DYNAMISM AND ASSERTIVENESS IN THE PUBLIC VOICE: TURN-TALKING AND CODE-SWITCHING IN RADIO TALK SHOWS IN JAMAICA

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0. Introduction

Radio phone-in talk shows in Jamaica are a potential gold mine for the study of conversational techniques and language styles. On the one hand, they facilitate the listener's unimpeded access to the range of language styles in English and Jamaican Creole used by hosts and their guests - potentially all those individuals in the society with access to telephones - who constitute the talk-show population. On the other, they provide a context for the study of the conversational strategies employed in the society for generating and maintaining discussion about national and international issues. In addition, they provide an ideal data base for the study of spontaneous speech. This paper uses data tape-recorded from such shows as a basis for the discussion which follows.

1. Balancing the power: Interruption in assertive conversational styles

Talk shows embrace a range of topics for conversation. Most calls deal primarily with issues at the parochial level: Longstanding problems related to roads, sewerage, transportation etc. in need of urgent attention in the community. Others focus on broader national concerns: Religion, politics, violence and crime, sexuality - topics which attract a variety of points of view, and foster the greatest intensity of emotion. Regional and international issues also gain attention.

The intention as perceived by the public and for the most part implemented by moderators, is to stimulate dialogue between guest and host, and to provide the listener with insight into the opinions of the proverbial 'man on the street' who, in turn, can have his ideas clarified and his opinions informed. The time each caller is allowed to discuss his views varies, although 3 - 5 minutes approximately is the norm.

The balance of power in radio talk shows is potentially somewhat skewed in favour of the moderator who, in a position of authority, may attempt to dominate the programme in a number of ways. S/he may manipulate the content of the programme by pointing the way for subsequent discussion by initially summarising what s/he regards as salient topics. In addition moderators are usually articulate in English, well educated, widely read and very competent to lead the unwary caller into any quagmire they may have designed. Further, hosts are in a position to disconnect the call or at least end it abruptly if they feel inclined.

If they decide to ignore the moderator's bait, callers may select any topic they choose or put forward any point of view; however, manifesting as they do a wide range of language skills and embracing all social classes and levels of education they are usually less articulate and secure than the host. Those who perceive themselves as outclassed may feel obliged to retreat and withdraw before satisfactorily defending their position. Many do not have the tenacity or confidence to stand in the face of superior language ability or assertiveness. Callers therefore could well be at a disadvantage in terms of overt power.

The balance of power is redressed, however, in at least a couple of respects: Moderators are constrained by the regulations of radio stations to exercise moderation and maintain political neutrality. Identified up front, they are potentially the target of personal abuse, slander and the like issuing from unprincipled callers who, in contrast, often not perceiving themselves as subject to the same constraints, not only indulge in virtual harassment of their hosts but also remain anonymous unless they elect to disclose their identity. As regards these two factors, therefore, it is the moderator who is the vulnerable party.

Turn-taking embraces a range of strategies, some of which are avoided in other societies. The technique unmarked in metropolitan models of conversation (Sacks et al 1974: 72-8) is that of A-B-A-B-A-B in which A indicates by a pause, lowering of pitch or a reduction of speed at a turn - transition point that it is B's turn. Several instances of this pattern can be observed in the Jamaican data - as, in example 1 where voice downturn and pause indicate the turn of the other speaker who uses the occasional 'hm' or 'yah' to indicate his supportive role in the conversation¹:

1	Host	Listen - we had a number of calls earlier on, and the general tone of the calls - general trend was that an Indian group which took part in the parade on Monday..
	Caller	Yes
	H	ahm did not perform authentic Indian dances. Ah you have any comments ?
	C	(laughs) Well.. two zealous Indians brought that group together.. they
	H	[hm
	C	their nation's independence celebrations. If you noticed, the group was largely of ahm - they were negroes - they were not really Indians..
	H	Yah
	C	an' I am jus' wandering if there is anything really authentic about Jamaican Indians.
	H	Yah. Well I suspect what people were concerned about - they would've liked to have seen people who looked more obviously Indian, an' who danced dances which were perhaps more authentic Indian dances.

