, Jørgensen introduces the notion of polylingualism, which he uses to characterize situations of social change where people use fragments from differently valued languages that they do not speak proficiently or share with their interlocutors, where linguistic forms can be hard to link to designated source languages, where we-code/they-code (or minority/majority language) interpretations oversimplify, and where the linguistic combinations often stand out to participants as non-routine, not just to analysts (Jørgensen 2008: 169).

Crossing displays a range of characteristics typical of polylingualism, and we will elaborate on this in the section on empirical trends. But before that, it is important to differentiate crossing from other types of plurilingual practice.

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Distinguishing crossing from other language practices

The difficulties involved in classifying language mixing have long been recognized (Romaine 1988: 114). In addition, in the situations where crossing occurs, sensitivity to the form and significance of social or ethnic boundaries can be locally variable and partially open to negotiation, with the result that ambiguity is often intrinsic to boundary-crossing practices themselves – an issue we will return to at the end of the section. Nevertheless, it is worth using the terms 'crossing', 'stylization', 'codeswitching', 'codemixing' and 'multi-ethnic vernacular' to differentiate a number of important ways in which language use can vary in plurilingual situations (see also Auer 2003).

Multi-ethnic vernaculars can be defined as local versions of dominant/majority languages – English, Danish, German, etc. – that emerge over time among mixed populations in mainly working-class urban areas where there has been substantial immigration from abroad. In such settings, habitual everyday speech often carries small phonological, lexical and/or grammatical traces which reflect the influence of migrant speech and language varieties that are either more distinct in older generations, and/or are still used in intra-ethnic contexts (cf. Hewitt 1986; Rampton 1995). Linguists and outsiders (as well as locals when they step back) may be able to identify influences from, for example, Jamaican Creole in the English of young Londoners of different ethnic backgrounds, or Turkish in the Danish around Copenhagen. But participants treat these elements as routine and unremarkable in their interactions. With codemixing, the combination of words, phrases and longer sequences from different lexico-grammatical codes is more conspicuous, making it easier for linguists to classify the speech involved as more than just a subvariety of the national language, but the changes from one code to another do not reframe the ongoing interaction or impact on its unfolding (Auer 2003: 76–7). As in multi-ethnic vernacular speech, the combination of linguistic elements with objectively different histories is treated as unmarked.

In contrast, with 'codeswitching', 'stylization' and 'crossing', the move from one variety or style to another has significance in the moment-to-moment development of the talk itself. Auer (1988) suggests that in codeswitching there are two broad ways in which people make sense of the switch as it occurs. They may either interpret it as a sign of a participant's linguistic preference or proficiency, or they may see it as relevant to a shift in the discourse – for example, the move from shared to new information, from a story-preface to the story itself, from one addressee to another. Codeswitching does not necessarily require high levels of proficiency in the languages involved (Auer 2003: 84), but the speaker's use of these languages is not normally treated by recipients as noteworthy or unusual in itself, and they are able to continue the interaction as normal. This is not the case with stylization. In stylization, speakers shift into varieties or exaggerated styles that are seen as lying beyond their normal range, beyond what participants ordinarily expect of them, and this disjunction of speaker and voice draws attention to the speaker herself/himself, temporarily positioning the recipient(s) as spectator(s), and at least momentarily reframing the talk as non-routine – a joke, for example, or some kind of artful performance. Much the same occurs in crossing, *except* that in crossing the speaker's use of another voice raises wider issues of entitlement. To illustrate the difference: when the young Londoners in Rampton (2006) did stylized posh, Cockney or German in the school corridors, or when vernacular English speakers with Punjabi backgrounds stylized Indian English (Rampton 1995), they spoke in exaggerated voices and codes that they would never use in ordinary talk with friends. But nobody accused them of expropriating linguistic resources that did not belong to them, or of using language to which they had no right. In contrast, the use of Indian English could be very risky for white and black kids, as could

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white and Asian uses of Caribbean Creole. The circumambient politics of race made ethnolinguistic boundaries very sensitive. When crossing recipients encountered the gap between the voice and the speaker's ethnic background, the interactional question 'why that now?' was supplemented with a more political 'by what right?', and it often took special circumstances to circumvent this – close friendship, a game or some opposition to authority (see below).

