Tímea Kovács

The Meaning of Code-Switching in Anne Tardos's Multilingual Poem *Ami Minden*

On Code-switching

Ever since Gumperz defined conversational code-switching as "the juxtaposition within the same utterance of passages belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems,"[1] there have been numerous attempts to understand the whys and hows of code-switching. There is now a consensus that the use and meaning of code-switching is not arbitrary but can be interpreted as an interdependence "between the subjective, objective and social worlds."[2] Following this tripartite distinction of perspectives on the meaning of code-switching, theorists differ in the importance they assign to the subjective, objective, and social factors as the most salient in the interpretation of code-switching.[3]

Different ways of interpreting the meaning of code-switching can also be detected in terms of how universal or idiosyncratic it is claimed to be. As a continuation of the early interactional sociolinguistic traditions of Blom & Gumperz,[4] some theorists claim that there is a universal (but ethnographically community-specific) normative framework which creates the context in which the meaning and function of code-switching can be interpreted.[5] In contrast to theorists interpreting the meaning-

[1]   John J. Gumperz: *Discourse Strategies*, Cambridge – New York, Cambridge University Press, 1982, 59.

[2]   Agnes Bolonyai: "Who was the best: Power, knowledge and rationality in bilingual girls' code choices". *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 2005/9.1, 24.

[3]   Tímea Kovács: *Code-Switching and Optimality: An optimality-theoretical approach to the socio-pragmatic patterns of Hungarian-English code-switching*, Budapest, L'Harmattan, 2018, 19.

[4]   Jan-Petter Blom – John J. Gumperz: "Social meaning in linguistic structure: Code-switching in Norway". In John J. Gumperz – Dell Hymes (eds.): *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1972, 407–434.

[5]   Blom – Gumperz (1972); Joshua A. Fishman: *Hungarian Language Maintenance in the US*, Bloomington, Indiana University, 1966; Susan Gal: *Language Shift: Social Determinants of Linguistic Change in Bilingual Austria*, New York, Academic Press, 1979; Susan Gal: "The political economy of code choice". In Monica Heller (ed.): *Code-switching. Anthropological and Sociolinguistic Perspectives*, Berlin, New York, Amsterdam, Mouton de Gruyter, 1988, 245–264; Monica Heller: "Code-switching and the politics of language". In Lesley Milroy – Pieter Muysken (eds.): *One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Code-switching*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1995, 158–174; Monica Heller: "Strategic ambiguity: Code-switching in the management of conflict". In Monica Heller (ed.): *Code-switching*, 77–96; Carol Myers-Scotton: *Duelling Languages: Grammatical Structures in Code-switching*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1993; Carol Myers-Scotton: "A theoretical introduction to the Markedness Model". In Carol Myers-Scotton (ed.): *Codes and Consequences: Choosing Linguistic Varieties*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1998, 18–38; Kathryn A. Woolard: "Code-switching and comedy in Catalonia". In Monica Heller (ed.): *Code-switching*, 53–76; Kathryn A. Woolard:

making function of code-switching in a universal framework, others claim that the instances of code-switching are more of idiosyncratic value as the community in which they occur is heterogeneous. Therefore, instead of assuming a normative, static framework, these theorists prefer a more dynamic, conversation-based, descriptive approach, which does not interpret the meaning and function of code-switching in a universal framework but rather demonstrates how that framework is created locally in a conversation.[6]

According to Myers-Scotton, code-switching is a linguistic device serving the idiosyncratic motivations of the speaker in the process of negotiating and indexing meaning against or in line with the expected rules and obligations, the normative social constraints, of a speech community.[7] Linguistic choices are seen as determined by universal cognitive processes as the markedness metric, which actually assesses the linguistic choice as marked or unmarked. However, the actual community-specific set of rights and obligations in which these linguistic choices gain their actual meaning of markedness or unmarkedness are determined by constructed sociocultural norms. Therefore, linguistic choices are constrained by a universal innate cognitive faculty, the markedness metric, as well as by community-specific constructed sociocultural norms.[8]

Auer claims that the analysis of code-switching should focus on its actual conversational instance-specific characteristics rather than on extra-interactional factors determined by the wider social context.[9] The main purpose of Conversation Analysis (CA) is to give a local interpretation of language alternation as a conversational activity relying on interactional evidence rather than on extra-linguistic assumptions. Code-switching should be taken seriously as a conversational activity, a "contextualization cue."[10]

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Double talk, Bilingualism and the Politics of Ethnicity in Catalonia, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1989.

