

**Code Switching in Tomson Highway's *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing***

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**Abstract**

Code Switching is one of the prominent strategies of language appropriation. Tomson Highway's play *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* employs this strategy very effectively to appeal to his native audience and the global audience. This linguistic practice distinguishes him as an adept in employing this strategy of appropriation. He also attempts to revive native culture and its language which has been forcefully erased by the colonial power. Highway's first hand experiences with the native life in the reserve and his urge to revive the once forgotten ways of life and culture are visible in this play. This paper tries to analyse how Highway uses the technique of code switching in his play to write back against the empire through their own language.

**Keywords:** bilingual speakers, code switching, embedded language, matrix language

For a long time, code switching has been rarely noticed by linguists writing about language contact. Over the last forty years, there has been an explosion of interest in code switching. Code switching has continued to be more or less invisible in research on bilingualism up until the work of Gumperz and his associates in the

1960s. Research in this field is complicated by the multi-layered significance of code switching. Each new case which is documented can be looked at from numerous standpoints.

All speakers use selective language varieties in their linguistic range, as directed by their purposes and by the needs of the speech members and the conversational background. Even monolinguals are capable of switching between the linguistic registers and the dialects. There are parallels that can be drawn between monolingual and bilingual language use. Monolingual style switch behaviour can be termed as “style shifting” (Bullock 2). In the case of bilinguals, they have access to not only different registers and dialects of one language, but of two distinct languages. In style shifting, monolinguals can keep their varieties of styles apart. But it is not common for bilinguals to segregate their languages. Given the appropriate circumstances, many bilinguals will exploit this ability and alternate between languages in an unchanged setting, often within the same utterance. This is the phenomenon which is understood as code switching.

In the Introduction to the book entitled *Multidisciplinary Approaches to Code Switching*, Isurin and others reflect on code switching in bilingual context as,

Bilingual speakers are often involved in what looks like an effortless switch between the two languages that they speak. The switch can happen within the same conversational turn or when there is a shift to a different register brought about by changes in setting, interlocutor, conversational goals and other social factors. (ix)

Of all the numerous forms of bilingual linguistic behaviours, code switching is the most obvious and immediate statement of a speaker’s bilingualism. The most

intriguing factor of code switching is that it provides direct insights into the ability of bilinguals to manage and to organise different linguistic systems even while alternating between them. This ability arises from a convergence of cognitive, linguistic, and social factors. It is a phenomenon that occurs both consciously and unconsciously in the speech articulation of bilinguals.

Code switching is one of the inevitable consequences of bilingualism, as anyone who speaks more than one language chooses between them for various reasons. It is potentially the most creative aspect of bilingual speech. It is a change or alternation from one language or language variety to another one. One single speaker uses different varieties in his speech in the process of code switching. Switching is normally done for the duration of a unit discourse. A bilingual speaker can switch between mixed codes as he does between unmixed languages. Switching is found only in a balanced and stable bilingual speaker. Code switching is, thus, seen as a purposeful activity, that is, there are functions and intentions assigned to this behaviour.

Code switching is actualized as a process where the speaker moves from one code to another and back, more or less rapidly, in course of a single utterance. It is a verbal strategy used by speakers in much the same way as creative artists switch styles and levels that is, from sublime to the mundane or the serious to the comic or the vice versa or the ways in which monolinguals make selections from among vocabulary items. Each type of coding or code switching is appropriate to the topical and situational features that gives rise to it.

The majority of the studies of code switching, tend to focus on naturally occurring code switched utterances in interpersonal interaction. A few studies have

analysed the deliberate use of code switching technique as an aspect of literary or bilingual creativity in the world of English literature. In the context of appropriation of language in postcolonial texts, code switching is an important strategy.

The literary code switching, decolonizes the postcolonial texts from hegemonic discourses. The construction of meaning through code switching is strategic and it is a means by which speakers and postcolonial writers position themselves as agents of resistance. Code switching can be seen as a subversive act. It is a means for oppressed people to utilize the language of the oppressor, in addition to their own indigenous languages, in order to undermine colonial and neocolonial authority.

When a bilingual speaker is confronted with a monolingual, colonial speaker, there is a dual set of linguistic and cultural epistemologies that is unknown to a sole monolingual speaker. Through sociolinguistic acquisition, the bilingual speaker has the knowledge of both the oppressed and oppressive languages and dialects. As political and economic power concretely mark out between the colonizer and colonized, other aspects of this asymmetrical relationship are much more ambiguous and difficult to identify. Cross cultural language exchanges, represent these more ambiguous, potentially resistant moments. Instances of code switching within a literary text are sites of decolonization and destabilization of monolingual and hegemonic discourses. Code switching is influenced by the social conditions discussed above and there are various other reasons like deliberate second language learning and the like.

One of the principal challenges in code switching research is to identify the social circumstance which affect the strategy of code switching. There is also a great

deal of research which emphasizes the linguistic and typological factors which shape code switching. It is often considered that the code switching patterns found in any given context represent a choice among grammatical options, which are themselves defined by the contributing languages.