¹ .. speech pause
 ... long speech pause
 [conversational overlap/interruption

- C ... Well I think what we're - what we're talking about here is more participation than authenticity.
- H Ah ha.
- C I think people are here an' they are zealous; they wan' to participace, an' I think these two persons got together because ahm they wanted to participate in their country's programme; an' I am just wandering if it is more participation we are looking at at this time than authenticity of the dance.
- H There's a point there NJ 3888

Example 2 is another illustration of A-B-A-B-A-B interaction, in which the conversation is more evenly spread between participants:

- 2 H The communities have to own the school. They have to get in there an' say, "Watch ya now - we not goin' to put up with this foolishness any more." We grateful fo' what is being done. We are glad fo' teacher an' fo' government an' so on; but it is clear that Government can' manage the system - Dr. Gallimore notwithstanding - I have no word of criticism in respect of him. But the government cannot manage it; an' the people at St. Andrew, the people at Gimme Me Bit or wherever schools are - up in the Alps in in Trelawny - have to take charge of their own school because is *iz fidem pitkni* (they are their children)
- C You see what is wrong is that the management team at the top is inadequate to cope with all of today's problems in all the schools.
- H Yes.
- C What we have is an explosion of children, you know, an 'the same ol' - time system is still going on in - in the Ministry of Education where everything has to be channelled up to an apex. I agree 100% that there should be a system that the management of schools should be delegated out at the parish level.
- H Yes.
- C I remember when President Roosevelt ah President Reagan took office; he said that one of the things they had to do is give more authority to the states. Let them look after it out there. You have a central control.
- H Yeh. But it can't jus' happen by itself, you know, sir.
- C No no. I'm not saying it can happen by itself.
- H It - it needs a directive on the 12 o'clock news to say: School Boards should all meet before the 15th of August to prepare... RT 3888

The above conversations conform to the Sacks *et al* (1974) model of orderly turntaking in which one party at a time is selected to speak at a possible turn-transition place - also called unit-type (complete phrase, clause, sentence etc.) - on the priority basis of

- H [lose it; an' whenever we who are
 H [Yes. Can I tell you
 C workin'.. I don' have to explain to you what I do.
 H [We who are workin', we work an' we
 C [Because you don' work there; because
 H [protec' our wages an' don' want anybody to
 C [you do not work there. You know, here..
 H [come in an' cause us not to be workin'. We
 C [Hello .. wan' to tell you .. Repeat after me
 H [cannot sit down
 C [you do not work there; an' a wan' [to tell you
 C [How would
 H you know that, Mrs. Gloudon?
 H Because you refuse to discuss the matter in a way which would
 H make me believe.

BG 14788

For most of the conversation above, two parallel statements run concurrently, although each speaker is not simply making a statement, but also appropriately responding, as she deems necessary, to that of the other. The example underscores the simultaneous operation of productive and receptive skills mastered by most participants.

The prevalence of the interruption in so many of the conversations recorded suggests that turn-taking in Jamaica accommodates rather than outlaws interruption and simultaneous speech.

Note on gender and assertiveness

Example 5 is remarkable for another reason. Gender stereotyping (c.f. Lakoff 1975; Dubois & Crouch 1975) would subscribe to the notion of exchanges as aggressive as that in 5 representing male rather than female speech styles. However, both host and caller in 5 are female, and in this society, not unusual. In fact, if the most frequent and persistent callers are anything to go by, it is the Jamaican female who often asserts the greater dominance and exercises the authority over moderators. Such callers, intent on following their hardly-concealed agendas, are confident about their right to speak, the validity of their positions and the power of their speaking skills.

Similar behaviour is not confined to single-sex interaction, but is often evident, also, in cross-sex interaction as in example 4 where the female caller refuses to allow the male moderator's interruption or in example 6 where the female caller dominates the discussion and it is the male host who hesitates and uses hedges and tag questions - traditionally the female domain - (Lakoff 1973) rather than declaratives:

- 6 C [So as a commentator you have no opinion then.
 H [No no .. Le'me jus' make the point I'm making to you. I'm
 C [not .. I'
 C [A don' mean about the politics.

- H You have no opinion about how it is [to be
C [solved. In other words, you can't say to me
H [said
C "I think no .. we shouldn't go to the radio, we should stay on
H [the street". No I'm not
C [No I never said that
H saying you said it; I'm saying you don't have your opinion. I've
C given [you mine .. I want
H [No, but ... no, but
C [to hear yours.
H [Wait nuh. You not asking for my opinion. I'm making a point
to you in terms of how I'm conducting the programme. I am
saying that I am not going to encourage or entertain anybody
who is going to come with charges and countercharges
supporting one [side or the other. But
C [I am not making any
H [.. but .. but can I .. can I finish? Can I finish?
C [charges or counter-charges, Mr. James
[SECTION OMITTED]
H I'm goin' leave you now. Okay?