Of course the range, subtleties and ambiguities of interactional practice exceed a classification scheme like this. So, for example, where close social ties allow a white person to make use of their friends' minority ethnic variety without any challenge, it can be hard to class this as 'crossing' rather than codemixing, switching or stylization (Sweetland 2002). Equally, there may be situations (such as advanced language shift) where the notional inheritors of a minority language use the code in ways that closely resemble the 'crossing' of their other-ethnic friends (cf. Auer 2003: 84; Hewitt 1986: 114, 153). In both these – and indeed most other – cases, it is important to study the reception of alternative forms very closely, and to probe at sociolinguistic perceptions with playback and other kinds of metalinguistic interview. Nevertheless, first, it makes intuitive sense to use 'stylization' vs 'crossing' to distinguish, for example, someone's impersonation of older members of their own group from their use of a language saliently associated with an ethnic outgroup. Second, the distinctions outlined above can be helpful in the study of change over time, as when once-stylized language forms cease to be seen as specially marked and simply become features of style (Bakhtin 1984: 190), or when uses of language that once counted as 'crossing' lose their ethnolinguistic specificity, blending into local multi-ethnic vernaculars. And third, the differences can matter to informants. Hewitt found, for example, that if 'a white youngster wishes to use a certain [Creole] word … he or she may have to make it appear 'natural' to their speech if they are to avoid the possibility of being challenged' (1986: 151). This can be done either by claiming family ties to the ethnic group with which the forms are associated (Trosset 1986: 187–8; Hewitt 1986: 165, 195), or much less dramatically, by delivering the word in such a way that it seems like a routine element in the multi-ethnic vernacular.

Equipped with understanding of the kinds of interpretive leeway required in the use of notions like crossing and stylization, we can now turn to a description of some of the main trends in the empirical descriptions of these practices.

Some empirical trends

Crossing and stylization are probably as old as speech itself. In the USA, for example, Hill dates the 'appropriation of African American cultural and linguistic materials' by whites back at least 150 years (1999: 544), whereas white appropriations from Native American languages began in the seventeenth century (2008: Chapter 6). But in spite of some exceptional studies (e.g. Basso 1979; Hill and Coombs 1982), polylingual practices were largely peripheral to the 'linguistics of community'. This changed with the post-structuralist 'linguistics of contact'. Also impelled by a sense that these were paradigmatic practices in contemporary globalization, crossing and stylization became a major focus in sociolinguistics from the mid-/late 1990s onwards, so that in one form or another, they have now been described in, *inter alia,* the UK, mainland Europe, North and South America, South Africa, Hong Kong, Japan, Australia, New Zealand (see e.g. Rampton 1999b; Auer 2007; Alim *et al.* 2009; Reyes and Lo 2009).

It is difficult to summarize this work, and general definitions of crossing that declare, for example, that it is ludic or 'expresses identification with the outgroup' are impossible to sustain when it is studied in close-up. In any given site, there are likely to be different types of crossing,

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produced and construed on different kinds of occasion by people with different commitments and positions. Crossing can be mocking, admiring, an end in itself or the first step in a longer journey, and it may strengthen boundaries, undermine them or assert their irrelevance. And of course researchers themselves may have different inclinations, seeming to others either unduly cynical or romantic in their interpretations. That said, there are at least three related themes that recur in the research: (1) race or ethnic difference in sociolinguistically differentiated class societies governed by standard language ideologies; (2) public discourses, media representations and their interplay with local practices; and (3) non-routine, 'keyed' interactional moments and activities as sites for crossing and stylization.

(1) Race/ethnic difference in class-stratified societies governed by standard language ideologies

A substantial number of European studies have focused on crossing among youth in multi-ethnic urban working-class locations where there have been substantial post-war histories of labour immigration from abroad (e.g. Auer and Dirim 2003; Doran 2004; Hewitt 1986; Jaspers 2005; Lytra 2007; Quist and Jørgensen 2009; Rampton 1995). As well as disrupting the normal relationship between speaker and voice, the crossing practices described here often depart from the forms and decorums of educated national standard languages, so there are good reasons for seeing this polylingualism as itself a 'low', 'slang', vernacular style counterposed to 'posh', whether 'posh' is mono- or multilingual (Rampton 2009b, 2010; on multilingual posh, see e.g. Heller 2007: 151; Pujolar 2007: 77). At the same time, the languages, registers and styles in a given environment generally differ in their histories, status, social purchase and symbolic connotations, and as such, they constitute a differentiated 'sociolinguistic economy' that provides very significant resources for the positioning of selves and others.

