Translanguaging or code-switching?
Reassessing mixing of English in Hong Kong Cantonese

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The emergence of “translanguaging” as a concept referring to bilingual practices has challenged the appropriateness of “code-switching” – the term that has been most influential in studies of bilingualism and language mixing. Reassessing the literature on Cantonese-English mixing in Hong Kong, this paper suggests that the kind of spontaneous code-switching in peer talk, largely intra-sentential (or intra-clausal) and intra-turn, can indeed be recast as translanguaging, where speakers transcend language boundaries between Cantonese and English for the purpose of meaning-making. Nevertheless, Hong Kong speakers do constantly draw language boundaries by marking words as English or Cantonese, both in metalinguistic judgment and in real-time language production. Revisiting an unpublished dataset of radio talk, this paper further illustrates a number of sequences in which Cantonese speakers may “languagise” the code-switched words or expressions as “English”. It is concluded that, in a Conversation-Analytic understanding, the difference between “translanguaging” and “code-switching” boils down to “languagising”, and the contrast between the two notions may have been overstated.

Keywords: translanguaging, code-switching, languagising, Hong Kong Cantonese, repair, radio talk

1. Introduction

The study of bilingualism has welcomed a wealth of new terms in which to describe bilingual language practice, and the one that has received most attention so far is translanguaging (García and Li Wei, 2014; Li Wei, 2018, Otheguy, García and Reid, 2015, 2018, etc.), which is defined as “the deployment of a speaker’s full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially
and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages” (Otheguy, García and Reid, 2015:281). One issue that has arisen is its relationship with code-switching, the term that has been most widely accepted in referring to bilingual practices in the linguistics literature (e.g. Auer, 1984; Gumperz, 1982; Myers-Scotton, 1993a, 1993b, etc.). Those who embrace “translanguaging” have suggested that “code-switching” presumes two or more clearly delineated “codes”, with a “code” referring to a “language” (García and Lin, 2017; Li Wei, 2018). However, a “code” or a “language” is in fact a social construction (i.e. a “named language”) rather than a psychologically real entity, as boundaries between languages are socially and politically defined (Bailey, 2007; García and Otheguy, 2020; Otheguy, García and Reid, 2015, 2018). In this view, instead of a combination of languages, what bilingual speakers have is one holistic – rather than compartmentalized – language repertoire from which they freely draw resources, that is, linguistic items that may belong to different “named languages”, for meaning-making in various communicative contexts (García and Lin, 2017; García and Otheguy, 2020; Otheguy, García and Reid, 2015, 2018).

Language contact between Cantonese and English has a long history (Chan, 2021), and there is by now quite a substantial literature about the mixing of English words and phrases in Hong Kong Cantonese. In particular, intra-sentential alternation of English and Cantonese in which English words and phrases are inserted into Cantonese-based clauses or sentences (Chan, 1998; Li, 2017). Granted that Cantonese has been the home language of the majority in Hong Kong population and a default language in spoken communication within this majority (Bacon-Shone and Bolton, 2008; Bacon-Shone, Bolton and Luke, 2015; Bolton and Luke, 1999; Li, 1999; Luke and Richards, 1982), one central focus in these studies is why a Hong Kong bilingual code-switches to English without adhering to Cantonese throughout the conversation. For Gibbons (1987), an English word or expression is mixed in Hong Kong Cantonese because the bilingual speaker is simply more familiar with it – probably because the concept was first learnt in English – than a Cantonese counterpart, if any. Alternatively, the English word may convey nuanced meaning not carried by its Cantonese counterpart, or the mixing of English into Cantonese indexes a distinct identity. The identity-marking function of mixing English and Cantonese is echoed in what Luke (1998) calls orientational language mixing, but Luke (1988) also adds that the English word or expression may act as an informal variant of a Cantonese counterpart (i.e. expedient language mixing – Luke (1998)). For Li (2000, 2001), the English word conveys different connotations or even referential meaning that elude its translation equivalent in Cantonese. Moreover, a code-switched expression (i.e. a phrase or a sentence containing both Cantonese and English words) may convey more communicative effect (e.g. bilingual pun), or it may be more economical than a
purely Cantonese expression (i.e. *The principle of economy* – Li, 2000). Besides, it has been observed that many English expressions mixed into Cantonese are technical terms related to particular topics (e.g. academic subjects, music, fashion, food, etc. – see Chen and Carper, 2005; Li, 1999; Li and Tse, 2002). Instead of seeing topics as a direct trigger of code-switching, topic-oriented code-switching had better be understood as an epiphenomenon open to some usage-based explanation. More specifically, speakers have been highly exposed to these English terms in their everyday life – for instance, in English-medium schools (for the academic terms – Li and Tse, 2002) and/or in the written media (Lee, 2000; Li, 1998, 2001). It is also possible that speakers simply do not know the Cantonese equivalents, or they learnt the concepts first in English (Gibbons, 1987; Li and Tse, 2002). Accordingly, these English expressions are activated easily and used spontaneously although the speakers are talking in Cantonese. An alternative account is that English has been “naturalized” in the speech of Hong Kong Cantonese speakers by prevailing language ideology under which English is deemed more appropriate in talking about these topics (Lee, 2000).

All these accounts are sensible explanations of Cantonese-English code-switching, if they may sound somewhat instinctive, being largely based on the researchers’ observation. That being said, these explanations do have some support from personal reflection of speakers who often engage in such language practice (Chen and Carper, 2005; Li and Tse, 2002). In particular, Li and Tse (2002), who asked a group of students to avoid using any English for one day and to reflect on the experience, highlight the spontaneity and compulsoriness of Cantonese-English code-switching in the Hong Kong context. The paper concludes that smooth and efficient communication is a much more primary motivation than identity-marking in code-switching in Hong Kong. Chan (2009) generalizes various accounts of code-switching to English due to a gap in Cantonese – be it lexical (i.e. an English expression is used since there is no Cantonese word with equivalent meaning – Li, 2000, 2001; Li and Tse, 2002) or stylistic (i.e. an English expression is used since there is no Cantonese word in the same informal style – Luke, 1998) – as “the lack of equivalence” argument.

Looking into the code-switching literature outside Hong Kong, the kind of quick and spontaneous mixing of two languages or “codes”, mostly on an intra-sentential (or intra-clausal) and intra-turn level and with one language being more dominant (i.e. Cantonese in our case, technically known as the “Matrix Language” – Myers-Scotton, 1993b), is hardly uncommon. It recalls what Gumperz (1982) describes as *conversational code-switching* which is fluent and unconscious and which tends to be used in informal peer talk, a practice attested in various immigrant communities in the United States. Myers-Scotton (1993a), based on her African data, describes this kind of bilingual practice as *CS* (i.e. *code-switching*)
itself as the unmarked choice, in which code-switching, being mostly intrasentential and intra-turn and produced by all participants, does not index a change of interpersonal relationship. Switching due to the switched word/phrase being the right expression – since there is no equivalent word or phrase that expresses the exact meaning or that is familiar or accessible in the language the speaker has been using – has been widely reported, including the Catalan community in Mexico (Curcó, 2005), the Turkish community in the Netherlands (Backus, 1998), and the French communities in Ottawa and Hull, Canada (Poplack, 1988). The right word or expression to convey a certain meaning has been called the *mot juste*, and code-switching is often motivated by the *mot juste* missing in a language that is being used (Gafaranga, 2000; Poplack, 1988), which is another way of formulating the “lack of equivalence” argument (Chan, 2009). Bhatt and Bolonyai (2011) capture this motivation of code-switching as the Principle of Interpretive Faithfulness.

