

# Humour in conversation among bilinguals: constructing “otherness”

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## Abstract

*In this study, we analyse conversations recorded during ethnographic research in two bilingual communities on the island of Rhodes, Greece. We examine: (a) the bilingual in Greek and Turkish Muslim community of Rhodes (Georgalidou et al. 2010, 2013) and (b) the Greek-American/Canadian community of repatriated emigrant families of Rhodian origin (Kourtis-Kazoullis 2016). In particular, combining interactional and conversation analytic frameworks (Auer 1995; Gafaranga 2007), we examine contemporary approaches to bi-/multilingualism focusing on the pragmatics of humour in conversations among bilinguals. We scrutinise aspects of the overall and sequential organisation of talk as well as instances of humour produced by speakers of different ethnic origin, generation, and social groups. We focus on the construction of “otherness,” which reflects the dynamic interplay between the micro-level of conversational practices and the macro-level of discourse involving contrasting categorisations and identities pertaining to differently orientated ethnic and social groups. Based on the analysis, we will show a) how humorous targeting orients in-groups versus out-groups, and b) mediates the dynamic process of constructing the identity of speakers who, being members of minority linguistic communities, represent “otherness.”*

*Keywords: conversational humour, bilingual communities, Rhodes.*

## 1. Introduction

In this study, we analyse conversations recorded during ethnographic research in bilingual communities on the island of Rhodes, Greece. We examine (a) the bilingual in Greek and Turkish Muslim community of Rhodes (Georgalidou et al. 2010, 2013) and (b) the Greek-American/Canadian community of repatriated emigrant families of Rhodian origin (Kourtis-Kazoullis 2016). In particular, we examine the pragmatics of humour in conversations among bilinguals. We scrutinise aspects of the overall and sequential organisation of talk as well as instances of humour produced by speakers of different ethnic origin, generation and social groups. We focus on the construction of “otherness,” which reflects the dynamic interplay between the micro-level of conversational practices and the macro-level of discourse involving contrasting categorisations and identities pertaining to differently orientated ethnic and social groups.

Our data is comprised of recordings of humorous everyday talk-in-interaction during family and friendly gatherings (Georgalidou et al. 2010, 2013, 2014; Georgalidou & Kaili 2018). Bilingual speakers tease and humorously attack interlocutors or participants in narrated incidents constructing discreet identities for themselves and perceived “others.” Teasing, banter<sup>1</sup> and narratives involving jokes elaborate distinctions among different origins and generations and demonstrate relationships of ambivalence as to the *we/they codes* compatible with a dynamic process of change within at least the Rhodian-Muslim community under scrutiny (see section 2; Georgalidou & Kaili 2018). Moreover, Rhodian Muslims and Rhodian women of Greek-American/Canadian origin produce code-switches marking humorous exchanges.

Thus, we analyse mundane everyday bilingual conversations to study bilingual humorous mechanisms interculturally. Also, we tackle multilingual interactional choices as social practices which construct non-mainstream identities and variable ethnic and social categorisations and contest existing ones. We apply a sequential analysis of humorous switches attempting to determine how bilinguals of different age-groups, affiliations, symmetrical and/or asymmetrical positionings, position themselves vis a vis each other and vis a vis the world around them (Bamberg 1997), their bilingualism being a conspicuously foreign element which marks them out.

To tackle questions such as the above, we review work on code-switching done in the previous five decades, the starting point being Blom & Gumperz’s (1972) work on bilingual discourse strategies. We investigate whether there are codes to be switched and functional outcomes of the switches to be discursively exploited by interactants. We take into consideration contemporary debates between an approach to bilingualism as a (trans-/multi-) languaging process operating in conversations perceived as polylingual (Blommaert et al. 2005; Jørgensen 2008; Otsuji & Pennycook 2010; García & Li 2014; Jørgensen & Møller 2014; Canagarajah 2017) and classic code-switching studies (see Auer 1998; Gafaranga 2007 among others). We also investigate whether emic conversation analytic approaches are ultimately based on predetermined and ideologically biased categorisations, i.e. to what extent etic perceptions of codes/languages and ethnic group identities affect not just emic analysis but also the interactants’ discursive negotiation of macro-sociolinguistic categories.

Translanguaging theorists express reservations concerning the basic premises of ethnomethodologically informed code switching analysis. The notion of language, the notion of code distinctiveness, and the notion of a base-language creating the canvas upon which switches acquire discursive value are being contested within contemporary translanguaging approaches

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<sup>1</sup> There is a wide range of teasing practices that could be largely defined as other-directed (designed as) jocular mockery. Teasing is interactionally achieved by participants in conversation through various design and response features. In cases where the counter or elaborative teases are also construed as jocular, the teasing episode constitutes banter (see Norrick 1993; Haugh 2017 and references therein).

(Blommaert et al. 2005; Jørgensen 2008; Otsuji & Pennycook 2010; García & Li 2014; Jørgensen & Møller 2014; Canagarajah 2017). Within this perspective, the question whether there are codes to be switched or whether we are dealing with various degrees of mixing elements stereotypically attributed to different languages, codes or simply linguistic varieties is a prevalent one. On the other hand, ethnomethodologically informed code-switching analysis (Auer 1998; Gafaranga 2007) is based on the distinctiveness of codes as a prerequisite for switches to produce discourse functional outcomes. Adopting the participants' point of view, Auer (2019) distinguishes between the -mostly intrasentential- mixing of codes and interactionally meaningful switches, which mark discourse organisational pragmatic functions and/or participant related preference systems. All the above converse with group identities and language politics (see section 2; Gafaranga 2007; Georgalidou et al. 2013).

In this paper, we claim that the interplay of structural micro analysis as in conversation analytic paradigms and the examination of bilingual discourse as a form of social action can be compatible with both translanguaging approaches contesting macro ethnic and linguistic categories and conversational data analysis. In our case, the question is how the humorous microstructures of bilingual conversational text and the interactional construction of "otherness" interact with the origins, the history and the present situation of the bilingual communities under scrutiny. Thus, applying a multi-faceted analysis based on the parameters discussed so far, we will show how the exploitation of variable linguistic resources mediates the dynamic process of constructing the identity of speakers who, being members of minority linguistic communities perceived to represent "otherness" make strategic use of their repertoire to humorously negotiate discursive outcomes and plural identities. In what follows, we will discuss the theoretical underpinnings of the analysis of humorous code alternation practices (section 2), our data (section 3) and the results of our analysis (section 4).

## 2. Bilingual conversation analysis, humour and identity

In accordance with third wave sociolinguistic approaches, in this paper, we see discourse as performative social practice in which speakers actively and creatively draw on available linguistic (and other semiotic) resources to produce social meaning (Coupland 2001; Pennycook 2003; Bucholtz & Hall 2005; Androutsopoulos 2007; Eckert 2012; Jaspers & Van Hoof 2019). Within this perspective, we strive to combine the microanalysis of humorous situated performance, which draws upon variable linguistic resources, with the process of negotiating multiple ethnic identities as these can be shown to be meaningful for the interactants.