NJ 588

It is of course important to recognise that to stop at observing this fact is not by itself instructive, although many analyses provided in the literature do precisely that. Far more important, and ultimately useful is to investigate the *function* which the use of these forms fulfils. The question/request form 'Can I finish', in fact does not function as a question or a request at all: It has the perlocutionary force of *Let me finish!* (command). This point is verified by the fact that the moderator does not pause for his caller's assent, but continues, undaunted, making his point. The tag, "Okay?" which ends the altercation also has the force of *This conversation is now at an end* - a signal reinforced by the host's immediate discontinuation of the call.

The question form also serves another function quite unconnected to gender: It is a marker of politeness, only superficially disguising the fact that the moderator has already come to his own decision. It is in this instance directly related to the role the moderator is expected to perform with the minimum of social conflict.

It is necessary to re-iterate here that nothing except for an unwarranted conclusion - viz this man is conforming to the behaviour stereotypical of a woman - is gained by merely counting the number of instances in which questions/tags occur, or even by noting that the male rather than the female employs them in this example. It is the relevant attendant issue of the *function* of the form which, clarified, advances the analysis.

While it is worthwhile to observe caution in ascribing function since, inherent in the functional approach, is the possibility of imputing motives not operating in the mind of the speaker, it is also important to recognise that focus on form in isolation can result in the ignoring of intention which is in fact present - leading to a mistaken interpretation of the social meaning of the data.

Crosby and Nyquist pose the question of whether a woman's style or register exists noting that "in some contexts, [gender differences] will be exaggerated, and in some attenuated" (1977: 320). What they are emphasising is the importance of *role* in language interaction - a point reinforced by the examination of example 6. What appears to be operating is the speaker's playing of a role which she has assigned herself: That of convincing the moderator that he should agree with the point of view she presents. It may well be argued that the speaker is able to be confidently manipulative of the host merely because of her articulateness in English and the social status of her 'accent' (not noted here). The truth is, however, that the data indicate that female callers of lower social status, and perceivably less articulate in English are similarly tenacious and no more diffident about expressing their point of view. (See example 5)

The implication of Crosby and Nyquist's question is that speech styles and concomitant linguistic power-play may have nothing at all to do with gender stereotyping. The present data suggest that at least one so-called characteristic of male speech, assertiveness with a propensity for interrupting others, is displayed in large measure by Jamaican female callers. In this respect, at least, conventional gender stereotyping proves unreliable.

2. Dynamism in the voice: How hosts code-switch

From a socio-linguistic point of view, Jamaica is an interesting case. It principally embraces a traditional standard of English based on a British model, while being subject to the influence, through the electronic media, satellite dishes etc. of American English. In addition, there is an emerging Jamaican Standard English which differs in several respects (syntactic structure, phonology, lexical meaning) from these metropolitan varieties. Then there is the Creole first language of most Jamaicans - traditionally outlawed from the schoolroom and the media, but asserting itself in both domains (as well as others) at very formal levels via the speech and writing of a growing number of educated people. It is increasingly establishing its footing in the electronic media; not only in advertisements, cultural presentations and disk jockey shows, but also as a medium of expression in discussion and call-in programmes. Its prominence in this latter forum is remarkable not as regards the language of callers who, coming as they do from diverse backgrounds, are expected to account for a wide range of variation; but in relation to the output of hosts - members of the intellectual, educated elite - traditional agents of acrolectal focussing.

Two or three decades ago, there probably would have been no doubt about Standard English being the unmarked variety on any radio programme. Radio was a public domain to which were attached expectations of formality no less as regards the speech of participants in phone-in discussion programmes. Hosts were undeniably speakers of English; callers, if not entirely confident expressing themselves in Standard English, would consciously attempt to put their best English foot forward. Substance was often sacrificed for on the altar of form.

Today, the reality is somewhat different. Callers are primarily concerned with making their views understood in any variety with which they are at ease - which can range from anything between formal Standard English to the most informal

Jamaican Creole. In addition, most hosts create a relaxed atmosphere conducive to informal discussion, at some times also themselves admitting non-standard incursions into their essentially Standard English speech, at others, completely switching to Creole. They manipulate different varieties and styles for a range of pragmatic functions, with the emphasis remaining on substance and the meaningful interchange of ideas.