So, in a study of two classrooms in Antwerp, Belgium, Jaspers found that '[m]ultilingualism … consisted of varieties of Arabic … varieties of Berber … varieties of Turkish, and Dutch varieties. I could also regularly hear phrases in English and French, often in combination with the rap or hip hop in these boys' cassette-, CD- or minidisk-players' (Jaspers 2005: 286). In some cases, the sociolinguistic stratification among these varieties was long-standing (e.g. Dutch above Flemish, Arabic above Berber), whereas with others, it was more recent, and Jaspers focuses on the perceptions and performances of teenage boys of Moroccan descent, particularly in and around Dutch. These boys accepted that standard Dutch would be an asset in the longer term, and even though they themselves spoke a non-standard variety, they rated this much higher than the Antwerp dialect of their white peers or the learner Dutch of migrant newcomers. Their self- and other-positioning practices included derogatory impersonations of Antwerp dialect; foreigner talk addressed to Turkish boys; and parodically ultra-standard Dutch in situations where they themselves felt targeted by the potentially critical gaze of better-positioned white observers.

Jaspers describes a situation where among things, the extremist nationalist Vlaams Blok party had a strong and adverse influence on ethnolinguistic relations, but elsewhere, the local urban sociolinguistic economy may be much more open. In some German studies, crossing into Turkish and the stylization of Turkish–German are associated with racism and intergroup hostility (Hinnenkamp 1987; Depperman 2007), but in research on Hamburg neighbourhoods with a high density of people of Turkish background, Auer and Dirim (2003) reveal a much more differentiated picture. Auer and Dirim provide case studies of the Turkish of 25 young people of different ethnicities (German, Afghan, Greek, Moroccan, etc.), and they describe how the language is variously seen as valuable for getting by in localities and

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networks; as salient in youth cultural style; as congruent with a commitment to mainstream success; as linked to subcultural delinquency; as principally associated with Turkish neighbours, and/or Turkish cultural practices, and/or Turkish media and/or Turkey itself. In a similar vein, the practical use of Turkish itself extends well beyond crossing and stylization to 'include code-switching and code-mixing, almost monolingual Turkish as well as German conversations in which an occasional word of Turkish is inserted' (2003: 224).

In spite of the presence of a lot of other languages, the speech of second and third generation Turkish Germans is widely regarded as the most significant local ethnic influence on urban youth culture in Germany (Auer and Dirim 2003). Turkish has similar status in multiethnic urban youth vernaculars in Denmark, and, in the UK, Jamaican Creole often plays a lead role reinvigorating non-standard English among young people (Hewitt 1986; Harris 2006). But in the USA, race and class have been equated for far longer, and in spite of considerable ethnic diversity, African American Vernacular English (AAVE) stands out as the principal polar contrast to middle-class standard American English. In North America, there are a number of studies of mixing and crossing among people with Asian Pacific and Spanish–American backgrounds (e.g. Reyes and Lo 2009; Zentella 1997; Bailey 2000), and some of this operates more or less independently of the black–white binary, with young people engaging with ethnically specific stereotypes (Lo 1999; Reyes 2009), or negotiating a relationship with ethnic ingroup newcomers to the USA ('FOBs'/'fresh off the boat' – e.g. Talmy 2009). But Bucholtz proposes that for Asian Americans, the 'identity project is complicated by the need to navigate the hegemonic US model of race as a dichotomy between blackness and whiteness' (2009: 21), and she illustrates this with a study of how two Laotian American girls display contrasting orientations to school through different uses of AAVE. Elsewhere, the hegemonic black–white binary is invoked when white youth appropriate AAVE to differentiate themselves from their families (Cutler 1999), or when black students stylize white to parody their (black) teacher (Clark 2003), and it also infiltrates the efforts of Dominican American adolescents to differentiate themselves from immigrant peers (Bailey 2007).

So far, we have described crossing and stylization invoking different codes in plurilingual landscapes that are dominated by monoglot standard languages and where, in some cases, there is also a very strong influence from particular non-standard ethnic varieties conspicuously counterposed to this. Of course, public discourses and mediated popular culture also play a crucial part in all this, introducing dynamics of their own.