6 Peter Auer: *Bilingual Conversation*, Amsterdam – Philadelphia, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1984; Peter Auer: "A postscript: Code-switching and social identity". *Journal of Pragmatics,* 2005/37, 403–410; Joseph Gafaranga: "Demythologizing language alternation studies: Conversational structure vs. social structure in bilingual interaction". *Journal of Pragmatics*, 2005/37, 281–300; Penelope Gardner-Chloros: *Language Selection and Switching in Strasbourg*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991; Christopher Stroud: "Perspectives on cultural variability of discourse and some implications for code-switching". In Peter Auer (ed.) *Code-switching in Conversation: Language Interaction and Identity,* London – New York, Routledge, 1998, 321–348; Christopher Stroud: "The problem of intention and meaning in code-switching". *Text,* 1992/12, 127–155; Ana Celia Zentella: *Growing Up Bilingual: Puerto Rican Children in New York*, Malden, MA, Blackwell, 1997; Li Wei: "The 'why' and 'how' questions in the analysis of conversational code-switching". In Peter Auer (ed.): *Code-switching in Conversation*, 156–176; Li Wei: "'How can you tell?' Towards a common sense explanation of conversational code-switching". *Journal of Pragmatics*, 2005/37, 375–389.

7 Myers-Scotton (1988): 151–186.

8 *Ibid*. 18–38.

9 Auer (1988): 187–213.

10 Auer (1988): 6.

As opposed to theorists supposing the *a priori* existence of a social reality against or in the context of which certain code-switched instances gain meaning, Gafaranga sees language as a means of constructing its social reality, as a membership categorization device.[11] Hence, code-switching, as any linguistic choice, has to be examined as a way of (re)constructing social reality. Individuals (re)construct their realities by categorizing, identifying themselves in certain ways, and by affiliating to the rest of their reality through their linguistic choices. Hence, code-switching has to be examined as a linguistic device of a membership categorization through its construction of (social) identities, roles, and stances.[12]

Various researchers have analysed code-switching as a means of identity construction.[13] Williams focused her research more on code-switching as a means of assigning roles.[14] Jaffe claimed that by examining code-switching as a way of constructing stances, more insight can be gained into how speakers construct their realities with the help of code-switching.[15]

In the quest for a unifying, comprehensive, and universal framework of the whys and hows of code-switching, a new perspective has been proposed by Bhatt & Bolonyai, focusing on the interpretation of the meaning and functions of code-switching from a socio-cognitive perspective.[16] They set up a socio-cognitive, normative community framework interpreting the meaning of code-switching in consideration of the cognitive, objective and social factors interplaying in the mechanism of code-switching. Their model provides a unified theoretical framework of how the socio-pragmatically meaningful instances of code-switching can be assumed to index certain social constructs and to (re)negotiate the (con)textual framework within an ethnographically specific bilingual immigrant community's linguistic repertoire.

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[11]　Gafaranga (2005): 281–300.

[12]　*Ibid*.

[13]　Charles Antaki – Sue Widdicombe: "Identity as an achievement". In Charles Antaki – Sue Widdicombe (eds.): *Identities in Talk,* London, Sage Publications, 1998, 1–14; Auer (2005); Katherine Hoi Ying Chen: "The social distinctiveness of two code-mixing styles in Hong Kong". In James Cohen – Kara T. McAlister – Kellie Rolstad – Jeff MacSwan (eds.): *ISB4: Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium on Bilingualism,* Somerville, MA, Cascadilla Press, 2005, 527–542; Ben Rampton: *Crossing, Language and Ethnicity among Adolescents*, London, Longman, 1995; Maria-Carme Torras – Joseph Gafaranga: "Social identities and language alternation in non-formal institutional bilingual talk: Trilingual encounters in Barcelona". *Language in Society*, 2002/31.4, 527–548.