Code switching is an everyday reality in every place where more than one languages are spoken in everyday communications. Chloros states, “Sociolinguists have treated CS [code switching] mainly as a spoken genre [...]” (20). But code switching is also found in written texts throughout various historical periods. Many scholars have studied extensively about the patterns of code switching and the reasons for code switching. In fulfilling the relational and referential functions, code switching is seen as the medium to convey both social and linguistic meanings. The situations in which code switching may occur are to appeal to the literate, to appeal to the illiterate, to convey precise meaning, to ease communication, that is, utilizing the shortest and the easiest route, to negotiate with greater authority, to capture attention, that is stylistic, emphatic, emotional, to emphasize a point, to communicate more effectively, to identify with a particular group, to close the status gap and to establish goodwill and support.

There are different communicative functions of code switching. They are, lack of facility, lack of register, mood of the speaker, to emphasize a point, habitual experience, semantic significance, to show identity with a group, to address a different audience, pragmatic reasons and to attract attention. Susan Gal says, “codeswitching is a conversational strategy used to establish, cross or destroy group boundaries; to create, evoke or change interpersonal relations with their rights and obligations” (qtd. in Wardhaugh 101). In addition to the functions of code switching one must particularly focus on the types of it for in depth understanding. There are

three types of code switching. They are, situational switching, metaphorical switching and conversational switching. Concentrating on the practical part of code switching, this paper focuses on the last type, which is conversational code switching.

Situational code switching is the tendency in a speech community to use different languages or language varieties in different social situations, or to switch varieties in order to mark a change in situation. Situational code switching occurs when distinct varieties are associated with changes in converser, context, or theme, and is thus a direct consequence of a diglossic distribution of the varieties. The language choice changes because of external factors such as change in the participants during the speech act. In situational code switching, people may not be aware that the code switch has occurred. The motivation for switching itself is an important factor. In situational code switching, the motivation does not appear to be conscious. A typical example can be how an individual uses one language at work and another language at home.

While explaining about metaphorical code switching, Wardhaugh writes, “When a change of topic requires a change in the language used we have metaphorical code-switching” (104). Li Wei’s describes it as, “Metaphorical switching, on the other hand, referred to changes in the speaker’s language choice when the situation remained the same. For the speaker to code-switch in this case was thought to convey special communicative intent” (156). Metaphorical code switching is often witnessed among immigrants who tend to use various languages in order to comprehend the country’s culture. Situational and metaphorical code switching have been first described by famous linguists, John J. Gumperz and Jan-Petter Blom.

What makes code switching more interesting is that a speaker may switch codes within a single utterance, which can be considered as the third type code switching which is the conversational code switching. Gumperz suggests the term “conversational code switching” in order to distinguish it from the situational code switching. He defines it as, “Conversational code switching can be defined as the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems” (59). In conversational code switching, there is no such change in the situation nor is there any change in the topic which might lead to metaphorical code switching. Instead, one gets the impression that the aim of the conversational code switching is only to produce instances of the two varieties of language in roughly equal proportion. This balance may be achieved by expressing a sentence in one variety and the next in the other or by using the two varieties in different parts of a single sentence. The *Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics* explains conversational code switching as,

Conversational code-switching serves to create various contexts (contextualization). For example, ‘informality’ in a formal situation, the different types of relationships between individual participants in a conversation, irony vs seriousness, and background information vs the ‘actual’ message can all be contextualized by means of code-switching. (Bussmann 194)

Based on the classification of code switching, this paper narrows down the analysis to the three major aspects of conversational code switching which are, inter sentential, intra sentential and tag switching. There are specialized areas to be explored in this field such as Azuma’s “stand-alone principle” and unconscious code switching. The structural and interactional analyses of conversational code switching

are discussed in detail with reference to the play, *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*.

Chloros lists out “conversational functions” (qtd.in Chloros 67) of code switching as suggested by Gumperz. Firstly, code switching occurs in quotations direct or reported speech. Secondly, it is governed by addressee specification – a different code for different addressee. The third function is as a mark of interjection or sentence filler. Next is for reiteration, meaning to repeat an expression in another code either to clarify or emphasise a message. Code switching also functions to qualify a message. These functions are evident in the code switches found in the play, *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*.

Code switching differs in the location of the point at which the language switch occurs. The main distinction is usually seen between inter - sentential and intra - sentential switching. Inter - sentential switching consists of language switches at phrasal, sentence, or discourse boundaries. In the play, *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* Spooky Lacroix one of the characters who have assimilated himself with the western ways of life, attempts to spread the ideas of Christian doctrines. In one such context he says,

**SPOOKY. *Singing.*** Everybody oughta know. Everybody oughta

know. Who Jesus is. ***Speaking.*** This is it. This is the end. Igwani eeweeponaskeewuk. (“The end of the world is at hand.”) Says right here in the book. Very, very, very important to read the book [...] (Highway 36)

In the above situation, there is an inter - sentential code switching from English to Cree, one of the native Canadian languages. The speaker is obviously using English



as a matrix language but tends to shift to Cree when he mentions a quotation from The Bible.