Research on multilingual performance, in the last five decades, has shed light on previously ignored contact phenomena embedded in the discourse of people socialised in more than one code/language. As far as terminology is concerned, by dealing with code and language as a single category, we acknowledge the multiplicity of linguistic resources, registers, local and/or social dialectal varieties which comprise the linguistic environment of any *speech* (in Gumperz's 1982 terms), as opposed to *linguistic*,<sup>2</sup> community, whose members barely share identical language biographies (Blommaert & Backus 2012). Without ignoring the multiple aspects of identity construction processes and the interplay of macro-sociolinguistic categories such as gender, age, social class and group membership with any act of linguistic performance, we focus on ethnic and multi-ethnic categorisations seeking their meaningfulness in the way interactants negotiate them in discourse via humour.

Within this context, let us attempt a brief overview of sociolinguistic approaches to bi-/multi-lingualism so far. As we have discussed elsewhere (Georgalidou et al. 2010), the first attempts to tackle issues of code-switching within the sociolinguistic paradigm dealt with the

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<sup>2</sup> Presupposing the one, usually ethnic, language norm.

phenomenon in accordance with the situational parameters of language use within a specific bilingual community. The hypothesis of *domains* (Fishman [1965] 2000), as well as the *Rights and Obligations Theory* (Myers-Scotton 1988; Myers-Scotton & Bolonyai 2001) base their analysis on the assumption that there is a connection between community value systems and language use and attempt to map the latter onto the former adopting an *etic* outlook on code alternation. A step towards an interactional sociolinguistic perspective is Gumperz's analysis of *situational* and *metaphorical* code-switching as a *contextualisation cue* which takes into serious consideration both contextual and functional parameters (Gumperz 1982; Blom & Gumperz 1972).

However, it is the *emic* perspective of Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis that established the analytic primacy of the bilingual talk-in-interaction and permitted the scrutiny of instances of switching in multilingual conversations. Within this perspective, Auer (1995) proposed four patterns of *discourse related* (patterns I, III) and *participant related* alternations (patterns II, IV). Discourse related alternations are analysed in accordance with a) *preference for same language talk*, i.e. the discourse functional departures from the *base language/code* of the interaction to locally organised turns (pattern I) or b) *practices of mixing*, i.e. conversational structures involving continuous inter- and intra-sentential alternations so that the resulting mixed code cannot be attributed to any single language/code (pattern III). Participant related alternations are analysed in accordance with c) the *conversational negotiation of contrasting language preference systems* exhibited by the interactants (pattern II) or d) momentary departures, or else *transfers*, from the language of the interaction that do not alter the language/code choice pattern (pattern IV).

In more recent work, Auer (2019) further defends a) the distinctiveness of codes for the switches to be discursively meaningful for the interactants, established via the sequential analysis of multilingual performance and b) discusses pattern III, mostly intrasentential, switches and the mixing of codes as a case of blurred boundaries as far as the delimitation of (perceived autonomous) linguistic systems is concerned.<sup>3</sup> Mixed codes have the potential to become codes of their own, given conditions of relative communicative stability through time. What is more, taking into consideration Gafaranga's (2000) proposal for an overall discursive level of reference in which the switching and mixing practices is the preferred medium of talk-in-interaction, such practices, also referred to as translanguaging, can be approached in conversation analytic terms.

Recent sociolinguistics approaches addressing overall organisational aspects of language mixing and the flexible exploitation of variable linguistic resources contest associations with clear-cut categorisations such as ethnic languages.<sup>4</sup> *Polylingualism* (Jørgensen 2008; Jørgensen & Møller 2014), *translanguaging* (García & Li 2014), and *metrolingualism* (Otsuji & Pennycook 2010), *codemeshing* (Canagarajah 2011), and *truncated multilingualism* (Blommaert et al. 2005), among others, problematise the use of "a 'language' as a prime of linguistic analysis" (Auer 2007: 320), seeing "language" more as an ideological construct than an analytical tool (Canagarajah 2017; Li Wei 2018).<sup>5</sup> However, as Canagarajah admits,

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<sup>3</sup> Mixed registers have been in the focus of code-switching studies for many decades but referenced with different terminologies. Gumperz (1964) refers to them as a code-switching style, Poplack (1980) as a code-switching mode, Myers-Scotton (1996) speaks of code-switching as the unmarked choice and Gafaranga (2000) of code-switching as a bilingual medium.

<sup>4</sup> Rampton's (1995) very important work on the switching of codes described as *crossing* will not be considered here as it exceeds the scope of the present analysis.

<sup>5</sup> Canagarajah (2017: 7) claims that language ideologies give identity to a collection of words as indexing certain places and communities. They promote identities based on distinctly labelled or territorialised languages. He also claims that such structures or labels do not constrain people from drawing from a multiplicity of linguistic and other semiotic resources to accomplish their activities in practice, giving new meanings and identities to these words, as translanguaging scholars theorise.

translanguaging theorising confronts pressing methodological and analytical questions as to how to define the unit and focus of analysis when “a flat ontology assumes that everything is connected to everything else” (Canagarajah 2017: 22).

The hypothesis that what linguists tend to take for granted as “codes” may not be looked upon as “codes” by members/participants (Jaspers & Malai Madsen 2019) contrasts the basic premises of analysis of code-switching (but not random intasentential mixing<sup>6</sup>) as a discourse organisational strategy. It also fails to acknowledge the fact that whenever interactants use more than one code, they “contest the clear mapping of languages onto situations and visa-versa” (Auer 2019: 27). The translanguaging interpretation mostly assumes an ideological position in contesting existing linguistic and social categorisations and a political rejection of linguistic and ultimately national barriers. But where do actual speakers stand in this debate? Both mixing as an overall choice and/or juxtaposing linguistic systems to produce the information recipients come to assess locally constitute social practices and identity construction processes. Thus, from the point of view we adopt in this study, there is no actual dilemma in this debate. In tandem with conversation analytic approaches, we see language alternation as an orderly phenomenon. What is more, analytically speaking, delimiting switching as opposed to mixing choices might not be a worthy endeavour. In our data, variable medium preference and a rather liberal notion of a mixing mode that moves along a *continuum* of discourse to participant relevant switches or translanguaging choices (as in the crossing of linguistic boundaries) seems to be at work (Georgalidou et al. 2010, 2013, 2014). Bilingual repertoires are dynamic and undergo change. A continuum approach captures exactly this aspect of a variable preferences/variable identities overall organisational scheme. Within this context, in the present paper, we attempt an analysis of the humorous aspect of bilingual talk-in-interaction.

