

**Code-switching in computer-mediated communication (CMC):
an exploratory study of linguistic factors underpinning the role
of English in Seychelles Kreol web-writing.**

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I certify that the attached material is my original work. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement. Some of this material was used for the project proposal for this current module and the Introduction to Sociolinguistics (LIN8015) module. Other than these, it has not been presented by me for assessment, in any other course or subject at this or any other institution

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Christine Pejakovic

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1. Introduction

1.1 Statement of the research problem

This aim of this study was to gain a comprehensive insight into the nature and functions of language alternation between *Kreol Seselwa* and English, in social media writing in Seychelles.

1.2 Background and context of the research problem

The Seychelles archipelago consisting of 115 islands is situated in the western Indian Ocean, north-west of Madagascar. In the past decade, with the rise of social media and increasing accessibility of the internet in the archipelago, Seychellois at home and within the widespread diaspora have been taking more and more to the web to communicate. Certain Facebook pages/discussion fora are subscribed to, by over a quarter of the country's total population of approximately 93,144¹. Seychelles has three national languages: English, French and Kreol Seselwa (hereafter, Kreol). Via participation of Seychelles online fora in the past three years, from my adopted home of Queensland, it became apparent to me that Kreol (whose lexifier language is French) demonstrates significant code-mixing with English. Prima facie, it appeared that both inter and intra-sentential code-switching are manifest, as well as recourse to English for lexical items that seemed to have equivalents. As a Seychelloise, who is proud of her nation's tri-lingualism, this project reflected my intention to elucidate and appraise the emerging written styles that I had been witnessing, through interactions via Facebook with Seychellois friends and pages such as *Gossip Corner* and *Sey_Troll*. There did not appear to be any studies on the discursive practices of Seychellois in computer-mediated communication (hereafter, CMC), let alone in respect to code-switching (hereafter CS), in that context.

¹ Source: <http://www.nbs.gov.sc/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Mid-2015-Population-Bulletin.pdf>

1.3 Scope of the study

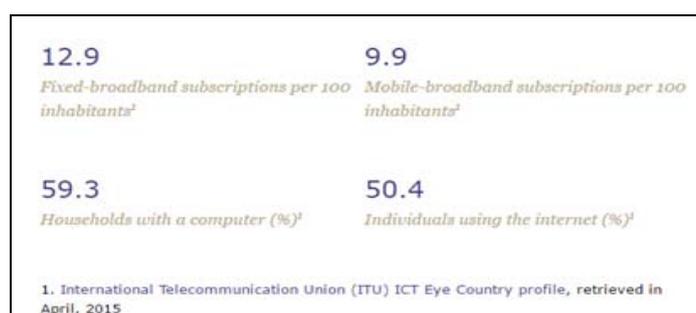
As this is an exploratory study, no hypotheses were developed for the nature and functions of code-alternation in Seychelles. I approached this research principally

from the sociolinguistics perspective as it is the predominant perspective in CMC (Androutsopoulos, 2013), while also considering to a lesser extent, the salient psycholinguistic theories.

The study of the alternate use of two or more languages in conversation has produced two major schools of thought: Structural and Sociolinguistic. The structural approach to CS is concerned with its grammatical aspects – the syntactic constraints which effectively give rise to patterns of CS. It has been established that CS occurs at specific switch points. For instance, with switching between Spanish and English, some grammatical constraints can come into play. Switching can only take place between an adjective and a noun if the adjective is placed as per to the rules of the language of the adjective (Herredia & Altirriba, 2001). As for the sociolinguistic approach, it views CS primarily as a discourse phenomenon focusing its attention on questions such as how social meaning is created in CS and what specific discourse functions it serves. (Boztepe, 2003). These two approaches are not mutually exclusive of each other. They are in fact complementary: one “tries to identify the structural features of morphosyntactic patterns underlying the grammar of CS, whereas the sociolinguistic approach builds on this in its attempts to explain why bilingual speakers talk the way they do”. (Boztepe 2003, p. 3). In this study, despite the temptation to consider all aspects of codeswitching, I decided to focus on the sociological aspects and to some extent some psychological factors. Throughout the study, I have kept an open mind about the (somewhat discredited) notion of semilingualism – the age-old belief that bilingual speakers who engage in code-switching only do so due to because of a lack of linguistic competence (Edelsky, Hudelson, Flores, Barkin, Altwerger, & Jilbert, 1983, cited in Boztepe, 2003). Significant research in the past two decades has consistently shown that code-switching itself constitutes the norm in many stable bilingual communities, and that “satisfaction of this norm requires considerably more linguistic competence in two languages” (Poplack, 1980, p. 588, cited in Boztepe, 2003). Nonetheless, from my personal knowledge of the Seychellois’ linguistic competence in English and Kreol in addition to discourse manoeuvres that I had observed in web fora, I did not expect there to be significant evidence pointing towards semilingualism as a factor responsible for the prevalence of code-switching in the sites of investigation.

1.4 Some personal observations regarding the site of investigation: Seychelles Facebook groups

- As can be seen from this snapshot of Seychelles' Information Communication Technology (ICT) status², access to the internet is significantly higher than the 2015 African average of 28.6% ³.



Source²: Commonwealth of Learning: <https://www.col.org/member-countries/seychelles>

Source³: <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm>

- There are a handful of online discussion fora operating in Seychelles that are subscribed to by a significant number of members. The most popular discussion Facebook groups/pages are: *Gossip Corner* (community group), *Seychelles Funny Corner* and the politically-affiliated groups: *Dan Lari Bazar* and *Seychelles Daily*. They each boast a membership in excess of 23,000. For the purposes of this study, I observed and examined corpora from *Gossip Corner* and *Sey_Troll* (adult) humour page from 2013 to 2016.
- As *Gossip Corner*'s membership exceeds a quarter of the country's current population, it is - as would be expected, representative of the various age-groups and walks of life in Seychelles and across the global diaspora. Posters use their personal Facebook profiles, while fake profiles are not tolerated by the site administrators. The site is continually updated by its members with a wide variety of information. This can take the form of first-hand accounts of locally breaking news events (sometimes with an uploaded photograph), to a complaint or praise of service received at a particular establishment. The sensationalism that often accompanies these news items and early notification of events contribute to this site's immense popularity. Responses to posts can

often manifest in rapid succession, giving it an air of synchronicity. In the literature review that follows, synchronicity in CMC is an important aspect of some key studies in CS. Overall, on the spectrum of synchronous (chat/Internet Chat Relay) on one end and asynchronous (email) on the other, I would place these discussion fora, towards the middle, albeit closer to the chat mode than email.

- Due to a factors such as the population's cultural and linguistic homogeneity as well as small size -with negligible degrees of separation, I have consistently observed a high level of mutual intelligibility within the Facebook groups. Short clauses are usually sufficient to express a wide range of opinions and ideas; they seem to be easily digested by the next posters, typically without requests for clarification. With posts that offer the additional visual cues consisting of photographs or memes, discourse goals seem to be achieved speedily.

1.5 Statement of the research question

This exploratory study was designed to answer the following question:

What are the nature and functions of code-switching between Kreol and English in the Seychelles CMC environment, from the socio and psycho-linguistic perspectives?