A subsequent instance of inter - sentential code switching is noticed in a conversation between Zachary and Simon:

**ZACHARY.** I was ... standing on the road down by Andy

Manigitogan's place when this car came by and woof! My pants ripped. Ripped right down the middle. And my shorts, well, they just ... took off. How do you like that, eh?

**SIMON.** Nope. I don't like it. Nee, awus. Kigithaskin. ("You're lying to me.") (41)

Here, code switching takes place in an inter - sentential manner. The first half of Simon's dialogue is in English and the second half in Cree.

The next instance of inter - sentential code switching occurs in the conversation between Dickie Bird and Nanabush / Black Lady:

**DICKIE BIRD.** Mawch eemithoosit awa aymeewatik keetnanow

kichi, eetweet Simon Starblanket. ("Simon Starblanket says that this cross is not right for us.") *He grabs the crucifix from the night-table and spits on it.*

**NANABUSH/BLACK LADY.** *Grabbing the crucifix from Dickie*

*Bird, she attempts to spank him but Dickie Bird evades her.*

Dickie Bird! Kipasta-oon! ("You're committing a mortal sin!") Say ten Hail Marys and two Our Fathers. (96)

In the above mentioned context, Dickie Bird uses Cree entirely in all his speech activities, whereas Nanabush / Black Lady uses English and switches to Cree intermittently. Here, code switch occurs on account of the importance given to semantic significance of the utterance. Black Lady, though not a staunch follower of Christian principles, is afraid to trespass the same. She is taken aback by the strong disapproval of Christianity by her son Dickie Bird. She warns her son not to speak against Christian doctrines as it is a mortal sin. It is at this moment, she switches code in order to convey the precise meaning. It signifies the gravity of the semantic content of the utterance. Any utterance that is loaded with emotions is automatically said in the speaker's first language.

Code switching in this context gives the exact significance of Black Lady's warning tone. Lexical and language choice convey meaning during code switching. Listeners interpret code switching as an indicator of the speaker's attitude, or communicative intents and emotions as it is a tool for conveying appropriate linguistic and social information. A range of speech acts like reprimands, directives, requests, and warnings are conveyed by using different intricate strategies to show the semantic significance in certain specific situations. Code switching helps to achieve this in the case of bilingual speakers.

The next instance of inter - sentential code switching is seen at the crucial moment of Simon's death. Zachary is frantically trying to bring Simon back to his senses, after he accidentally shot himself.

**ZACHARY:** Simon! Simon! Oh, lordy, lordy, lordy ... Are you

alright? Are you okay? Simon. Simon. Talk to me. Goodness sakes, talk to me Simon. Ayumi-in! (“Talk to me!”). (Highway 115 – 116)

In this context, Zachary asks Simon to talk back and respond. He uses English twice initially and then switches to Cree for one last desperate attempt. Here, Zachary repeats the message and shifts from English code to Cree code in order to emphasise the message. According to Gumperz, one of the reasons for code switching is reiteration. The repetition of the same point in another language indicates that the speaker is stressing or adding more emphasis on the topic of discussion. The conversation between Zachary and Simon reveals a tone of desperation in Zachary. Here, code switching occurs due to reiteration.

When code switch takes place in middle of a sentence, with no interruptions, hesitations or pauses indicating a shift then it is intra - sentential code switching. The speaker is usually unaware of the shift. Different types of switch occur within the clause level including within the word level. Some researchers term it as code mixing as, “Muysken prefers the term code-mixing (CM) to the commoner CS [code switching] [...]” (qtd. in Chloros 104). It involves the embedding or mixing of various linguistic units, that is morphemes, words, phrases and clauses from two distinct grammatical systems or sub-systems within the same sentence. Aravind Joshi states, “... it is only at the intrasentential level that we are able to observe with some certainty the interaction between two grammatical systems” (190). With the intra - sentential code switching, grammatical constraints directly affect the behaviour of two, or more participating languages.

Muysken suggests that there are three main intra - sentential code mixing patterns which may be found in bilingual speech communities. The three types of intra – sentential code mixing are “insertion,” “alternation” and “congruent lexicalization” (3). In the insertion pattern, one language determines the overall structure into which constituents from the other language are inserted. In insertional code mixing, one language remains more activated. It tends to provide the main verb and most of the functional elements of the whole utterance. This is a form of unidirectional language influence. Muysken centres on noun constructions in order to illustrate the case of insertion. At the level of observation, code mixing of noun constructions is the most frequent kind of switching observed in most language pairs. Muysken says, “Noun phrases are well-defined constituents and tend to be syntactically inert and hence easily insertable” (62). But in a formal syntactic analysis, not all noun constructions can be analysed in the same way. Matrix Language Frame (MLF) theory proposed by Carol Myers-Scotton explains the insertion pattern of intra sentential code mixing.

