Caint na nDaoine in action in Gaeltacht na nDéise: Code-Mixing, Code-Switching or Translanguaging?

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Abstract

Code-mixing, code-switching and latterly translanguaging are concepts that are well-researched in the concept of bilingual communities, especially from a sociolinguistics perspective. This paper explores a corpus of interviews from speakers living in Gaeltacht na nDéise, in the South-East of Ireland. The data, in both Irish and English, was originally part of a mixed methods study that included a largescale community study of 497 households. Using a corpus linguistics methodology, we coded all instances of language change and analysed them systematically. Using a bottom-up approach, we explore whether current concepts of code-mixing, code-switching or translanguaging can help explain the data. Our results show, across the data, instances of code-mixing, code-switching and translanguaging occurring across both parts-of-speech, discourse items and within utterances. We note a prevalence of nouns in the English interviews and pragmatic markers in the Irish interviews, and to a lesser degree, adjectives and quotatives, as sites where language pivots appear to be more likely. In this study code-mixing, switching and translanguaging are brought together to illuminate our data and each offers a perspective that helps is better conceptualise how language is being used.

Achoimre

Is coincheapa iad an códmheascadh, an códmhalartú agus an trasteangú atá saothraithe go maith sa taighde ar an bpobal dátheangach, go háirithe ó pheirspictíocht na sochtheangeolaíochta de. Déanann an t-alt taighde seo iniúchadh ar chorpas agallamh le cainteoirí a chónaíonn i nGaeltacht na nDéise, in Oirdheisceart na hÉireann. Ba chuid de staidéar modhanna measctha ó thosach a bhí sna sonraí seo, idir Bhéarla agus Ghaeilge a chuimsigh staidéar pobail ar 497 teaghlach. Ag baint úsáid as modheolaíocht teangeolaíochta corpais, códaíodh gach cás den athrú teanga agus rinneadh anailís chórasach air. Ag baint úsáid as cur chuige ón ithir aníos, féachtar le míniú a sholáthar ar na sonraí, féachaint an é an códmheascadh, an códmhalartú nó an trasteangú atá i gceist. Léiríonn na sonraí i gcoitinne go bhfuil ann don chódmheascadh, an códmhalartú agus an trasteangú i gcodanna cainte, i míreanna dioscúrsa agus laistigh de ráitis. Tugtar faoi deara go bhfuil ainmfhocail le sonrú sna hagallaimh Bhéarla agus marcóirí pragmatacha sna hagallaimh Ghaeilge, agus go pointe áirithe, feidhmíonn aidiachtaí agus athfhriotail chomh maith mar shuíomhanna ina n-athraíonn an teanga. Sa staidéar seo, tugtar códmhalartú, códmheascadh agus trasteangú le chéile chun ár sonraí a shoiléiriú agus cuireann gach ceann acu faoi leith peirspictíocht ar fáil a chabhraíonn linn coincheapú níos fearr a dhéanamh ar an gcaoi a bhfuil an teanga á húsáid sa phobal.

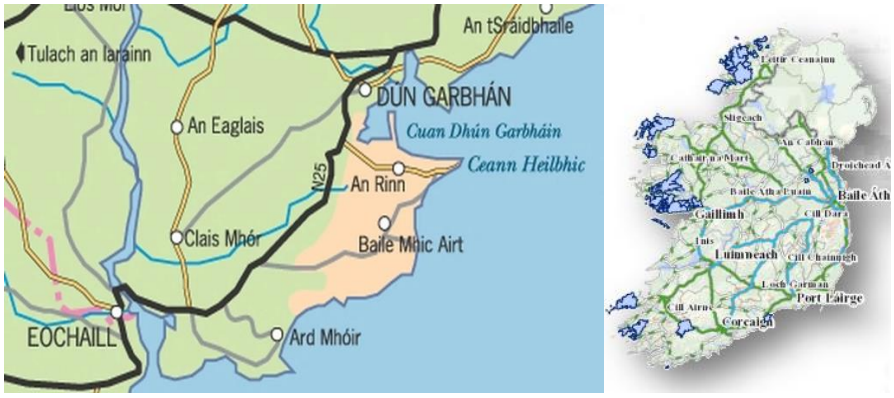
Keywords: Code-mixing, code-switching, translanguaging, Gaeltacht na nDéise, corpus linguistics

Introduction

Walsh (2018) conducted a study of Irish language use in *An Rinn* (Ring) and *An Sean Phobal* (Old Parish), which together form *Gaeltacht na nDéise,* representing 1.7% of the modern-day Gaeltacht[1] population (see Figure 1). This paper focuses on an incidental observation based on the eight semi-structured interviews that formed part of the much larger mixed methods dataset which spanned 497 households (see Walsh, 2018).

