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## The Sociolinguistics of Code Switching: A Conversation Analysis Perspective

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**Introduction:** This paper attempts to show that a multiple perspective is better than any single perspective in accounting for the phenomenon of using more than one language in conversation by speakers of a speech community. For this purpose, the paper takes into account language use, particularly code switching, among the Meiteis in Delhi and claims that a purely sociolinguistic perspective when supplemented with an analysis done from the perspective of Conversation Analysis (CA), affords us a much richer account of language use in conversation, code switching in particular, than any single perspective can individually offer. This paper in doing so highlights the observation that rather than looking at code switching as indexing symbolic and sociolinguistic values attributed to the languages used and motivated by sociolinguistic factors associated with the languages concerned, these sociolinguistic aspects can be seen as being brought about in conversation to be made relevant in the way these factors are presented, understood, accepted or rejected, and changed in the process of interaction by the participants in the conversation. The languages in question are Meiteilon, English and Hindi.

**Methodology:** The study is based on extensive field work carried out in Delhi for the collection of sufficient amount of data which includes recordings of speech data of interviews and conversations in formal as well as informal settings supplemented by

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participant observation and a questionnaire study. The questionnaire response was obtained from 100 Meitei consultants from the age group of 18-33 years. Thirty-three questionnaires were rejected due to incomplete responses in the final tabulation and analysis. The consultants consisted of 29 males and 38 females; their duration of stay in Delhi ranging between 3 months and 11 years. In total, 690 minutes of recorded speech data was used for the analysis.

**Profile:** Most of the Meiteis, in Delhi, are students while a considerable section, some of whom staying back further after their education, are employed in some job or other in various institutions in the capital. Faced with the present unstable political, social, economic situation in Manipur and the fall outs of secessionist movements as well as a sense of 'deprivation as an Indian' (Angomcha, 1999), there seems to be a reanalyzing of their 'national' and 'regional' identities. Alongside a constant effort to assert the distinct regional identity with a different racial and linguistic difference, one can also find an equally strong effort to identify with the national identity and assert the Indian identity. The main languages used by the Meiteis in Delhi are English, Hindi and Meiteilon. While Meiteilon is extensively and exclusively used within the group, English and Hindi are used in communication with people belonging to other linguistic groups. However, one can find that English and Hindi are used even within the group, to an extent. While English is used in both formal and informal settings, Hindi is used only in very informal situations. Code mixing and switching of the three languages is a common feature of this speech. It is not uncommon to find Meiteis, mostly young friends, involved in conversation mostly in English with words and phrases from Meiteilon and vice versa. This may be representative of the language usage by the younger educated group, mostly students in Delhi where code mixing English and some other language is a common practice.

**Perspectives on Code Switching:** There are mainly three main perspectives from which code switching has been studied, namely, the sociolinguistic point of view: why do people switch languages; the psycholinguistic point of view: what aspects of their language enable them to switch; and the linguistic (structural) point of view: where in the sentence is switching possible (Appel and Muysken, 1987). However, there have also been other studies done on code switching within discursal and conversational frameworks (Gumperz 1982, Auer 1981, 1984, 1984a, Myers-Scotten 1993, etc.). The studies done from the conversational perspective to code switching are the ones whose approach to conversational code switching is dominantly sociolinguistic. This approach is different from the approach which is dominantly conversational. However, the CA approach to code switching as in Auer (1984), which will be used in

the analysis of the Meiteilon-English code switching data, is on the other hand, dominantly conversational.