This is not to imply, however, that there is any question about the facility of any of the talk show hosts to produce discursive prose in formal Standard English, or about their suitability as agents of acrolectal focussing. The data are repete with examples which attest to this. In example 7, for instance, the host begins his programme with a comment prompted by the re-introduction, by the Government, of the Suppression of Crime Act (which has given extraordinary powers of arrest and search to the police):

- 7 Okay. We have been discussing on this programme, ah, particularly yesterday, the sociological context in which some of this crime is going on; an' I was pointing out that part of the problem is that the police are not offering - the police, the apparatus of the state - is not offering security to people in some o' those so-called garrison areas; which is precisely the reason why they have become garrison areas. Ah- the police do not represent to them law and order. The police represent ahm another set of people that is threatening them with arbitrary and lawless action. Hence, given the breakdown of security; given the breakdown of law and order from the perspective of those people who live in those areas, you get a situation developing similar to what occurred in the early middle ages, and ahm similar to what occurred in China before the communist revolution; where you get this breakdown of order, an' you get a warlord syndrome developing; and the warlord offering people security ah within the area of his domain, an' therefore winning their loyalties.

WP 30890

Apart from the grammatical correctness which marks the elaborate explanation presented above as formal, educated English, the extended piece employs long, complex sentences incorporating qualification of previously made points, and cross-referencing - both of which point to mastery of English sentence structure at a highly sophisticated level.

It is not unusual, as well, to hear comments using the rather more formal, academic vocabulary of example 8 (in answer to a question about impending tax rebates):

- 8 In all fairness, I mean, I think two things need to be said. One is that the remission of tax for those earning under \$ 10,000 has ah been part of an overall strategy for renewing an' revamping the tax base which has come to a certain stage now; an' I suppose the government actuaries and others will tell you that the burdens of collection at those levels are even less efficacious or more efficacious than the loss in revenue that is occasioned. The other thing is, quite frankly, sir, this is obviously election time.

RT 191288

2.1. *Creole as an instrument of co operation*

In many contributions begun in Standard English, however, non-standard and/or Creole words and constructions are incorporated, apparently automatically, and in response to contextual dictates requiring the contribution to be more informal. The host may want to preserve a personal, chatty level of conversation between him/herself and the callers, and therefore accommodate to their grammatical constructions:

- 9 C You think you workin' fo' the state, sir?
 H Fo' which state?
 C Jamaica, sir, the state. [They say the 'ave
 H [No
 C Church an' State. For they say in Communist countries, the
 people work fo' the state; [so
 H [Yes
 C in Jamaica you think we workin' fo' the state?
 H I don' know what *you* workin' fo', but *I* workin' fo' myself an'
 my family

WP 3189

In example 9, the caller uses the participle without the copula. The host adopts the same construction as a means of accommodating to the caller, thereby maintaining a conspiratorial tone in the exchange.

Shifts to more informal registers incorporating non-standard grammatical constructions or vocabulary are not only interpersonal - a means of the host's establishing co-operation with the other participant. Intra-personal shifts are also employed. In example 10, the omission of the copula occurs where he is stating what he considers to be a maxim. It immediately gives the entire utterance a more informal flavour:

- 10 H Sometimes, in this world, we think there's a solution to everything. I think, myself, that this is one of those things that there is no absolute to - which we have. [inaudible..] an' the problem will go away. Because all throughout history, human beings have always been using mind altering substances of one sort or another. Ah many of these substances *jus' not good for you*, but people are going to do it nevertheless.

HG 120989

This traditional use of non-standard and/or Creole elements to achieve informality with its corresponding in-group one-to-one intimacy can, of course, backfire, as in the next example where the caller seems intent on making what he considers a point of general application, in spite of the host's attempts to personalise the issue:

- 11 C *ju andastan wot a ta:kin about?*
 Do you understand what I am talking about?
 H *no, ʌ do:nt bʌ ʌ dʒʌs ʌ tra:I fləʊɪn ju.*
 No, I don't, but I am trying to follow you.
Hol ʌn likl blɪt nɔʊ. Can I ask you a question?