1.6 Definition of special terms

Code-switching usually refers to alternating between different languages by bilinguals, so that the switches, termed 'nonce borrowings' by Romaine (1989, p. 61 and 134) are integrated only momentarily and infrequently, and often extending beyond the individual lexical item to longer stretches of talk.

Inter-sentential switching occurs *outside* the sentence or the clause level (i.e. at sentence or clause boundaries) while **Intra-sentential switching** occurs *within* a sentence or a clause.

Loanwords/ Borrowing:

‘Established loan words’ (Romaine, 1989, p. 61 and 134) are accepted, recurrent, widespread and collective. They are utilised regularly and are permanently present and established in the recipient language's monolingual environment. They have often been integrated into the language and are “used by monolinguals who may or may not be aware of their foreign origin... probably not even perceived as foreign by the majority of speakers” (Romaine, 1989, p. 55).

A note on the distinction between Code-switching and borrowing:

There are two differing approaches to distinguishing between Code-Switching and borrowing. According to Poplack and her associates, they are based on two entirely different mechanisms. In cases where a lexical item shows only syntactic or phonological integration or no integration at all, it is considered to be a manifestation of CS. However, where a lexical item exhibits all three types of integration (the above mentioned two and morphological), would infer a case of borrowing. Single lexical items or bound morphemes which are syntactically and morphologically integrated into the base language, but which may or may not show phonological integration are called nonce borrowing (Boztepe, 2003). Unlike established borrowings, they lack frequency of use or degree of acceptance and are not considered as a type of CS.

On the other hand, linguists such as Meyers-Scotton claim that assimilation - specifically morphosyntactic integration, may not always be the defining criterion to distinguish borrowing from CS. (Meyers-Scotton, 1992, 1993a). They are seen as related processes along a continuum, influenced by frequency of use. On the continuum, only Core borrowings feature as instances of CS, as they are those lexical items that already have viable equivalents in the recipient language. Cultural borrowings are those lexical items that may be new to the recipient language and therefore more easily justify filling a lexical gap, via borrowing

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 The Seychelles linguistic situation

2.1.1 A brief history and overview

First colonised by the French in the late eighteenth century, the Seychelles islands acceded to British rule the following century, until independence in 1976. Its current population is heterogeneous, with the majority of Seychellois descending from French and British settlers and East African slaves. Chinese and Indian merchants were later additions to this ethnic melting pot. Although the Seychelles were a British colony since 1815, there was not a great influx of British migrants in the 19th century; the pervasive French influence remained from the previous administration. In fact, there were very few words of English derivation in Seychellois texts from that era. English words have noticeably been finding their way in the 20th century, due to education, occupations requiring a knowledge of English and language of government (Baker, 1982). Kreol has been developed from dialects of south-west France, which have been enriched by vocabulary from Bantu, English, Hindi and Malagasy (Moumou, 2004). It shares similarities with the codes found in a number of other post-colonial island societies such as Mauritius, Haiti and Dominica. (Laversuch, 2008). It was in 1979 that Kreol was declared by the new Constitution as an official language, with its own orthography, effectively making it the first French-based creole to be elevated to such status. In 1981, it became the first national language of the Republic, with English in second place and French in third (Bollée, 1993). In 1982, Kreol became a medium of instruction at pre-primary level and in the early stages of primary schooling, which is still the case today. The following year all three languages acquired equal status in the revised Constitution (Nadal & Anacoura, 2014).

Once a patois, today Kreol is the mother-tongue of over 95% of the population (Michaelis & Rosalie, 2013). *Double-nested diglossia* (Hoareau, 2010), can describe in part the current relationship between English, French and Kreol. Once English's role increased, this involved a systematic relegation of French and Kreol to lesser importance in a revised complementary redistribution. English dominates the institutional and educational fields. French, on the other hand, is intimately linked to

Kreol for historical, political and cultural reasons. However, it plays an important role in specific domains, such as tourism. Tourism is the main income earner, with over 80% of the market emanating from Europe. Laversuch (2008) makes the connection between linguistic development and these important ties as well as the substantial investment links with the UK and France. Kreol is seen as the prime language of identity, oral, and informal communication. Nadal & Anacoura (2014) point out that it is also used exclusively in parliament, for the debating of prospective of bills and other discussions.

From interviews with Seychellois of various walks of life, Bollée, 1993; Laversuch, 2008; Fleishmann, 2008 and Hoareau, 2005, 2010, discovered the general belief “that high proficiency levels in English (and to a much lesser degree in French) would offer Seychellois graduates socioeconomic benefits.” (Laversuch, 2008, p. 382). In other words, both French and English were generally felt by interviewees to have a higher “market value” than Kreol. Such public opinion contrast to the body of research that associates the country’s educational and literacy advances to its trilingual policy (Laversuch, 2008).

2.1.2 Formalization of the Kreol orthography

The written code was only developed in the late 1970’s. Prior to which, Kreol primarily served as an oral language. A phonemic orthography was developed by Bollée and d’Offay, based on phonological research of Dr Chris Corne (Bollée, 1993, p. 90). In 1977, two grammars of Seychelles Creole appeared: Bollée, (1977) and Corne (1977), cited in Bollée (1993). In 1979, the *Komite Kreol* (the national Kreol Committee) was founded with the aim of establishing and standardising the Kreol orthography and devising protocols for its written use. (Bollée, 1993, p.90). The *Komite’s* language policy, as articulated in 1985, sought to: i) protect and ii) guide the use of the Kreol language iii) assist with kreolization and creation of new words. In relation to the lexicon, the principles were to: i) use existing words, ii) creolise French words – as these were easily integrated phonologically and iii) use English words that have already been integrated into Kreol and iv) create new motivated words. Manoeuvring a delicate balance of protecting the language from undue foreign influence and adapting Kreol to suit the needs of a modern era, the Committee

replaced a number of Anglicism by i) already existing Kreol words ii) French borrowings or iii) newly coined Kreol words (Bollée, 1993, p.93). In 1982, the first dictionary *Diksyonner kreol – franse* was published by St Jorre and Lionnet (Michaelis & Rosalie, 2009). The (first[#]) monolingual Kreol dictionary is currently being drafted by the International Creole Institute of Seychelles and is expected to be available by the end of 2016⁴

⁴source: personal email to the author from Dr Marie-Reine Hoareau, (Chairperson of the International Creole Institute of Seychelles) dated 17 May, 2016.

[#]author's own word.