A different perspective of looking at conversational code switching which have attracted the attention of researchers in code-switching studies developed with the publication of Peter Auer's *Bilingual Conversation* (1984a). Auer approaches the meaning of language choice and code switching in conversations by adopting CA approach. He notes that in previous sociolinguistics approaches to code switching (Blom and Gumperz, 1972 and Myers-Scotton, 1993), code switching do not have 'signalling values of its own' and instead of the switching from one language to the other, it is the association between speech activities and languages which has meaning. Such a view implies that a particular speech activity may be tied to a particular language. That is, code switching is merely seen as an accidental fact of switching between two activities. This observation by Auer brings us to an important aspect of the study of code switching and in looking at the question of why people switch from one language to another in a conversational interaction. This is the aspect of looking at the meaning of code switching. Thus, the CA approach to conversational code switching derives the meaning of code switching in a conversation by localizing it in the sequential environment of the conversation. In his study of the Chinese community in Newcastle, England, Li Wei (1998) makes 'a case for the conversation-analytic approach to code-switching' and argues how CA approach is more advantageous by looking at code switching from a conversationalist perspective rather than looking at it from an analyst-oriented perspective.

**Organisation:** The paper is organised as follows in two sections: In 6 below the questionnaire responses are dealt with from a sociolinguistic perspective providing observations based on a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data. In 7, the code switching data is approached from a CA perspective and observations that emerged out of the questionnaire responses are accounted for from this perspective. In this section, we look at how the sociolinguistic features of the language use patterns and behaviour of the Meiteis in Delhi that emerged in the analysis in the previous section, can be seen in the code switching patterns in the data. Instead of the sociolinguistic factors as motivating the code switching behaviour, it is shown how these factors are brought about and manifested in the process of the linguistic negotiations in the conversation sequences. It is clear, then, that the stance that this paper takes vis-à-vis the so-called sociolinguistic factors belongs to the CA tradition.

**Language Use and Patterns: A Sociolinguistic Perspective:** For the purpose of the present paper, two observations from the study of the questionnaire would be considered in order to account for the claim made that a sociolinguistic perspective supplemented by a CA perspective of the code switching data offers a more enriched account of the Meiteilon-English code switching data and language use among Meiteis in Delhi. The two observations are given below.

- (i) Hindi is used only in a very *casual and informal* context in conversation between Meiteis
- (ii) Use of Meiteilon is preferred in interaction between participants whose relationship is based on a *social hierarchy*.

The following tables show the patterns of language use by the Meiteis in various domains in formal and informal situations:

	Father	Mother	Seniors	Brother	Sister	Meitei friends	Non-Meitei Manipuri friends	Non-Meitei Non-Manipuri friends	Non-Meitei Seniors
M	80.5	88	67.1	47.7	49.2	47.7	11.9	0	0
ME	7.4	8.9	20.8	34.3	28.3	28.3	29.8	0	0
MEH	10.4	2.9	5.9	7.4	2.9	8.9	1.4	0	0
E	1.4	0	2.9	7.4	11.9	14.9	32.8	68.6	67.1
H	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.9	1.4
EH	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.4	28.3	29.8
MH	0	0	0	0	1.4	0	0	0	0
EM	0	0	2.9	0	0	0	5.9	0	0
HE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.4	1.4

**Fig1: Language Use in Formal Situations**

	Father	Mother	Seniors	Brother	Sister	Non-Meitei Seniors	Non-Meitei Manipuri friends	Non-Meitei Non-Manipuri friends	
M	94	97	80.5	67.1	67.1	46.1	17.9	0	0
ME	5.9	2.9	11.9	25.3	17.9	19.4	25.3	0	0
MEH	0	0	5.9	0	5.9	13.4	4.7	0	0
E	0	0	1.4	4.4	2.9	17.9	32.8	46.1	64.1
H	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11.9	4.4
EH	0	0	0	0	0	0	11.9	37.3	26.8
MH	0	0	0	0	1.4	2.9	0	0	0
EM	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.7	0	0
HE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.4	4.4

**Fig2: Language Use in Informal Situations**

The interlocutors form two main domains: home domain and domain outside home. The home domain would include the family relations such as the father, mother, brother and sister. The domain outside home includes Meitei friends, Meitei seniors, non-Meitei Manipuri friends from Manipur, non-Meitei non-Manipuri friends from other parts of India, non-Meitei seniors.