We examine the humorous aspect of practices of code-switching and mixing that could also be described as cases of translanguaging if seen as instances of everyday language politics in the sense that they are tokens of how people, socialised in variable languages and codes, draw from their individual and/or collective repertoires to respond to communicative situations. Both interpretations of bilingual talk have been discussed extensively in the relevant literature so far, albeit not in connection to the parameter of humour.

Despite the fact that research on the politics and the pragmatics of bilingual conversation as well as the pragmatics of humour is quite abundant (see Attardo 2017; Glenn & Holt 2017 and references therein), literature combining both topics is rather limited. One more challenge has to do with the fact that defining humour, joking, kidding, teasing, banter, etc. may not produce cross-culturally acceptable definitions (Goddard 2018). Whatever the metapragmatic interpretations of humorous incongruities, i.e. clashes of expectations as a prerequisite for the humorous outcome, though, what makes an utterance (un)funny seems to be based on a combination of structural, cultural and local parameters (Mullan & Béal 2018). Conversational humour develops across turns in interaction (Holmes 2006) and is locally co-constructed by participants (Dynel 2009). Taking this as a principal point of departure, categorisations become meaningful if activated, i.e. brought along, by participants.

In our data, speakers produce teases and banter aimed at mutual entertainment (Norrick 1993: 290) but also target perceived otherness for the sake of bonding (Mullan & Béal 2018). Marked register clashes (Attardo 1994; Dynel 2011; Venour et al. 2011), subcategories of which are code-switching and mixing devices, constitute markers of not just interethnic otherness but also of meaningful distinctions within communities perceived as unified and are relevant to the present discussion. Being contextualised as humorous, they form a case of incongruity which brings along the distinct individual linguistic biographies of the participants in the real time negotiation of identities (Blommaert & Backus 2012). The humorous exploitation of switching

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<sup>6</sup>A monolectal view of code-switching had already been proposed by Meeuwis & Blommaert (1998).

and mixing practices is of analytical interest when it converses with the formation of more or less stable interethnic -or transethnic- collectivities. In this context, what constitutes incongruity, what kind of incongruity leads to bilingual humour or even what constitutes a language, or a code remain open questions to be answered. Etic categorisations concerning not just the analyst's perceptions but those of the conversationalists, as well as the local practices the latter employ, need to be mapped on naturally occurring conversational sequences (Haugh & Weinglass 2018).

Let us examine two cases in point. In a narrative often repeated as a family joke, an elderly woman, the grandmother of one of our informants, is urged to repeat utterances addressed to the greengrocer of the neighbourhood, whom she supplied with the vegetables she produced: 'Αρετή μου α φέρει εσένα αύριο κολοκυτάκια και κολουπίτια α πουλήσει' ("My dear Areti tomorrow I will bring you zucchinis and cauliflowers to sell;" see Georgalidou & Kaili 2018). Her systematic violations of the phonological<sup>7</sup> and morphosyntactic<sup>8</sup> rules of Greek are treated as incongruous. More specifically, in "renditions" of the joke, the switching from Turkish (the narrator's voice) to Greek (the grandmother's voice) constructs the locus of incongruity, i.e. the grandmother's performance in Greek. Initially a contingent incident and an unintentional humorous instance, the episode forms part of an often-repeated family narrative in which switching from Turkish, or Greek to the grandmother's Greek idiolect, in Bakhtinian terms, stylising the grandmother (Bakhtin 1981), is constitutional for the creation of contrasts among linguistic competences and different generations of bilingual speakers. The effect would not have been possible if the codes pertaining to the linguistic repertoire of the community were not perceived as distinct by the interactants.

The second case concerns the exploitation of vocabulary discrepancies among community codes (also see example 7). The episode is an instance of humorous multilingual talk-in-interaction, constructed via a jab line addressed by a mother to the fifteen-year-old friend of her children, in turn 3.

Example 1. (Participants: H/M=Hostess/Mother, FR=Ercan)<sup>9</sup>

1. H/M Yarin hangi dersi yaziyorsun?
2. FR: History.
3. H/M Vay vay. Ιστορία της ζωής σου ε: ? Άντε↓  
(Georgalidou et al. 2013: 122–124)

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<sup>7</sup> 'κολοκυτάκια' instead of 'κολοκυθάκια', 'κολουπίτια' instead of 'κουγουπίδια', in which the phonemes t, l and t replace the standard phonemes θ, n, δ respectively.

<sup>8</sup> 'α φέρει-3SN εσένα' instead of 'να σου φέρω-1SN', 'α πουλήσει-3SN' instead of 'να πουλήσεις-2SN', in which person-endings in verbs are confused and the strong form of the personal pronoun is misused.

<sup>9</sup> List of symbols:

- self-repair
- // interruption
- (.) pause
- (()) extralinguistic information
- underlined segments speaker emphasis
- capitals increased volume
- = latching
- [] simultaneous speech
- () unintelligible segment
- ↑↓ rising or falling intonational shift
- . a full stop indicates a stopping fall in tone
- , a comma indicates continuing intonation
- ? a question mark indicates rising inflection
- repetition altering the epistemic status

1. H/M Tomorrow which course are you writing? ((taking exams))
2. FR History.
3. H/M Vay vay. *The history of your life isn't it? Come on!* ((your life story))

Mother initiates the episode by choosing Turkish to ask Ercan about the following day's exam. He chooses to respond by switching to English, a code that constructs a youth identity rather than an ethnic one (Jørgensen 2005). The switch establishes the playful mode in the interaction. Mother initiates her turn (3) with a Turkish marker of playful despair preserving Turkish as the base-language of the interaction. She subsequently performs an intra-turn switch to Greek to take advantage of the incongruity created by the ambivalent meaning of the word *history* in Greek. The humorous effect could not have been achieved in Turkish due to different lexicon, history/a school subject: "tarih," history/a life story, a narrative: "hikaye," a fact that points towards the exploitation of distinct codes in actual multilingual performance. Translanguaging practices thus do not preclude the perception of code distinctiveness for the speakers or their purposeful switching so that the contiguous juxtaposition of semiotic systems, enables "recipients of the resulting complex sign" to "interpret the juxtaposition as such" (Auer 1995: 116), a prerequisite for code contrasts to construct bilingual humour. The analysis will further elaborate on this claim.

### **3. Analysis**

Taking the literature on conversational humour and bi-/multilingual interaction into consideration, we claim that code alternation in humorous sequences in our data reveals different aspects of switching and mixing practices and their role in establishing the humorous mode. We focus on the discourse functional aspect of humorous switching with respect to marking the boundaries of humorous sequences, the construction of the voice of others in narratives, the exploitation of vocabulary/cultural discrepancies, as well as the management of face-threat and dis/affiliation and bonding procedures. We also focus on humour as contributing to the construction of identities of "otherness" for the different groups pertaining to the communities under scrutiny.