(2) Public discourses, mediated popular culture and their interplay with local practices

The institutions, policies and official discourses in the nation-state have a major influence on the evaluation and use of different language varieties, promoting the national standard, facilitating or discouraging schooled bilingualism, shaping the image of second language learning. So do the representations of migrant neighbourhoods and ethnic populations that circulate through the mainstream press and media. Analyses of the impact of these discourses focus on, among other things the manner and extent to which commercial representations of ethnic speech entail mocking derogation (Hill 1995; Lippi-Green 1997; Chun 2009); the way in which groups with no links to migrant or minority neighbourhoods learn to cross and stylize from the screen and other sources (Androutsopoulos 2001; Cutler 1999); how crossing and stylization variously align or distance speakers from dominant representations (e.g. Rampton 1995: Chapter 3; Reyes and Lo 2009; Jaspers 2005); and how opposition to state representatives, such as teachers, can provide specially licensed sites for crossing (e.g. Quist and Jørgensen 2009: 376–7).

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Directly counterposed to educated mainstream standards, mediated musical cultures have had a massive influence on crossing and stylization, and in recent years, AAVE has gained global currency through hip-hop (e.g. in Brazil, Greece, Germany, Tanzania, Nigeria, Hong Kong and Japan – see Alim *et al.* 2009). As well as displaying affiliation to a larger transnational community, these appropriations are also sometimes redirected towards local political struggles, articulating opposition to, for example, racialized exclusion in Brazil (Roth-Gordon 2009) or the unspoken idealization of white Frenchness in Montreal (Sarkar 2009: 153; see also Urla 1995), although the engagement can also be lighter, more aesthetics and fashion than politics (Maher 2005). Other kinds of media product that circulate through diasporic networks can also influence stylization and crossing – Shankar shows how Hindi films provide Californian youngsters with resources they transpose to real interactions (2009: 328), and Auer (2003: 85–90) shows a Turkish and a Jordanian girl stylizing a Turkish TV and video genre. At the same time, certain youngsters may be deterred by the higher popular cultural profile of a given language – whereas white and black boys in Rampton (1995: Chapter 10) made ample use of Punjabi in playground interaction, they generally stepped back in the context of *bhangra* music, and instead it was the white girls who were enthusiastic.

More work is still needed on the local interactional processes involved in the appropriation and assessment of widely circulating popular cultural materials (Alim 2009: 17; Rampton 2006: Chapter 3), but in a wide-ranging review of 'Bilingualism in the mass media and on the Internet', Androutsopoulos (2007) suggests that there is a prominent and enduring place for polylingualism, crossing and stylization in media communication.

Although he says it 'thrives at the "periphery" rather than the [monoglot] "core"' (2007: 226), Androutsopoulos argues that 'linguistic diversity is gaining an unprecedented visibility in the mediascapes of the late twentieth and early twenty first century' (2007: 207), and he identifies at least three processes we can call polylingual. First, diaspora media often have to reckon with the fact that much of their audience has limited competence in the language of the homeland, and so producers position 'tiny amounts of [the] language … at the margins of text and talk units … thereby … exploit[ing] the symbolic, rather than the referential, function … evok[ing] social identities and relationships associated with the minimally used language' (2007: 214). Second, starting in advertising but extending now beyond nation-wide media to niche, commercial and non-profit media for various contemporary youth-cultural communities and audiences (2007: 223–4), Androutsopoulos notes the widespread stylization of non-national language forms: '[w]hen media makers devise an advertisement, plan a lifestyle magazine or set up a website, they may select linguistic codes (a second language, a mixed code) just for specific portions of their product, based on anticipations of their aesthetic value, their indexical or symbolic force, and, ultimately, their effects on the audience' (2007: 215; see e.g. Bell 1999). Third, as producers design ethnically marked materials to carry beyond local audiences to wider publics, a sense of crossing – in reception if not production – may be built into the audiences' experience. Androutsopoulos gives the example of Algerian *rai* music lyrics:

> early *rai* recordings capitalize on an 'insertion style' with frequent incorporation of French nouns and clauses in an Arabic matrix, which bears close resemblance to code mixing in urban Algerian communities. But in later production the languages are more separated, their distribution bearing a 'more systematic relationship to the structure of the song' (Bentahila and Davies 2002: 202). Rather than reflecting societal language change, this shift from mixing to a generic separation of languages is motivated by a shift in target audiences: As *rai* music became more popular in France, its artists and producers turn to

> a more prominent use of French for key phrases, refrains and titles in order to increase its chances of exposure to a French audience.
>
> *(2007: 214; see also Woolard 1988)*

In addition, of course

> [i]n the era of digital technologies, the sampling and recontextualisation of media content is a basic practice in popular media culture: rap artists sample foreign voices in their song; entertainment shows feature snatches of other-language broadcasts for humour; internet users engage in linguistic *bricolage* on their homepages.
>
> *(2007: 208)*

We said earlier that crossing and stylization were generally treated as noteworthy or unusual, and that recipients needed to engage in extra inferential work to answer ever-pressing interactional questions like 'why that now?' and 'what next?'. This is quite easy to see in mediated contexts like the ones discussed above, where crossing and stylization are often specially framed as artful performance, with speakers and producers assuming 'responsibility for a display of communicative competence', designing language for 'enhancement of [the] experience' of their audience (Bauman [1975]2001: 178). But these practices are also framed as non-routine in more everyday environments.