2.1.3 The ‘Transition Problem’ and categorisation of loan words in this study

A notable hurdle encountered in this project was that of categorising between loan-words and code-switches. As lexical borrowings must be excluded from the analysis of CS utterances, it is imperative to clarify the boundaries between the two. Both literature review and actual practice confirmed that this objective is not unproblematic or even likely to be achieved to the satisfaction of all. This problem was identified by Weinreich, Labov, and Herzog (1968, cited in Boztepe, 2003, p. 5) as “the transition problem: Because language change is a diachronic process, we cannot really determine at what point in time a particular lexical item gained the status of loanword in the recipient language”. Many linguists do not engage in the dichotomy of the debate and instead question the need to distinguish between CS and Code-borrowing, especially seeing that there are more similarities than differences between the two concepts. Boztepe (2003, p. 3) cites Eastman (1992) who states that “efforts to distinguish codeswitching, codemixing and borrowing are doomed” (p. 1), and that it is crucial that we “free ourselves of the need to categorize any instance of seemingly non-native material in language as a borrowing or a switch” (p. 1) if we want to understand the social and cultural processes involved in CS. As positive as this sounds in theory, for this study, I saw no alternative but to establish some parameters. Being a study of code-switching between Kreol and a language that not its lexifier parent, it is not impossible to have some general categories in place to establish roughly what is considered loanwords, at any given time, assuming as the lexicon is regularly revised and updated. In fact, there has been useful groundwork already

undertaken on Seychelles loanwords by Michaelis and Rosalie, as part of a data-gathering exercise for the World Loanword Typography Project (Michaelis & Rosalie, 2009), in addition to the continual work, undertaken by the International Creole Institute in updating the Kreol lexicon and grammar. Michaelis and Rosalie (2009, p. 218) make the important point: deciding what constitutes a loanword is dependent on the view that one subscribes to, in respect to creole genesis. If the relexification hypothesis is the preferred rationale, all items emanating from the donor language will be loanwords. The above-mentioned authors adhere to the continuity hypothesis that posit that creoles have no special genesis and that their formation should be treated as for any other language. “Seychelles Creole is thus regarded as an offshoot of French, and we regard most of its core vocabulary as inherited from earlier French”. (p. 226). Loanwords are therefore lexical items that have not been inherited from 18th century French. The table below shows the relatively high level of borrowing from English compared to the other donor languages:

Table 2: Loanwords in Seychelles Creole by semantic word class (percentages)

	English	French	eastern Bantu	Malagasy	languages of India	Portuguese	can languages	Chinese	Arabic	Unidentified	Total loan-words	Non-loanwords
Nouns	5.6	2.6	2.0	1.3	0.9	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.1	1.1	14.6	85.4
Verbs	2.4	0.2	0.2	0.8	-	-	0.2	-	-	0.2	4.1	95.9
Adjectives	2.2	-	1.6	1.4	2.2	-	-	-	-	-	7.3	92.7
Adverbs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0	100.0
Function words	-	-	-	0.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.9	99.1
all words	4.2	1.6	1.4	1.2	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.7	10.7	89.3

Source: Michaelis & Rosalie (2009, p. 222)

The line in the sand that I have drawn between CS and borrowing is not without its limitations: I have referred to: i) the list of English loan words codified by Philip Baker (1982), ii) the Diksyonner kreol-franse (D’Offay & Lionnet, 1982) and iii) the typography of loanwords by Michaelis & Rosalie (2009). These are the documents that I was able to access online from Australia. Granted, the first two documents are nearly four decades old. The third, despite its relative newness only focuses on a set number of lexical items, as part of a global typology project. Nonetheless, as this is an exploratory study, my most important consideration has been to show the patterns of language alternation and frequency, to some extent. Therefore, I hereby acknowledge

that I may have inadvertently categorised words already established as borrowed as instances of switches and vice versa.

2.2 Sociological dimensions of CS

2.2.1 Sociological approaches to CS in conversation

Code-switching provides a unique window on mechanisms at play of when languages come into contact with each other (Bullock & Toribo, 2009). The bulwark of qualitative studies on CS have been informed by interactional sociolinguistics (e.g. Gumperz, 1982) or conversation-analytical study of code-switching (eg. Auer, 1999) who both see that CS as a “contextualisation cue”. This cue is effectively “a means of conveying pragmatic information to interlocutors as to how a particular utterance is to be read in context” (Martin-Jones 1995, p.98). Gumperz (1982), identified six typical discourse functions that CS fulfils in conversation, namely: i) quotation ii) addressee specification iii) interjections iv) reiteration iv) message qualification, and v) personalisation versus objectivisation. He also suggests that code-switching is employed for the creation of a variety of social meaning (p. 144), namely:

- To convey social and linguistic meaning:
- To appeal to the literate
- To appeal to the illiterate
- To convey precise meaning
- To ease communication (ie. utilizing the shortest and easiest route)
- To negotiate with greater authority
- To capture attention, stylistic, emphatic, emotional
- To emphasise a point
- To communicate more effectively
- To identify with a particular group
- To close the status gap
- To establish goodwill and support.

Malik (1994) adds a few more attributes to this comprehensive list, with: i) lack of facility, ii) lack of register iii) mood of speaker and iv) habitual experience.

It is to be noted that based on a significant body of research, CS functions strongly as a symbol of group identity and solidarity amongst members of its discourse community (Boztepe, 2003, p. 17). Speakers adjust their speech style as a way of expressing their solidarity or distance by using the “we-code” and “they-code” (Gumperz (1982). The *Communication Accommodation Theory* (CAT) advanced by Howard Giles (Giles and Powelnd, 1975, cited in Boztepe, 2003) seeks to understand the reasons for code-switching (or other language change) by focusing on how interlocutors choose to emphasise or reduce social differences (ie. divergence/convergence) between them. Speech convergence can include factors such as choice of code, accent, dialect, and other para-linguistic features. Divergence manifests with a code choice that will alienate and distance others, typically using speech with linguistic features characteristic of his/her own group. CAT is one of three key sociological theories of CS; the other two being Auer’s Conversation Analysis Framework and the Markedness Model (Carol Meyers-Scotton), which will be introduced subsequently.

A number of theorists, such as Bourdieu, Heller and Gibbons (cited in Boztepe, 2003, p. 16) believe that code choices are made against the background of social factors as those related to the immediate situation. Bourdieu goes as far as suggesting that speakers “attribute value and power to languages or language varieties”, which potentially explains situations whereby a foreign word is favoured over an available equivalent, if borrowed from a more “prestigious” donor language. “Crossing” is another significant social aspect of code-switching (Rampton, 1995). It is not uncommon for individuals to mirror vernacular of other ethnic groups to gain inclusion. There have been numerous studies demonstrating how identity can be created through choice code (Reyes, 2005; Gardner-Chloros, 1991 & 2001; Sweetland, 2002, cited in Wardaugh, 2010). Alastair Pennycook has analysed the phenomena of local re-contextualisation of linguistic and cultural forms via an analysis of the worldwide spread of Hip hop music and related linguistic forms (Bozza, 2003, cited in Alim et al., 2009, p. 28).

Peter Auer’s Conversational Analysis (CA) Framework (1995) posits that the social

motivation behind code-switching is determined in the way that code-switching is structured and managed in conversation. The model rests on the important premise that the meaning or function of a code-switched utterance can be manifested if the preceding and following utterance in the sequence are also considered. Therefore, thorough examination of the conversational locus of switch points is indispensable to the Conversational Analysis approach to CS (Auer 1995). Irrespective of the code a speaker chooses for a conversational turn, subsequent choices of language by their interlocutor and themselves as the hearer, will be impacted. In other words, the analysis focuses on the meaning that the act of code-switching itself generates. In laying out the tenets of the *Markedness Model (MM)*, Carol Meyers-Scotton said “Choose the form of your conversation contribution such that it indexes the set of rights and obligations which you wish to be in force between speaker and addressee for the current exchange” (Myers-Scotton, 1993, cited in Boztepe, 2003, p.14). She sees code choices as a rational and deliberate function of negotiations of position between the speakers, who use the codes in their linguistic repertoire to index the rights and obligations holding between the participants. Therefore, when there is no clear unmarked code choice, speakers resort to code-switching to as an alternate language choice. The MM has been criticised for its inference that all code choice is rational and deliberate.