Analysis of bilingual conversations is conducted within the conversation analytic framework. Code-switching is seen as a meaningful choice of bilingual speakers. It is discourse related, i.e. connected to pragmatic parameters of the organisation of talk-in-interaction and/or participant related, i.e. strategically used for the construction of aspects of the bilingual identity and dynamic (dis)alignments among participants (Auer 1998, 2005). We specifically approach the humorous switching and mixing of codes as indications of a continuum of discourse related and participant related alternations (Georgalidou et al. 2010). For this purpose, we examine conversations naturally produced by members of two distinct communities of Rhodian society; (a) the Greek and Turkish Muslim community of Rhodes (Georgalidou et al. 2010, 2013) (section 3.1) and (b) the Greek-American/Canadian community of repatriated emigrant families of Rhodian origin (Kourtis-Kazoullis 2016) (section 3.2).

#### **3.1. Rhodian Muslims<sup>10</sup>**

Muslims of Rhodes are Greek citizens of Turkish origin who have lived on Rhodes since 1522. In 1912, during the Italian occupation, and then again after the annexation of Dodecanese islands to Greece in 1947, the community underwent a major shift in the distribution of power. After

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<sup>10</sup> In the examples analysed in this section, Greek is marked in *italics*.

being the dominant group during Ottoman times, they acquired the unofficial status of a minority community. Nowadays, the estimated population of Rhodian Muslims is 2,500-3,000 people and Turkish is mainly used in speech events within the community. As a consequence, over the last 70 years its members have shifted from near monolingualism in Turkish to bilingualism in Turkish and Greek. Rhodian Muslims make use of code-switching devices in their everyday-talk-in-interaction. Within community networks they display their extended linguistic competence to organise discourse, create and alter alignments and construct more than ethnic or cross-ethnic identities (Georgalidou et al. 2010).

In this context, we analyse 3 excerpts of humorous talk for the overall and local organisational aspects of switching and mixing practices. Recordings used for the present study come from ethnographic research that has been going on since 2004. They comprise of 22 hours of talk. Excerpts of bilingual talk were selected as representative of the communicative choices made by the members of the community.

### 3.1.1. Organising humorous narratives

Excerpt 2 is a typical case of discourse organisational code-switching (Georgalidou et al. 2010). The intra-turn switch (turn 6) contextualises the voices of different speakers, the fifteen-year-old friend's, who is throwing a party to celebrate his birthday and the narrator's, who switches to Greek to report her own contribution during a discussion held with him.

Example 2. (Participants: F=Father, M=Mother, D=Daughter)

1. F: Yemekli mi yapçek bu yaşgününü? ((referring to a fifteen-year-old friend's birthday party))
2. D: Yemekli yapçekmiş.
3. M: Doğru mu söylüyorsun?
4. D: Yemek yime de gel [dedi bene, sordum]=
5. M: [hahaha]
  
6. D: =*Να φάω και να 'ρθω ή να μη φάω είπα*. O da dedi yimeden gel. ↓*Οπότε*
  
1. F: Is he going to serve food on his birthday? ((referring to a fifteen-year-old friend's birthday party))
2. D: He is going to serve food.
3. M: Are you telling the truth? ((Really?))
4. D: He told me to come [without having eaten]=
5. M: [hahaha]
6. D: =*Should I eat and come or not I said*. He told me come without having eaten. ↓*Therefore* (Georgalidou et al. 2010: 334)

In accordance with the distribution of language preference systems across generations in the community under scrutiny (Georgalidou et al. 2010), the base code of the conversation introduced and sustained by the parents is the Rhodian variety of Turkish. The first switch to Greek by the young narrator takes place in turn 6 to a) distinguish the different voices of the participants to the narrated incident, and b) to maximise its humorous effect via expanding the initial narrative through directly reporting the dialogue. Switching to Greek to report the narrator's contribution and then back to Turkish to repeat the boy's contribution prolongs the entertainment provoked by an incident contextualised as incongruous in turns 3 (Mother is expressing mock disbelief as to the serving of food at a teenager's birthday party) and 5 (via laughter). At the end of turn 6, the narrator again switches to Greek, thus marking the boundaries of the reported chunk and constructing the coda that serves as closure to the narration (turn 6: ↓*Therefore*). All switches exploit the juxtaposition of Turkish and Greek as distinct codes to construct the reported dialogue and maximise the humorous effect of the narrative.

### 3.1.2. Humorously targeting the young

Excerpt 3 is an example of an overall pattern III code-mixing -or translanguaging- humorous incident. However, all inter and intra sentential switches functions as discourse organisational devices.

Example 3. (Participants: M=Mother, F=Father, S=Son, D1=first Daughter, D2=second Daughter)

1. M: İnsanlar yani barlarda mı yapıyo şeylerini? Doğum günlerini? [Mm?
  2. S: [Κλαμπ-α- είπα.
  3. M: →A↑ κλαμπ.
  4. D1: Δωσ' μου το σε παρακαλώ. ((addressing her brother S))
  5. F: Kim vardı yanında?
  6. S: Erkan vardı.
  7. D1: Μεγάλη ποικιλία. ((ironically))
  8. M: Bi dakkika↑ (.) geçenlerde değil miydi daha onun doğumgünü? Kaç defa- Kaç defa doğum günü yapıyo bu?  
((they all laugh))
  9. S: Πάρτι.
  10. F: →A πάρτι↑(.) πάρτι dedi doğum günü değil.
  11. D2: Geçen seferki doğum günüdür.
  12. F: Her hafta πάρτι oluyo, ayda iki sefer doğum günü oluyo.  
(Georgalidou et al. 2014: 202-203)
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1. M: Do people then have their whatever at bars? Their birthday? [Mm?
  2. S: [Club-a- I said.
  3. M: →Ah↑ Club.
  4. D1: Give me this please. ((addressing her brother S))
  5. F: Who was with you?
  6. S: It was Erkan.
  7. D1: What a great variety. ((ironically))
  8. M: Just a minute↑ (.) the other day wasn't it his birthday again? How many- how many times does he have his birthday, this guy?  
((they all laugh))
  9. S: Party.
  10. F: →Ah Party↑ (.) party he said, it wasn't his birthday.
  11. D2: The previous one was his birthday.
  12. F: Every week there is a party, twice every month it is his birthday.

In accordance with excerpt 2, Turkish is systematically used by both parents to construct first pair parts when addressing their son (turns 1, 5, 8). They momentarily switch the code (turns 3, 10) to mockingly echo his disaffiliative responsive second pair parts in Greek (turns 2, 9). By doing so, they resort to humour, as rising intonation patterns and repetitions, which mark a change in the epistemic status, recontextualise previous talk as incongruous. What is more, by breaching the choice of their preferred code and Grice's (1975) maxim of quantity (i.e. they repeat information that has already been established), they accentuate incongruities, thus producing an extended humorous sequence (Georgalidou et al. 2014). Both parents initiate (turn 1) and further establish the humorous/teasing mode by highlighting incongruities concerning people's birthday celebrations and dates by means of Turkish (turns 1, 8, 12). Turn 12 also serves as the closure of the humorous sequence.