The Matrix Language Frame (MLF) model is a comprehensive model that has been chiefly fruitful in predicting the acceptable structures that occur within a clause showing code switching. The model relies on the difference it makes between the roles of the contributing languages. Precisely, the core of the MLF model is that it limits the contribution of one of the languages in constructing the grammatical frame of the bilingual clause. Thus, the basic generalization that the model offers is that code switching is characterized by a basic disproportionateness between the participating languages so that only one language accounts for the uniform arrangement that prevails in the bilingual clause.

The MLF model calls the language that constructs the grammatical frame for the bilingual utterance as the Matrix Language (ML) and the other language is called the Embedded Language (EL). Although a minor role for the EL is predicted, it takes part in code switching in two ways. First, it may supply content morphemes to those elements within the bilingual clause that contains morphemes from both languages. Second, the EL may supply EL islands. These islands are monolingual EL phrases that are grammatically well-formed in the EL. Similarly, phrases that are entirely composed of ML elements that are termed as ML islands, may also occur within the larger bilingual clause.

The MLF model shows how there are differences in the dispersal of categories of morphemes that are related to the asymmetry between languages. There are two types of morphemes. They are content morphemes and system morphemes. Content morphemes express semantic and pragmatic aspects and are assigned with thematic roles. Examples for content morphemes are nouns, verbs, adjectives and some prepositions. These are essential to convey messages in communication. System morphemes express the relation between content morphemes and do not assign or receive thematic roles. Function words and inflections are examples of system morphemes. The switched elements in insertion type of code mixing mostly tend to be content morphemes rather than function morphemes.

Although the term 'intra - sentential' has been used broadly and consistently in the field of linguistics, Scotton advocates that as a unit of analysis, CP, that is Projection of Complementizer is a more appropriate term than a sentence because even within a sentence, the grammar may not be in contact. A bilingual CP can consist of 1) Matrix language (ML) islands which have only ML morphemes 2) mixed constituents including morphemes from both ML and Embedded language (EL) and

3) EL islands consisting of only EL morphemes. ML islands are made of ML morphemes and are under the control of ML grammar. On the other hand EL islands are also well-formed by EL grammar but they are inserted into an ML frame.

Therefore EL islands are under the constraints of ML grammar.

The case of insertional code mixing is illustrated using examples from the text, *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*. Creature and other characters in the play are discussing the sweater worn by Gazelle Nataways during the game of hockey, and in this context Creature comments: “Trimmed it? She’s got it plunging down to her ootsee. (“belly button.”)” (68). Gazalle has got her sweater’s neck trimmed upto her belly button. The matrix language in this context is English and Cree is the embedded language. The word “Ootsee”, meaning “belly button” in English language, is a noun. The word occupies the object position in the given sentence. It is a content morpheme. It is embedded into the frame of the matrix language, which is English. The example shows that the speaker has inserted an EL (Cree) content morpheme into an ML (English) frame consisting of both content and system morphemes.

Another example for insertional intra – sentential code mixing is visible in Big Joey’s commentary on women’s hockey: “ [...] Wha! Close one, ladies igwa gentlemen, kwayus close one [...] (126). The ML is English and the EL is Cree, with regard to this example statement. In this example, the EL morpheme is “kwayus”. “Kwayus” is a Cree term which is translated by the author himself as “real”. Being an adjective, it is a content morpheme. Therefore, an EL content morpheme is inserted into an ML frame, which articulates the entire grammatical structure. This explains how the technique of insertion in intra - sentential code mixing is effectively used by Highway in his play.

The second important intra - sentential code mixing pattern is alternation. Alternation is defined as the switching between structures from separate languages. Muysken says, “Alternational patterns often show some diversity of elements switched. Content words such as nouns and adjectives are likely to be insertions, while **discourse particles** and **adverbs** may be alternations” (97). The boundary of the switches may be a clause, or some peripheral element such as a discourse marker or tag form. The grammatical elements of two languages are used in an autonomous or independent way. Example from the text, *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* is seen in the hockey commentary by Big Joey as he says, “[...] How, Number Nine Hera Keechigeesik, CAPTAIN of the Wasy Wailerettes, face-off igwa itootum asichi Number Nine Flora McDonald, Captain of the Canoe Lake Bravettes [...]” (124). The translation of this dialogue is given as end notes by the author. It reads as, “Now, Number Nine Hera Keechigeesik, CAPTAIN of the Wasy Wailerettes, facing off with Number Nine Flora McDonald, Captain of the Canoe Lake Bravettes” (133). In this example each language stretch, be it English or Cree, has its own language-specific syntax and morphology, with neither language providing an overall structural frame for the utterance. There are no syntactic dependencies. The syntactic connections between alternating constructions involve constituents that have been adjoined. The absence of bounded syntactic relations make this code mixing a strong contender for being classified as alternation. The alternating forms have not been incorporated in a nested structure.