Figure 1

Co. Waterford Gaeltacht area in the South-East of Ireland and a map of Irish-speaking areas



The key observation which drives this paper is that the interview data contained seamless pivots between Irish and English. Our goal is to audit the degree to which interviewees move between English and Irish and to appraise how the three prevailing concepts of code-mixing, code-switching and translanguaging might help us understand this type of language use. A corpus-based methodology is used whereby the interview data is coded to capture sites of language pivoting. This allows us to systematically analyse these instances in context. Our results, across both the Irish and English interview responses, show language

[1] 'Gaeltacht' refers to areas where Irish is, or was, the main language spoken by the majority local population.

pivots occurring across certain parts-of-speech and discourse items. We note a prevalence of nouns (in the English interviews) and pragmatic markers (in the Irish interviews) as sites of language pivots, and to a much lesser degree, adjectives and quotatives. Based on a close analysis of the nouns, we make the case that for the English speakers in the Gaeltacht community, Irish nouns are often used to express in-groupness and belonging. In the Irish language interview data, we note the frequent use of pragmatic markers in English and hypothesise that they function primarily as a discourse efficiency because they are often shorter than their multi-word Irish counterparts. However, we conceded that it could also be argued that this is evidence of dominance of the majority language (Pétervary et al 2014, p. 237).

Code-mixing

Code-mixing is broadly defined as "the alternative use by bilinguals of two or more languages in the same conversation" (Milroy & Muysken, 1995, p.7) and has also been described as "a salient phenomenon that can be observed in language contact situations" (Quick et al., 2021, p.7). Ó Murchadha (2009), writing about teenagers' language use in Gaeltacht na nDéise, uses the term *meascán* or 'mix' for this practice. Myers-Scotton (1993, p.475) similarly refers to the diverse nature of "the structural 'mix' of languages in codeswitching." Muysken (2000, p.1) uses *code mixing* for cases where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentence, while Wardhaugh (1992, p.106) notes it occurs when speakers alternate between languages within a single utterance. He also suggests code-mixing often serves as a solidarity marker in multilingual communities.

Code-switching

Gumperz, discussing the sociolinguistic significance of conversational code-switching, defines it as "the juxtaposition of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems within the same exchange" (Gumperz, 1982, p.59). Rather than viewing it as a language deficit, he saw it as an additional resource for expression. Cook (2000, p.83)

describes code-switching as “going from one language to the other in mid-speech when both speakers know the same languages,” interpreted as shifting to another language within the same conversation. Myers-Scotton (1993, p.480) defines it as “the selection by bilinguals/multilinguals of forms from two or more linguistic varieties in the same conversation.” In this study, speakers were asked which language they preferred for the interview, yet the *meascán* or mixing observed occurred despite a conscious choice to speak in one language in a formal setting.

Translanguaging

The more recent term *translanguaging* differs from code-switching (García & Lin, 2016, p.4), which assumes bilingual speakers have two separate linguistic systems. Instead, translanguaging views bilingual behaviour as “always dynamic, responding not to two monolingualisms in one but to one integrated linguistic system.” García and Li Wei (2014) describe it as a way of understanding language that accounts for its complexity, connecting shared experiences and identities. Originally defined as “the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages” (Baker, 2011, p.288), the term was first coined in the 1980s by Welsh educator Cen Williams to describe the planned use of two languages in the same lesson (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012, p.643). While it began as a pedagogical concept, this paper explores its explanatory potential—alongside code-mixing and code-switching—in a different social setting: a Gaeltacht community.

During data collection and analysis from questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews, Walsh (2018) observed frequent movement between Irish and English. These transitions appeared systematic, prompting this study’s deeper investigation of interview data (Section 3). Our goal was to explore patterns empirically without imposing theory. Using corpus linguistics

tools, all language pivots were coded and analysed, allowing us to assess the relevance of code-mixing, code-switching, and translanguaging in explaining observed language use.