(3) Crossing and stylization in 'keyed' interactional moments and activities

Interactional analysis reveals that crossing and stylization often occurs in moments and activities when the ordinary commonsense world is problematized or partially suspended (Rampton 1995, 1999a). Artful performance – stories, songs, jokes, etc. – is one type of environment where the special framing of the activity licenses the use of styles and forms that would otherwise seem unaccountable, and games, where there is an agreed relaxation of routine interaction's rules and constraints (Rampton 1995: Chapters 6.7, 7.2), are another. Interpersonal verbal rituals are a third. These occur at moments of heightened interactional uncertainty – on meeting new people, at the start of an encounter, close to a breach of etiquette, etc. – and the uncertainty on hand temporarily jeopardizes the reassuring, orderly flow of interaction, intensifying the need to show respect for social relations to compensate. To do this, people generally increase the symbolic dimensions of their conduct (Goffman 1967, 1971, 1981: 20–1), shifting briefly away from the (appropriately modulated) production of propositional utterances geared to truth and falsity. Instead, they turn up the ritual aspects through a range of inherited symbolic formulae – farewell and greeting routines, apologies, thanks, expletives, expressions of sympathy, disapproval, dismay or surprise – and by invoking well-established material authored by tradition, they display an orientation to wider social collectivities capable of overriding the temporary disturbance immediately on hand. Very often, these ritual actions are convergent, providing the participants with some common ground on which to (re)establish synchronized, affiliative action, affirming dominant social orders, drawing on shared cultural inheritance, and one way of doing this is to codeswitch into a shared language that is either more intimate or more elevated. But these showcased moments for the symbolic display of social allegiance can also be used more divergently, and they are a prime site for all sorts of creativity – one often hears people putting on 'funny voices' at junctures like these.

In Goffman's terms, artful performance, games and verbal rituals in which participants amplify their non-normality by the use of unexpected voices, are all examples of 'keying' – interaction

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framed in a way that shows it is somehow special and not to be taken 'straight' or treated naively (1974: Chapter 3). Goffman identifies several very basic keys, and some of these fit with the activities identified immediately above – artful performance falls into his category 'make-believe', games fit with his 'contests' and interpersonal verbal rituals can be classed as one of his 'ceremonials'. The centrality of 'keying' to crossing and stylization has two general implications.

First, crossing's occurrence in interactional moments that are specially marked as unusual and non-routine carries the implication that the speaker is not really claiming unqualified open access to the identity associated with the language they are crossing into – their speech does not finally imply that he or she can move unproblematically in and out of their associates' heritage language in any new kind of open bicultural codeswitching. At the same time, however, the intensity of keying can vary a great deal, from events that are very conspicuously staged to acts in which there is merely the lightest suggestion that things are not quite what they seem. This range is important for understanding how, over time, routine vernacular practice can gradually come to absorb forms that were once clearly marked as 'other' (see 'Distinguishing crossing from other language practices', above). Whereas games and artful performance provide rather well-demarcated frames for often quite spectacular crossing and stylization, interpersonal verbal rituals are more closely woven into everyday activity, and can provide a safer and more ordinary environment in which a speaker can try to slip into their speech an other-ethnic form as if it was their own (Rampton 2009a).

So far, most of this overview of recent work on crossing and stylization has focused on young people and the kinds of urban polylingualism associated with migration, globalization and mediated popular cultures. But these are far from being the only scenes for language crossing, and in the next section, we turn to a post-conflict environment with recent memories of war, where there is some official institutional support for crossing, where adults engage in it as much as youth, where crossing is challenged by ingroup rather than the outgroup members and where it is keyed in hitherto undocumented ways.

Teaching and learning Turkish in Greek–Cypriot classes in Cyprus – a case study

In Cyprus, the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities have a long history of violent conflict. Since the 1974 war, Cyprus has been de facto divided into north and south, with substantial displacement in both populations, and until 2003 communication between the two parts was almost impossible.