Focusing on the Hong Kong context, if using the *mot juste* is the primary motivation of switching to English, whether there is a Cantonese counterpart or not, it is indeed plausible to recast Cantonese-English code-switching or code-mixing as translanguaging (Li, 2017). Apparently, translanguaging better captures the “in-between-ness” of English words which have been frequently used and in a sense conventionalized in Hong Kong Cantonese (i.e. words or expressions which cannot be clearly pinned down as “English” or “Cantonese” – such as “friend”, “lunch”, “keep”, etc.). What is more, in a translanguaging lens, language mixing of Cantonese and English in general is motivated by efficient communication or meaning-making which takes priority over observing language boundaries. Actually, long before recent discussion of translanguaging, various descriptions other than code-switching or code-mixing have been proposed, suggesting that bilingual practices in Hong Kong are better construed as one language or code in itself rather than switching between or mixing of two languages or codes. Whether it is “U-gay-wa” (literally, the language of university students – Gibbons, 1979), “MIX” (Gibbons, 1987), or the “mixed code” (Li, 2000), the implication is that what appears to be the mixing of two languages can be viewed as one language or code for the bilingual speakers. Li and Tse (2002) conclude that code-switching with English and Cantonese is so pervasive that one may adopt a monolectal view of code-switching (Meeuwis and Blommaert, 1998), in which both English and

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1. These terms are not exactly identical to the established loanwords (or borrowings) which are phonologically integrated to Cantonese in the Hong Kong context (e.g. “baa1-si2” for “bus”) and which speakers are more inclined to describe as “Cantonese” (Chan, 2021).

2. Gibbon’s (1979, 1987) dataset of Cantonese-English code-mixing was drawn from recorded speech of students at the University of Hong Kong.
Cantonese elements make up a code and they are not clearly differentiated and identified as English or Cantonese by Hong Kong bilinguals. These conceptions come close to what has been called a “holistic” language repertoire or network of language resources by the translanguaging scholars (Lin, 2019; Otheguy, García and Reid, 2015, 2018). Departing further from current literature on Cantonese-English mixing in Hong Kong (Gibbons, 1979, 1987; Li, 1999, 2000; Li and Tse, 2002), on a translanguaging view, we may not even assume that Cantonese is the default language in spoken interaction among Hong Kong Chinese speakers and hence code-switching is a digression that has to be explained or motivated by some discourse functions (Bailey, 2007). That is to say, while we may continue to see the use of English as motivated by the lack of equivalence in Cantonese (Chan, 2009) or induced by specific topics (Chen and Carper, 2005; Li and Tse, 2002) or various discourse-pragmatic functions, we do not need to justify or explain the “switching” in these terms. In a translanguaging perspective, speakers simply use an English term or expression as the mot juste which best meets their communicative needs in real-time conversation, regardless of whether a meaning equivalent is available in Cantonese or whether the English expression is induced by topic (i.e. code-switching to English is not always induced by topic – see more discussion below) or discourse-pragmatic functions.

There are, however, two major problems in fully adopting a translanguaging view on Cantonese-English mixing in the speech of Hong Kong bilinguals. Firstly, although the practice of mixing suggests that the bilinguals do not stick with the language boundaries between English and Cantonese, there is clear evidence that the bilingual speakers, not only the researchers or the analysts, are making these boundaries. In Li and Tse (2002) and Chen and Carper (2005), informants refer to the bilingual practice as either “gong2 jing1-man2 講英文 (i.e. speak English)” or “zung1-jing1 gaap3-zaap6/ 中英夾雜 (i.e. Chinese-English mixing, with “Chinese” (zung1 中 or zung1-man2/中文) often used to refer to Cantonese in spoken communication in the Hong Kong context – Bacon-Shone and Bolton, 2008; Bolton and Luke, 1999)”. The former phrase – when it refers to mixing of English in Cantonese – takes it for granted that Cantonese is the default language in

3. Whether an English item has an equivalent in Cantonese may vary among speakers or even genres. See Chan (2009) and Lee (2000) for some discussion.

4. Early researchers of code-switching proposed different typologies of the functions or motivations of code-switching (e.g. Gumperz, 1982); however, this kind of “classificatory” approach has long been deemed unsatisfactory as it falls short of offering a systematic account of code-switching (Auer, 1995; Gumperz, 1982; Myers-Scotton, 1993a).

5. Transcriptions of Cantonese in this paper follow the Cantonese Romanization Scheme (i.e. 粵拼) designed by the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong. The numbers indicate different tones in Cantonese. Details of the Scheme can be found on http://www.lshk.org/node/31.
ongoing interaction but the speakers divert to English. This presumption indicates a monoglossic ideology – the idea that Hong Kong Chinese should speak only Chinese, that is, Cantonese in the Hong Kong context – which has been strong despite the prevalence of language mixing (Chen, 2008). The latter phrase indicates that two distinct languages of “Chinese (i.e. Cantonese in the Hong Kong context)” and “English” are being mixed, implying that the two are discrete, bounded systems. Secondly, in addition to metalinguistic judgment, that is, Hong Kong speakers reflecting upon and talking about their bilingual practice after interaction, they may also draw boundaries between English and Cantonese in their language production. More precisely, they classify or mark a word/phrase as “English” during interaction, a process we may call languagising – following recent works in Jaspers and Madsen (eds.) (2019). In connection with this, this paper aims to examine language practices that have so far been overlooked in the literature of code-mixing or code-switching in Hong Kong. Specifically, rather than the English words or expressions that are mixed into Cantonese, it studies the ways in which they are languagised as “English” in conversation.

The major strategy by which a Hong Kong speaker marks an English word or expression in bilingual conversation is to translate it into Cantonese. In my personal experience and observation, this practice has been more frequent in the media (e.g. television and radio) than in everyday conversation, although it is not obligatory in the media and it may be attested in face-to-face, spontaneous conversation too. The following utterance was produced by an informant in Chen and Carper’s (2005) video.

(1) jyu4-gwo2 jiu3 ngo5 dei6 complete gong2 (.) cyun4-bou6 jing1-man2
    “If we are required to speak English completely...”
    (From Chen and Carper, 2005)

In this extract, the speaker switched to English (i.e. “complete”) but translate it to Cantonese (i.e. “cyun4-bou6/全部 (wholly/completely)”). The act of translating the term to Cantonese is intriguing. If the English word “complete” is indeed the mot juste (Poplack, 1988; Gafaranga, 2000), the speaker has already achieved the purpose of communication. Why does the speaker bother to bring in the Cantonese translation which is less satisfactory (i.e. not the mot juste)? One commonsense explanation is that, especially under a media setting, the speaker is catering for those audiences who may not understand English. This explanation is at best

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6. “Languagising” is different from “languaging” which refers to “the process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language” (Swain, 2006: 89), in other words, using language for meaning-making and learning.
partial given the substantial exposure to English in Hong Kong and the pervasiveness of language mixing with English, as it is unclear how many (would-be) audiences are Cantonese monolinguals who do not understand a rather common word in English (i.e. “complete”). It is least likely that the speaker was assuming that the interviewer – who is a fluent English speaker – did not understand the word. What is more, in a non-classroom setting, the speaker is not teaching an English vocabulary item to students by explaining it in Cantonese. Another possible account is that the speaker is emphasizing the meaning of “complete” by repeating it in Cantonese. However, emphasis can equally be achieved by repeating the English word (“complete”) again without switching to Cantonese, and, arguably, the effect of emphasis is already conveyed by the code-switch (from Cantonese to English) rather than the repetition of meaning in Cantonese.