[14]　Ashley M. Williams: "Fighting words and challenging expectations: Language alternation and social roles in a family dispute". *Journal of Pragmatics*, 2005/37.3, 317–328.

[15]　Alexandra Jaffe: "Codeswitching and Stance: Issues in Interpretation". *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 2007/6.1, 53–77.

[16]　Rakesh Mohan Bhatt – Agnes Bolonyai: "Code-switching and the optimal grammar of bilingual use". *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 2011/14.4, 522–546.

Code-switching in Literature

Recently, there has been an upsurge in interest in written code-switching, particularly in literature. Gardner-Chloros & Weston claim that there is at least a partial – and not inconsiderable – overlap between the functions of code-switching in spoken and written modalities.[17] A methodological quandary exists, "as many of the models discussed above for CS are based on oral data, it is unclear to what extent they can be applied to the written word."[18] Sebba has misgivings about the applicability of oral models of code-switching to monologic written language, especially when it comprises multimodal features. He even questions whether the term "code-switching" is applicable to this medium at all, or if it describes "substantially different phenomena."[19]

The use of several languages or varieties within the same text, or code-switching, has a multitude of possible functions within multilingual literature. "It includes different languages being used for different characters or voices; to mark out different parts of the text; to represent a mixed speech mode which characterizes the community; or to bring in different registers or sets of allusions. In the case of intense switching within the grammatical unit (sentence or word), it may be used for deliberate comic effect."[20]

Other examples of code-switching as used in literature, often in a humorous or satirical way, include the representation of the speech of speakers of other languages, as in Shakespeare, *Henry V*; Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*; Tolstoy, *War & Peace*; or Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain*. Such instances lend more authenticity than the representation of "foreign" speech through monolingual means, as attempted by Hemingway in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* or Roth in *Call it Sleep*. Code-switching itself may also represent hesitant speech in characters who are not using their native tongue as in Twain's *The Innocents Abroad*. Idiosyncratic multilingual speech can be used to draw attention to the particularities of certain characters.[21]

The Framework of Domokos and Deganutti

Literary code-switching was first theorized and classified by Johanna Domokos in 2018–2020. The six-scale (0-to-5) classification functions as a framework in which all literary heterogeneous code-switching strategies can be included. Later,

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[17] Penelope Gardner-Chloros – Daniel Weston: "Code-switching and multilingualism in literature". *Language and Literature*, 2015/24.3. 182.

[18] Gardner-Chloros – Weston (2015): 183.

[19] Mark Sebba: "Multilingualism in written discourse: An approach to the analysis of multilingual texts". *International Journal of Bilingualism,* 2012/17.1. 98.

[20] Gardner-Chloros – Weston (2015): 186.

[21] Gardner-Chloros – Weston (2015): 186.

in 2022, she, together with Marianna Deganutti, further elaborated the six-scale classification to a 0-to-6 degree (seven-scale) one. According to this model, literary code-switching instances can be classified as covert and overt (zero code-switching), starting from so-called "hidden or latent multilingual practices to the most openly expressed or manifest multilingual forms."[22] According to this formulation, code-switching corresponds to several different practices, which are scaled into degrees from 0 to 5 and subdivided into further categories.[23] The 0-to-6-degree classification of code-switching classification further elaborated by Domokos & Deganutti in 2022[24] utilises Myers-Scotton's intra- and inter-sentential code-switching terms, as well as her concepts of matrix and embedded languages.[25] By employing this framework (Table 1), the current terminological confusion dominating the literary multilingual field is meant to be replaced by a well-structured and clear theoretical structure based on code-switching practices.[26]

Table 1: Grammatic and graphemic code-switching types of the four levels of a literary work (level of the text, narration, and fictional world, plus the paratexts)