Let us now look at the observations on the basis of the table above which point to the two main points (i) and (ii) given above.

The observations in support of (i) that Hindi is used only in informal context are as follows.

(a) Hindi alone is not reported to be used at all among the Meitei speakers in either the formal or informal contexts. It is used only with the non-Meitei, non-Manipuri friends and seniors.

(b) Hindi is used mostly when it is used along with Meiteilon and English in both the situations.

(c) Meiteilon remains the most preferred language among the Meiteis in both formal and informal situations. English follows and is shown having preference over Hindi. The observations which point to this pattern are given as under.

- There is more mixing of Meiteilon and English than with Hindi among the Meiteis. After M, the most preferred use is of ME.
- There is no instance of EH among the Meiteis.
- With the non-Meiteis, use of English is preferred to Hindi. In the case of the non-Meitei Manipuri friends, English takes precedence even over Meiteilon.

Though Hindi is used more in cases of communication with the non-Meiteis in either of the situation with these interlocutors, English still takes precedence in these cases too. However, these cases being beyond the scope of this paper will not be dealt here.

The second observation (ii) states that use of Meiteilon is preferred in interaction between participants whose relationship is based on a *social hierarchy*. That is, the hierarchy of social roles is respected by not switching to English when addressing either seniors or the juniors and Meiteilon remains the preferred code choice. In this regard, it is also important to note that use of English is preferred among the groups whose relationship is based on social solidarity. This result is somewhat unexpected and must be attributed to a cultural choice specific to the Meiteis. The use of English increases as we move out of the home domain and Meiteilon decreases, except in the case of the Meitei seniors. Thus Meiteilon remains the code of choice with the seniors in order to maintain the hierarchy. This observation is supported by the following patterns of language use that emerges from the tables.

- (a) Within the home domain the use of English can be seen to be more frequent with the siblings than with the parents.
- (b) Outside the home domain the use of English is more frequent with friends than with Meitei seniors.
- (c) Also, the use of English is more frequent with siblings than with seniors, a category outside the home domain. The participants share a relationship based on solidarity with the siblings and on power with the Meitei seniors. However, in case of switching among the siblings and the Meitei friends, the preference to use English is higher with the friends.
- (d) Mixing of Meiteilon and English is considerably less with parents and seniors than with siblings and Meiteis friends, however, with non-Meitei Manipuri friends, mixing is much more frequent in both formal and informal situations.

Within the home domain, people who share an equal status, and thus a relationship based on solidarity with the respondents, are the siblings. Thus with the siblings the

percentage of the use of English is considerably higher than that with the parents with whom the relation is based on a social hierarchy defined by power. Outside the home domain, this pattern of language use based on power and solidarity can be seen as represented by the respondents' language use with Meitei friends and Meitei seniors. They share a relationship based on power with their seniors and that of solidarity with friends. Thus the use of English with Meitei friends is considerably higher than with seniors. It is Meiteilon which is preferred in interactions involving seniors. The use of ME is also higher with siblings and friends than with parents and seniors.

However, the pattern of use of E and particularly ME among the Meiteis is also significant when we look at the percentages in the case of the seniors and the siblings. The use of E and ME with siblings is higher than with seniors and ME is considerably higher. This pattern points to a difference in the use of English and Meiteilon not only within domains but also across domains, siblings being from the home domain and seniors from domain out of home. Thus, this pattern also shows the role that social status in a hierarchy plays in determining language choice.

In the next section the Meiteilon-English code switching data will be analysed from the perspective of the CA approach. In this context, we will see how the two above mentioned observations (i) and (ii) are brought about in conversation between the Meitei speakers. We will also see that another pattern of language use emerges from the analysis of the code switching data which did not show up in the questionnaire study.

**Code switching: the CA perspective:** This section approaches the code switching data from the CA perspective by taking the two observations mentioned above.