The third type of intra sentential code mixing is congruent lexicalization. It is defined as the combination of items from different lexical inventories into a shared grammatical structure. Both languages contribute to the grammatical structure of the sentence, which in many instances is shared. Thus grammatical convergence leads to

congruent lexicalization. Congruent lexicalization requires that the languages in contact be structurally congruent to a very high degree.

The best example for congruent lexicalization, from the text *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* is evident in the commentary for hockey game, by Big Joey:

... Hey, aspin Number Six Dry Lips Manigitogan, right - winger for the Wasy Wailerettes, eemaskamat Number Thirteen of the Canoe Lake Bravettes anee-i 'particular puck' ... igwa aspin sipweesinskwataygew. Hey, k'seegoochin! How, Number Six Dry Lips Manigitogan igwa soogi pugamawew anee-i 'particular puck' ita Number Twenty-six Little Girl Manitowabi, left-winger for the Wasy Wailerettes, katee-ootetuk blue line ita Number Eleven Black Lady Halked, wha! defense-woman for the Wasy Wailerettes, kagatchitnat anee-i 'particular puck' igwa seemak kapassiwatat Captain Hera Keechigeesikwa igwa Hera Keechigeesik mitooni eepimithat, hey, kwayus graceful Hera Keechigeesik, mitooni Russian ballerina eesinagoosit. Captain Hera Keechigeesik bee-line igwa itootum straight for the Canoe Lake Bravettes' net igwa shootiwatew anee-i 'particular puck' igwa she shoots, she scores ...almost! Wha! Close one, ladies igwa gentlemen, kwayus close one. But Number Six Dry Lips Manigitogan, right-winger for the Wasy Wailerettes, accidentally tripped and blocked the shot ... How, Number Nine Flora McDonald, Captain of the Canoe Lake Bravettes, igwa ooteetnew anee-i 'particular puck' igwa skate-oo-oo behind the net igwa soogi heading along the right side of the rink ita Number Twenty-one Annie Cook ...

(125 – 126)



Here in this dialogue, one finds emblematic representation of congruent lexicalization. The grammatical structure of both English and Cree overlap over each other in creating a more fluent bilingual speech activity.

The next type of intra - sentential code switching to be discussed is Tag switching. Tags include interjections, fillers, idiomatic expressions and even single noun switches. Examples of English tags are OK, well, next, right, isn't it, so etcetera. Tag switching involves inserting a tag or short phrase in one language into an utterance that is otherwise entirely in another language. This type of code switching occurs most easily. The reason behind is that tags typically contain minimal syntactic restrictions. Tags do not require a function word to help them adhere to the language frame. Hence, they do not break syntactic rules when introduced into a sentence that is given in a particular language.

In *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*, tag switching occurs at certain instances. The first instance is where Big Joey tries to smoothen out things between himself and Spooky Lacroix:

**BIG JOEY.** *Suddenly quiet and intimate.* William. William. You and me. You and me, we used to be buddies, kigiskisin? (“Remember?”) Wounded Knee. South Dakota. Spring of ‘73. We parked my van over by that little lake, we swam across, you almost didn’t make it and nothin’ could get you to swim back. Kigiskisin? So here we’re walkin’ back through the bush, all the way around this small lake, nothin’ on but bare feet and wet undershorts and this black bear come up behind you, kigiskisin? And you freaked out. (62)

In this context, the speaker uses English as a matrix language. The entire dialogue is in English except for the term “kigiskisin”. “Kigiskisin” is a Cree term and it is translated by Highway as “remember”. The term “kigiskisin” is used as an informal single word question tag. Here, the word “kigiskisin” stands aloof from the rest of the constituent sentences of the dialogue. It is introduced easily at a number of points in the monolingual utterance without violating syntactic rules. In this sort of code switching, the grammatical rules of both the matrix and embedded languages do not collide or sync with each other.

In contextual level, this code switch has a serious underlying connotations. Spooky Lacroix is a person who had embraced Christianity as the reason for his salvation, even though it is shown to be at the root of the subjugation of native people. He has in effect substituted a mindless addiction to Christianity for an addiction to alcohol, and uses his religion to intimidate others such as Dickie Bird Halked. The play provides the glimpses of Spooky before he accepted “the Lord” into his life, through Creature and Big Joey. Creature reminds Spooky that before twenty one years they mixed blood, cutting their wrists swearing they'd be friends for life. Once Spooky got attacked by seven white guys with broken beer bottle. He was saved by Creature Nataways. But Spooky pretends to have forget all his ties with his friends. He wears a mask over his true wild self, by strictly adhering to Christian doctrines.

In the above mentioned dialogue, Big Joey clearly attempts to remind Spooky of the childhood memories. The eagerness of Joey is evident when he asks thrice, if Spooky remembers anything at all. Moreover, the very word ‘remember’ is in Cree, in order to imply that even though Spooky has altered his way of life, and assimilated himself with the western culture, his thought process will still be in Cree. The very usage of the word “kigiskisin” gives a clarion call to all those natives who have

forgotten to remember their native ways of living and to those who have been blinded by the colonizers.