Previous studies

The *meascán* of Irish and English (Ó Murchadha, 2009) examined here may be explained by code-mixing, code-switching, translanguaging, or a combination of all three. Previous research on English insertions into Irish has focused largely on code-mixing. Ó Coigligh (1984), for instance, studied English words and expressions used by five members of two families in Inis Meáin, noting significant borrowings: nouns, verbal nouns, adjectival nouns, and adjectives, many originating from America. O'Malley-Madec's (2007) seminal study analysed 15 informal interviews with two Irish-speaking cohorts: Cohort F from a Gaeltacht community "within the heartland of Irish-speaking Galway" and Cohort B from a community on Galway's outskirts (p.494). Unlike the present study, interviews were primarily in Irish, and the focus was on English borrowings, defined as items occurring within Irish syntax, distinct from 'clean' code-switches (Poplack, 2001). Counterintuitively, Cohort F routinely borrowed discourse markers and nouns, while Cohort B tended to avoid borrowings, opting instead for clean switches (e.g., at topic boundaries). O'Malley-Madec (2007) concluded that borrowing and code-switching practices reflect social context and location more than historical or linguistic factors. High borrowing among Gaeltacht speakers indexed informal style and broader communicative competence, whereas peripheral speakers avoided borrowings, such as English discourse markers (now, so), to maintain linguistic purity, suggesting a conscious effort toward authenticity.

Stenson's studies (1990, 1991, 1993) provide a detailed breakdown of code-mixing, highlighting English influence and an "insertional pattern" between the two languages. Other

research has examined Irish use among young immersion learners and Gaeltacht speakers. Mac Fhlannchadha (1999) studied code-mixing and code-switching among non-native children in an Irish immersion school, finding unidirectional English–Irish mixing (Stenson, 1990). Taking a deficit view, this was seen as producing oversimplified and incorrect Irish (*Béarlachas*), particularly in communication strategies. Darcy (2014) analysed spoken discourse among 16–18-year-old secondary school speakers in Corca Dhuibhne Gaeltacht, finding code-mixing even among proficient speakers, indicating compromised composite structures and an active shift toward English. This aligns with Ó hIfearnáin and Ó Murchadha (2011), who reported that young Gaeltacht speakers' Irish is shifting rapidly from local variety to one marked by English code-mixing at lexical, grammatical, and syntactic levels. Ó Domagáin (2013) found similar patterns in Donegal, noting that code-mixing was considered fashionable among young speakers, while those who avoided it were seen as old-fashioned. His corpus analysis identified nouns and discourse markers as the most frequent sites of code-mixing, a point revisited below.

The distinction between code-switching and code-mixing has long been blurred, with some scholars questioning its usefulness (Richie & Bhatia, 2013, p.337). In the context of an Irish–English *meascán*, Ó Domagáin (2013, p.213) notes the absence of a clear definition, as both terms are often used interchangeably. Darcy (2014, p.68) identifies this as a research gap, one this study seeks to address.

García argues that translanguaging "…goes beyond what has been termed code-switching … although it includes it, as well as other kinds of bilingual language use and bilingual contact" (2009, p.45). Moriarty (2017) applies the concept to Irish pedagogy, while Flores & Schissel (2014) advocate its use to describe English insertions in Gaeltacht Irish. They define translanguaging as characterising the fluid language practices of bilingual communities (2014, p.461)—the focus of this study.

For this research, interview data were coded to create a corpus, remaining agnostic as to whether code-switching, code-mixing, or translanguaging was at play. Once quantified, results were interpreted through these three concepts.

The data and method

Eight members of Gaeltacht na nDéise were randomly selected for interview: three chose English and five chose Irish as their preferred language. The researcher was a native of *Gaeltacht na nDéise*.