As mentioned earlier the symbolic and social values attached to the languages surface as the interlocutors negotiate their use of language in a conversation. This section, therefore, devotes itself to showing how some of the observations resulting from the questionnaire survey emerge in the code switching data in conversations.

To demonstrate from a CA perspective, let us look at the two major observations below.

(i) The following conversation sequence is taken as an example to show that Hindi is used in very informal contexts. The example given below is a conversation sequence between three Meiteis, A, B and C. A non-Meitei is also present at the time of the

conversation though she does not participate in the conversation sequence taken for this example. A and B are friends and C is B's junior in the same department in the university. A and B plan to visit B's cousin. This example shows the contexts in which Hindi is used among the Meiteis and also the preference for Hindi in informal contexts.

#### Example 1

- 1 A: It's far, right? *ja-e kya abhi?*  
 2 B: *abhi? jaane ki mood me hai?* About 45 minutes by bus.  
 3 A: but we should inform her first, no? I don't want to just pop up.  
 4 B: We'll pop up. It's ok  
 5 C: *agar nahi mila to? aap logon kaa jaanaa kyaa hogaa.*  
 6→ B: *i:s! Ye larki to bahot samajhdar hai.*  
 ((laughs))  
 7 *Ye to bacci thii. itni samajhdar kaise ho gayii*  
 ((laughs))  
 8→ A: *bacci* for you, *yaar*  
 9 C: *aap dono risk lenaa caahte ho to koi baat nahi*  
 10 B: *bahut samajhdari dikhati he. khana khale cup caap.* ((laughs))  
 11 C: *me bhi aa rahi hun*  
 12→ B: *accaa? tu aa rahi hai? Tum nahi aa sakti. Tum bhi risk lenaa cahti ho kyaa?.*  
 ((laughs))  
 13→ Actually, the thing is, this cousin of mine...[...]

#### Translation

- 1 A: It's far, right? *Shall we go now?*  
 2 B: *now? Are you in the mood to go?* About 45 minutes by bus.  
 3 A: but we should inform her first, no? I don't want to just pop up.  
 4 B: We'll pop up. It's ok.  
 5 C: *What if you don't get (them)? What use of your going (then)?*  
 6→ B: *i:s! This girl is really sensible.*  
 ((laughs))  
 7 *She was just a kid. How did she become so sensible?*  
 (laughs)  
 8→ A: *kid* for you, *yaar*  
 9 C: *if you guys want to take the risk then it's ok.*  
 10 B: *trying to act smart. Eat your food quietly.* ((laughs))



- 11 C: *I'm also coming.*  
 12→ B: *really? You are also coming? You cannot come. You also want to take the risk or what?*  
 ((laughs))  
 13→ Actually, the thing is, this cousin of mine...[...]

In the above conversation, A and B talk about visiting B's cousin. A starts with English and shifts to Hindi to ask a question (line 1). B responds in Hindi to A's question and shifts to English (line 2) which is a response to A's first utterance in line 1 seeking confirmation that the place where they are going to is far. The next exchange of turns (lines 3 and 4) takes place in English which can be interpreted as a preference for English in the present interaction by both A and B. C joins in line 5 to support the idea of informing the cousin first before their visit, in Hindi. To this, B responds in Hindi starting with an exclamation *i:s!* (line 6). This exclamatory sound is a very typical Meiteilon exclamation which can indicate surprise, shock, fear, disgust, sarcasm, etc., depending on the intonation of the exclamation. In this case, it is the effect of sarcasm which B intends to bring forth. This is also suggested by the following turns of B.