0 type or covert, and overt c-s (ZCS)	1st type or Intra-sentential c-s (CS1)	2nd type or Inter-sentential c-s (CS2)	3rd type or blurring the border of matrix and embedded languages (CS3)	4th type or lexico-morpho-logic translin-gualism (CS4)	5th type or homophonic translingualism (CS5)	6th type or syntactic translingual-ism (CS6)
It allows the writer to utilize language as a medium with-out any special reflection on multilingual-ism, so that the reader can better focus on the storyline.	It is charac-terized by the sporadic use of foreign words and tags in the sentences of the matrix language.	It corresponds to a text that includes whole sentences in another lan-guage.	It is a radically intensive form of code-switch-ing, where the matrix lan-guage is almost deconstructed.	It uses a high number of diverse lexical and morpho-logical units in a sentence.	It is neither intra- or in-ter-sentential, nor is it easy to identify the matrix and embedded languages.	Matrix and embedded languages intermingle due to pidgini-zation, relex-ification and other forms of interlan-guag-ing.

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22 Johanna Domokos – Marianna Deganutti: "Four major literary code-switching strategies in Hungarian literature: Decoding monolingualism". *Hungarian Studies Yearbook* 2021/3.1. 43.

23 Domokos – Deganutti (2021): 45.

24 Johanna Domokos – Marianna Deganutti: *Literary Code-Switching and Beyond: Motivation, composition, narrativity, function, and multimodal aspects of aesthetic multi- and translingualism*, Budapest, L'Harmattan / Károli Book Series, 2023, 21.

25 Myers-Scotton (1993): 18–38.

26 Domokos – Deganutti (2021): 59.

The quadrilingual poetic laboratory of Anne Tardos can be classified as an example of third-degree code-switching in the above framework. This type of code-switching blurs the boundaries between the matrix and the embedded languages and dismantles linguistic homogeneity even more remarkably, sometimes calling into question the matrix language of a text. Through the use of this kind of literary code-switching strategy, the author can activate multiple denotations, which would be unthinkable in a monolingual work.[27] In the next part, the third type of code-switch (CS3) used by Anne Tardos in a multilingual poem is analysed within the above framework.

Anne Tardos on her Multilingual Writing

Anne Tardos was born in France in a family of Hungarian and Austrian descent. All her life she was exposed to different languages; she learned Hungarian, German, Russian, and French. Later she seems to have forgotten Russian, but at the age of 21 she learned English. As she recalls, none of these languages was her native or mother tongue, but "these four languages finally made up one whole: my singular, personal language."[28] Hence, she used the collection of these four languages to create her own personal language that allowed her to "cross boundaries and break down the barriers of the established tongue."[29]

In her writing, she also relied widely on her multilingual experience and use. She compared writing to "putting together objects out of curiosity in a given form."[30] By placing, seemingly arbitrarily, linguistic elements of different languages, she engaged the reader or audience in the process of interactive creation, as they had to make some sense of this juxtaposition of multilingual elements. This kind of dialogue created between the text and the reader stimulates the reader to "enter into their artistic consciousness."[31] Code-switching, or rather the juxtaposition of multilingual elements in her writing characterises Tardos' unique writing style. She uses languages to break down the boundaries set up by given languages, thereby creating her own language, her own voice. In doing so, she invites the reader to enter into an interactive dialogue to discover their own "artistic consciousness" or language in which they can make sense of the complexity of these multilingual texts.

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[27] Domokos – Deganutti (2021): 57.

[28] Anne Tardos: *Multilingualistic Existence*, 2011. ny-web.be/artikels/multilingualistic-existence.

[29] Tardos (2011).

[30] Anne Tardos: "Poetic Form: It's What's for Dinner". In Annie Finch – Susan M. Schultz (eds.): *Multiformalisms: Postmodern Poetics of Form*, Cincinnati, OH, Textos Books, 2008a, 526.

[31] Anne Tardos: "Why I Have Been Avoiding Doing Collaborative Performances Recently, and How My Years of Experience Doing Them Has Informed My Current Work". For Panel Discussion at Naropa University, Boulder, CO, Summer, 2008b, 8.