As this paper argues, the practice exemplified in (1) shows that the speaker is acutely aware that he or she is switching to English which is deemed not entirely appropriate in ongoing interaction, and, therefore, by providing the Cantonese translation, he or she is repairing that “error” or “problem”. The concept of repair is drawn from Conversation-Analysis and it is well attested in monolingual conversation. For instance, a speaker produces a wrong word by slip of the tongue and then corrects that error by producing the right one afterwards (Goffman, 1981; Schegloff, 2007; Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977). However, not only an “error” but also “anything in talk may be treated as in need of repair... a possible repairable or a possible trouble-source” (Schegloff, 2007:100). Extending the concept of repair to bilingual conversation, Gafaranga (2000, 2007, 2012; also see Gafaranga and Torras i Calvo, 2001; Gafaranga and Torras, 2002) put forward the term Medium Repair for language practice such as (1) in which the speaker repairs the Medium, that is, the language or languages the speaker orients himself or herself to in an interaction. For Gafaranga (2000, 2012), Medium refers to the “base language(s)” or “code(s)” of a conversation which can be monolingual or bilingual (Gafaranga and Torras i Calvo, 2001) when switching becomes natural or unmarked for the participants. Hence, the term “language”, which implies “one language”, is avoided in favour of “Medium”. One key idea throughout all these works is that the Medium of conversation is defined in the perspective of speakers or participants (Gafaranga and Torras, 2002) and inferred in conversational sequences. For instance, in Example (1), the speaker considers that Cantonese is the base language or Medium of the ongoing conversation. Consequently, the

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7. Medium, which refers to the base language(s) of an ongoing interaction (Gafaranga, 2000, etc.), starts with a capital letter in this paper. This is to distinguish it from “medium” (starting with a small letter) which refers to the communication medium, for example, whether a discourse is spoken or written, as often used in sociolinguistics and discourse analysis.
switch to English needs to be repaired, and the Cantonese translation serves as Medium Repair. Notwithstanding, participants’ perception of the Medium may well be affected by variables such as the communicative situation, formality of the situation, language attitude and prevailing language ideologies. In particular, linguistic purism – the idea that one should use the standard forms of a language – and monoglossic ideology – the idea that only one language should be used in one situation – work against mixing of languages and lend support to a monolingual Medium. In the Hong Kong context, linguistic purism and monoglossic ideology have been strongly manifest in the government’s consistent insistence on teaching in one language (either Cantonese or English) and opposition to bilingual pedagogies or code-switching in the classroom (Li, 1999; Li and Tse, 2002; Lin, 1996, 2006). Even though language mixing has been pervasive, negative attitudes have persisted towards extensive code-switching and use of English among Cantonese-speaking Chinese in Hong Kong (Chen, 2008).

In addition to being used as Medium Repair, the Cantonese translation in (1) highlights the word previously uttered being in “English” and also the boundary between Cantonese and English which are represented by the two lexical items juxtaposed, a process we may refer to as languagising (Jaspers and Madsen (eds.), 2019). Accordingly, the Cantonese translation does not so much serve the purpose of expressing ideas, but its function is largely ideological; that is, the speaker is conforming to the monoglossic ideology, which, in our case, means that only Cantonese should be spoken in the ongoing interaction. Put simply, the speaker does not really aim to translate the English term into Cantonese (for the sake of those audiences who may not understand English), but she aims to show that she can speak “pure” Cantonese. The following example lends more support to this line of thought.

(2) moderate zumg1-sing3 di1 ge3 jan4 ze1 dou1 wui2 gok3 dak1…
    moderate neutral    more LNK people PRT all will feel PRT
    “Those who are more moderate, er, will feel that…”  (Chen, 2008: 61)

According to the context (Chen, 2008), the speaker is describing the character of some of his colleagues as “moderate”, that is, people who are not too radical or critical of others. Interestingly, the Cantonese translation being offered, “zung1-sing3/中性 (neutral)”, sounds hardly a faithful one, as more commonly it means

8. For instance, many informants in Chen and Carper’s (2005) video say that Chinese(Cantonese)-English mixing is fine as long as the speakers accept it and the communication proceeds unhindered, but many others find it not proper for Hong Kong Chinese to have to use English in interaction among themselves.
“gender-neutral in appearance” when used to describe people. On this interpretation, the use of English (i.e. “moderate”) does seem to be the mot juste as the speaker apparently fails to recall an appropriate Cantonese word (e.g. “wan1-wo4/温和 (moderate)”) at the moment of speaking, and “zung1-sing3/中性 (neutral)” is only a gesture which gives the impression that the speaker could speak Cantonese to express all his ideas.

It is crucial to note that bilingual speakers do not always attempt to translate an English word or phrase inserted into Cantonese discourse, not even in media settings. The speaker may not be aware that he (or she) is switching to English, or he (or she) may not feel the need to stick to Cantonese all the time in the ongoing interaction. For instance, in the following conversation among a reporter (R), a female artist (F) and a male artist (M) in an entertainment news programme, F switches from Cantonese to the English word “circus” when making a suggestion for a charity show.

(3) Context: R, the reporter, was talking to a female artist, F and a male artist, M, about an imminent fund-raising event.

1. F: ngo5 lam2 ho2-ji5 zou6 circus
   I think can do circus
   “I think we can have a circus.”

2. R: circus zung1-man2 hai6 mat1 aa3 circus Chinese COP what SFP
   “What is circus in Chinese (Cantonese)?”

3. M: maa5-hei3-baan1
   “Circus.”

(From “Watching East and West (Dong1-Zoeng1-Sai1-Mong6/東張西望)”, TVB, Jade Channel – anecdotal data collected by the author)

In line 1, the code-switch to English (i.e. “circus”) elicits a request to translate it into Chinese (i.e. “zung1-man2” – which means Cantonese) in line 2, and this Medium Request (Gafaranga, 2010) implies that “circus” is not Chinese/Cantonese and asks for the word in Chinese/Cantonese. A third speaker, M, provides the Cantonese word, “maa5-hei3-baan1/馬戲班 (circus)” in line 3. The fact that the reporter (i.e. R) makes the Medium Request is not surprising, since she is officially responsible for the interview and its language and supposed to be the one who executes the language policy and ideology of the television station. Put under the framework of Conversation Analysis, “circus” in line 1 constitutes a

9. See https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%B8%AD%E6%80%A7/2473123 or https://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E6%80%A7%E5%88%A5%E4%B8%AD%E7%AB%8B
repairable; the Medium Request in line 2 is the repair-initiator (words that point to the repairable), and the translation in line 3 is the repair, or, in Gafaranga’s (2000, 2012) term, Medium Repair. What is more, the repair initiator (line 2) and the repair (line 3) form an inserted sequence, expanding the first turn in line 1. This repair sequence is other-initiated (i.e. not initiated by the speaker who produced the repairable), other-repair (i.e. not done by the speaker who produced the repairable). The previous Examples (1) and (2), on the other hand, are self-initiated, self-repair (Schegloff, 2007; Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977). Whereas it is common to find self-initiated repair in the same turn; that is, the repair is close to the repairable or trouble source, other-initiated repair tends to be made in inserted, expanded sequences (Liddicoat, 2011; Schegloff, 2007; Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977). The fact that Medium Repair can be other-initiated indicates that the Medium, which is monolingual Cantonese in this extract, is co-constructed in conversation.