- C Listen to me for a minute.
Yes
H *s'pɔ:z ɪm wɪn, wɔʒ jʊ dʊ?*
 Suppose he wins; what will you do?
C **Eh?**
H *s'pɔ:z ɪm wɪn, wɔʒ jʊ dʊ?*
 Suppose he wins; what will you do?
C **Mr. Manley?**
H Suppose he won; what would you do?
C *wel dɪ pi:pl ɪn dɪ kʌntri s'pɔz tʊ* ^{f no: ɔv}
H well, the people in the country should be able
^{l No no}
C *dɪ gʌvnmənt rʌɪn dɪ kʌntri*
 to assess how capable the government is
H *wɪ nɒt tɑ:k n ʌb ʊt dɪ pi:pl* **I'm askin'**
 we are not talking about the people
what would you do.. You who called me.. So
speaking for yourself. What would you do?
C **Because I know the country is** ^{rʌɪn ralt}
^{is} ^{being run right}
H **Yow! hear me**
now, nuh! jʊ rʌɪn frɒm mi kwɛstɪʌn. I'm
stop & listen! you are evading my question
saying jʊ kɑ:l mi sɛ jʊ wɑ:n tʊ av ən a:rgjʊmənt
 you called me so as to hold a discussion
ən wɪ avɪn ən a:rgjʊmənt. Suppose he
 and we are going to hold one.
won; what would you do? You personally do?
ju hu kɑ:l mi
 you who telephoned me
C *həv ju pɑ:s baɪ dɪ vɪnjɑ:d taʊn e:rjɑ blɪʃər?*
 Have you ever been to Vinyard Town?
H **Lord! jʊ kʌm fɔ a:gjʊmənt bʌ jʊ dɔ: wɑ:nt**
 You really didn't mean to hold
a:gjʊmənt. ʌ wʌs dʒʌs ɑ:skɪn ju ʌ kwɛstɪʌn.
 a discussion. I was merely asking you a question.
C **I'm telling you.**
H *jʊ hɪər wɒt ʌɪm sɛɪn tʊ ju?*
 Are you listening to me?

BG 1188

Although the speaker uses Creole, he does not respond to the question phrased in that language; he only attempts to reenter the conversation after the moderator rephrases it in English. One possible explanation is that the caller takes a while to understand what is being asked. Another interpretation is that he is unwilling to be seduced by the conspiratorial tone and the concomitant Creole use of the moderator into entering the debate at a personal level. His reference to third person participants seems to support this view, and to indicate an attempt to elevate the

matter above purely personal considerations. The host yields only partially to his attempts, reformulating the question in Standard English, but maintaining the in-group code for commenting on his unwillingness to co-operate and persisting in her efforts at persuading him to do so. The altercation ends without being resolved.

2.2. Language role reversal

The host can also reverse the normal roles of English and Creole as a stylistic device. Since Creole is the unmarked language for the host, s/he can use Creole for metaphorical purposes in order to underscore an opinion or perception with which s/he disagrees. The politician who exploits the man on the street for his own short-term gain speaks the language of the people - from which this host, as objective analyst, alienates himself:

- 12 H Well, sir, you may be right, but I hope you are not right; because tha's a very very dismal prospect indeed. Crime certainly is an enormous problem in this country. You know one o'the things? Our politicians don't believe in fighting crime an' putting resources into justice an'security an' so on; ah .. that is not something that wins votes. You see, what *win* votes is when a politician can go out an' tell people:

Λ goIn bil Λ hɔvzɪski:m her ʃ dɪ pi:pl
 "I intend to build a housing scheme here for the people"
 or, "*Λ goIn tʊ pʊt ʌp Λ dɪs her ɔr Λ dət dɛr.*"
 or "I intend to erect this here or that there."
Λ goIn tʊ pʊt ʌp Λ sku:l.
 I am going to build a school".

Not .. not paying teachers more money, but
Λ goIn pʊt ʌp Λ sku:l
 I am going to put up a school building

That is the kin' o' thing that we respond to as people.

In a similar vein, in the next example, perceptual differences between host and Government are underscored by a code-switch. English is used to denote the order and logic of those abroad, with whose views the speaker agrees, while Creole is used to decry the disorder operating locally:

- 13 H Westminster politics is consensual politics .. the kind of politics that goes on in the .. democratic politics is consensual .. has to be consensual politics .. which means that there has to be some limitation on what democratic majorities can do. Right? That's why the constitution of the United States .. which I keep pointing out .. the constitution of the United States says that Congress can make no law abridging doing this that and the other .. abridging freedom.. the right to free speech an' the freedom of the press an' so on an' freedom of religion. Which means that however big the democratic majority ..

however much the democratic majority may want to shut me up, right, it can have no right .. that, that .. the right to make that decision is moved out of the ambit of the democratic decision-making process. You follow what I mean?