Analysis of Ami Minden

One of Tardos' multilingually written texts, *Ami Minden*, was written in the late 1980s. In this poem she incorporated Hungarian, German, French and English linguistic elements. *Ami Minden* was first published in a book, *Cat Licked the Garlic* (1992).

> Ami minden quand un yes or no je le said
> viens am liebsten hätte ich dich du süsses de
> ez nem baj das weisst du me a favor hogy
> innen se faire croire tous less birds from the
> forest who fly here by mistake als die Wälder
> langsam verschwinden. Minden verschwinden,
> mind your step and woolf. Verschwinden de
> nem innen – je vois the void in front of
> mich, je sens als ich érzem qu'on aille, aille
> de vágy a fejem, csak éppen (eben sagte ich
> wie die Wälder verschwinden) I can repeat it
> as a credo so it sinks into our cerveaux und
> wird embedded there mint egy teória
> mathématique "d'enchassement"
> die Verankerungstheorie in der Mathematik,
> hogy legalább…

As can be seen, longer pieces of text are placed side by side in such a way that the codes used are not mixed. This means that the elements are embedded in a linguistic frame without violating the structural constraints of a given language. However, this frame cannot be considered as a matrix language because there is no hierarchy between the pieces of linguistic elements: they are embedded in this frame, which is only a formal and not a linguistic structural frame, in a parallel way. Therefore, it is not the structure of the language that creates the frame or sets the limits of this mode of expression, but rather the poetic form. There is no dominant language, but the multilingual pieces are placed parallel to one another, creating a sense of transition through different codes or languages.

The title of the poem, *Ami Minden*, is also open to different interpretabilities. *Ami* in French means a (male) friend, but in Hungarian it is a relative pronoun. The word *Minden* in Hungarian means "everything," but it can also refer to a small town in North Westphalia. The title already creates this multilingual setting in which individual elements can be interpreted differently in different linguistic domains. The reader is apparently left without cues, without reference points, without a matrix language in which elements gain meaning. They are influenced by the effect of the juxtaposition of multilingual elements and are involved in the process of

assigning meaning to the text. They are not entirely alone in their search for the meaning of the text, however, for Tardos has given instructions to the performers of the poem. Some parts of the poem had to be read in a normal tone, others in a more intense tone. She also left some parts to be interpreted as silence. Thus, the way the poem sounds, its spoken realisation, creates an effect on the reader (or listener) that goes beyond verbal interpretation by means of linguistic devices and opens up new ways of making sense without relying on a given linguistic structure. It could be interpreted as a return to a pre-linguistic way of experiencing reality in a multilingual setting. It is a transient mode in which transience is aided by switching between different verbal codes, semiotic cues to which cultural and personal experiences are linked with the need to understand a universal meaning. It comes from the very idiosyncratic source of an inner dialogue that seeks to be universally shared. In Tardos' own words, "by switching from one language to another I arrive at some deeper truth than if I were to remain within the confines of a single language."[32]

Caroline Bergvall described Tardos' multilingual poems as "shrapnels of tales from what is both a European and personal folklore."[33] She adds that they can be seen as "notations or inscriptions of a post-babelian narrative."[34] Anne Tardos was clearly fascinated by the cultural influences that accompany different languages. She claimed that language can change the way its speakers behave, or even the way they look. She noticed that the pitch of her voice changed when she spoke in different languages, and even her personality changed. It seemed to her that she might be a more generous person in English and a more relaxed or calm person in German. She found herself more irritable in French or more morose in Hungarian.[35]

By using different languages in her poems, Tardos allows the reader or listener to make subconscious associations with the languages without actually understanding them. In this way, she also uses languages to break down the barriers they create. She introduces ways of attaching meaning to texts by entering the unconscious layers of interpretability, where readers have to rely on their own feelings, emotions, associations rather than the cognitive structures of languages or codes. Meaning is therefore not created by cognitively interpretable verbal cues (codes or languages), but by how the individual unconsciously interprets such cues. Meaning is created not by relying on shared verbal codes, but by opening up new levels of idiosyncratic interpretability through multilingualism. Multilingualism is seen as a means of understanding reality in its complexity on the basis of idiosyncratically activated but universally shared cues, beyond the limits set by given linguistic structures.