2.2.2 Sociological approaches to CS in the CMC environment

The CMC milieu offers new sources of CS data, where high-quality participant observations can be collected unobtrusively and with less methodological overhead (Poplack, 1993). Classical conversational approaches, with their classificatory endeavours, are being increasingly supplemented by ethnographically-informed studies that incorporate a dynamic approach to online code-switching as a tool to manage social relations and construction of identities (Androutsopoulos, 2013; Georgakopoulou, 2003; Hinrichs, 2006). Nonetheless, as the field widens and research proliferates, there are divergences in opinion over the relevance of traditional theories and frameworks. Hinrichs (2006) believes that that CMC language has little in common with oral discourse and reject the application of traditional code-switching frameworks of analysis. Contrary to Gumperz’s suggestion that “the participants

immersed in an interaction are quite unaware of which code is used at any one time, their main concern is with the communicative effect of what they are saying,” (1982, p. 28). Hinrichs points out that in CMC, CS is likely to be employed more consciously. He used two Jamaican web fora as a point of comparison to his email corpus. As a result of this qualitative analysis, he highlights the performance and stylization functions, eg. double-voicing, in the use of Creole by Jamaicans (as opposed to Standard Jamaican English), which serve as an important act of identity (2006, p.28). This landmark study will be discussed further in this paper in relation to the Markedness Model (MM).

Bell (1984, cited in Androtsopoulos, 2013 p.677) states: “CS presupposes a bi-or multi-lingual audience that is able to understand the codes at hand and to draw inference from the way the speakers juxtapose and alternate between the codes.” As dyadic interactions can be private or public, the presence of over-hearers may have an effect on audience design. In more private CMC, participants rely on larger inferential power as they can easily rely on common and personal knowledge and practices to achieve mutual intelligibility.

Androtsopoulos (2013) categorised the discourse functions for CS in CMC, as follows:

- 1) for formulaic discourse purposes, including greetings;
- 2) in order to perform culturally-specific genres such as poetry or joke-telling;
- 3) to convey verbatim speech;
- 4) with repetition of an utterance for emphatic purposes;
- 5) index one particular addressee, to respond to language choices by preceding contributions, or to challenge other participants’ language choices;
- 6) switching to contextualize a shift of topic, to distinguish between facts and opinion;
- 7) to differentiate between the jocular or serious, and to mitigate potential face-threatening acts, for instance through humorous CS in a dis-preferred response or request;
- 8) to index consent or dissent, agreement and conflict, alignment and distancing etc.

Burgeoning research indicates that online CS “includes playful and creative uses of linguistic resources, which exploit available planning opportunities and are reflexively mobilised in discourses of cultural diversity or hybridity.” Georgakopoulou, 1997, cited in Androtsopoulos, 2013, p.698) explains that CMC interlocutors use CS, style shifting and other manipulations of written symbols (emoticons, laughter acronyms) to accomplish pragmatic work that would otherwise be accompanied by phonological variation, prosody, posture and other stylized cues in normal conversation.

Paolillo (1996) found that Internet Relay Chat (IRC) offer more instances of CS than Usenet (online discussion board, precursor to web forum) due to the former’s more dynamic and interactive milieu. In the case of Usenet, participants can choose what articles appear on their screens, therefore reducing the element of shared context. He also discovered that IRC data contains creative conversational CS, whereas Usenet data is limited to formulaic discourse (such as Poetry and standard phrases). His findings are that synchronous modes of CMC will contain more conversational CS than the asynchronous. In fact, in public CMC, discourse is as much shaped by the technological properties of CMC synchronicity as by social and pragmatic factors (eg. linguistic repertoires, interpersonal relations, interactional activities). Another important finding of Paolillo (1996) in his important study of English, Hindi, and Punjabi CS in four Internet communication contexts, relates to the predominance of English in all four. He surmises that this is a reflection of the high prestige accorded to English (favoured in the formal and educational systems), audience of IRC and Usenet - often international, as well as the fact that computer network technology and use continue to be dominated by English-speaking countries. Androtsopoulos (2013) remarks on the “conspicuous language practices in various CMC modes is the switch between respective national language and English” (p. 697). There is evidence from a number of studies (Egypt, Finland, South Africa) of widespread patterns of “minimal bilingualism”. This refers to the practice whereby sets of English chunks and formulaic routines including greetings and farewell, interjection and discourse organiser, requests, slogans etc. are inserted into the base language.

It is also worth signalling the phenomenon of “Crossing” whereby the code choice is often indexical to the “group’s” lifestyle orientations, including stylized

representations of vernacular Englishes (Androutsopoulos 2013). Referring to the phenomenon of new Englishes, such as those operating in Singapore or Malaysia, McArthur (cited in Crystal, 1999, p. 165) states that “different degrees of language mixing are apparent: at one extreme, a sentence might be used which is indistinguishable from standard English; at the other end a sentence might use so many words and constructions from a contact language that it becomes unintelligible to those outside a particular community”. In between, there is the spectrum of hybridization, which can range from the use of a single lexical borrowing to numerous items within the recipient sentence.

Hinrichs’ (2006) study of Jamaican CMC is a landmark study, which has informed subsequent forays into Kreol code-switching. According to the Meyers-Scotton Markedness Model, all CS behaviour is based on “rational choice whereby speakers seek to optimise the relationship between costs and rational outcome” (Myers-Scotton & Bolonyai, 2001, cited in Hinrichs, 2006, p. 140). Hinrichs (2006) discovered that in Jamaican society, for a number of domains, CS is the unmarked choice, including for dialogues with peers. In the sphere of informal communications, including web discussions, Jamaican Creole is the unmarked code and Jamaican English is the marked code. This is in the context of individuals having greater written fluency in English due to the education factor. Nonetheless, despite English’s ‘quantitative dominance’, they choose to switch to writing in Creole, which carries the “higher cognitive cost”.

2.3 The Psycholinguistic approach

The Psycholinguistic approach to CS has steadily been gaining interest in recent years largely due to the contributions of Michael Clyne (Riehl, 2013). Psycho-linguistically conditioned code-switching is non-functional and non-intentional; it is not prompted by the interlocutor’s intentions, but rather by specific conditions of language production. In other words, this cognitive type of code-switching is set into action by trigger-words that are effectively “words at the intersection of two language systems, which, consequently, may cause speakers to lose their linguistic bearings and continue

the sentence in the other language” (Clyne 1991, p.193, cited in Riehl, 2013). Those words generally belong to more than one language.

Triggering provides interesting insights into the processes of mental representation of bilingualism on the one hand and bilingual language processing on the other. Riehl (2013, p.1948) lists the different types of trigger-words, as per Clyne’s (1991) classification:

- Proper nouns;
- Lexical transfers that are phonologically unintegrated eg. *Film* in Italian which is a lexicalized loan (dictionary-attested loanword) in Standard Italian and no native Italian counterpart.
- Bilingual homophones: words that sound same or nearly the same in both languages;
- Discourse markers, which tend to be low in content, conversation fillers and perceived as “gesture-like”. Examples are ‘well’, ‘yeah’, “you know”.