C I do .. I do .. I do.

H Congress can make no law, and admits of no exceptions. Right? Here, we have a constitution framed by *pɔlitɪʃn wɪʃ hɛdʒ at* politicians who have contrived

θɪŋ ʌʁʊnd wɪθ so mʌʃ ɛksɛpʃn ɖat pɔlitɪʃn
to have so many exceptions that politicians

kʃan mɛk ɛnɪ la ðe wa:nt. **Right?**

tionicians can make any law they desire.

An' that is what is out of order an' wrong.

WP 30189

In both examples, the host cannot totally divorce himself from the scheme of things he articulates in Creole; but he uses the superior social position provided by English as a platform from which to express his disapproval.

Creole can also be used as a contrast to English in order to differentiate a personal response from an objective analysis. In the next example, the speaker, in local parlance,

tɛk si:rʌs tɪŋ mɛk dʒo:k
makes light of serious matters

introducing as supporting evidence her considered opinion, formed from personal experience. Articulated as it is in Creole, it is set apart from the objective assessment of the situation offered in her formal role: That of host/commentator.

- 14 H While we're at it .. we're still on the Hot Line .. somebody wants to know what is happening with condensed milk. For the past fortnight, they've been going to some supermarkets and its been slow coming forward; an' what we're getting is the runny Betty. A mean I'm told that is the quality of the milk powder or butter fat or

sʌpm .. bʌt mɛk mɪ tɛl ʊnʊ sʌpm .. unu kud ɛnta betɪ ɪn dɪ
something .. but listen to me; you could enter Betty in the
ɔlɪmptɪks. Mɪ nɛvə si: ʌ milk kʃan rʌn so.

Olympics. I have never seen such a thin milk.

As you open it, an If ju do:n wafʃ you end
if you are not careful

up with half a cup of condensed milk. You noticed it? I would like to enter Betty in the hundred yards dash, commin' coas' to coas', pos' to pos'. *Wɪ kʃa:n dʊ* a little better than that?

Surely we can do

BG 0290

2.3. Identification with the caller

By far the largest number of examples of code-switching from English to Creole, however, represents the host's direct identification with the language, opinions and concerns of the caller. In example 15 which follows, the caller is at pains to use Jamaican English phonology, although her syntax and idiom are often Jamaican Creole. The host acts as a facilitator of his guest's point of view, and either echoes or provides a slightly modified iteration of her comment in order to emphasise it:

- 15 C *an ðe ka:n get It an s/vm j/ŋ pi:pl getIn a:l*
and they can't get them, and some young people are collecting as
faIv wan taIm ...
many as five at any one time.
- H **Yes ma'am**
- C *an ðe nɔt te:kIn ðI tIz fɔ ðI be:bI ðe*
And they are not purchasing things for the baby:
tʃe:ndʒ It an te:k m/vl
they convert the stamps to money
- H **Yes**
- C **An tha's not right.**
- H *laIk hʌv ðe sɛl ðe zɪŋk an baI a:l kaIn ^*
In the same way that they have sold the zink
[*sterIo an tIz*
and brought all kinds of stereos and the like
- C **Yes sir .. An' you** [**know**
[**Yes** *wId dI bɪldɪŋ stʌmp*
with the building stamps
- C *ja aI bli:v It sʌd kʌ ɔv frɔm ðI j/ŋ pi:pl*
Yes. I believe young people should be prevented
[*let ðe go an lʌk wɔk you know*
from receiving [stamps] & be sent to work.
- H **But I .. yes indeed ma'am. I think it is a**
disgrace that we have young [**people in this**
[**Yes sir. Because**
- C *sʌ had a bɪs ɔv ðem ðe dʒɛrɪ kəl hɪɾ ðetɛk*
there are many of them who [use the money] to
It an spʊɔrt an ðI tʃɪldrɛn dem daɪn fʌ hʌŋgrɪ
jerry-curl their hair and to entertain themselves
dem dʒʌs fɪ:d dem ɔn pe: tɪn makrɪl an fɪbwa
while the children are starving. They feed them exclusively
[**Yes**
- H
- C *an ðat kʌn ɔt gro:a* [*tʃaɪl*
on canned mackerel and flour which is not a nutritious meal.
- H [**Yes. Tin mackerel & flour**
- C **Sir?**
- H *dɛ dɛ tɛk m/vl baI tɪn makrɪl an fɪbwa an*
So they use the money to buy canned mackerel
dʒɛrɪ kəl [*dɛm he:ɾ*