B's following turn (lines 6-7) after C's, is interspersed with laughter (from everyone) where she sarcastically, as well as, humorously, comments on C that she was just a kid and is not matured. A addresses B in English using the Hindi term which B used for C, '*bacci*' (line 8). C continues in Hindi in her next turn (line 9). B responds to C again in Hindi chiding her and telling her to eat quietly (line 10). This turn also is followed by laughter indicating the humour present in the exchange. In the next turn C announces that she is also coming along (line 11). B, with fake surprise and anger, continues in Hindi and tells C that she cannot come along and ends her response to C with a sarcastic remark if she also wants to take the risk. This is followed by a laughter after which B switches to English, indicating the shift of topic and intention to make known a new information to A and C.

From the above conversation we can make the observation that Hindi is used in a very informal and casual manner. This can be seen in the way the exchanges of turns take place between B and C. The topic which is being discussed is also of the most informal kind. Further, the following are couple of more observations in this regard:

**(a) Hindi not an appropriate code among the Meities :**

This can be observed in the context of the exchange between friends (between A and B) and also in the case of an exchange between a relation based on power (exchange between B and C). Meiteilon does not figure in the sequence which could be because of the presence of a non-Meitei, non-Manipuri in the room. The Meiteis are thus possibly avoiding use of Meiteilon so as not to exclude her thus offending her in the process.

Though Hindi is used by both A and B in their interaction, the pattern shows a preference for English. A's query started in English with a switch to Hindi to seek a confirmation (line 1). B also shows the same kind of pattern when she responds in Hindi and then shifts to English (line 2). Their next turns are in English. Also, in line 8, it is in English that A makes a comment in the midst of turn-takings in Hindi.

The degree of inappropriateness of Hindi in the interaction seems to be more in the case of relations based on power in the social hierarchy. It is interesting that this inappropriateness is indicated by an exchange exclusively in Hindi without any switch to either Meiteilon or English. This is seen in the exchange between B and C whose relationship is based on social hierarchy. C joins the conversation using Hindi (line 5). Her use of Hindi could have been licensed by the preceding turn takings between A and B (lines 1-4). B responds to C by exclaiming in Meiteilon and then switching to Hindi sarcastically remarking on C. It is important that the next turn in response to C's turn is selected by B. Recall that C is B's junior from the same department. A, though older than C, does not share this relation with C. Thus B is more likely to take the responsibility of conveying the inappropriateness of C's code choice. It is interesting that she uses the same code which is Hindi.

It is possible that this is a deliberate attempt by B to bring in a hint of sarcasm and also convey the message of inappropriateness of the code. C does not seem to get the message and thus continues in Hindi without switching to English or Meiteilon (line 9). The sarcasm turns to subversion of C's suggestion by B, though humorously yet again, in the next turn (line 10). This turns to direct refusal by B to C's willingness to come along with them (line 12). The difference between B's response to A's and C's turns in Hindi is obvious. While in line 2, B accommodates to A's query in Hindi by responding in Hindi, her response to C is rendered in a more aggressive manner though done humorously. Her disapproval of C's code choice can be seen in her first reaction to C's turn (line 6) which is a typical Meiteilon exclamation marker which,

here, carries out the function of disapproval and sarcasm. It may be noted that C's turn in line 5 otherwise does not carry any message which is offensive to invite the sarcasm from B. B's disapproval or sarcasm can also be seen in line 13 when she shifts to English to mark her disinterest in continuing the topic with C and thus ending the sequence.

**(b) Humour to maintain cultural appropriateness necessitates Hindi:**

In this conversation sequence, Hindi acts a useful code to maintain cultural appropriateness among the Meiteis present, especially between B and C. Use of Hindi was seen in the questionnaire response as indicating patterns of language use, is very less and appears to be preferred more in informal situations than formal ones. By using Hindi in showing her disapproval, B attempts to bring in and maintain the level of informality and humour in the environment. The informal situation thus brought about enables B to show her disapproval and sarcasm in a light manner thus avoiding chances of confrontation or unpleasantness.