Historically, education has been very closely linked with the formation and 'imagining' of these two Cypriot communities, seeing them as parts of two different and already rival 'Motherlands' – Greece and Turkey. Even after the establishment of the Cyprus Republic (1960), education was 'strictly communal' and monolingual (Karyolemou 2003), and in both communities, schools were responsible for creating what Bryant (2004) calls 'true Greeks' or 'true Turks'. Most educational researchers agree that Greek-Cypriot education has been dominated by Hellenocentric discourses, which emphasize 'Greekness' and construct the 'Turks' as the perennial enemy and 'primary Other' (cf. Spyrou 2006), and within this context, speaking the language of the opposite community seemed not only undesirable but also a betrayal of one's own nation and ethnic group (Ozerk 2001). Up until 2003, although it was an official language of the Cyprus Republic, the Turkish language had never existed in any Greek-Cypriot formal school curricula.

In April 2003, however, the Turkish language was introduced in Greek-Cypriot formal education as part of a package of measures 'of support to the Turkish-Cypriots' and 'for

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building trust'. At the same time, the Cypriot government set up free Greek and Turkish afternoon language-classes for Turkish-Cypriot and Greek-Cypriot adults, respectively, and this coincided with the Turkish-Cypriot authorities' partial lifting of the restrictions of movement across the buffer zone. Interviewing Greek-Cypriot Ministry of Education Officials, C. Charalambous (2009) found a lack of emphasis on issues of linguistic achievement and proficiency, and instead, Turkish-language classes were seen as an 'offer' of tangible recognition for Turkish-Cypriots, as a token of 'goodwill' and as a first step towards the two communities' rapprochement. Rather than seeking to establish functional bilingualism, the language classes were designed as a symbolic reconciliatory gesture. As such, set within the historical hostility between these two communities and the education system's traditionally very strong ethnolinguistic boundary maintenance, there are grounds for seeing these classes as a type of institutionally sponsored crossing. Charalambous studied the effects of this both in the adult afternoon classes and in secondary schools (ibid.).

The rapprochement rhetoric was certainly congruent with what Charalambous observed in the Turkish-language classes for adults. All the adult learners appeared to be at least sympathetic towards the other community. Some stated that it was their ideological opposition to nationalism and their desire to demonstrate this to their Turkish-Cypriot compatriots that had prompted them to learn the language, whereas there were also others whose initial motivation was, for example, promotion at work, where Turkish language counted as an extra qualification. But all of these adults had sustained contacts with Turkish-Cypriots and the structure of the lessons took this for granted – there were dialogues based on experiences of real encounters, students posed specific questions on how to say certain things that they wanted, etc. In addition, the teacher organized informal visits to the northern part of Cyprus and students contributed to the organization of these events by suggesting specific people or organizations to visit (e.g. the editor of a Turkish-Cypriot newspaper with whom someone in the class was acquainted). Finally, as Greek and Turkish language learning was organized at the same governmental institution, students had the opportunity to meet people from the other community in the corridors before or after lessons, and on several occasions, if Turkish-Cypriot students had arrived early, they would go and sit in a Turkish-language teaching class and vice versa.

So teachers and students in the adult classes sought opportunities for intercommunal communication, and crossing was a standard everyday practice on which teachers also drew for language teaching purposes. For example, in brief corridor encounters outside class, learners from both communities would greet one another in the opposite language even if they did not know each other. Those who had formed friendships with learners from the opposite community would try to produce the other language as much as possible when chatting before or after class with their friends and acquaintances, and rather than responding in the language in which they had been addressed, they would cross back into their interlocutor's first language, filling in the gaps in English. English would form the bulk of the talk for people who were not advanced in the other language, but the opening and closing of the encounters were always in the other language, and in interviews, both Greek- and Turkish-language learners explained this by saying that just a couple of words in the other language were enough to 'break the ice'. The two teachers in the more advanced-level classes took advantage of these practices, and at the end of one term, they joined the Greek and Turkish language classes together to 'roleplay' a famous market in Cyprus back in the 1960s, before the intercommunal troubles. Students acted as retailers, customers, strollers and even when the task was for everyone to speak their own language, they did not stick to it, and instead, they constantly alternated between Greek and Turkish.

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Activities like these were greatly enjoyed, but crossing into Turkish (or Greek for Turkish-Cypriots) also involved a very strong sense of ethnolinguistic boundary transgression, accompanied by a feeling of risk. However, it was not the owners of the language who presented any threat, and in and around the lessons, their crossing was partly sheltered by the institutional arrangements. Instead, learners faced criticism and disapproval from members of their own ethnic group, and some reported having to hide their Turkish books at home because their partners could not stand seeing anything in the Turkish language.