Greek is used by the son in turns 2 and 9 to introduce the dispreferred/disaffiliative action of other-initiated, other-repair, as he contests his parents' humorous criticism on peer social

events. In contrast with D2, Greek is consistently used by the older daughter (D1, turns 4, 7) to construct sibling alignment on the language level. In turn 7, however, despite the fact that D1's humorous comment is done in Greek, she also aligns with the parents in their humorous criticism of her brother's social life.

Code-alternation in this excerpt is discourse functional as it contributes to the establishment of the humorous mode. It also pertains to participant-related alternations with Turkish established by both parents as the base language of the episode. Momentary departures to Greek by them serve the humorous targeting of the young, further establishing otherness in terms of generational distinctiveness. Similarly, Greek is mostly used by younger speakers to construct youth identities. Thus, code contrasts serve both as the means to negotiate humour and to manage variable alignments and contrasting identities within this close-knit family network.

### 3.1.3. Adult humorous bilingual talk

Excerpt 4 forms part of another extensive family dinner conversation this time among adults, i.e. members of the community with advanced competence in both languages. The canvas for this incident is Greek. Switches done exclusively by the Mother (G) point towards variable code preferences and are at the same time functional as far as the organisation of discourse is concerned.

Example 4. (Participants: N=Father 60, G=Mother 55, A=Son 31)

1. A: *Κόψε ένα κομματάκι τώρα.*
2. G: *E iyi tamam.*
3. A: *Λέει τίποτα;*
4. G: *Μ'ε: θα λέει;*
5. N: *Ξέρεις τα- τέτοια πράγματα όταν γίνονται στην Ελλάδα είναι πιο- θυμάσαι που παίρνα από την Αθήνα; Αλλά μπορεί να ναι καλό κι αυτό αλλά το παραψήνουσει. =*
6. G: *=Bak şeyi de var [asmaya].*
7. N: *[Οι Τούρκοι] το παραψήνουν.*
8. G: *Ναι τους κερατάδες τους Τούρκους, ε τους κερατάδες τους Τούρκους↑ ((playfully))*
9. A: *Μην το κόβεις, ξεραίνεται μετά=*
10. G: *=E tamam. Yıcemiz kadar. Dur bakalım üç tane kesmedim daha. Birer tane. Aka↑ (.) Ah να ναι καλά η αφεντικίνα μας.  
(Georgalidou et al. 2013: 122-123)*

1. A: *Now cut a small piece.*
2. G: *Well ok ok.*
3. A: *Is it any good?*
4. G: *Wouldn't it be?*
5. N: *You know the- these things when they are made in Greece they are more –do you remember the ones I used to buy in Athens? But maybe this is good too but they usually overdo it. =*
6. G: *=Look, there is something to hang it [from].*
7. N: *[The Turks] overdo it.*
8. G: *See the rascals the Turks, ah the rascals the Turks↑ ((playfully))*
9. A: *Don't cut it, it gets dry afterwards =*
10. G: *=E ok. Only the pieces we will eat. Look, I haven't cut three pieces yet. One each.  
Aka↑(.) Ah God bless our ((lady)) boss.*

The humorous response of G to her husband's remarks about how the Turks overdo the dish in question (*lukum sucuk*, turns 7-8) is constructed via switching to Greek in turn 8. She contributes

a punch line responding to her husband's criticism of the Turks by a mock insult repeated twice (*the rascals the Turks*). She thus accentuates the reference to native Turkish people as the *they/them* group. By doing so, she constructs delayed alignment with her husband's choice of code in order to humorously contest his distancing from native Turks (turns 5, 7) (see also Georgalidou et al. 2013). The move is in contrast with the affiliative, non-humorous switch to Greek in turn 4. Switches to the attackee's preferred code to humorously contest their positionings as in turn 8 are also the strategy employed by adult speakers in example 3 and can be considered a form of redressive action. Despite the fact that the son maintains Greek in the next turn constructional unit that introduces a new topic (turn 9), this time, she refrains from aligning with his choice of code exhibiting that code-switches can also be random. The episode is concluded by her by means of another switch to the bilingual medium (turn 10; see also footnote 3) which marks a shift in topic and the boundaries of one more humorous jab line by means of which she rhetorically blesses the person who presented them with the delicacy, that is, her husband's boss (*Ah God bless our ((lady)) boss*).

Practices that could also be described as cases of translanguaging as far as the overall established preference for multilingual talk in the community under scrutiny is concerned, are nevertheless discursively meaningful in the local level of (humorous) interaction, a fact that should be analytically acknowledged. Similar questions are tackled in the following section based on talk recorded in another Rhodian bilingual community.

### 3.2. Rhodian Greek-American/Canadian women: Switching codes or just translanguaging?<sup>11</sup>

Greek-American or Greek-Canadian women are second-generation repatriated immigrants to the U.S.A. or Canada. Their parents were first generation immigrants from Rhodes, who immigrated in the 1960s. All women members of this all-woman community of practice grew up in the respective countries and repatriated to Rhodes, Greece as young adults, after completing their education in the 1980s. Most are graduates of American or Canadian universities. As a result of indirect and direct family pressures (*"My parents made us come back to their homeland"* as one of them reports), they married Rhodian men and have children who are now adults (Kourtis-Kazoullis 2016). Being doubly deterritorialised,<sup>12</sup> once as members of young immigrant families and again as repatriated young bilingual adults, is the necessary condition for the bond that has led to the formation of their community of practice.<sup>13</sup> In their own words:

*When I used to live in Canada I was Greek. I had always felt a foreigner there. Now that I live in Greece I am and I will always be the Canadian.*<sup>14</sup>

They are all bilingual and biliterate in Greek and English and use each language with ease. Nevertheless, as one of them reports:

*When there is a need to communicate in written Greek there is a feeling of inefficiency and low self-confidence. This is especially felt when having to fill out forms in front of others – native Greeks.*

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<sup>11</sup> In the examples analysed in this section, English is marked in *italics*.

<sup>12</sup> For the discursive construction of the hybrid identity of the stranger, see Karachaliou et al. (2018).

<sup>13</sup> We use *community of practice* in the sense of Eckert (2000: 35): "A community of practice is an aggregate of people who come together around some enterprise. (...) The value of the construct is in the focus it affords on the mutually constitutive nature of individual, group, activity and meaning."

<sup>14</sup> Similar statements of being perceived as Turks in Greece and Greeks in Turkey are made by Rhodian Muslims who have moved to Turkey (Georgalidou 2004).