B still maintains Hindi even when she scolds C (line 10) or disallows her to come along with them (line 12). This can be interpreted as an attempt on her part to maintain the humour and keep the interaction as informal as possible so as not to offend C with her scolding or refusal. It is significant that even though her first reaction showing disapproval to C's code choice (line 6) is Meiteilon she chooses to switch to Hindi and not to English or Meiteilon to continue. As mentioned before, the shift from the Meiteilon exclamation may be due to the presence of a non-Meitei, non-Manipuri in the room. That B chooses to use Hindi instead of English points to the fact that Hindi is favoured in an interaction which is of a very casual and informal manner.

These observations are not brought *along* by the speakers. They are brought *about* through various conversational processes of negotiation, rejection, acceptance, and understanding in the internal sequencing of turns in the conversation by the participants. Thus the symbolic and social value attributed to a language can be seen to be developed by the participants in their conversational interactions.

(ii) In the following conversation sequence in example 2, the observation that use of Meiteilon favoured in interaction between participants whose relationship is based on a *social hierarchy* is brought about in the course of the interaction.

The conversation below is between A and B. B is senior to A and both attended the same university. B is now a teacher in an institute in Delhi.

Example 2

- 1 A: nang-di *blunt cut* na henna pakcai-e.
- 2 B: aise ado *blunt* kakmanghidada bore curaba
- 3 A: adum phajei-e.adumai-na adum kak-o
- 4 B: aduda kalen-da sabaduda aise khang ngam-da-ba-do
- 5 nahan-su aina class-ta "*maybe I'll just cut my hair or just shave off my head*"
- 6 haiba chatra mayamne ba, makhoina "*no no, ma'am, mat karo*" haina  
(laughs)
- 7 A: *When do you go for classes?*
- 8 B: nipan makhai-da
- 9 A: ↑*in the morning?*
- 10 B: ou
- 11 A: ↑*everyday?*
- 12 B: ou, ayuk-ta adum cat-le
- 13 A: wa-ram-ga-ni-e, ce. ai-di ayuk yahu-ba yam-na wai-e

Translation

- 1 A: the *blunt cut* suits you more (than any other hairstyles)
- 2 B: but I'm bored with the *blunt cut*
- 3 A: you look good. Keep it that way
- 4 B: but, in the summer it is hard to tolerate (the blunt cut)
- 5 the other day in the class, I said "*maybe I'll just cut my hair or just shave off my head*"
- 6 There students, they said "*no no, ma'am, don't do that*" hahaha
- 7 A: *When do you go for classes?*
- 8 B: Eight-thirty
- 9 A: ↑*in the morning?*
- 10 B: ya
- 11 A: ↑*everyday?*
- 12 B: ya, I go in the morning always
- 13 A: It must be difficult, sis. It's really difficult for me to get up early.

In the above conversation, the first two exchanges between A and B (lines 1-4) happens in Meiteilon which establishes it as the preferred choice of code. In her turn, B switches to English and partly Hindi only when she quotes herself and her students respectively in the reported interaction that she had with her students. However, A switches to English after B's narration to ask B a question (line 7). B responds to A in Meiteilon and maintains the language which has been the preferred code choice between them. In the next few exchanges (lines 9-13), A's turns which continue in English are responded by B in Meiteilon. Finally A gives up English and switches back to Meiteilon and accommodates to B's code choice (line 13). This switch to Meiteilon by A can only be for the purpose of accommodating to B's code. This can be supported by the following:

- (a) It is not to go back to the earlier preferred code choice in the earlier topic of hairstyles (lines 1-6) as this topic is not brought up.
- (b) It is also not a switch which starts a new topic as it is a response to B's turn in line 12.

From the above conversation sequence, it can be inferred that Meiteilon emerges as the preferred language in an interaction between a senior and a junior. This observation can be seen in the linguistic negotiation between A and B. In her interaction, B who is the senior, maintains Meiteilon throughout in her turns. She switches codes only for the purpose of quotations. This can also be seen in her reluctance to switch to English and maintaining Meiteilon in her responses to A's queries in English and thus not accommodating to A's choice of code. This pattern of linguistic behaviour necessary for social appropriateness is contextualised in the conversation by B in maintaining Meiteilon and reluctance to switch to English and by A in giving up Meiteilon and switching back to Meiteilon.