Having examined the various theories for bilingual language processing (Levelt & al, 1999; Grosjean, 1988; Aitchinson, 1994; Dell & Reich, 1980) cited in Riehl (2013) conclude that it is plausible to assume one shared language store, where all the items are interconnected (2013, p.1957). The lemmas (conceptual level where language choice is made) are connected. They are also equipped with “language tags” - information specific to a particular language. She states that the transversion from the trigger word to an instance of code-switching is explained by the internal linking of lemmas with morpho-syntactic information. Franceschini (1998, cited in Riehl, 2013) observes that in communities whereby code-switching is very common, there is a high likelihood that language tagging information becomes lost cognitively and speakers become less and less aware of triggering effects. Therefore, children who acquire two languages simultaneously usually do not differentiate between the two systems prior to the age of three (Butzkamm 1993, cited in Riehl, 2013). In speech communities utilizing mixed codes, if applying Franceschini’s logic, it would therefore be difficult for children to acquire the language tags for the different language systems.

3.0 Approach and Methodology

3.1 Mixed Methods and Ethnography

A mixed-method approach was used in this study as it lent itself extremely well to exploratory research. In fact, I note that in the field of CS research, the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches is the most often utilised (Androutsopoulos, 2013, p. 674) as it combines a bird's eye view (or back-drop) of the distribution of languages over a large data set, in juxtaposition with a more descriptive/ granular view of local processes.

For methodology, the obvious choice, given my long-standing participation in Seychelles web-fora and intrinsic understanding of the discourse was Ethnography; specifically **“discourse centred online ethnography” (DCOE)**, coined by Androutsopoulos (2013). Ethnographical research typically focuses on mixed methods of data collection and analysis, namely, observations through holism and immersion, document reviews, frequency analysis, interviews and survey questionnaire (Frankham & MacRae in Somekh & Lewin eds, 2011). Ethnography in the digital age no longer necessitates the researcher to physically live in the target community amongst the participants that he/she is attempting to study. DCOE, by virtue of systematic ethnographic observation, aligns well to the epistemological tenets of CMC, particularly in studies such as this one, whereby socio and psycholinguistic approaches are being considered. This view is also echoed by Kytölä and Androutsopoulos (2011), who find long-time immersion and real-time observation of web forum discourse activity imperative for gaining insights into emergent multilingual practices. Androutsopoulos (2013) also considers the additional value gained by the contact with the actors in terms of obtaining additional evidence or correctives to the findings. This informed my decision to complement the corpus analysis with a small-scale questionnaire.

3.2 Some considerations

- As this is an exploratory study with a wide perspective, the data collection points were multiple and small in scale.
- Privacy considerations in reviewing Facebook corpora:
 Sey_Troll is an open/ Facebook page; despite its relatively small membership of 6000+. This public aspect, coupled with its predominant use of Kreol made it an attractive (although limited) source of data for this study. Names or persons names (or any reference to) were deleted from the corpora being examined. Gossip Corner is technically a closed group, although membership is granted unequivocally by site administrators upon selecting the ‘join group’ option. 23,000 of Seychelles' 93,144-strong population are subscribed to it and it is widely regarded as the main community discussion forum in Seychelles. Due to the membership and popularity of the site, it is very rich in linguistic data. However, due to the official “closed” status of the group, data from this corpus was used in a restrictive way: it was used quantitatively for frequency analysis and code distribution of CS in corpora (in percentage terms) and qualitatively to elucidate patterns of CS; however short of clauses containing examples of pertinent linguistic content have been quoted. Names of persons (or any reference to) were deleted from the corpora being examined. There is no possibility of a poster being identified by an utterance, from a public web-search using these key words.

3.3 Data collection

Data-collection was undertaken as per the following stages, considerations and methods:

- #### 3.3.1 [Quantitative] Establishment of official baseline (via sweep of articles from national newspaper, to establish the overall frequency of English lexical items):

This initial step was to ascertain what official written Kreol ‘looks like’ in terms of language composition and ‘purity’. 20 articles from were selected on the basis of their coverage of a wide range of news items and not confined to the similar themes, where certain potentially code-switched lexical items would be over-presented. Due to the small sample taken, the frequency analysis was undertaken manually and collated in an Excel document.

3.3.2 [Quantitative] Sweep of web corpus data to establish the frequency of English lexical items in web forum posts in Kreol and to establish a pattern of code-distribution across a set corpora of posts.

This exercise was two-fold:

- i) To establish the percentage of English lexical items (that are not verified loanwords) in a sample of Facebook corpora (*Gossip Corner* and *Sey_Troll*).

The posts that were chosen reflected a variety of topics. Only posts where the original comment was in Kreol (or Kreol/ English CS) were selected. Proper names were deleted from corpus.

The corpora (of each of the two Facebook fora) were copied and pasted into a text file and then uploaded into the Simple Concordance Software for categorisation of *Key Words*. In the absence of the existence of a Kreol online dictionary, which can be fed into Concordance Software packages, I had to manually check each English lexical item against the *Diksyonner kreol-franse*, the Loanword List (Baker, 1982) and Michaelis & Rosalie (2009) loanword list. The lexical items that were included in the Key Words register were effectively CS terms. This data was exported into Microsoft Excel for “sorting” by frequency.

- ii) To establish a pattern of code-distribution across a set of Facebook corpora

This entailed the selection of random Facebook threads from *Gossip Corner* and categorising each post into the following (based on word count): Kreol only/ English only/ CS (50/50)/ Mostly English/Kreol/ Mostly Kreol/English/ French including Mixed with French.

3.3.3 [Qualitative] Ethnographic and linguistic examination of web corpus data (Kreol posts) of 2 selected Facebook groups;

My online ethnographic observation (through immersion but no contact with other members) took the form of being a member of the Gossip Corner and Sey_Troll Facebook groups for over 2 years.

The linguistic examination involved the selection of unlimited random threads that I would look for patterns, in line with i) Sociolinguistic factors for CS and ii) Psycholinguistic factors for CS. The Literature Review section of this paper encapsulates the theories that have informed by analyses. This, juxtaposed with the actual analysis (in Chapter 4 Analysis and Findings) clearly demonstrates how these examinations were carried out.

3.3.4 [Mixed] analysis – Survey questionnaire distributed to 72 of Seychellois Facebook friends and their friends, residing in Seychelles to gauge their code-mixing practices and attitudes.

Research design considerations:

- The questionnaire to a great extent, supplemented the data that I had obtained through frequency and corpus analysis. Through linguistic analyses and literature review, I already had a relatively clear picture of the nature and rationale for CS in CMC.
- I set a limit of 15 questions to secure higher response rates.
- The survey software was www.Typeform.com; The reporting functionality allowed for easy export of data in Microsoft Excel format. Graphical representation of each set of answers was also available.

- Mixed method approach characterises the survey analysis. As certain questions in the survey carry an editable “other” field, this consists of qualitative data.
- The survey questions were informed by the following primary and secondary sources of data
- Primary: i) Corpus findings (sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic) showing very clear CS patterns; ii) CS distribution across corpora.
- Secondary: Informed by literature review, particularly Bollée (1993) on limited Kreol register and ii) socio-linguistic and psycholinguistic approaches to functions of CS in CMC.

Selection of participants

- I emailed an invitation via Facebook inbox to all 72 of my Seychellois Facebook friends, who are in my knowledge residing in Seychelles and who are over 18.
- I simultaneously posted a general invitation on my Facebook wall, kindly asking Seychellois friends to share on their own walls or send a link directly to their contacts in Seychelles. The audience would be all my friends, including those who live outside of Seychelles. It was anticipated that a minimum of 100 responses would be obtained.
- The online survey, Participant Information form and Consent form all carried a Kreol translation, which I personally effected, being a fluent/ native speaker of both English and Kreol, respectively.