Part of their feeling of inefficiency stems from having acquired the native dialectal Rhodian varieties spoken by their immigrant parents instead of “Greek-proper.” The prevalent code for in-group communication is pattern III continuous switchings from Greek (standard or dialectal) to English and back. The community of practice comprises about 30 English-Greek bilingual friends who meet regularly on a weekly basis in smaller groups of 6 to 7 people. Meetings mostly take place in cafeterias and are important for the members of the group because they can talk about whatever concerns them using both languages freely. The researcher is a member of the group and a regular participant in the discussions. Recordings in the context of these meetings used for the present analysis comprise of 6 hours of talk. Excerpts of bilingual talk were selected as representative of the communicative choices made by the members of the group. In examples 5, 6 & 7 interlocutors activate their multilingual repertoire in what can be described as a translanguaging process. However, code-switches also organise discourse via marking various pragmatic functions, a procedure that requires the perception of codes as distinct.

### 3.2.1. Adult humorous bilingual talk

Via continuous switches highlighting semantic contrasts pertaining to a continuum of Pattern III to I alternations, in excerpt 5, friends discuss B’s intention to start swimming in cold weather. Humorous sequences are initiated when D questions the newsworthiness of the announcement (turn 3).

Example 5. (Participants: four middle-aged members of the all-women bilingual group)

- |     |    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | N: | Άλλο νέο;                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 2.  | B: | Άλλο νέο; <i>U:m</i> (0.4) Άλλο νέο; <i>I am gonna start swimming on Sunday.</i>                                                                                                                                   |
| 3.  | D: | Χαχαχα Φο(gh)βερό νέο Χαχα [ <i>Good well/</i>                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 4.  | B: | [φυσικά είναι [θε:-νέο]                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 5.  | T: | [Βάλε:] <i>put your foot inside first και βλέπουμε. It’s freezing</i>                                                                                                                                              |
| 6.  | B: | [Ye:::]                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 7.  | D: | [A:::] <i>You know how I look at it now; Αφού μπήκα που μπήκα I’m just gonna continue an- I keep saying this does really does a lot of good to your skin.</i><br>[Αφού το] διάβασα κιόλας [και ιατρικά κάνει καλό] |
| 8.  | T: | [Ναι εντάξει]                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 9.  | A: | [ <i>Yea:h</i> (.) <i>if you don’t</i> ] <i>have a heartattack.</i>                                                                                                                                                |
| 10. | D: | <i>Yeah, well the first time I thought I was gonna [heartattack] (.) χωρίς πλάκα</i>                                                                                                                               |
- 
- |     |    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | N: | Anything new?                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 2.  | B: | Anything new? <i>U:m</i> (0.4) Anything new? <i>I am gonna start swimming on Sunday.</i>                                                                                                                                 |
| 3.  | D: | Hahaha. Am(gh)azing news. Hahaha [ <i>Good well</i>                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 4.  | B: | [Of course it is [the:-new]                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 5.  | T: | [Put:] <i>put your foot inside first and we’ll see. It’s freezing</i>                                                                                                                                                    |
| 6.  | B: | [Ye:::]                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 7.  | D: | [A:::] <i>You know how I look at it now; Since I’m already in. I’m just gonna continue an- I keep saying this does really does a lot of good to your skin.</i><br>[Because] I read it[and health-wise it’s good for you] |
| 8.  | T: | [Yes OK]                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 9.  | A: | [ <i>Yea:h</i> (.) <i>if you don’t</i> ] <i>have a heart attack.</i>                                                                                                                                                     |
| 10. | D: | <i>Yeah, well the first time I thought I was gonna [heart attack] (.) I’m not kidding.</i>                                                                                                                               |

The question-answer pairs in turns 1 and 2 are marked by switches from Greek to English. The dispreferred act of contesting newsworthiness is mitigated by laughter and done via a humorous

switching to Greek to ironically define the piece of news as amazing (turn 3). Ostensibly exaggerating to underline incongruity, D switches back to English to contribute a discourse marker that signals her intention to maintain the floor. Overlaps and interruption by B and T (turns 4, 5, 6) contest D's dismissiveness of the topic and re-establish the newsworthiness of deciding to go swimming in cold weather as both women align to offer supportive arguments. D (turn 7) realigns with them initiating her response in the code established in turn 6 to contribute her own account of dealing with freezing cold sea water. She organises her contribution as a (rhetoric) question-answer sequence by means of code alternation. By successive intra-turn switchings, she elaborates on the medical benefits of swimming in cold water. The final intra-turn switch describes successive actions and elaborates on the decision to proceed with swimming emphasising the reason for it (*does a lot of good to your skin/health*) by repeating its content in both languages.

B switches back to English in turn 9, which partially overlaps D's turn in what Tannen (1989) defines as a high involvement style that constructs in-grouping, to contribute a punch line that humorously contests D's reasoning. To that, D again responds with agreement realigning with B's selected code (turn 10). In a final intra-turn switch, she assesses her admitting to almost having a heart-attack as *no kidding*. Thus, humorous attacks are instantly repaired via code realignments and agreement with contesting jab or punch lines, a choice that further solidifies the bonding of the group. As this excerpt also shows, women in this community of practice share a bilingual code that in an overall organisational level functions monolectally and serves as a marker of their participation to the community. However, switches exploit code juxtapositions in the local level of talk-in-interaction. In the following two examples, we will further elaborate on this claim.

### 3.2.2. Organising humorous narratives

In excerpt 6, the topic *wedding-gowns* is introduced by B in Greek. In a sequence of turns in which switches to English and back mark the negotiation of the topic and the floor (turns 1-8), B's contributions pre-announce her intention to proceed with a narrative (turn 12) in which voicing the thoughts of the overlooking workers, is delivered by a switch to English. Self-directed humour depicts the middle-aged narrator of the incident incongruously examining wedding gowns.

Example 6. (Participants: four middle-aged members of the all-women bilingual group)

1. B: *Αλλά δίπλα στο σπίτι μας τώρα (.) άνοιξαν τα νυφικά Dimitrios=*
2. D: *Oh yea::h I wanted to tell you [tha::t]*
3. B: [ΔΙΠΛΑ] ΣΤΟ ΣΠ-Λέω-λέω ΠΕ ΠΑΙΔΙ ΜΟΥ
4. D: *A::w (.) ναι*
5. DE: *Δίπλα στο σπίτι μας*
6. T *B is it Dimitrios νυφικά or is it his (.)name και το έβαλε Dimitrios*
7. B: *Αλλά: ήταν ωραί:α μάρεσε δηλαδή που τα είδα=*
8. D: *=[That's so funny, that's funny:]*
9. B: *=[και λέω ρε παιδί μου λέω(.)] λέω λέω λέω λέω after all these ye:ars (.) I mean ακόμα με ενδιαφέρουν α οι μόδες*
10. D: *[E ναι βέβαια]=*
11. T: *[E ναι ντάξει]=*
12. B: *=και η πλάκα είναι ότι εγώ περπατούσα και σταμάτησα και πήγα και έβλεπα τις βιτρίνες and there was two guys working on the ro:ad acro:ss και με βλέπαν καλά καλά σου λέει αυτή at her age she wants to buy a wedding gown ((ελαφρύ γέλιο)) what is she looking at χαχαχαχα*
13. T: *[η κόρη σου, η κόρη σου]*