The examples above in this section illustrate how various sociolinguistic observations obtained in the questionnaire study can be made to be seen in the light of the linguistic negotiations performed by the participants as predicted by the CA perspective on code switching.

In the following conversation, it is shown that the preference for Meiteilon to English is also based on whether the person is someone who is not in one's peer group such as an older sibling. Even though the siblings share a relationship of solidarity, the power factor comes to play in language use when the sibling is someone older. In such a situation, the power relation overrides the solidarity factor of the relationship.

This observation which did not show up in the questionnaire response, emerges in the following conversation sequence.

The following conversation is between A and B who are friends. C who is A's youngest sister is also present in the room. A and B are planning to go to a fair.

### Example 3

- 1 A: *So, we should start now if we are planning to go.*
- 2 B: *You know where it is?*
- 3 A: *Ya, I know. Ticket mamal lupa kun. You pay for the ticket. ((laughs))*
- 4 B: *bha::go:: (((laughs))*
- 5 A: *[are! kaise bhagogi::*  
*((laughs))*
- 6 *(to C) nang chat-ning-a-ga chat-lam-o.ai kaino ama hai-ge.*
- 7 *si-gi-ne (.) nata-ra-ga nairam-ge-ra?*
- 8 C: *um*
- 9 B: *C, nang han-na laibham-du-da adum lei-ri-ba-ro?*
- 10 A: *mathak-ta lei-ba-do khang-ba-ra?*
- 11 B: *(to C) oh, haan-na-gi-du-da-gi hong-dok-rak-a-bo?*
- 12 C: *hoi. Khara [kui-re*
- 13 A: *[ou. Hey, chat-la-se. We will take the ring road bus.*

### Translation

- 1 A: *So, we should start now if we are planning to go.*
- 2 B: *You know where it is?*
- 3 A: *Ya, I know. The ticket costs Rs.20. You pay for the ticket. ((laughs))*
- 4 B: *ru::n (((laughs))*
- 5 A: *[aha! how will you*  
*((laughs))*
- 6 *(to C) you can leave (while we are away) if you want. Let me tell you something...*
- 7 *this... (.) or will you wait?*
- 8 C: *um*
- 9 B: *C, are you still staying in the previous place?*
- 10 A: *do you know the one on the top floor?*
- 11 B: *(to C) oh, you shifted from the previous place?*
- 12 C: *yes. Its been [quite sometime*
- 13 A: *[yes. Hey, let's move. We will take the ring road bus.*

In the above conversation, A starts her turn in English suggesting that they should start for the fair (line1). B also responds in English asking a question to B (line 2). A responds in English and then switches to Meiteilon to give an additional information which is the rate of the entry fee (line 3). She then switches back to English which is the language preferred language of interaction between A and B telling B in a light hearted manner to pay for the ticket followed by laughter. The next turns of A and B happen in Hindi amidst laughter (lines 4 and 5). A then switches to Meiteilon to address her younger sister, C, and then there is a diversion of topic with the change of the interlocutor (line 6). B also addresses C in Meiteilon asking for information about her address (line 9). Instead of C, A responds to B's question (line 10). The language in this case is Meiteilon and not English, the language with which A and B had started their turns in the beginning. B continues in Meiteilon addressing C (line 11). C responds to B's query in Meiteilon (line 12). C's turn overlaps with A's who also responds to B. In this inserted sequence (lines 6-12), which involves C, the language of preference is Meiteilon. A then suggests that they should be moving. She starts with Meiteilon (line 13). However, she switches to English which was the preferred language between them in the beginning of the conversation. This switch to English marks the end of the inserted sequence and the topic of C's address and the resumption of the pre-insertion topic of going to the fair.