Examining a set of hitherto unpublished radio data archived and recorded back in 2006/2007, the remainder of this paper considers a variety of sequential patterns where Medium Repair is or is not made after a speaker putatively switches to an English word or expression.

2. Data and method

The radio programme aimed to discuss interesting weblogs, websites and online practices (e.g. ancestor-worship online, also see Extracts (4), (5), (9) and (10) below). However, the hosts also covered other topics (see Extracts (6), (7), (8), (11) and (12) below). In sum, the radio programme is considered a typical one in being mainly informative (i.e. the kind of radio programmes which Goffman (1981) describes in the chapter on Radio Talk as opposed to radio dramas). It was broadcast on Channel 1, 2 and 5 of the Radio Television of Hong Kong (RTHK) which are all Chinese (i.e. Cantonese-speaking) channels. I had long been a regular listener of the programme on RTHK 2. On first hearing, the time slots were jotted down during which extracts were noted for containing Cantonese-English code-switching, and then these extracts were transcribed directly from and double-checked against computer sound files on the website of the radio station (www.rthk.org.hk). The data include the talk of mainly three radio hosts, namely, J (male), T (male) and A (female), but occasionally the talk of guests speaking either on the spot or over the phone is also included. For example,

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10. Except Example (4) and (5) below which are cited in Chan (2009:113). Example (4) below was also cited Setter, Wong and Chan (2010:99).
Extract (6) below features the speech of a guest AG (male) who was interviewed on the phone and Extract (11) features the speech of another guest B (male), a member of a rock band, who was interviewed live in the studio.

There have been five radio channels broadcast on FM by RTHK. Channels 1, 2 and 5 are “Chinese” (i.e. Cantonese-speaking) while channel 3 is English. Channel 4 is special; it has been the only channel dedicated to classical music in Hong Kong (Chin, 2009) and in the programmes the music is introduced bilingually in Cantonese and English. Nonetheless, in such introduction the information is mostly repeated in Cantonese and English as if there are two different voices addressing a group of English-speaking audience and another group of Cantonese-speaking audience, although this can be done by the same host or two different hosts.\(^\text{11}\) The designation of certain channels as Chinese (which means Cantonese as the spoken language in Hong Kong) and others as English, which Luke and Richards (1982) once called *societal bilingualism*, has its historical background,\(^\text{12}\) but it turns out to fit into the monoglossic ideology in the sense that Chinese channels (RTHK 1, 2 and 5) are primarily for Cantonese speakers whereas the English channel (RTHK 3) target English speakers. This is not surprising in view of the fact that Radio Television Hong Kong is the public broadcaster funded by the government of Hong Kong who have manifest similar ideological inclinations in other policies and domains (such as its medium-of-instruction policy in education, as mentioned above in Section 1).

With this background, it is interesting to examine how radio hosts juggle competing demands from communicative pressure and norms (according to which they would easily produce English words and expressions, especially technical terms related to internet-related topics) and language policy/ideology (according to which they would have to adhere to Cantonese as much as possible) in their language practices.

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\(^\text{11}\) RTHK 4 is radically different from FM Select, another radio station which boasted of being bilingual and where virtually all radio hosts engaged in a lot of code-switching between Cantonese and English in ongoing talk (which is mentioned briefly in Li (1999, 2017)). The radio station suspended its service in 2001, and also gone is the “bilingual” style of radio talk with extensive code-switching in Hong Kong.

\(^\text{12}\) For instance, RTHK 3, the English channel, developed from its predecessor which served the British Army who essentially spoke English but not Cantonese in the colonial days before 1997 (Chin, 2009).
3. **Sequences of Cantonese-English mixing in a Hong Kong radio programme**

3.1 **Medium repair**

In Example (4) below, the English phrase “internet culture” is followed by a Medium Repair in Cantonese (i.e. “wu6-lyun4-mong2 man4-faa3/互聯網文化 (internet culture)”) within the same turn. Same as Examples (1) and (2) above, the self-repair is made quickly after the repairable or trouble source, which is typical of all types of repair (i.e. Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977).

(4) Context: T is talking about the radio programme itself.

T: 1 hai6 jat1 go3 internet culture, zik1-hai6 wu6-lyun4-mong2 man4-faa3 internet culture
2 ge3 zit3-muk6 programme
“(It) is a programme about internet culture.”

The following two extracts exemplify other-Medium Repair. Different from (3), which is also other-repair, there is no self or other-initiation, and other-repair is made right after the turn. That position, however, is more typically one for self-repair, that is, “transition space repair” in conversation (Liddicoat, 2011; Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977).

(5) Context: T and J are talking about a photo a woman put on her weblog, which shows her half-naked.

1. T: keoi5 hai6 bei2-gaau3 giu3-zou6 artistic it compare call artistic
   “It (i.e. the photo) is comparatively (i.e. compared to pornography) artistic.”

In Example (5), J’s Medium Repair (“ai6-seot6-sing3/藝術性 (artistic)” in line 2) immediately follows the English word “artistic” (line 1), apparently finishing up the sentence started by T. Notice that J also produces a sentence-final particle “ge3/嘅” in line 2. In terms of footing (Goffman, 1981), it looks as if J has aligned with T and both are taking one “voice” addressing the audience. Presumably, T and J, being co-hosts and employees of the radio station, share the presupposed Medium (i.e. Cantonese) of the ongoing programme, and T would not be surprised by J’s Medium Repair which may sound a rather rude interruption.
consensus, however, may not be shared by guests calling in. In Example (6) below, the guest AG is introducing several technical terms about frequency in English, namely, “very high frequency” (line 5, 8), “ultra high frequency” (line 9) and “extremely high frequency” (line 11). The two radio hosts, J and T, attempt to translate these terms into Cantonese immediately after these English terms are uttered (i.e. line 7, 10, 12, 13).

(6) Context: J and T are interviewing AG, a guest who is an expert in wireless communication.