Table 1

Interviewee Profile: Occupation, Age, Origin, Address, Interview Language, and Word Count

	Occupation	**Gender**	**Age**	**Place of birth/current address**	**Main language of interview**
1	Post-primary student	F	<20	Old Parish	Irish
2	Teacher	M	20-39	Old Parish	Irish
3	Business person	F	40-64	Dublin/Old Parish	English
4	Stay-at-home mother	F	+65	Ring/Old Parish	Irish
5	University student	M	<20	Ring	Irish
6	Health professional	M	20-39	Ring	Irish
7	Business person	F	40-64	Dungarvan/ Ring	English
8	Retiree	F	+65	Dungarvan/Ring	English

The eight interviews were orthographically transcribed (17,378 words). One participant (Interviewee 2) spoke entirely in Irish; the other seven used both languages to some extent. Mixed-language phases were isolated and manually coded (6,068 words). Corpus software Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al., 2014) was then used to automatically retrieve and quantify each code during analysis (Section 4).

Coding was conducted bottom-up, with codes emerging from qualitative analysis. The initial aim was to code language changes syntactically by part of speech, but a two-tier system proved necessary (Table 2).

Table 2

Summary of coding system with examples

Tier 1 1) Part of Speech (PoS): When a language change occurs, the PoS of the changed item is coded. 2) Pragmatic Markers (e.g., *now*, *anyway*): Items that organise or orient discourse and are clause-independent are coded as pragmatic markers.		
Detail	**Codes and examples**	**Example**
Classification of word or phrase	<N> noun or noun phrase	there are a lot of people who are like a <N> **cigire** </N>
	<PP> prepositional phrase	we do this <PP> **as Béarla** </PP>
	<Adj> adjective	If it's like that if it's shop talk that's <Adj> **go breá** <Adj> for me
	<PM> pragmatic marker	<PM> **now** </PM> tá sé ag feabhsú i measc mo chaired
	<I> Interjection	<I> **Jesus !** </I> an ceart dúinn é seo a dhéanamh.
Tier 2 1) A change of language for direct speech. These are marked <DS>. 2) Changes in the language of the speaker mid-utterance are marked <C>.		
Detail	**Codes and examples**	**Example**
Utterance-level codes	<DS> direct speech	… and then you know I tell them, <DS> **níl líofacht agam** </DS>
	<C> phases where code changes within utterance.	... mar cailleadh m'athair agus mo mháthair agus caithfidh mé <u>fuireach</u> sa mbaile <C> **to rear my brothers and sisters that were under me and then** </C> tar éis san nuair a dh'imíodar <C>

		out on their own </C> sin a thosnaigh mé thíos sa Choláiste.

The two tiers of coding better captured discourse complexity and allowed for coding of 'nested features'. For example, in Extract 3, we see a language change phase marked <C>. Within it we find direct speech <DS>, as well as Tier 1 items like adjectives <Adj> and pragmatic markers <PM>.

3)

<C> If it's like that if it's shop talk that's <Adj> **go breá** </Adj> for me to instigate that but if it's something that I have to be serious about, <DS> **tóg go bog é** <PM> **now** </PM> **píosa** </DS> </C>.

Analysis and results

Tier 1 word and phrase-level language changes

Table 3 summarises Tier 1 results: nouns (54.9%) and pragmatic markers (37.5%) dominate (in line with Ó Domagáin, 2013), while prepositional phrases, adjectives, and interjections account for 4.9%, 2.3%, and 0.4%, respectively.

Table 3

Breakdown of coded items by frequency and percentage

Tier 1	**English medium Interviewees**	**Irish medium interviewees**	**Occurrences**	**%**
Noun	102	43	145	55.1
Pragmatic Marker	0	98	98	37.3
Prepositional phrases	12	1	13	4.9
Adjective	1	5	6	2.3
Interjection	0	1	1	0.4
Total	115	148	263	100

From these results, we can say that:

- English-medium interviewees most often switched when using nouns or, less frequently, prepositional phrases;
- Irish-medium interviewees most often switched with pragmatic markers or, to a lesser extent, nouns;
- Adjectives and interjections are minimally prone to change of language (mostly for Irish-medium interviewees).

We now look more closely at the top two categories: nouns and pragmatic markers (accounting for 92% overall).

Nouns

In our data, 67.6% of nouns are proper nouns, with the remaining 32.4% being common nouns. As Table 4 illustrates, these breakdowns differently across Irish- and English-medium interviewees.