Another instance of tag switching found in *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* is when Simon tries to explain about the idea of brand names to Zachary:

**SIMON.** *Amused at the rather funny-looking Zachary.* Neee,

machi ma-a, (“Oh you, but naturally,”) Westinghouse for refrigerators, Kellogg’s for corn flakes igwa (“and”) Hobart for dough-making machines. Kinsitootawin na? (“Get it?”) Brand name. Except we used to call it “the pig” because it had this ... piggish kind of motion to it. But never mind. Awus. Don’t bother me. (40)

In the above mentioned illustration, there are two major instances of tag switching. The first is the initial interjection, “Neee, machi ma-a, (“Oh you, but naturally,”)” and the next is the question tag, “Kinsitootawin na? (“Get it?”).” Both code switches do not potentially affect the semantic and grammatical construction of the sentence.

The next instance of tag switching is observed when Zachary mourns for Simon’s death:

**ZACHARY.** *As he kneels over SIMON’s body, the full moon*

*glowing even redder.* Oh, lordy, lordy ... Holy shit! Holy shit! What’s happening? What’s become of this place? What’s happening to this place? What’s happening to these people? My people. He didn’t have to die. He didn’t have to die. That’s the

goddamn most stupid ... no reason ... this kind of living has got to stop. It's got to stop! *Talking and then just shrieking at the sky.*

Aieeeeeee-Lord! God! God of the Indian! God of the Whiteman! God-Al-fuckingmighty! Whatever the fuck your name is. Why are you doing this to us? Why are you doing this to us? Are you up there at all? Or are you some stupid, drunken shit, out-of-your-mind-passed out under some great beer table up there in your stupid fucking clouds? Come down! Astum oota! ("Come down here!") Why don't you come down? I dare you to come down from your high-falutin' fuckin' shit-throne up there, come down and show us you got the guts to stop this stupid, stupid, stupid way of living. It's got to stop. It's got to stop. It's got to stop. It's got to stop. It's got to stop. It's got to stop ... (116)

Zachary is desperate about the deterioration of his native community and his people. Simon gets drunk and shoots himself and furious Zachary rages the callousness of the God that allows such a senseless tragedy to happen. Zachary shows sheer aversion towards the dogma of Christianity. He disbelieves in the ability of the Christian God to disentangle the chaos of his community and to deliver them from the bitter experiences of colonization. He doubts the existence of one such Christian God. In his desperation, he orders the unknown God of Christianity to descend from His mighty throne and to have a look at the havoc which He has allowed to happen. The entire dialogue stated is in English, except the phrase "Come down!" which is reiterated in Cree again as "Astum oota! ("Come down here!")".

The connotation of the above mentioned code switch is significant. There is an outright hatred towards western ideas. Europe's excessive force upon indigenous

Canadian culture is exposed in this context. Colonizers assign low prestige to non-European languages and cultures and establish superiority of the coloniser's language and culture. Here, Zachary's imperative tone of speech subverts superiority. Although many of the formally colonised populations have gained today what is usually called political independence, the cultural and linguistic decolonisation of European culture is hardly complete and this agitated state is portrayed in the play.

Tag switching of an interjection is observed in a conversation between Zachary and Simon where Simon says, "Mind you, if there was a team of mid-wives, chee-i? ("eh?") Wha!" (46). In this instance, the interjection "eh" is code switched into Cree as "chee-i". The matrix language being English in this dialogue, it is just the interjection "eh" that is code switched. Interjection or sentence filler code switching is used for better expression, clarification or better understanding.

Evidences confirm that bilingual speakers shift codes both consciously and unconsciously. Ad Backus points out,

Presumably, every utterance we produce is the result of a mix of conscious and unconscious choices. To a certain extent, issues of creativity, of finding the right words, of wishing to emphasize a point, of indexing a certain social position, etcetera, are the targets of deliberate choices. That this is the mechanism through which cultural loanwords enter a language is often implicit in discussions of borrowing and codeswitching. On the other hand, lexical, grammatical, and certainly most phonological choices tend to be completely under the radar, and produced more or less automatically. (319)

Regarding the unconscious dimension, although bilinguals are generally aware of the existence of code switching in their own communities, their awareness to their own code switching behaviour lags far behind their practice. Bilinguals are often unaware of their spontaneous alteration between languages.

Melissa Bishop and Mark Peterson expound about Becker's classification of unconscious code switching as, "Becker classifies unconsciously motivated code switches into three distinct categories" (279). The first category occurs when a speaker is not able to access the equivalent lexical term in the other language. That is, switches triggered by momentary inclination at the production stage of speech. The second category refers to switches that are triggered due to the frequent exposure of certain terms in the other language. This is due to habitual use of such terms, so that their use is no longer a conscious choice. The third category for unconsciously triggered code switches is due to the untranslatability of certain terms into the other language. This occurs when a speaker is hard pressed to find an appropriate synonym in the other language.