1. T: pei3-jyu4 ngo5 dei6 ji1-gaa1 jung6 sau1-jam1-gei1 go2 go3 le1 for-example I PL now use radio DEM CL SFP
2. dou1 hai6 jat1 go3 pan4-leot2 lei4 gaa1-maa3 also COP one CL frequency PRT SFP
3. keoi5 hai6 syun3 hai6 gou1 pan4 ding6 dai1 pan4 aa3? it COP count COP high frequency or low frequency SFP “For example, the radio (channel) we are using is also a frequency. Is it high frequency or low frequency?”
4. AG: kei4-sat6 keoi5 le1, ji6-ging1 hai6 syun3 hai6 jat1 go3 ngo5 dei6 actually it PRT already COP count COP one CL I PL
5. cing1 zi1 wai6 VFH, zik1-hai6 very high frequency ge3 pan4-leot2 call it as VFH that-is very high frequency LNK frequency
6. lei4-gaa3 SFP “Actually, it (i.e. the radio frequency) can be counted as a frequency that we call VFH, that is, a frequency called very high frequency.”
7. J: hou5 gou1 pan4 laa3 very high frequency SFP “Very high frequency.”
8. AG: er... daan6-hai6 hai2 very high frequency soeng6-min6 [filler] but LOC very high frequency above “er...But, above very high frequency,”
9. zung6 jau5 ultra high frequency also have ultra high frequency “there is also ultra high frequency.”
10. J and T: gik6 gou1 pan4 extreme high frequency “Extremely high frequency. (trying to translate “ultra high frequency” above)
11. AG: sam6-zi3-fu4 extremely high frequency even extremely high frequency “Even extremely high frequency.”
12. J: [ciu1 gou1 pan4
super high frequency
“Super high frequency.” (i.e. trying to translate “extremely high frequency”)
13. T: [fei1-soeng4 gik6-dou6 gou1 pan4
unusually extremely high frequency
“Unusually extremely high frequency.” (i.e. trying to translate “extremely high frequency”)

The English expressions here are clearly technical terms related to a technical subject (i.e. physics or wireless communication). As mentioned above, such topic-oriented code-switching may be open to a range of possible explanations. Presumably, the English terms in the extract may be more familiar and accessible to the speaker (Li and Tse, 2002), who may be projecting a sense of professionalism (what Luke (1998) calls orientational language mixing) at the same time. More importantly, he may not see the need to observe language boundaries and keep to the Medium (i.e. Cantonese); in other words, he may be seen as translanguaging here. J’s Medium Repair in line 7 seems to catch AG off guard, as shown by the filler at the beginning of line 8. In Conversation-Analytic terms, AG may not have finished his turn although J may perceive that he has. J’s Medium Repair without any initiation, just like the one in Example (5) above, is referred to as transition space repair (Liddicoat, 2011; Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977). AG appears to have got accustomed to the intruding Medium Repairs later (line 10), and he continues his turn without the filler (line 11). J and T overlap in line 10 – where they provide the same translation to “ultra high frequency” (line 9) – and in line 12 and 13 – where they offer competing translations to “extremely high frequency” in AG’s turn (line 11). These overlaps suggest that Medium Repair is unplanned and spontaneous, and both are selecting themselves without a clue as to who will take up the turn after line 9 and 11 (Li Wei, 1998).

3.2 Other-Language Repair followed by Medium Repair

In bilingual conversation, it is common to explain or elaborate a word by switching to another language. Gumperz (1982) calls that function of code-switching reiteration. In Gafaranga’s (2000) framework (also see Gafaranga and Torras I-Calvo, 2001), a code-switch that explains or elaborates what has been said previously is called Other-Language Repair, which means a language other than the one that is currently used is brought in for repair. In other words, Other-Language Repair is a way to solve the problem of the mot juste missing. Crucially, Gafaranga (2000) suggests the possibility that Other-Language Repair may be unnoticed by
speakers and there is no indication of its “other-language-ness”, indicating that the Medium is bilingual consisting of a mixed code.

In our data, however, Other-Language Repair, either self or other-repair, is always followed by a same-turn Medium Repair. Accordingly, the radio hosts remain alert that another language is introduced into the current conversation, and, by Medium Repair, they orient themselves back to Cantonese as the Medium in line with the language policy and ideology of the radio station.

(7) Context: T and J are discussing a new Cantonese slang word which is a verb or adjective meaning “somebody demanding a lot from another person”.

1. J: 

   **coe2** lei4-gong2 le1, ngo5 lam2, 
   demanding talk **prt I** think

2. ying1-goil hai6 gaai2 zok3 hou2 demanding  
   should **cop** interpret as very demanding

3. zik1-hai6 hou2 [er] **seoi1-sok3 dak1 hou2 gan2-jiu3**  
   in-other-words very [filler] demanding very severe
   “As for this word ‘coe2’, I think it should be interpreted as ‘very, very demanding’.”

In Extract (7), J explains a slang word in Cantonese (i.e. “coe2 (very demanding)” in line 1) in English (i.e. “hou2/好 demanding (very demanding)” in line 2), probably thinking that the slang word may not be understood by all listeners. This Other-Language Repair is immediately followed by a Medium Repair in line 3, as J explains the word again in Cantonese by the expression “**seoi1-sok3 dak1 hou2 gan2-jiu3**/需索得好緊要 (severely demanding)” with the key word “**seoi1-sok3/需索** (demanding)” sounding literary and classical in style and rare in conversation. At any rate, the filler before this expression suggests that J spends much effort retrieving it, showing his determination in producing the Medium Repair which orients the talk to a Cantonese Medium. What is more, the Cantonese expression (“**seoi1-sok3 dak1 hou2 gan2-jiu3**/需索得好緊要 (severely demanding)” – line 3) sounds more than just a Medium Repair of the Other-Language Repair (“**hou2/好 demanding**” – line 2); it is also a Repair of the slang word “**coe2**” (line 1) as a more formal paraphrase of it.

A Medium Repair after an Other-Language Repair is not always prefaced by a filler. In Extract (8) below, A is recounting her experience of burying a pet raccoon and putting its dead body in a wooden box as its coffin. The box was used to wrap up ginsengs her mother consumed. J is teasing her, alluding to the fact that A comes from a rich family because ginseng is expensive; J is also joking that the box might be very big (“**hou2 daai3 hap3**/好大盒 (very big box)” in line 1). A

rejects J’s assertion, and most probably also the implication that she is from a rich family, by saying that the box is very small (i.e. “hou2 sai3/好細 (very small)” in line 3). Immediately afterwards, she changes the expression to “standard size” and “sai3 sai3 dei2/細細哋 (pretty small)” (line 3), which suggests that the box is actually not too small.

(8) Context: T and A are discussing how to treat dead bodies of pets.

1. J: gam2 nei5 jiu3 hou2 daai3 hap3 jan4-sam1 sin1 dim6 wo3 “You must have a really big box of ginseng (in order to use that box as the racoon’s coffin).”

2. A: m4 hai6. gam2 go2 di gam2-mou4-syu2 hou2 sai3 zek3 ze1 maa3 “No. The raccoons are, you know, very small.”

3. gam2 go3 hap2 kei4-sat6 hou2 sai3, standard size, sai3 sai3 dei2 “And then the box is in fact very small; (it’s) like standard size, pretty small.”

(A went on to talk about how she eventually put the raccoon in the box and buried the box in a garden near her house.)

As in Extract (7), Other-Language Repair (i.e. “standard size” – line 3) is also self-repair and followed by a Medium Repair (i.e. “sai3 sai3 dei2/細細哋 (pretty small)” – line 3). Different from (6), the Medium Repair here is more of a paraphrase or an elaboration rather than a translation of the Other-Language Repair. Additionally, there is no filler or hesitation before the Medium Repair in Cantonese is produced. Similar to (7), the Cantonese expression – “sai3 sai3 dei2/細細哋 (pretty small)” in line 3 – is more than a Medium Repair of the English expression “standard size” (line 3); it is also a Repair of “hou2 sai3/好細 (very small)” – line 3’, the first repairable, in elaborating it and fine-tuning its meaning (i.e. the box is not exactly very small but more precisely quite small).