Although some learners were very keen and sometimes anxious to achieve high levels of proficiency either for personal or for what they called 'ideological reasons', proficiency and the communicative dimensions of other language learning seemed secondary to 'breaking the ice', and overall, the ritual dimension of other language learning was very pronounced. Ritual, suggests Rampton,

> can be defined as formulaic conduct that displays an orientation to issues of respect for social order and that emerges from some sense of the (actual or potential) problematicity of social relations. Typically, ritual gives a more prominent role to symbols than to propositional expression, it elicits a marked emotional response, it creates an increased feeling of collectivity between at least some of the participants and it is itself subject to comment and sanctions (2005: 82). Ritual is a form of action that is typically (though not invariably) intended to help people get past such difficulties and on with normal life, albeit often in a new state.
>
> *(2006: 174)*

A history of conflict and some still very powerful nationalist discourses have made Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot relations potentially very problematic, but the ritual learning and use of the other's language sought to generate and/or re-establish new solidarities, displaying the participants' commitment to reconciliation and their acceptance of the 'Others'. So in the adult classes, crossing seemed to be an *enacted* (rather than simply a stated) denial of nationalism and rigid ethnic boundaries.

The situation in the secondary school language lessons was very different. As already mentioned, formal Greek-Cypriot education constructs a particularly hostile image of the Turks, in textbooks, literature and history lessons, as well as through national celebrations (cf. Christou 2007; Papadakis 2008; P. Charalambous 2009; Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis 2000). A recent attempt by the Minister of Education to introduce 'reconciliation' as an educational goal met with immense resistance from teachers, parents and media (see Zembylas *et al*. 2011), and there is currently a great deal of controversy in Greek-Cypriot society about changing history textbooks. Although the introduction of the Turkish language into the Greek-Cypriot Modern Foreign Languages curriculum had reconciliatory intentions, it came into conflict with formal schooling's strong traditional Hellenocentrism, and even though Turkish-language classes were an official part of the curriculum, both the teacher and the students faced criticism from their associates. 'What world do you live in? They have occupied half of our country and you are teaching their language?' was one example of the type of reaction that Mr A., the Turkish-language teacher, had to face when he told his staffroom colleagues what he taught and all students reported that their peers called them 'traitors' for learning Turkish.

Mr A.'s strategy for dealing with this was radically different from the processes encountered in the adult classes. Throughout his regular Turkish-language lessons, he consistently tried to erase any political or ideological resonance that the Turkish language could have, and to suppress the emblematic character of Turkish-language learning as an 'offer' to the Turkish-Cypriots.

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In the 32 hours during which Charalambous observed his classes, Mr A. constantly avoided talking or even naming the Turks and Turkish-Cypriots – in all, he used these labels only four times. Instead, he focused exclusively on grammar and vocabulary. He explicitly avoided any 'political' discussions in the classroom, and even when he dedicated two sessions to 'teaching culture', he still managed to re-direct the focus of his lesson away from the Turks or Turkish-Cypriots. In the first, he taught a Turkish adaptation of a *Greek* song, limiting the 'Turkish-ness' of the lesson's content to just the language, and in the second session, he talked about Muslims, constructing an ambivalent category from which he excluded the Turks ('children (.) all the Turks are Muslims (.) almost … But when we say Muslims we do not mean the Turks we mean *all* the *Muslims* who are almost all the Arabic-the … Arabian countries').

In the sensitive political boundary situations where crossing emerges, one can often find quite conspicuous patterns of avoidance, in which individuals and groups take care *not* to use the other language in particular contexts, with particular others (cf. Hewitt 1986; Rampton 1995; also Kamwangamalu 2001 on post-apartheid South Africa). These secondary school language lessons present an interesting variation on this. The teacher and the students did use the Turkish language, but they persistently tried to cut out the social indexicality/cultural associations that the Turkish language carries in Greek-Cypriot society. Returning to Goffman, this practice fits with a fourth very basic type of 'keying' – 'technical redoings' (1974: 58ff). 'Technical redoings' refer to activities that are 'performed out of their usual context, for utilitarian purposes openly different from those of the original performance, the understanding being that the original outcome of the activity will not occur' (1974: 59). Goffman also points out 'these run-throughs are an important part of modern life' – demonstrations, exhibitions and rehearsals are typical examples – and their purpose is usually 'to give the neophyte experience in performing under conditions in which (it is felt) no actual engagement with the world is allowed' (ibid.). In the Greek-Cypriot classroom, the indexical associations of the Turkish language appeared to be so powerful that Mr A. had little room to renegotiate or redefine them, and because of this, the only strategy he could find was to extract the language from its original setting, and to reconstruct Turkish as a neutral and ideology-free linguistic system. Crossing into Turkish in these classrooms seemed so politically transgressive that it was only possible when keyed as a 'technical redoing'.