4. Analysis and Findings

4.1 Establishment of ‘official’ baseline of English lexical items

Frequency analysis was conducted of a small sample of 20 Seychelles Nation online newspaper articles in Kreol dating from 1 April 2015 to 18 April, 2016 to establish what the percentage of non dictionary-attested English lexical items. This revealed a very low figure of 0.78%.

4.2. Frequency analysis of English CS lexical items and code distribution of Facebook corpus in Seychelles CMC

4.2.1 English lexical items in web forum posts

The posts that were selected were on the basis that the original post is in Kreol or Kreol (with CS). From the Facebook page Sey_Troll, a corpus of 830 words were selected, of which 103 (or 12.65%) were English terms. If one discounts posts written entirely in English, this figure changes to 66 English terms out of a corpus of 764 lexical items, thus reducing the percentage of code-switched terms to 8.51%.

The same analysis (via *Simple Concordance* software) was undertaken for a number of posts in Gossip Corner Facebook group spanning the period of approximately one year. From a total corpus of 8352 lexical items, there were 1893 instances of code-switched terms, which represents 22.67%. Upon eliminating all posts written completely in English, the corpus dropped to 6567 and English lexical items to 781, representing 11.89% of the total corpus. Across both these Facebook groups (from the samples analysed), an overall average of 18.26% words were in English. If one were to disregard posts written entirely in English, this average would then be 9.95%. One can therefore assert that within public Facebook groups in the Seychelles, one out of ten words within a Kreol interaction, is effectively, an English term. These figures are significantly higher than the 0.78% revealed in the frequency analysis of the Seychelles Nation articles.

4.2.2 Code-distribution of Facebook corpus

The patterns of code-switching from a corpus of 288 posts revealed the following composition of posts: English only (30%.); Kreol only 40% ; Code Switched (English and Kreol): 28.5; French or Kreol/ French: 1.4%.

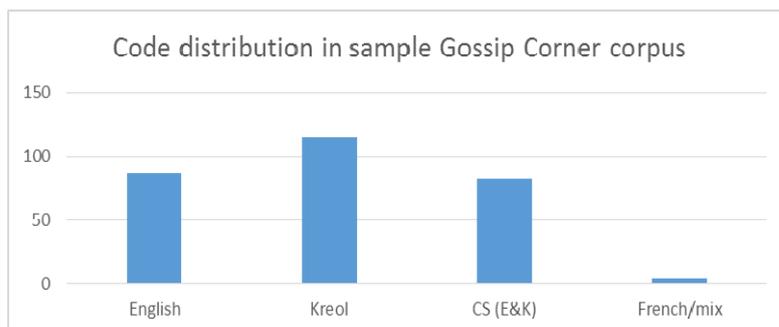


Fig. 3. Graph showing code distribution across 288 *Gossip Corner* posts (from random threads between 5 January to 18 April, 2016).

The following graph refers to the same data but includes a break-down of the CS category:

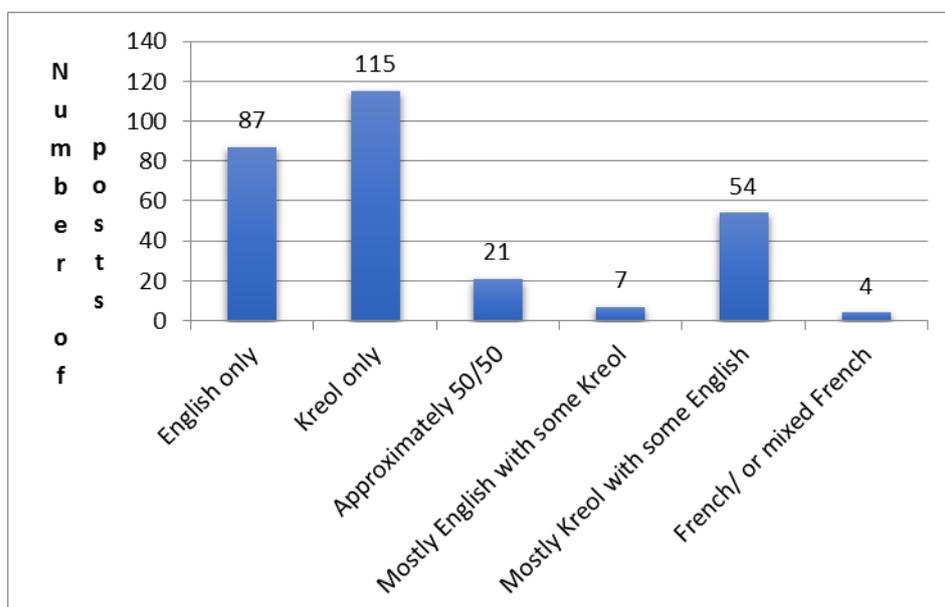


Fig. 4 Graph showing code distribution across 288 *Gossip Corner* posts (from random threads between 5 January to 18 April, 2016) – with CS data break-down.

4.3 Sociolinguistic analysis of Facebook corpus in Seychelles CMC

My sociolinguistic analysis of Facebook corpus of both *Gossip Corner* and *Sey_Troll* revealed close alignment to a number of the CS functions posited by Gumperz, Malick and Androutsopolous (see chapter 2 of this paper). Additionally, Hinrich's

(2006) findings on Creole as a rhetorical tool and Rampton's (1995) theory on 'Crossing' were strongly present in some of the themes that emerged.

i) Rhetorical functions of CS (including double voicing)

It was not uncommon to see code-switching being deployed for rhetorical ends in the Seychelles CMC context. A multitude of examples were encountered in the corpus whereby a switch in code provides an effective climax. These Facebook pages are rife with posts whereby the poster has described a number of complaints or ills in one language, followed (usually inter-sententially), by a sigh of exasperation, in the other code. The following examples are cases in point. In the first three, Kreol is the language of rhetoric:

Example 1 (NB: a lengthy clause expressing difficulties for the poster preceded this).... *there hardly was any in the shops and one had to buy in bulk. **Zis mazinen!***
 ![Kreol translation: *Just imagine!!!*]

Example 2. *I wrote asking WHY are they not using "mold resistant" paint in the hospitals....NO REPLY. Such molds can also trigger asthma in asthmatic patients such as myself..... So again.....AKOZ nou lopital I dan en leta koumsa???? Lekel ki responsab pou maintenance?.....*

[Kreol translation: *WHY is our hospital in such a state?? Who is responsible for maintenance?" ..]*

In this post, the intensifying dissatisfaction of the author is signalled by the capital lettering and code-switch strategy. The switch to Kreol occurs after the emphatic "So again and then the capitalised AKOZ ie. "why".. are our hospitals in such a state???? The multiple question marks contribute to the heightened level of frustration in the Kreol clauses. The switch to Kreol also ushers a change from the narrative to the interrogative. This particular line of questioning, particularly the first of the two questions, is delivered in an epiplexic manner, which further reinforces the post's overall rhetoric.

A similar climactic effect is achieved via intra-sentential codeswitching:
 Example 3. *Better than this i a gate.. byen dir. [Kreol translation: *Can't be said**

better than this (literally; Better than this is spoilt, well said]. In fact the first part of this sentence is the literal translation of a popular Seychellois saying “plibon ki sa i a gate”.