In Extract (9) below, the Other-Language Repair is other-initiated. T is talking about the topic of “virtual voodoo dolls”, reporting that a listener would rather have a doll that is real and hand-made instead of a virtual one.

(9) Context: T is reporting a listener’s opinion on “virtual voodoo dolls” on the internet. J did not get the idea.
1. T: (Reporting the idea) ngo5 waan4-si6 wui5 hei2-fun1 seon4 sau2
   I however MOD prefer pure hand
   gung1 dik1
   make LNK
2. mou4-duk6 waa1-waa1
   voodoo doll
   “However, I would prefer a voodoo doll which is hand-made (i.e. not the virtual one to be found on the internet).”
3. J: seon4 sau2 gung1?
   pure hand make
   “Purely hand-made?”
   (J repeats T’s phrase in a question tone; apparently he does not understand it.)
4. T: hai6 aa3. zik1-hai6 jan4 gung1 zou6 ge3 mou4-duk6 waa1-waa1
   yes that-is man labour make LNK voodoo doll
   “Yes. voodoo dolls made by human hand.”
5. J: zik1-hai6 m4 wui6 hai6 go2 zung2 jau5 jat1 go3 lam2 zyu6
   that-is NEG MOD COP DEM kind have one CL think ASP
6. zeoi2-zau3 jan4 go2 zung2 gam2-gok3 ge3
   curse person CL kind feel SFP
   “That is, that kind of voodoo doll which won’t feel like cursing others.”
   (J still cannot get it.)
7. T: m4 hai6. keoi5 ge3 ji3-si1 hai6, ngo5 gu2, zik1-hai6 hand-made
   NEG COP he LNK meaning COP I guess that is hand-made
8. jung6 jan4 sau2 zou6 ge3...
   use person hand make SFP
   “No. What he meant is, I guess, hand-made, (dolls) made by hand.”

J cannot understand the idea of a “hand-made” doll expressed in Cantonese (i.e. “seon4 sau2 zou6/純手做 (purely handmade)” in line 1), most likely because T is reciting a script in Standard Written Chinese (line 1–2). J expresses confusion by repeating the phrase in a rising intonation in line 3, which is a repair initiator. T answers the question by paraphrasing the expression in Cantonese (i.e. “jan4 gong1 zou6 ge3/人手工做 (made by labour)” in line 4), which is a (Same-Language) self-repair. Still, J does not get it, checking whether T means a fake voodoo doll which is ineffective in cursing others (line 5–6). As a last resort T

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14. Most words in this turn are in a written Chinese style which have their synonymous counterparts in vernacular spoken Cantonese, including “waan4-si6/還是 vs zung6-hai6/仲係 (still)”, “heiz-fun1/喜歡 vs zung1-ji3/中意 (like)” and “dik1/的 vs ge3/冇 (linking particle/nominalizer).”
uses the term “hand-made” in English (line 7), an Other-Language repair, which is then accompanied by an explanation in Cantonese, that is, a Medium Repair (i.e. “jung6 jan4 sau2 zou6 ge3/用人手做嘅 (made by hand)” in line 8) in the same turn. What is most interesting about this example is the fact that T first attempts to clarify a (Cantonese) word in Cantonese (line 4) in what appears to be a Same-Language repair. Only after another repair initiator (i.e. line 5 and 6 where J shows that he still does not understand) does T appeal to Other-Language Repair (line 7) which is followed by a Medium Repair (line 8). In addition to the Medium Repair, the procrastination of Other-Language Repair also shows the speaker’s orientation to Cantonese as the Medium of the ongoing talk.

3.3 Same/Other-Language Repair without Medium Repair

This section examines those sequences in which speakers putatively switch to English without a following Medium Repair. The crucial issues here are whether there is a change of Medium (Gafaranga, 2000, etc.) and whether the radio hosts are engaging in translanguaging.

In Extract (10) below, J produced some originally English words more in Cantonese pronunciation, as if they are Cantonese words. For instance, “SARS” in line 1 is pronounced as a bisyllabic word [sa: si] instead of the more English-sounding pronunciation that is monosyllabic with a syllable-final fricative [s] (i.e. [sa:s]).

(10) Context: The two hosts are discussing a website which carries information about the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) situation that happened in 2003 in Hong Kong.
1. J: gei3-dak1 hai2 zou2 gei2 nin4 hoeng1-gong2 cang4-ging1 jau5 remember loc early several year Hong Kong used-to have
2. saa1-si2 aa3 SARS SFP
3. dong1-si4 jau5 jat1 go3 mong2-zaam6 soeng1-dong1-zil1 ceot1-meng2 at-that-time have one cl website very famous
4. zau6-hai6 giu3-zou6 so1 sik1 ([so sik]---[k] unaspirated) that-is name “SO SICK”
   “I remember several years ago Hong Kong experienced SARS. At that time there was a very well-known website named ‘SO SICK’.”
5. A: hai6 so1 sik1 ([k] unaspirated) aa4?
   COP “SO SICK” SFP
   “Is it [so-sik]?”
In line 4, J introduces the website whose name is “So Sick” but the final [k] of “sick” is unaspirated. The two syllables sound like Cantonese which are homophonous with the name of a very famous literary writer in Chinese history (i.e. 蘇軾). Consequently, A asks a clarification question by repeating J’s pronunciation (line 5). J spells out the words “So”, “Sick” and “Com” (line 6) to clarify what he was saying. A suggests that the word “sick” in “So Sick” should be pronounced with the [k] of “Sick” aspirated (line 7). J offers an apology (line 8–10), and pronounces the words “So Sick” again with [k] of “Sick” aspirated (line 11).

In Conversation-Analytic terms, J’s mispronunciation of the word “sick” (line 4) leads to a repair initiator by A (line 5). J’s clarification by spelling out the letters (line 6) confirms A’s suspicion that the phrase “So Sick” is indeed English, although at that point J is probably still unaware of his mispronunciation in line 4. A puts forward another repair initiator and provides the repair (line 7). This leads J to apologize (line 8–10); the code-switched English word “pronunciation” (arguably “sorry” too – line 8) also hints that the phrase he mispronounced in line 4 (i.e. “So Sick”) is meant to be English rather than Cantonese. After the apology, J acknowledges the repair suggested by A in pronouncing the phrase “So Sick” correctly with the final [k] aspirated (line 11). J proceeds with his account of the website “So Sick” in the following turns without any Medium Repair. This is understandable since the phrase “So Sick”, being a proper name here, defies Medium Repair in Cantonese; any attempt to translate the phrase in Cantonese...
would hamper the authenticity of the name ("So Sick" is supposed to be the name of the website without an official Chinese translation) and lead to confusion (like what J does in line 4). Despite the absence of Medium Repair, spelling out the letters of the English words (line 6), and the English word "pronunciation" (line 8) jointly index his mispronunciation of "So Sick" (line 4) and mark the phrase as English. Such attempt of languagising makes it difficult to analyze the mixing of Cantonese and English in this extract as translanguaging. Though in a way the speakers do not adhere to language boundaries in switching to the English words and phrases, they do show their understanding of these words and phrases as "English".