Areas for further work

(1) Crossing is very much a linguistic anthropological/ethnographic topic, and it provides a window on major social and cultural changes that starts very close to lived experience and practical activity. Both in social sciences and public institutions, there is growing recognition that traditional social and ethnic classification can no longer account for the splits and alignments emerging in contemporary urban environments (Vertovec 2007; Platt 2008), and the significance of informal processes, local 'conviviality' and low-key 'civility' is increasingly stressed (Gilroy 2006; Vertovec 2007). These informal processes can be hard to access with the interview and survey tools that dominate British social sciences (Savage and Burrows 2007), but they are central in research on polylingualism, and in future work, it is essential to make the kinds of linguistic ethnographic analysis associated with the study of crossing and stylization more widely available to social research, increasing its ability to deal with practices that are indirect, implicit, grounded in activity and background understanding, weakening its dependence for evidence on explicit claims and propositions. So in the first instance, it is important to continue to treat crossing as a point of entry into the understanding of social process rather than as an

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autonomous topic in its own right. That said, we can identify a number of areas for further development.

(2) In the metropolitan contexts that have so far featured most centrally in the research on crossing and stylization, there are several directions worth pursuing. First, it is important to extend the focus well beyond ethnicity and youth. Of course, even though the linguistic forms used in crossing may be identified first and foremost with a particular ethnic group, the personae or images that they are used to project are often multidimensional, displaying classed, gendered, generational and local characteristics as well, and in addition, the political and cultural issues thematized in crossing acts may also be treated by analysts more as matters of gender or class (e.g. Bucholtz 1999a; Rampton 2009b). Nevertheless, crossing and stylization with other kinds of voice deserve more attention (for gender, see e.g. Hall 1995; Barrett 1997; Georgakopoulou 2007; for class (and gender), Bucholtz 1999b; Rampton 2006), and with so much research focusing on working-class schools, there is an urgent need for studies of crossing and stylization in independent and elite institutions. Following Hewitt 1986, it is quite often assumed that crossing declines post-adolescence, but this needs empirical investigation, particularly in countries like the UK, where, for example, 48 per cent of Caribbean men in couples and 34 per cent of Caribbean women live in interethnic partnerships (Platt 2008: 7), or even in the USA, where 30 per cent of married US-born Asians and Latinos have an other-ethnic spouse, and one-tenth of young blacks marry someone of a different racial background (Lee and Bean 2004: 228). In addition, in as much new work as possible, it is important to examine the inter-relationship between the different registers and varieties used in crossing and stylization, as much of their ideological meaning derives from the contrasts and complementarities between them (Irvine 2001; Rampton 2010).

(3) As a concept, crossing is tightly linked to boundaries and the renegotiation of traditional interethnic relations, and as such, it may be particularly useful in peace education projects researching contexts of intractable conflict. We have discussed 'Other-language' teaching and learning in Cyprus as a reconciliatory gesture, and similar classes have been established in Israel, teaching Hebrew to Arabs and Arabic to Jewish students (see e.g. Bekerman 2004; Bekerman and Horenczyk 2004; Bekerman and Shhadi 2003). These are important contexts for studying crossing as an institutionally sponsored practice designed to change hostile intergroup relations (Charalambous and Rampton forthcoming).

(4) Lastly, there is a need for detailed longitudinal studies of how language forms become variously routinized or denaturalized, occurring at one time/place only in crossing and stylization, forming part of habitual speech at another. This is a significant issue for variationist studies of long-term language change (see e.g. Johnstone and Andrus 2006), and for research on the language development of individuals.

Related topics

Codeswitching; heteroglossia; discourses about linguistic diversity; multilingualism and the media; multilingualism and popular culture; linguistic diversity and education.

Further reading

Alim, S., Ibrahim, A. and Pennycook, A. (eds) (2009) *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities and the Politics of Language*, London: Routledge.

(An important collection on hip-hop language practices.)

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