Table 4

Breakdown of coded proper nouns and common nouns by frequency and percentage

Type	**English-medium interviewees**	**Irish-medium interviewees**	**Number**	**%**
Proper nouns	82	16	98	67.6
Common nouns	20	27	47	32.4
	102	43	145	100

We then looked at whether speakers had a choice of a noun or whether it only existed in either Irish or English (e.g. *Coiste Fáilte na nDéise, Coláiste Mhuire, Raidió na Gaeltachta, Subway, Spar, wifi*). The latter were classified as 'unique' (Table 5).

Table 5

Breakdown of proper nouns by 'unique' versus 'choice'

	English-medium interviewees		**Irish-medium interviewees**		**Frequency**	**%**
	Proper	Common	Proper	Common		
Unique	74	0	10	4	88	61
Choice	8	20	6	23	57	39
Total	82	20	16	27	145	100

Of note from Table 5: For both English- and Irish-medium interviewees, most proper nouns lacked alternatives, while all common nouns, and most items switched to English in Irish-medium interviews, had plausible English equivalents.

In Extract 4) the proper noun *Gaelainn* has an English form, *Irish* while *Gaeltacht, Raidió na Gaeltachta* and *TG4* do not. Extracts 5 illustrates, a speaker changing from Irish to English to say *New Year's Resolutions* even though the term *Rún na hAthbhliana* is an option.

4)

Like anything we should be using **Gaelainn** more, Paddy is from the **Gaeltacht** ok we welcome it, between **Raidió na Gaeltachta** and **TG4** and all that.

5)

Tá an meas breise ann, tosnaíonn na **New Year's Resolutions** le ceoltóirí gan Ghaelainn ag foghlaim beagáinín Gaelainne.

Pragmatic markers

The term *pragmatic marker* (PM) refers to optional clause-independent items that are used before, during or after a clause, for a variety of possible purposes. Typical functions of PMs include *discourse marking* (organising: e.g. *Okay* marking the beginning of a phase of

classroom discourse); *interpersonal marking* (encoding attitude, stance or involvement: e.g. *luckily* marking stance, or *and so* on marking vagueness etc.) (see O'Keeffe et al., 2020).

A total of 98 occurrences of PMs were found, with 24 individual types (Table 6). All pragmatic markers were in English (i.e. all were found in Irish-medium interviews). This is in line with the Gaeltacht study, O'Malley-Madec's (2007) (which uses the term discourse markers).

Table 6

Frequency of 24 pragmatic markers by type

Item	**Frequency**	**Item**	**Frequency**
so	18	Look	4
you know	10	Yeah	3
but	11	Even	2
now	10	Say	2
like	8	Anyway	1
just	7	et cetera	1
I think	2	Ok	1
I mean	2	Obviously	1
I don't know	2	Because	1
I'm like	1	Absolutely	1
oh	4	Really	1
actually	4	you know what?	1

The majority of the PMs are single word items, with *so, but, now, like,* and *just* accounting for the majority of types (66%). The two-word item *you know* is the second most frequent item.

6)

Ní féidir leat a rá níl tú ábalta Gaelainn a labhairt **so** níl tú ábalta cónaí anseo.

7)

Seachas **you know** is breá liom an áit ó thaobh na háilleachta de…

Tier 2 Utterance-level pivots

Table 7 summarises the occurrences of direct speech (where the language changes) and mid-utterance changes of language.

Table 7

Summary of occurrences of direct speech and utterance-level language pivots

Tier 2	**English-medium interviewees**	**Irish--medium interviewees**	**Occurrences**
Direct speech	4	16	20
Change within an utterance	6	6	12

Direct speech

Speakers often prefer direct over reported speech and sometimes switch languages to preserve the fidelity of the original (a type of re-enactment), as Example 8 illustrates.

8)

… bhí mé ag labhairt le mo dhearthair agus dúirt Meiriceánach **you are so rude to speak Irish** agus **you know that I don't speak Irish** agus ní raibh mé fiú ag labhairt léi.

As Table 7 shows, language change during direct speech is more frequent when Irish is the matrix language (16 instances, 80%). Given the small dataset, this only suggests direct speech is a common site for switching. In both English- and Irish-medium interviews, 75% of cases were literal quotations (see Example 8), indicating speakers were strategically aware that reverting to the original language enhanced communicative impact, a point revisited in Section 4.

Language change within an utterance

Utterance-level switching of languages within an utterance was equally split between Irish-medium and English-medium interviews. Examples 9) - 11) illustrate how a speaker in either Irish or English can pivot language mid-utterance.