In some extracts, there is no clear effort to languagise an "English" element; there is neither a Medium Repair nor other indication that the word or expression is English. In the following episode, J is interviewing a band and conversing with B, one of its members.

(11) Context: J is asking the band members what kinds of music they like to listen to. B, one of the band members, is responding.

1. B: er. dou1-hai6 teng1 di1 rock go2 di1 go1, jan1-wai6 ci2-zong1, [filler] also COP listen CL rock DEM CL song because after-all
2. ngo5 lam2,
   I think
3. gaap3-band ge3 jan4 dou1 wui5 hai6 teng1, jau4 jat1 di1 band heoi3 form band LNK person also MOD COP listen from NUM CL bank go
4. kap1-sau1 di1 je5 gam2-lo1 absorb CL thing SFP SFP "(We) listen to rock songs, because, after all, I think, people who play in bands would listen to band songs to learn something."
5. J: lai6-jyu4 bin1 di1 le1 for-example what kind SFP "For example what kind (of band songs)?"
6. B: lai6-jyu4 aa4, ngo5 sai3-go3 jat1 ho1-ci2 hai6 teng1 jat6-byun2 for-example PRT I small beginning COP listen Japan
7. go2 di1 band ge3 DEM CL band SFP "For example, when I was young, I started listening to Japanese bands."
8. J: [ar [filler]
9. B: [er [filler]
10. J: J-rock [rising intonation]
11. B: hai6-aa3, hai6-aa3 yes PRT yes PRT "Yes, yes!"
The English words in B’s turns, namely, “rock” (line 1) and “band” (line 3 and 7, pronounced without the syllable-final [d]), are not repaired; nor is “J-rock” produced by J repaired. In more traditional thinking, these words may be induced by topic (i.e. music); alternatively, “rock” and “band” – which are monosyllabic – may be seen as instances of borrowing or conventionalized code-switching/code-mixing (Li et al., 2016). As for the word “J-rock”, it is likely to be entrenched in the mind of J who produced the same term in another episode not analyzed in this paper. At any rate, the mixing of English here may be treated as translanguaging. The absence of Medium Repair, however, seems to be closely related to the discourse context. Different from Extract (6), where the interviewee is speaking on the phone, here, the band members are in the studio. Despite the face-to-face presence of the participants, there is a sense of awkwardness, as the interviewees, an amateur band, do not seem to be very comfortable with the situation and they do not seem to know the radio hosts well. There is also an issue of turn-taking as it is often not very clear which speaker in the band should answer a question. Sometimes, the next speaker may be selected by the host but then he may not do this every time. This is understandable, because selecting the next speaker in a group of interviewees the host does not know well could sound imposing. B apparently selects himself in this episode, but there is still a sense of awkwardness, as both parties (J and B) seem to be just getting to know each other and building up the channel of communication. In his first turn, B is answering a question J has raised (line 1 to line 4). J follows up with another question (line 5). B answers that question (line 6–7), but somehow communication comes to a halt as suggested by both participants’ fillers (line 8 and 9). In this light, J’s question in line 10 is a repair that helps him to sustain the conversation. It is also a repair-initiator implying that B’s answer in line 6–7, in particular, “jat6-byun2 go2 di1 band/日本嗰啲 band (the Japanese bands)” is not precise enough, inviting further response. B confirms the suggestion in line 11 and maintains the conversation. In this vein, the absence of Medium Repair may be accounted for by an attempt to ensure a smooth interview between the radio host and the band. Without any explicit hint of the ongoing Medium or the “language” of the words or expression, we may see that the speakers engage in translanguaging here. In divergence from Extract (6) above, where the radio hosts J and T speak “in one voice” with guest AG and provide Medium Repairs to AG’s technical terms in English, here, the radio host J and the interviewee B appear to be more in a dialogue with different “voices”.

15. Monosyllabic English verbs – including “send”, “keep”, “call”, etc. – have been very frequently used in Hong Kong Cantonese. Li et al. (2016) explains this phenomenon in terms of the salience of monosyllabic verbs in Cantonese which facilitates the transfer or borrowing of monosyllabic words from English.
In Example (12) below, T and J are eliciting short stories from listeners.

(12) Context: After J has presented a short story a listener sent in, T talks about the kind of stories that he likes.

1. T: ngo5 zung1-ji3 li1 go3 happy ending ge3
   I prefer DEM CL happy ending SFP
   “I prefer (stories with) happy endings.”

2. J: m4 gan2-jiu3. daai3-gaa1 jyu4-gwo2 jau5 happy ending jau6 hou2
   NEG important you if have happy ending LNK good

3. sad ending jau6 hou2, dim2-joeng2 ge3 ending dou1 hou2
   sad ending LNK good whatsoever LNK ending also good

4. bat1-fong4 send[sen] bei2 ngo5 dei6
   feel-free send to I PL
   “No problem. Feel free to send us stories, no matter they have happy endings, sad endings, or whatever endings.”

T says that he personally likes stories with “happy ending” (line 1), implying that only those stories will be accepted. J corrects this pragmatic implication by picking on the point of “happy ending” (line 2) and then suggesting that stories with “sad ending” (line 3) and indeed with whatever ending (i.e. “dim2 joeng2 ge3 ending/點樣嘅 ending (whatever ending)” in line 3) are also welcome. T brings up the English phrase “happy ending” in line 1, probably because it is a familiar idiomatic expression without any close counterparts in Cantonese, in other words, the mot juste. Instead of providing a Medium Repair, J repeats the English phrase in line 2 and introduces another phrase “sad ending” in line 3 which contrasts it in meaning and which is also a repair in Conversation-Analytic terms, arguably Same-Language Repair (i.e. an English phrase repairs another English phrase). The subsequent phrase “dim2 joeng2 ge3 ending/點樣嘅 ending (whatever ending)” in line 3 is a repair of “sad ending” and “happy ending” by extending and modifying the meaning of “ending”. Though the modifier of the phrase is Cantonese (“dim2 joeng2 ge3/點樣嘅 (whatever)”), the keyword remains in English (i.e. “ending”) and hence the whole phrase cannot be seen as a Medium Repair of the previous two repairables. The repetition of the word “ending” is probably a strategy to foreground the chain of words and hence an attention-seeking device (Chan, 2009). In this light, J may be seen as translanguaging here. To create the discourse effect of foregrounding, which is part of the meaning-making process, he does not pay strict adherence to Cantonese.

The last word “send” in line 4, pronounced without the syllable-final [d], is arguably an established loanword which is phonologically assimilated to Cantonese (i.e. in Cantonese phonology, there is no voiced syllable-final stops such as /d/) and frequently used in the context of “sending an email” or “sending a mes-
sage” among Cantonese speakers in Hong Kong. It may very well be treated by the speaker as just a Cantonese word without the need for Medium Repair (also see footnote 15 above).