14. DE: [για τη γκόρη σου, η κόρη σου]  
 15. D: [για το παιδί σου, για το παιδί σου]  
 16. B: [No όχι με-] Πάντως με βλέπαν καλά καλά γιατί (.) ήμουν στο πεζοδρόμιο και ανέβηκα πάνω (.) *cause I wanted to get a good look and I was looking them for a long time cause I wanted to see the fabrics, the st the style*, τι τιου τιου τι: ταντέλα λέω τι↑ ταντέλα βάλανε και λέω λέω τον ρε λέω τον ντζερατούκλη χαχαχα λέω καλός είναι (.) είναι καλός.
1. B: But next to our house now (.) the bridal shop Dimitrios opened=  
 2. D: Oh yea::h I wanted to tell you [tha::t]  
 3. B: [NEXT] TO OUR HOU-I'm saying-I'm saying MY DEAR  
 4. D: A::w (.) yes  
 5. DE: Next to our house  
 6. T B is it Dimitrios bridals or is it his (.) name and they called it Dimitrios  
 7. B: Bu:t they were ni:ce I liked seeing them=  
 8. D: =[That's so funny, that's funny:]  
 9. B: =[so I thought my dear I thought(.)]I thought I thought I thought I thought *after all these ye:ars* (.) I mean I'm still interested a in fashion  
 10. D: [Um yes for sure]=  
 11. T: [Um yes OK]=  
 12. B: =and the funny thing is that I was walking and I stopped and I went and was looking at the store windows *and there was two guys working on the road across* and they were watching me intensely thinking at her age she wants to buy a wedding gown ((light laugh)) *what is she looking at* hahahahaha  
 13. T: [your daughter, your daughter]  
 14. DE: [for your daughter, for your daughter]  
 15. D: [for your child, for your child]  
 16. B: [No no they-] Anyway they were watching me intensely because (.) I was on the sidewalk and climbed up (.) *cause I wanted to get a good look and I was looking them for a long time cause I wanted to see the fabrics, the st the style*, what wh wh wha:t lace I said what ↑ they used lace and I thought I thought the I thought the wise guy hahaha I thought he's good (.) he's good.

Turns 1, 3, 7 and 9 constitute the orientation of the narrative followed by the complicating action,<sup>15</sup> which depicts the narrator examining wedding gowns in a new shop in her neighbourhood (turn 12). The canvas/base language of the narrative is Greek. Switches to English and a mixed code by the other participants mark attempts to alter the topic (turn 2), to introduce a request for information (turn 6) and to contextualise talk as *funny* (turn 8). The narrator switches to English to introduce two male workers participating in the scene. Contrasts concerning their actions (they interrupt their work to watch her examining the wedding gowns) are underlined by another intrasentential switch to Greek followed by the voicing of their supposed thoughts in English (turn 12). Laughter contextualises the incident as funny. Co-participants respond to the imaginary question (*what is she looking at*) depicting the narrator as too old to be looking at wedding gowns in the base language of the narrative. They overlap to offer an explanation supposedly compatible with the narrator's age; that she is looking at bridal dresses for her daughter (turns 13, 14, 15). However, B dismisses their excuse as unfounded emphasising the considerable amount of time she invested in examining the gowns (turn 16). Successive moves and the voicing of her own thoughts are delimited via continuous switches between Greek and English. The narrative is concluded via a final switch to Greek which

<sup>15</sup> Narrative analysis is based on the Labov and Waletzky (1967) model.

constructs the coda of the story (*and I thought I thought the I thought the wise guy hahaha I thought he's good (.) he's good*). Laughter further contextualises discourse as humorous.

Looking at this extended sequence from a distance, translanguaging practices seem rather random. However, close analysis of the delicate embroidery the switches construct helps identify their function as discourse organisational devices. Altogether, they distinguish the group from the mainstream, perceived as basically monolingual, Rhodian community.

### 3.2.3. Exploiting vocabulary and cultural discrepancies

Excerpt 7 is banter conducted via pattern III conversational switchings (turns 9-25). Discussing next year's birthday of one of the interlocutors, they co-construct a party scenario that is both exaggerated and in contrast to the local traditions of their native rural community. All references to the humorously proposed event are done in English, a choice coinciding with the fact that the cultural concepts involved are derived from their American/Canadian cultures and have no equivalent in Greek (also see example 1).

Example 7. (Participants: five middle-aged members of the all-women bilingual group)

1. K: *When were you born?*
2. B: *Fifty eight*↓
3. K: *A: you gonna be sixty this year too! Aw::*
4. T: *I was a self/*
5. DE: *Easter Easter*
6. T: *Easter*
7. B: *Easter Sunday*
8. DE: *Easter Sunday*
9. T: *A σου κάνουμε εμείς? =*
10. B: *=I was born April eight it has to be Easter next year*
11. K: *Ok*
12. B: *Θα γιορτάσω στον καλαφουνό εγώ*
13. DE: *Θα-θα στήσουμε:: [ε::μ ](σπίτι) και να κάνουμε open house party*
14. T: *[Birthday]*
15. B: *Open house party?*
16. T: *SWEET SIXTY και α σου βάλουμε μια ταμπέλα χαχαχαχα*
17. B: *μην το πολύ-μην↑ το πολύδιαφημίζετε*
18. K: *θα κάνουμε sixty and sexy*
19. DE: *We're going to have have a be wild (be) party*
20. K: *Sixty and sexy*
21. B: *A!*
22. DE: *Bring you Tom Cruise*
23. B: *Μην τα γιορτάσω τα γενέθλια μου καλύτερα*
24. K: *E?*
25. B: *Don't advertise it*

1. K: *When were you born?*
2. B: *Fifty eight*↓
3. K: *A: you gonna be sixty this year too! Aw::*
4. T: *I was a self/*
5. DE: *Easter Easter*
6. T: *Easter*
7. B: *Easter Sunday*
8. DE: *Easter Sunday*
9. T: *We'll plan the party for you? =*
10. B: *=I was born April eight it has to be Easter next year*

11. K: *Ok*  
12. B: I'm going to celebrate at the bonfire  
13. DE: We'll-we'll organise:: [u::m ](house) and we'll have an *open house party*  
14. T: [Birthday]  
15. B: *Open house party?*  
16. T: *SWEET SIXTY* we'll put a sign on you hahahaha  
17. B: Don't over-don't↑ over advertise it  
18. K: We'll have a *sixty and sexy*  
19. DE: *We're going to have have a be wild (be) party*  
20. K: *Sixty and sexy*  
21. B: A!  
22. DE: *Bring you Tom Cruise*  
23. B: It's better that I don't celebrate my birthday  
22. K: Huh?  
23. B: *Don't advertise it*