9)

Bhuel, ón méid a thuigim, ceapaim go bhfuil an-chuid daoine **le notions** atá ina gcónaí sa Ghaeltacht, cad é, níl sé i gceist agam a bheith suas mo thóin féin, bíonn daoine ag rá is ceantar Gaeltachta é seo, tá mise **fluent like**. **Are you actually**?

10)

… Níl uaim go mbeadh gach duine ag braith gur scrúdú cainte atá ann agus iad ag labhairt leat; rud a bhfaighim go minic, **like I'm not going to talk Irish to you because you are going to judge**, b'fhearr liomsa **and I know** gur cliché é, an Ghaelainn briste.

When Irish-medium interviewees switched to English, five of six cases (83%) involved expressing negative evaluations (Examples 9–10). Conversely, four of six English-medium interviewees pivoted to Irish when referring to family or local activities (Example 11):

11)

… Again if, he's involved in the Hurling and the **peil** as well. **Tá sé 14 bliana d'aois agus tá Aileen 11 bliana d'aois. Bíonn Aileen ag dul go-dtí an halla don traenáil i gcomhair an Chamógie agus bíonn Stephen thuas sa pháirc sa tSeanphobal gach seachtain. Nuair a bhíonn Aisteoirí an tSeanphobail** you know we go to that it's very very popular. Wasn't Moll fantastic?

These tendencies to pivot language during negative evaluation or when discussing people, places, and activities central to one's community suggest an affective dimension. We reflect on this further below.

Discussion

This study aimed to assess how often interviewees switch between English and Irish and evaluate how code-mixing, code-switching, and translanguaging explain this behaviour. We found a clear, quantifiable tendency to change language in both English- and Irish-medium interviews, with nouns, pragmatic markers, and direct speech as key pivot points. Mid-utterance shifts from the matrix language also occur. The broader question is how these patterns align with the prevailing concepts of code-mixing, code-switching, and translanguaging.

Code-mixing

We can see that code mixing, understood as lexical borrowings, is much in evidence, with nouns and pragmatic markers being the most borrowed. English-medium interviewees were more likely to switch to Irish when using a noun (though in 86% of cases when using a proper noun, they had no choice). Irish-medium speakers changed to English nouns but to a lesser degree (16%).

Borrowings of pragmatic markers were entirely from English. Therefore, we can conclude that they are a main site for language pivoting for Irish-medium interviewees but not vice versa. As noted above, O'Malley-Madec's (2007) concluded that the high usage of these English items in Irish was a marker of informal style. However, our study involves a more formal communicative context: an interview in a formal setting. If anything, this further underscores O'Malley-Madec's conclusion that their use is a marker of communicative competence and that even in a more formal context, speakers opt for the most efficient means of communicating their message.

On a practical level, retrospectively, we can say that Tier 1 level items align well with the concept of code-mixing and have proved useful for this purpose.

Code-switching

Looking at code-switching, where there are clean switches to the other language (Poplack 2001), we can see that there is evidence of this in both English and Irish-medium interviews (12 instances in all spread evenly across Irish and English-medium interviews). However, the concept seems ill-equipped to explain typical examples such 12 where there is code-mixing nested within code-switching:

12)

Táim béasach **so** níl uaim Gaelainn a labhairt ós cionn daoine b'fhéidir nach bhfuil ábalta mé a thuiscint. Tá saghas, **I don't know**, braitheann sé, bíonn mise istigh sa Seomra Feistis le Port Láirge. **but you know what?** tagann daoine suas chugam ina dhiaidh tá sé go hiontach Gaelainn a chloisint. **I'm like** ' **oh**, dhein mé dearúd, cathú orm'. Rudaí beaga **but just** déanfaimid é. Uaireanta bím saghas ag smaoineamh ar, **Jesus**! an ceart dúinn é seo a dhéanamh? . Ní féidir leat a rá níl tú ábalta Gaelainn a labhairt so níl tú ábalta cónaí anseo ach **yeah** caithfimid a bheith oscailte le daoine chun teacht agus **even** b'fhéidir nach bhfuil tú ábalta Gaelainn a labhairt ach ó thaobh an chultúir de.