When the play *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* is closely analysed, one finds evidences for all the three types of unconscious code shifting. Code shifting due to the inability to find the appropriate term for a particular word in another language is seen when Simon uses the word, "apple... pie" as such even when he speaks in Cree fluently. "Kamoowanow...apple...pie...patima...neetha...igwa Patsy... n'gapeetoonan... patima...apple...pie...neeh" (116) are the last words spoken by Simon before his death. In this context the matrix language is Cree and the embedded language is English. The word apple in Cree is termed as *picikwâs*. But there is no equivalent term in Cree for the dish "pie". Pie is a baked dish of fruits, vegetables or meat. The term "pie" is culturally embedded in the western world. Such words that

glue themselves to the context of certain culture find it hard to get assimilated into another one. Hence all the characters in the play use “pie” in their speech without trying to translate it into their native language.

The second category of unconscious code switching as classified by Becker, is witnessed when the characters of the play use numbers the way it is pronounced in English language. It is because of the frequent usage of numbers in the speech activity, all numbers are said in English language rather than sticking on to the complicated pronunciation of numbers in Cree. All the characters use English numbering system, but it is very distinct when Big Joey gives commentary for the Hockey event. A commentary is a description of an event, usually a sports event, given at the same time as it happens. Hence a commentator must be fluent in the language of his choice used for commenting over the event. Big Joey, belonging to the first nation community, finds numbering system and the pronunciation of the same, easier in English rather than in Cree. If at all Cree numbering system had been a simpler one, it would have been in his primary memory so that he might use the same for the running commentary.

**BIG JOEY. *Continuing uninterrupted above all the other men’s***

*voices.* ... igwa ati-ootteetum blue line ita Number One Gazelle  
Nataways, Captain of the Wasy Wailerettes, kagagweemaskamat  
anee-i puck, ma-a Number Nine Hera Keechigeesik mawch  
weemeethew anee-i puck. Wha! ‘Hooking,’ itwew referee Pierre  
St. Pierre, Gazelle Nataways isa keehookiwatew her own team-  
mate Hera Keechigeesikwa, wha! How, Number One Gazelle  
Nataways, Captain of the Wasy Wailerettes, face-off igwa meena

itootum asichi Number Nine Flora McDonald, Captain of the  
 Canoe Lake Bravettes igwa Flora McDonald soogi pugamawew  
 anee-i puck, ma-a Number Thirty-seven Big Bum  
 Pegahmagahbow, defense-woman for the Wasy Wailerettes, stops  
 the puck and passes it to Number Eleven Black Lady Halked, also  
 defense-woman for the Wasy Wailerettes, but Gazelle Nataways,  
 Captain of the Wasy Wailerettes, soogi body check meethew her  
 own teammate Black Lady Halked woops! She falls, ladies igwa  
 gentlemen, Black Lady Halked hits the boards and Black Lady  
 Halked is singin' the blues, ladies igwa gentlemen, Black Lady  
 Halked sings the blues. *Off microphone, to the other men.* What  
 the hell is goin' on down there? Dickie Bird, get off the ice! *Back  
 on microphone.* What! Number Eleven Black Lady Halked is up in  
 a flash igwa seemak n'taymaskamew Gazelle Nataways anee-i  
 puck, holy shit! The ailing but very, very furious Black Lady  
 Halked skates back, turns and takes aim, it's gonna be a slap shot,  
 ladies igwa gentlemen, slap shot keetnatch taytootum Black Lady  
 Halked igwa Black Lady Halked shootiwoo anee-i puck, wha! She  
 shoots straight at her very own captain, Gazelle Nataways and holy  
 shit, holy shit, holy fuckin' shit! (73 – 74)

The above commentary by Big Joey is one of the hockey commentaries found in the  
 play. Highway has translated the same into English and has included it as endnotes.  
 The numbers used in this piece of commentary are, one, nine, eleven and thirty –  
 seven. In Cree these numerals are termed as peyak, kekâmitâtaht, pēyakosāp and  
 nistomitanaw – tēpakohposāp respectively. Cree numerals are polysyllabic and are



comparatively harder than English pronunciations of numerals. Hence English is commonly used for terming numerals in speech activity by the characters of the play.

Bilinguals tend to switch to English to refer to items relating to the business world and modern technology because they might have learned such vocabulary outside home from speakers of English. Linguistic economy may also be related to the frequency of exposure and habitual use of certain lexical items in one of the two languages. In *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*, Pierre is excited about the World Hockey League played by the aboriginal women. In this context he says,

All the Indian women in the world is playin' hockey now! World Hockey League, they call themselves. Aboriginal Women's WHL. My wife, Veronique St. Pierre, she just got the news. Eegeewetamagoot fax machine. ("Fax machine told her.") [...] (108)

Here, there is an intra - sentential code switching triggered rather unconsciously. "Fax machine" is a term that is related to modern technology which has nothing to do with native Cree knowledge. Native people tend to use such terms as it is introduced into their culture because it is not culturally embedded in their context. The English word "fax machine" is more linguistically economical than the Cree equivalent "masinahikan kayitisahamatohk". Therefore, bilinguals in order to save time, unconsciously switch to English when referring to this machine.