By juxtaposing contrasting languages the participants intend to bring in or negotiate certain conversational ends or effects in the conversation such as adding a new information (line 3), humorous effects (lines 4 and 5), and change in topic and interlocutor (lines 6 and 13). However, besides being employed as a strategy, code switching between Meiteilon, English and Hindi by the participants in the above conversation informs us about the patterns of language use and the status and roles of these languages. The following points emerge in the above conversation:

(a) English and Meiteilon seem to be the languages used among the peer groups whose relation is defined by solidarity. This can be seen in the interaction between A and B who are friends, the relationship thus falling within the category of peer groups. English seems to be the preferred language in their interaction (line 1-3). We also see this when A switches back to English (line 13) after the inserted sequence in Meiteilon. This switch signals that the interaction would now be between the friends and thus excluding C with whom neither A or B share a relation of solidarity.

(b) Meiteilon is the preferred language in the home domain and between participants whose relations rest on a hierarchy. This is evident from the interactions between the

three participants in the conversation. A and C fall into the category of participants in the home domain as siblings and one would expect the possible use of English. However, A is older to C and has a hierarchically higher position. A is seen to switch to Meiteilon when she addresses C and does not switch to English or Hindi at any given point (lines 6 and 7). Siblings share a relation of solidarity as against the relation of power with parents. However this example shows that the power play can be seen to be functioning within the siblings domain as well. It is the power factor which overrides the solidarity among siblings in the interaction between an elder and a younger sibling. In such a situation, Meiteilon emerges as the preferred choice of code and English the unfavourable one. The interaction between A and C illustrates this observation. The relation between B and C also rests on a hierarchy, B being A's friend and thus older to C. Thus, we also see B switching to Meiteilon when she addresses C (lines 9, 11 and 12). This is further validated by the fact that Meiteilon is maintained throughout the inserted sequence which involves C and the topic is related to her address (lines 6-12).

**(c) Hindi is used in a very casual and informal manner (lines 4 and 5) and can again be seen in this example (refer also to Example 1 which exhibited the same point).**

Thus we have seen above that the CA perspective provides some additional viewpoints that enrich the observations obtained from the questionnaire study earlier.

Psychology of the speakers that the CA approach to conversational analysis reveals is unreachable through a mere questionnaire study; this presents a different set of identities of the speakers involved that is constructed through and around a conversation.

This paper hopefully provides a way to make the code switching data of a particular speech community more accountable by showing how a conversational context is shaped by its participants. It situates the code switching phenomenon within the broader field of Social Theory by emphasising on the importance of the CA perspective to code switching. This attempt thus puts this paper within the so-called "integrationist" perspective (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2004) where the interface between sociolinguistics and social theories is emphasised and explored. The other broad tension in sociolinguistics between the quantitative and the qualitative has also been addressed in this paper where results obtained from the questionnaire study in section 6 are sought within the bilingual corpus in 7.



### Transcription conventions

<u>Under</u>	Underlined fragments indicate speaker emphasis
(.)	A dot enclosed in a bracket indicates a pause in the talk of less than two-tenths of a second.
(1)	The number in brackets indicates time gap in seconds.
:	Colons indicate that the speaker has stretched the preceding sound or letter. More the colons, greater the extent of stretching.
!	Exclamation marks are used to indicate an animated or emphatic tone.
↓↑	Pointed arrows indicate a marked falling or rising intonational shift. They are placed immediately before the onset of the shift.
(( ))	A description enclosed in a double bracket indicates a non-verbal activity. It may also indicate the transcriber's comments on contextual or other features.
→	Arrows in the left margin point to specific parts of an extract discussed in the text.
[...]	A deleted segment of the utterance
[ ]	Square brackets between adjacent lines of concurrent speech indicate the onset and end of a spate of overlapping talk.

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