Despite the code-mixing and switching, in context of the interviews, this was communicatively successful (the interviewee did not seek any clarification). It captured exactly what the speaker wanted to say.

Translanguaging

Taking a translanguaging view allows us look at the deployment of linguistic resources to optimise communication. This could be viewed in terms of a speaker bringing all of their linguistic resources into play. Take for instance 'changed' nouns: it could be suggested that there may be a convention to use these terms in one language over the other (within this

community) and that it would sound odd not to. This could point to a type of sociolinguistic competence (Hymes, 1972) where the speaker shares community knowledge, for instance, it is the norm to say *Scouts* and unusual to say *Gasóga,* and so on. A similar point could be made about many of the common nouns where speakers had a choice of form in the matrix language. For example, *pub, siopa, gym, lads, physio, tuismitheoirí* all have equivalents but their use in one language may have become conventionalised over the other.

It could be hypothesised that speakers are sometime choosing to use nouns in the other language as a display of sociolinguistic competence where they are using the most appropriate form as a cultural or conventionalised norm in the community. For example, the phrasal assimilation e.g. where the article or modifier stays in the matrix language, *the siopa*) and the use of inflection from the matrix language (*sa phub,* Example 13) suggests a strong degree of normalisation:

13)

Is é an ***pub*** i gcónaí atá ann – níl aon rud eile, muna bhfuil fonn ort a bheith ag ól – ní chaithfidh tú ól **sa *phub*** ach fiú an tuairim go bhfuil tú ag dul an ***pub*** níl uait a bheith ag caitheamh an iomarca ama ann.

While on one hand, the choice to use *pub* over *teach tabhairne* might mark one as linguistically competent in terms of the norm of which word is used locally and so display in-groupness, the choice to instead of pub but it would sound very odd because everyone in the area says pub. Saying *teach tabhairne* would mark one out as not being part of the in-group. Conversely, we observed also a tendency to use certain common nouns to an othering or distancing function (*townies,* Example 14). This suggests an affective dimension to the choice being made by the speaker.

14)

má théann lads óga amach fiú san oíche, aithníonn tú cé hiad an dream ón Rinn is ón Seanphobal. Fiú is cuma cén teanga atá á labhairt ach aithníonn tú nach **townies** iad

Following up on this, there seems to be a tendency to use common nouns in the other language when referring to people and places inside the community (Table 8). Qualitatively, there is evidence pointing to a discourse-pragmatic usage, where nouns have a deictic dimension (i.e. used to point to people and places).

Table 8

Comparing referents of nouns used to talk about people and places in terms of inside or outside the Gaeltacht community

Domain	**Inside the community (%)**	**Example**	**Outside the community (%)**	**Example**
People	11 (73%)	táim ag obair mar *physio* san ionad	4 (27%)	… *blow-ins* mar a deirtear.
Places	9 (75%)	…there is only the *siopa…*	3 (25%)	…in the *baile mór*[2] or in any surrounding area…

While on one hand, people and places can be marked as in-group though noun change, it can also be used to 'othered' as the use of *blow-ins* and *cigire* in Extracts 15 and 16 illustrate (note the use of 'out there' with *cigire*. The change in language allows the speaker distance themselves from who they are referring to:

15)

Nuair a thagann daoine isteach go-dtí an ceantar uaireanta le Gaelainn, roinnt mhaith **blow-ins** mar a deirtear.

16)

[2] *Baile mór,* meaning *the big town,* is a euphemism for the nearby town of Dungarvan.

It's even challenging to use it when you are out and about the in **Gaeltacht**; definitely challenging in Dungarvan and outside the **Gaeltacht**. I have to say there are a lot of people who are like a **cigire** *out there*, right? That speak Irish and if you make a very small mistake, they will be like a **cigire** and it's really not good.

We also see this strategy used 'to other' within the community through noun post-modification. In Example 17, the noun 'daoine' is post-modified partly in English using the syntax [daoine] *noun* + [le notions] *prepositional phrase.* Rather than using the English preposition *with*, the speaker keeps the Irish *le*:

17) … ceapaim go bhfuil an-chuid **daoine le notions** atá ina gcónaí sa Ghaeltacht

This points to a translanguaging resourcefulness on the part of the speaker to draw on the most appropriate form (code-mix) or structure (code-switch) to deftly express nuanced meaning in real-time.