The third category of unconscious code switching is due to untranslatability of a term. It is a unique property of a text, or of any utterance, in one language, for which no equivalent text or utterance can be found in another language. 'Nee' is a term in Cree which is always used as it is, in *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*. It is



that the term ‘chunk’ needs further clarification to become a valid element in switching analysis and justifies ‘chunkness’ in terms of the ‘stand-alone principle’. (6)

Any segment which can meaningfully stand - alone in the speaker’s mind can be code switched. The crucial point is the concept of “meaningfully stand – alone”. According to Azuma, the clearest candidates for it are the discourse markers such as conjunctions, sentence adverbs and tags. The function of these discourse markers is not to relate syntactic units but speech acts. They are pragmatic connectors. They are not syntactically integrated into a sentence and they can be uttered alone.

For instance, in *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* Big Joey gives the commentary on the hockey game. Each time Joey says “ladies and gentlemen”, he uses Cree term “igwa” in the place of “and”. “And” is a conjunction which can meaningfully stand – alone according the postulation of Azuma. In the play, the term “igwa” is seen in eight places. The first two instances come about when Big Joey gives commentary for the women’s hockey event. The dialogue is as follows:

**BIG JOEY.** *Now speaking on the microphone. The other men watch the women on the ‘ice’; some are cheering and whistling, some calling down the game.* Welcome, ladies igwa gentlemen, welcome one and all to the Wasaychigan Hill Hip-hip-hippodrome [...]

**CREATURE.** ... there’s Gazelle Nataways, number one ...

**BIG JOEY.** ... they are, ladies ...

**SPOOKY.** ... terrible, terrible ...

**BIG JOEY.** ... igwa gentlemen ... (69 – 70)

The next four instances follow soon after the former ones, in the same thread of commentary:

**BIG JOEY.** [...]She falls, ladies igwa gentlemen, Black Lady

Halked hits the boards and Black Lady Halked is singin' the blues,  
ladies igwa gentlemen, Black Lady Halked sings the blues.

*Off microphone, to the other men.*

What the hell is goin' on down there? Dickie Bird, get off the ice!

*Back on microphone.*

What! Number Eleven Black Lady Halked is up in a flash igwa  
seemak n'taymaskamew Gazelle Nataways anee-i puck, holy shit!  
The ailing but very, very furious Black Lady Halked skates back,  
turns and takes aim, it's gonna be a slap shot, ladies igwa  
gentlemen, slap shot keetnatch taytootum Black Lady Halked igwa  
Black Lady Halked shootiwoo anee-i puck, wha! [...] (74)

In the above example, there comes an instance where “igwa” is used along with a phrase: “Igwa seemak n'taymaskamew” is a phrase that is translated into English by Highway as, “and grabs the puck from”. This phrase can meaningfully stand – alone without grammatical or syntactic constraints of the matrix language. This explains Azuma's principle in a detailed fashion.

The subsequent instances of the occurrence of the term “igwa” in the play are in the second hockey commentary by Big Joey where he says, “ And there they are, ladies igwa gentlemen, there they are, the most beautiful, daring, death-defying Indian

women in the world, the Wasy Wailerettes! [...]” (124). This is soon followed by the succeeding occasion where in the same commentary Joey says, “Wha! Close one, ladies igwa gentlemen, kwayus close one” (126). In all these eight instances, the conjunction “and” is used in Cree language. The stand – alone principle of Azuma is predominant in all these seven instances of code switching.

Besides the idioms, frozen expressions and quoted segments which are clear examples of stand – alone principle, researchers have noted that expressions related to number, time and manner are often code switched. The stand – alone principle claims that any unit of a sentence that can meaningfully stand alone may be code switched. But this does not mean that all stand – alone items are freely code switched regardless of grammaticality. The fact is that bilinguals code switch frequently and still maintain grammaticality in both the matrix and embedded languages. This suggests that the speech output is obviously constrained by the speaker’s knowledge of the grammar of the languages involved. Segments involved in a code switch must obey the morpho syntactic rules and the word order of the matrix language. Thus a speaker may code switch the items which can stand alone in a manner which satisfies the grammar involved.

It is evident that, an analysis of code switching contributes in various ways to an understanding of how an individual articulation is influenced by the social norms. Such an understanding comes under the domain of sociolinguistics. Moreover, the importance of literary code switching is manifested through the postcolonial context employed by Highway in *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*. His lofty management of the technique of code switching in his writing shapes the reader’s notion of culture and identity. At a social level, code switching may be viewed as the product of a power struggle between two varieties. When it is concerned with an

individual, it reflects varying bilingual competences and serves as a “discourse-structuring device” (Chloros 41).

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