4. Discussion and conclusions

Mixing of English elements has been an integral feature in spoken Cantonese in Hong Kong, to the point that it may be seen as an identity symbol of “Hongkongers” (Lee, 2000). Whereas most existing studies account for the phenomenon by “lack of equivalence” in Cantonese (Chan, 2009), in other words, the code-switched English words or expressions being the mot juste (Poplack, 1988; Gafaranga, 2000, etc.), this paper asks why the mot juste may be followed by a Cantonese translation. Apparently more frequent in media settings, such language practice would not be necessary from the viewpoint of communication, and it has not been addressed so far in the code-switching literature about Hong Kong (e.g. Gibbons, 1987; Li, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001; Li and Tse, 2002; Luke, 1998, etc.).

Adopting the concept of repair as developed in Conversation-Analysis (Liddicoat, 2011; Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977) and Gafaranga’s extension of it to bilingual conversation (Gafaranga, 2000, 2007, 2012; Gafaranga and Torras i Calvo, 2001; Gafaranga and Torras, 2002), it is suggested that Cantonese translations of code-switched English words are Medium Repair, whose function is to steer the conversation back to a Cantonese Medium. Examining a set of radio data, we find that Medium Repair can be self-repair (e.g. (4)) or other-repair (e.g. (5) and (6)), often quick and without initiation in the same turn (i.e. same-turn repair – e.g. (4)) or immediately after a turn or a turn construction unit (i.e. TCU – what is perceived to be a turn), that is, transition space repair (e.g. (5) and (6)). Same-turn Medium Repair is also attested after an English word is introduced to repair a previous Cantonese word, that is, an Other-Language Repair (e.g. (7), (8) and (9)). In other extracts, an English word is not followed by Medium Repair, probably because of the authenticity of a proper name (e.g. “So Sick” in (10), “J-rock” in (11)) or other discourse considerations (e.g. the need to build up and sustain a smooth conversation in (11), and an attempt to focus on certain keywords in (12)).

The variety of patterns of language mixing in our data may be understood in the light of the radio hosts striving to cope with competing demands imposed by the register16 of radio talk. Goffman (1981) considers that the central task of

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16. In this paper, “register” refers to a variety of language used in a particular type of situations with similar discourse purpose (e.g. conversation, radio, textbook, electronic mail, etc.) (Biber and Conrad, 2009).
professional radio hosts ("announcers" in his words) is to produce fluent and spontaneous talk. However, the task is daunting because they often have to handle different roles (or "production formats", e.g. reporting some information, commenting on the topic, etc.) and different relationships (or "footing") with co-hosts and the audience (e.g. giving a personal opinion, making an announcement, interviewing guests, etc.), in addition to concerns of accuracy (of information and delivery), all under real-time pressure. Accordingly, an English item is introduced when it is the most just to serve the purpose of communication, but Medium Repair balances out the digression from the Cantonese Medium. Although Medium is defined in the perspective of speakers in Gafaranga's works (2000, 2012, etc.), which is Cantonese in most of our extracts as evidenced by Medium Repair and other conversational activities (e.g. Other-Language Repair is delayed in (9)), it may well be related to the institutional context. That is, radio hosts have to pay respect to linguistic purism and monoglossic ideology and to adhere to Cantonese in a "Chinese" radio programme produced by the public broadcaster in Hong Kong. Nonetheless, Medium Repair may be avoided where translations of an English mot juste or renditions of it in a Cantonese way (e.g. "so sick" with [k] unaspirated in (10)) may lead to ambiguity and impede the flow of communication (e.g. (10), (11) and (12)). In the case of (12), Medium Repair of the phrase "happy ending" (line 1) would have ruined the "poetic effect" of repetition (i.e. "happy ending" – line 2) and contrast (i.e. "happy ending" vs "sad ending" in line 2 and 3) (Chan, 2009).

Finally, we return to the issue raised at the beginning of this paper, namely, whether Cantonese-English mixing in Hong Kong bilinguals' speech is better construed as code-switching or translanguaging. The main thrust of translanguaging is that languages are socially, culturally and ideologically constructed entities (i.e. "named languages") but not objects or systems defined by lexical or structural features, a view that has long been presumed in structural linguistics and that is assumed to be inherent in the concept of "code-switching" (Li Wei, 2018; Otheguy, García and Reid, 2015, 2018). Whereas many works do see code-switching as the mixing of two discrete languages or "codes", there has also been a strong tradition in the code-switching literature in which the concept of "code" is problematized and not equated with "(named) language". In the Conversation-Analytic approach to code-switching (Auer, 1984, 1995, 1998; Li Wei, 1998, 2002, 2005, etc.), the conversation sequences are to provide the primary evidence for explanation of speakers’ intentions and their interaction in favour of a-priori sociocultural context and categories as taken for granted by the researchers, including the very notion of “language” (Alvarez-Cáccamo, 1998; Auer, 1999, 2007). Taking a Conversation-Analytic stance, Gafaranga's works (2000, etc.), which this paper has drawn extensively from, argue that language or "code" is not the same as the
Medium (base language(s)) in ongoing talk, which is co-constructed and displayed in the sequences by the participants. In our data, Medium Repair hints that an English mot juste it repairs is “English”, and it is different from a Cantonese word which supposedly expresses the same idea (i.e. the Medium Repair itself – e.g. (1) to (9)). Alternatively, an English mot juste is referred to by other English expressions to show its “languagehood” (e.g. spelling out an English phrase or using another indexical word in English – see (10)). These systematic attempts of languagising words and expressions (Jaspers and Madsen (eds.) 2019) make it problematic to conclude that the speakers are translanguaging, that is, using languages without showing any adherence to language boundaries. In extracts where languagising is absent, it seems more plausible to see the speakers’ language mixing as translanguageing, since there is no evidence of speakers orienting to a particular language (e.g. (11) and (12)). Yet, as I hope to have shown, languagising, primarily Medium Repair in our data, can be subject to a range of sociolinguistic, discourse and contextual factors, for instance, register (e.g. Medium Repair may well be more frequent in media talk than in informal peer talk), speaker (e.g. Medium Repair is mostly initiated by the radio hosts rather than the interviewees), communicative situation (e.g. Medium Repair may be avoided to facilitate the ongoing talk, as in (11)), and discourse effect (e.g. Medium Repair may be avoided to help convey some discourse or “poetic” effect, as in (12)). The absence of languagising in talk does not necessarily imply that speakers cannot or do not understand the words they produce along the lines of “named languages”. All in all, the kind of frequent and spontaneous mixing of English in Cantonese may be recast as translanguageing, under which the “switching” needs not be explained by a wide variety of rather descriptive or post-hoc accounts (e.g. it is induced by certain topics, the English term has no equivalent in Cantonese, etc.). Nevertheless, a more developed theory of translanguageing would have to address the place of languagising, which can be just as common in bilingual speech, and the divergence between practice (i.e. pervasive and spontaneous mixing of Cantonese and English by Hong Kong bilinguals) and ideology (i.e. there still seems to be a very strong sense of separate bilingualism (Blackledge and Cresse, 2010) as Chinese/ Cantonese and English are deemed two very different languages in Hong Kong).

Glossary

This is a list of symbols used in the glosses in the examples:

- ASP  aspect marker
- CL   classifier
- CONJ  conjunction
References


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Publication history

Date received: 20 January 2020
Date accepted: 13 February 2021
Published online: 1 April 2021