- don't have your money? Isn't it the same business that pays them?
- C *jε an wen a went dier tv bal dɪfrɪdʒde: ta:k*
Yes. And when I went there to buy the fridge,
- [*tv mi so gud*
they treated me so well
- H **O lord, Yes.** *spi:kɪ spo:kɪ kja:n d/n.*
Well-spoken and accommodating
- C *an wen nɔv a wan dɪ sɔɪs ɔv mɪ frɪdʒ a kja:n*
but now I need the service of my fridge, I am
get ɪ dɪ sɔɪs ɔv mɪ frɪdʒ
unable to get it
- H **Alright, dear, hol' on let me try. I'll**
try once again, an' a mean them well, but
they really have to brush up on dis side of
- C [**it**
ɪz bɪka:z
it is because
- H **you see, I don't know who their owners**
are; I have nothing agains' them, but ..

RT CS

The code-switch signifies the host's sharing of his caller's frustration which he becomes involved in acting out, rather than just commenting on. The return to English marks his return to his substantive role - that of objectively assessing the situation, and providing a remedy by way of some concrete action.

Examples 8 to 16 serve to illustrate the fact that talk show moderators, educated as they are, are not necessarily solely vehicles of acrolectal focussing. What they provide is evidence of the fact that Jamaican Creole is an integral part of the communicative competence of even the most knowledgeable and highly intellectual within the society, and that it has penetrated domains from which, traditionally, it has been prohibited.

3. Some concluding observations

One important relationship which has not been explicitly examined so far is that existing between *topic* and the participant's choice of language variety and conversational style. It would seem reasonable to predict that the more abstract and/or international topics would elicit greater objectivity of approach and therefore be less likely to trigger switches to Creole, or overly assertive treatment. The relationship, however, is not so simple.

Hosts, when intending to be objective, do tend to use formal English; but there is no guaranteeing that they will stick to it. An attempt to relate the principles raised in the discussion of any topic to their own or the national life might trigger a strong reaction at a personal level and a concomitant switch to more informal-/non-standard English or to Jamaican Creole. In addition, a response from a guest might lead to the host's frustration, anger, indignation or approval, all of which have

been shown to trigger a switch. The latter cause is, in fact, the more likely to elicit an assertive and/or a personal response.

Similarly, the greater a participant's involvement in the topic, or the strength of his/her opinion about it, the greater the possibility of overlapping with and interruption of the other speaker occurring. As the examples discussed in this paper indicate, however, neither feature is exclusive to Creole, informal, or indeed male speech. Any context in which speakers of either gender become intensely involved is likely to trigger interruption and promote simultaneous speech.

In Jamaica, simultaneous speech is not the anathema it is to Zimmerman & West (1977). It does not result in the automatic silencing of one of the parties, and it does not necessarily disrupt the flow of the interaction. As has been illustrated (example 6), two parallel conversations can continue simultaneously, covering a number of turns. Further, some speakers are able to continue the articulation of their own point of view while at the same time responding to what the other speaker is saying simultaneously; displaying a dexterity in conversational manipulation not unusual in the society. A turn-taking model for Jamaica would need to embrace this phenomenon.

It is predictable, and therefore unremarkable that those callers who are primarily Creole speakers will attempt to adjust their speech toward English which is still the acknowledged language of public discourse. What is worthy of note is the extent to which hosts employ style shifts and/or language switches at the various levels of:

- a single word
- phonology
- phrase insertion
- whole sentences or paragraphs for anecdotes, quotes

Such adjustments are effected in order to

- support or chastise callers
- dissuade callers from continuing in a particular vein
or pursuing a particular line of argument
- reinforce a point being made
- encourage co-operation

The strategies are meant to enhance speaker effectiveness in promoting and maintaining conversation; callers, less articulate and secure than their hosts, nevertheless respond in a way that suggests that there are shared norms relating to the interpretation of assertiveness, style shifting and code switching which may not always correspond to practices in metropolitan societies. Studies of spontaneous language use in contexts such as talk shows could go a far way in supplementing and expanding our present understanding of these phenomena.

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