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32 Anne Tardos: "Why I Write the Way I Write". Talk presented at the conference on Poetry & Pedagogy: Bard College, June 24–27, 1999; revised 2001–2002, 2013.

33 Anne Tardos: Multilingual Writing, for Example, An Interview the Fall Festival on the Theme: "Alter-Englishes" of the University of Hawai'i, Manoa, Department of English, September 24–25, 1999.

34 Tardos (1999).

35 *Ibid.*

Conclusion

In this paper, the code-switching strategies and instances used in a multilingual poem, *Ami Minden* by Anne Tardos, have been analysed in the framework of literary code-switching strategies set up by Domokos and Deganutti.[36] Based on the 0-to-6-degree classification of code-switches, the poem by Anne Tardos can be classified as type 3 code-switching, as the matrix language is almost deconstructed. In deconstructing a matrix language, the reader of the poem is apparently left without a dominant linguistic structure, a framework within which linguistic elements make sense. Instead, they are engaged in the process of making meaning in a dimension where not only are linguistic boundaries crossed, but also the boundaries of conscious and subconscious interpretation of verbal cues are blurred. Therefore, for this boundary-crossing aspect that characterises the multilingual use of Anne Tardos, it can be considered as an example of translanguaging.[37] Through the almost complete deconstruction of a matrix language, a dominant linguistic structure, the four languages exist in parallel and form a unity. They create a linguistic repertoire in which different socially constructed verbal codes (languages) are used. However, by crossing these language barriers, meaning is created not in a specific linguistic repertoire, but in the quadrilingual repertoire that Anne Tardos has idiosyncratically constructed. Therefore, this literary (interlingual) translanguaging strategy[38] cannot be interpreted in the traditional sociolinguistic framework, as the codes (or languages) do not exist as separate socio-culturally created structures, but as a multilingual repertoire. By deconstructing socio-culturally created languages, the barriers that separate them are also deconstructed, and meaning is made individually in a multilingual repertoire that is universally shared.

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[36] DOMOKOS – DEGANUTTI (2021): 45.

[37] Ofelia GARCÍA – Li WEI: Introduction. In: *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education,* London, Palgrave Pivot, 2014. DOI: 10.1057/9781137385765_1.

[38] Johanna DOMOKOS: *Endangered Literature Essays on Translingualism, Interculturality, and Vulnerability*, Budapest, L'Harmattan / Károli Book Series, 2018, 147–148.

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Abstract

There has always been an interest in multilingualism in various fields of study. Linguists are particularly interested in why, how, and when multilingual speakers in specific communities draw on their multilingual repertoires, and what triggers certain salient tendencies in their language use. This paper examines a prominent feature of multilingual speech mode, code-switching, as a means of creating meaning in literary texts. In particular, the code-switching used by Anne Tardos in her literary work is analysed within the theoretical framework of literary code-switching established by Domokos & Deganutti (2021).

Keywords: multilingual speakers, linguistic repertoire, code-switching, literary texts, theoretical framework

A kódváltás jelentése Anne Tardos Minden Ami *című többnyelvű versében*
Rezümé

A többnyelvűséget mindig is különböző tudományterületek érdeklődése övezte. A nyelvészeket elsősorban az érdekli, hogy a többnyelvű beszélők egy adott közösségben miért, hogyan és mikor használják többnyelvű repertoárjukat, és mi vált ki a nyelvhasználatukban bizonyos releváns tendenciákat. Ez a tanulmány a többnyelvű beszédmód egyik jellemzőjét, a kódváltást mint az irodalmi szövegek jelentésalkotásának eszközét vizsgálja – konkrétan az Anne Tardos irodalmi műveiben használt kódváltást elemezzük a Domokos & Deganutti (2021) által felállított irodalmi kódváltás elméleti keretén belül.

Kulcsszavak: többnyelvű beszélők, többnyelvű repertoár, kódváltás, irodalmi szövegek, elméleti keret