Within in mind we return to Example 12) above if it were recast entirely in Irish, the matrix language in this case:

12 recast)

Táim béasach ***dá bhrí sin*** níl uaim Gaelainn a labhairt ós cionn daoine b'fhéidir nach bhfuil ábalta mé a thuiscint. Tá saghas, ***níl a fhios agam***, braitheann sé, bíonn mise istigh sa Seomra Feistis le Port Láirge, ***ach***, ***an bhfuil a fhios agat*** *?* Tagann daoine suas chugam ina dhiaidh tá sé go hiontach Gaelainn a chloisint ***deirim 'ó***, dhein mé dearúd, cathú orm'. Rudaí beaga **ach *ní*** déanfaimid ***ach*** é. Uaireanta bím saghas ag smaoineamh ar ***Íosa!*** an ceart dúinn é seo a dhéanamh? Ní féidir leat a rá níl tú ábalta Gaelainn a labhairt ***dá bhrí sin*** níl tú ábalta cónaí

anseo ach ***sea*** caithfimid a bheith oscailte le daoine chun teacht agus ***fiú*** b'fhéidir nach bhfuil tú ábalta Gaelainn a labhairt ach ó thaobh an chultúir de.

We observe that:

- The PMs (*so, I don't know, but, you know what? I'm like, oh, just, yeah, even*) don't have the same pragmatic impact when translated back into Irish.
- Many of the PMs are longer in Irish making them cognitively and temporally a little more demanding in real-time speaking;
- The interjection *Íosa!* Lacks the same pragmatic force of *Jesus!*;
- Replacing the quotative *I'm like* with *deirim* changes the narrative force of the delivery of the direct speech item that follows '*ó*, dhein mé dearúd, cathú orm'

Further exploring the purposes of PMs within our data, Table 9 shows that they are key to strategic competence (Hymes, 1972; Canale & Swain 1980, Canale, 1983), helping to organise discourse (54%), mark stance (23%) and sharked knowledge (11%) among other functions.

Table 9

Percentage breakdown of pragmatic markers (PMs) by function, including forms and examples

Function of PM	**%**	**Items from data**	**Example**
Discourse marking	54	So, now, but, like, I mean, say, anyway, because, okay	Ní féidir leat a rá níl tú ábalta Gaelainn a labhairt **so** níl tú ábalta cónaí anseo
Stance marking	23	Just, actually look, even I don't know, I think, obviously, really	ní raibh mé thar nais ag caint Gaelainne **obviously** dhein mé go maith…

Shared knowledge marking	11	you know	Seachas **you know** is breá liom an áit ó thaobh na háilleachta de…
Response token	8	oh, yeah, absolutely	**oh yeah absolutely** tá mise an-bhróduil go bhfuil mé ábalta Gaelainn a labhairt…
Quotative marker	1	I'm like	**I'm like** 'oh dhein mé dearúd, cathú orm'
Vagueness marker	1	et cetera	… ag caint ina dteanga féin, Spáinnis **et cetera** agus táimidne ag caint Gaelainne

At this point we have brought code-mixing, switching and translanguaging together to illuminate our data. However, without the ability to get into the mind of the speaker to ask why they decided to pivot from one language to another, we are left to surmise. As we conclude below, a broader methodology may be needed to fully address this subject.

Conclusion

Our study was borne out of a genuine quest to understand why language *meascán* was happening in these interviews. We can see some systematicity as discussed above in relation to nouns, PMs, direct speech, etc. The concepts of code-mixing, code-switching and translanguaging all help us articulate and theorise what we found. However, we are left with many questions that really can only be answered through further research. The present study is limited to a small dataset, albeit contextually-rich. Most of all, a future study which has a design that includes think-aloud protocols where participants could be asked to review a transcript and could be asked questions like: *why did you change to English/Irish when you used that noun?; were you consciously aware that you were using okay, so, really etc. in English?, and so on.* Such retrospection would inform us as to 1) possible reasons for changes; 2) the degree to which speakers are actually aware that they are changing language; and 3) possible in-group and out-group semantics that might lie behind using one language over another for certain words. Answering questions such as these could inform the translanguaging model in terms of

the degree to which speakers are drawing on their linguistic repertoire to optimise their communicative competence.

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