The incident is initiated in English via a sequence introducing the topic of B's date of birth and age (turns 1-8). The first switch to Greek, done in turn 9, marks a switch to the humorous mode as it preannounces the fantastic scenario of B's future birthday party. B preserves the base language of the incident to elaborate on the dates of her birthday (turn 10), but subsequently acknowledges the change in topic by switching to Greek in turn 12 to contribute the humorous option of the celebration taking place during the traditional Greek Easter bonfires (*καλαφρονός*). The utterance contains self-directed humour as the bonfires indirectly refer to the number of candles required for the birthday cake and B's age, a theme that is recurrent in the episode. However, DE, T and K modify the scenario by switching to English to introduce options connected to their foreign cultural backgrounds (the *open house party*, the *sweet-sixty* humorously word-playing with *sweet-sixteen* birthday parties held in Anglo-American cultural communities).<sup>16</sup> Thus, they playfully co-construct a narrative account of the party as an event that mostly pertains to their American cultural origins, further constructing identities of otherness for the members of the group. Word playing with *sweet-sixteen-sixty*, *sixty and sexy*, the latter invoking the famous TV series *Sex and the City* and the alliteration of *s* maximises the effect of playfulness. Resistance to the scenario is playfully done in Greek (turns 17, 23). The incident is concluded by B's final switch to English to repeat her request introduced in Greek in turn 17 not to over-advertise the event, another indirect reference to her age (turn 25).

Women members of this community of practice, share similar linguistic biographies (Blommaert & Backus 2012).<sup>17</sup> The mixed code they use constitutes a bilingual medium and is the means for the construction of their discrete bilingual identity and membership in the community of repatriated women who married native Greeks. At the same time, the switches perform pragmatic functions constructing humour, thematic (dis)continuities, semantic contrasts and (dis)alignments. Despite decades of residing in Greece, the women in our data mostly preserve English as their first language and a mixed code, or else translanguaging practices, for intra-group communication, which mark identities of otherness and membership to this particular community of practice. Maybe, they also mark their resistance to being assimilated to the local identities of both the rural local communities they come from and the urban mainstream community of Rhodes where they reside and work.

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<sup>16</sup> A sweet sixteen party is an important event in the United States and Canada; it is a "coming of age party" celebrating a teenager's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. In the Greek-American or Greek-Canadian context, it is usually a formal event with many guests. Sweet sixteen parties can be held in dance halls with DJ's or live music. Celebrities can be invited. Sweet sixteen parties can also be "open house" celebrations with many guests, held at home.

<sup>17</sup> In the sense that they share similar linguistic repertoires which are indexical of their individual biographies (Blommaert & Backus 2012: 22, 25).

#### 4. Discussion and conclusions

Looking at excerpts coming from the two communities under scrutiny as tokens of overall preference systems concerning the exploitation of linguistic resources, a process of translanguaging seems to be at work. However, we argue for the need for an analytic magnifying lens to capture delicate discursive work done at the micro-level of multilingual talk-in-interaction, when codes classified by third parties as distinct are also juxtaposed by interactants to produce discursive effects, in our case to mark humour. Towards this aim, analysis of excerpts of bilingual conversations was conducted within the conversation analytic approach of code-switching and mixing practices (Auer 1998, 2019). We adopted a *discourse organisation/participant orientation continuum* perspective that acknowledges the multifunctional nature of switches (Georgalidou et al. 2014). Therefore, we examined aspects of the sequential organisation of talk and identity construction processes as these can be documented based on humorous code-alternations. Within this approach of multilingual conversational choices, code-switches were found to organise discourse via marking various pragmatic functions, a procedure that presupposes the perception of codes as distinct.

Within this framework, the examples discussed in the analysis highlight different aspects of humorous events in bilingual conversations. Switching codes delimits the voice of the “other” in humorous narratives, thus thematising direct reported contributions as funny (excerpts 2 & 6). Moreover, the switching of codes is a means for the construction of humorous puns in the case of linguistic and cultural discrepancies of the languages involved (excerpts 1 & 7). As far as discourse organisational aspects of bilingual conversations are concerned, dispreferred speech acts and consequent face-threats can be redressed through humorous switches (excerpts 4 & 5). Similar processes can be seen in discourse addressed to younger participants to events, in which parental authority can also be contested via the switching of codes (excerpt 3). All in all, switches contribute to the construction of teasing and banter, maximise the humorous effect via reporting the discourse of others and reiterations and set the boundaries of humorous exchanges.

In all the episodes discussed, humorous switches are employed to create multiple alignments, different origins and generations of speakers, different linguistic biographies (Georgalidou & Kaili 2018) and competences, different identities and language politics even among speakers of the same generation (excerpt 4). Consequently, humorous code-switching, or switching as a parameter in humorous conversations, proves multifunctional and serves both organisational and participant-oriented aspects of the bilingual speech events. Both orientations also encoded language politics and preference systems related to different generations of speakers and community membership patterns.

As far as the bilingual in Greek and Turkish community is concerned, in conversational episodes among younger members, we observe a shift between the *we/they* codes, as Greek, the bilingual medium, and even English are differently used to construct youth identities, in contrast to the ones constructed by adult members of the community networks. Teasing and humorous attacks also contribute to the construction of the discreet identities of younger and adult participants to events. As far as the Greek-American/Canadian all-women community of practice is concerned, Pattern III switches, which nevertheless fulfil Pattern I pragmatic functions (as switches of the speakers of the Muslim community also do), constitute a distinct discursive mode that serves as a concrete identity marker for the community under scrutiny.

Taking the macro-level of the history and the minority position of both communities within Rhodian society into consideration, the exploitation of multi-linguistic repertoires that distinguish speakers of various origins, cultural backgrounds and generations constructs distinct identities of resistance to various pressures by the dominant cultures involved. The use of Turkish and a mixed Greek-Turkish, Greek-English code insulates people of Turkish origin and

the repatriated all-women Greek/American community of practice against loss of their bilingual and bicultural heritage. To this end, sharing bilingual humour not only constructs in-grouping but is also a means a) for the management of tensions within local communities of practice and b) constitutes a distinct stitch on the canvas of otherness and a means for the management of tensions created by not totally pertaining to mainstream normalised cultures.

Yet, more comparative work on everyday bi-/multilingual conversations -of which humour is a crucial parameter- within both and other bilingual communities is still necessary in order to capture the multiple aspects of the management of variable linguistic biographies and resources as this is mapped on translanguaging, code-switching and mixing practices and identity construction processes.

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