Conversely, code-switching from Kreol to English, where the latter can also effectively be used to convey rhetoric:

Example 4. *konman u met fb on i dr un use 75%...U ankor pe get sa msgs en pti ku i dr u 100%...I don't understand.*

Regarding use of internet data, [Kreol translation: “as soon as you go on FB, you are told that you have used up 75%.. You’re still reading that message and next thing you’re told 100%]. *I don’t understand.*

I can surmise, based on an overall qualitative observation, that for the purposes of injecting emphasis, code-switch from English to Kreol is more prevalent than the reverse. This finding is very much in keeping with Hinrichs (2006), who posits that “the rhetorical functions of Creole are often symbolic, and that the communicative value it adds is often greater and more specific than for English because it is the code that is associated with meanings of local culture” (2006, p. 140).

ii) Stylistic functions of CS – wordplay and humour

By having access to two full sets of lexicons -Kreol and English, it would appear that Seychellois are demonstrating creativity in wordplay, as the following instances aptly demonstrate:

Example 1. *6,000+ fanz, airconz e levantay..*

[Translated to 6000+ fans, airconditioners and (hand-held) fans]. This was an address by a site administrator thanking fans for their support.

Example 2. *...“hives all over his body. I give his (sic) ceterezine. Ek sa senir plim osi bon geez”*

[Kreol translation: ‘And it’s also good against that hairy caterpillar Geez’].

The nationally-disliked and much complained-about vegetation pest is also known to trigger allergic skin reactions. The emphatic “geez” reveals the resentment that the term “senir plim” evokes. The other meaning of Geez, or rather its homonym “G’s” is an expletive; it is an abbreviation for the word grenn, (literally scrotum). Colloquially, it usually denotes being given a hard time.

iii) Solidarity/ Convergence as a function of CS; and

iv) Personalization versus objectivisation/ to index one particular addressee as a function of CS

With reference to Giles and Poweland’s (1975) CAT theory, discourses expressing convergence are frequently observed in the Seychelles social media domain, from my observations. This is particularly evident in the community site “Gossip Corner”, with its inclusive focus and the up-to-the minute postings alerting fellow member to occurrences (often misfortunes) happening in the small community. The following post shows how the switch from English to Kreol ushers in a distinct air of solidarity and sharing in the other person’s plight:

*“**aww that is so touching enn ler nou paran isi sesel nou pas anver bokou difikilte ki bokou pa konen...ya mon kapab mazine sa ta depans osi.be how is your son now?**”*

[translated to: “sometimes us parents in Seychelles, we go through a lot of difficulties that others don’t know about .. yeah I can imagine all that expense too. But” how is your son now?]. The “us parents” ‘we go through.’ that others don’t know about” efficaciously convey convergence.

The Kreol clause also marks a change from direct to indirect speech. This example is also a perfect example of how CS is used in Seychelles’ social media interactions to effect a shift in conversational focus - from a generalised (objectivised) to a personalised stance.

v) Economy/ utilising the shortest and easiest route, as a function of CS

This appears to be a very commonly utilised reason for code-switching in Seychelles online fora, particularly in the context of the prevalence of SMS/ text-style writing in

both Kreol and English. Expediency in ‘getting to the point’ may account for the resort to English lexical items for terms that typically have Kreol counterparts. Due to the sheer size of the English vocabulary in relation to that of Kreol, it is highly likely that the term being described at the time of writing, is more easily contained and perfectly described in one or two English lexical item(s).

Example 1: *Feel free* pou demann mon[Translated to “Feel free to ask me”]

Example 2: ..si ler bis in sanze **advise**??? [Translated to...*if the bus timetable has changed. Advise*???

vi) No equivalent/ lack of exact register, as functions of CS

This part of the analysis considers both terms that have no equivalents (A) and those that lack the exact register (B).

A) In this category of code-switch to English are overwhelmingly technology/internet-related terminology, such as **shares, likes, OMG, lol, lmao, data, download, data**; although there are examples of other items (often observed in web-discourse) such as “**hangover**” that can also be included.

(B) The reason for code-switching is that is that the term is best articulated in the other code, usually English (in view of its wider lexical bank).

In the following sentence “*i bezwen pran mwan pre 5 an pou mwan finalman kapab **move on** e trouv en lot dimoun ki mon kapab aktyelman kontan*” the poster speaks of needing 5 years to move on after a failed relationship. “Move on” may best describe this process, as Kreol can only offer substitutes such as *kontinyen ek lavi* (continue with life), which arguably, does not convey the same perlocutionary effect.

vii) Formulaic routines / ‘minimal bilingualism’ as a function of CS

There is widespread occurrence of English formulaic routines across the totality of the web corpus under investigation. Lexical items or short clauses are used for greetings, interjections, slogans are inserted with ease and utmost frequency, such as:

You’re welcome, well said, good one, thanks.

viii) Crossing as a function of CS

In the case of Seychelles social media, it is undeniable that linguistic choices associated with Reggae and Hip Hop music sub-cultures are prevalent. Terms like **nigga, broda, numba, dafuq dis, dat, true dat** are extremely commonplace across the totality of the corpus examined. The following comments are two of the multitude of instances that I have come across:

Example 1. “beta *a ganny fer for* nurses in da future to show dem our appreciation” [translated to” we should do better for nurses in future to show them our appreciation”].

Example 2: *so dats all i cn report on.*

ix) Repetition as a function of CS

It is widely acknowledged that repetition is a function of CS. This was exemplified across some of the corpus under investigation. However, what I also discovered was that in the Seychelles CMC context, the actual avoidance of repetition and wish to sound original was a key factor for CS. Armed with a choice of three languages, the Seychellois has access to a wider range of synonyms than the monolingual. Often the aim is to respond with an original comment and not (appearing to) copy what the previous poster has said. The following example from Sey_Troll, is an example whereby “well said” is repeated in various forms:

[Poster 1] **Well said**, u guys r about a good laugh not corrupt n dirty politics that makes people angry n bitter .

[P.2] araze kopi sazot pa oule fer zot prop keksoz.....nek kopi orizinalite keksoz zot prosen

[P.3] Spread enpe lanmour Christmas dan plans lager ek politik.

Agree ek zot Sey_Troll.

[P.4] **Well said**, always ruining things with politics.

[P.5] **Byen koze** [translated:’ Well spoken’] me fodre nu asire ki zot p konpran.

[P.6] **Byen dir**. [translated: ‘Well said’] bez met politik dan you dil....syuuuuk

[P.7] Aste original

[P.8] **Well said**, "Arete Kopi"

x) With reference to Auer's (1995) Conversational Analysis Framework, the last example, (relating to repetition), demonstrates how sequential turns potentially affect the code-choice of the interlocutors. Even if this exchange unfolded in an asynchronous context, the principles applying to CA are still evident.

xi) Habitual experience

In addition to the sociolinguistic factors enumerated above and instances of triggering (from the psycholinguistic tradition, which will be discussed in the next section), it appeared from my ethnographic observation and corpus assessment that habitual experience may account for some of the CS which occur. This is particularly so for posters switching to the other language, for no discernible pragmatic reason. Although with reference to Meyers-Scotton's statement "habitual language choice in multilingual speech communities is far from being a random matter of momentary inclination" (Myers-Scotton 1987, cited in Boztepe, 2003, p. 14).

xii) Evidence of localised English lexical items and short clauses

Finally, a sociolinguistic observation of the contemporary Seychelles CMC milieu would not be complete without the mention of what appears to be prevalent examples of certain quasi-national idiosyncracies. A few examples of short clauses containing these are as follows:

- **so true sa dil best** [Translated: "so true, this stuff is fantastic/great"]
- **The best** [used in the same sense as "I Like!" in contemporary Facebook jargon].
- **simply the truth and true fact.** (This emphatic clause is used, either in its entirety and less seldom, as just "true fact").
- Mon prifere **kool** zis avek en dimoun. [Translated to: I prefer to *date/see* just one person]
- Get dan **welfare.** [Look into the wellbeing of someone/ assist]

NB: The latter two examples are not exclusive to web-discourse; they have been in used in oral interactions for quite some time.

4.4 Psycholinguistic analysis of CS: Triggering as a factor of CS

With reference to the categories identified by Riehl (2013) in section 2.3 of this paper, there seems to be evidence of triggering, due mainly to the presence phonologically unintegrated loan items. In such a context, on a cognitive level, lemmas from both codes would be activated. What is clear in the first example is that the phonologically unintegrated loanwords influence the choice of lexicon in this football-related discourse:

- Original post.....”Eski zot ti vreman pare pou sa **friendly match** or **simply no interest** dan sa **match**?? [translated: Were they really ready for this friendly match or simply no interest in this match??].
- [Poster 1]. What happened? **Score**?
- [P. 2]. Napa paviyon **corner** bezwen servi **cone**, **linesmen** napa **uniform** bezwen servi **vest**, ni prezans lapolis napa. Mon konpran i en **friendly**, selman **protocol should remain the same**.
- [P. 5]...’**corner flag** pati ganny envite,**assistant referee** i mank avyon **gate controller** ti ankor dan **hangover**....’
- In the same vein, a second example features as follows:
- “Sa bann **jokes, very very funny**;)”

4.4 Survey questionnaire

Responses were submitted by 61 participants.

4.4.1 Salient points that emerged from the data :

Languages spoken

- English slightly overtook Kreol (4.77 versus 4.4 out of a score of 5). 80% of respondents expressed total fluency in English compared to 64% in Kreol. Oral competency of French was significantly less, with 3.15 out of 5. Only 15% of respondents admitted to a high level of fluency in French.
- 90% mix Kreol and English when speaking (sometimes, at least); 10% state that they never do so.

Languages written

- Writing-wise, only a third acknowledged being able to write Kreol fluently. Overall, their written proficiency stands at 3.56 out of 5.
- However, for English writing proficiency, two thirds believed that they are fully proficient, with overall proficiency at 4.74 out of 5.
- French writing proficiency was significantly less, with 2.95 out of 5 and only 13% claiming full proficiency.

Social media writing

- An overwhelming 92% use mainly English on social media.
- 70% mix Kreol and English in one post, while 30% say they never do so.
- The respondents who mixed Kreol and English, 44% purported to tend to insert Kreol lexical items in English sentences while on 23% insert English words in Kreol sentences.
- When responding to a post written completely in Kreol, only 30% assert that they would respond solely in Kreol, while 56% would CS with English.

- The main reasons as to why the respondents would insert English terms in Kreol sentences is: "It is best expressed in English to avoid misunderstanding" (30%), followed by "there doesn't seem to be an equivalent word or phrase in Kreol" (25%) and "it is easier to write English than Kreol". 7% said they are not aware that they are doing it.
- For two thirds of respondents, inserting English terms in Kreol posts is a normal aspect of Seychelles web talk.

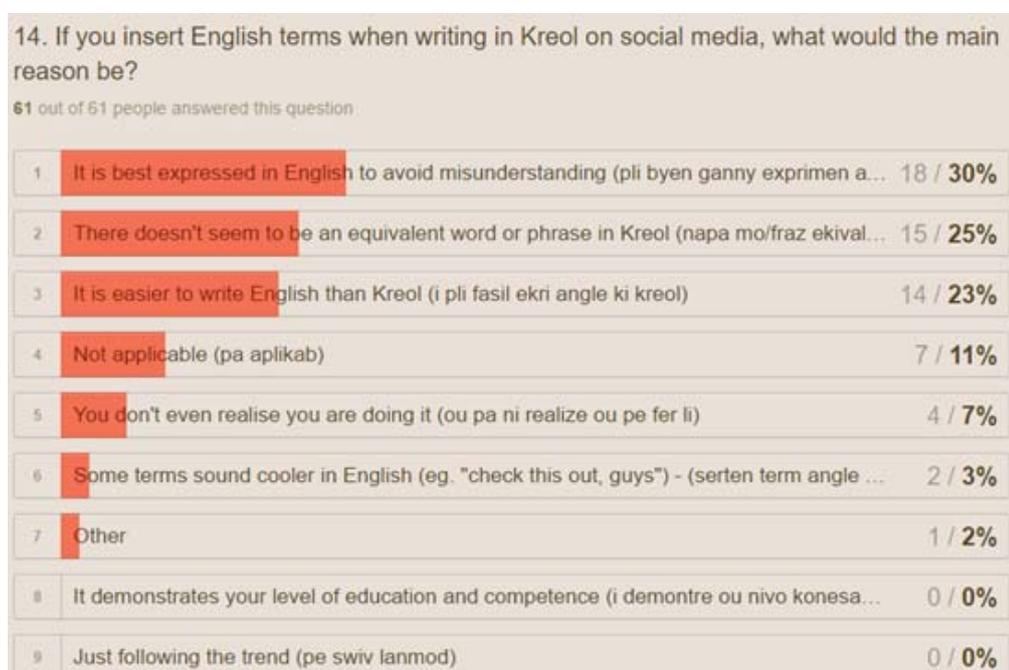
4.4.2 Examination of the survey results in the light of the Facebook corpus examination

The survey was intended to supplement findings that had already been ascertained in the web corpora and to some extent, the literature review. There were both similarities and differences in the data from the corpus analysis and the survey. This is understandably so, as survey respondents may not fully reflect the cross section of the Seychelles web-chatting population. Even if my Facebook friends come from a wide variety of backgrounds, there seemed to be an elevated number of tertiary educated respondents. It nonetheless was clear from both corpus and survey results that the use of English, either written monolingually or switched with Kreol, is prevalent in Seychelles community web fora, where the expected code is actually Kreol. In terms of evidence of code-switching however, two thirds of survey respondents acknowledged that they code-switch between English and Kreol, at least some of the time. This was the same across all age groups and both genders. However, in the Facebook corpus sample examined only 28% of the posts displayed code-switching in these two languages. This is not a critical issue as the two statements are not mutually exclusive and a variation is to be allowed for factors such as the sampling size.



In question 12, 44% of respondents reported that their more habitual CS pattern involved inserting Kreol words in English sentences. Corpus findings, on the contrary demonstrated the opposite trend: 54 of 288 posts contained a predominance of English lexemes inserted in Kreol sentences. This was compared to a mere 7 posts out of 288 that consisted of English sentences with Kreol lexical items inserted therein. I am inclined to believe that this anomaly is not a reflection of the credibility of responses but rather a hallmark of conscious and unconscious behaviour. It is likely that participants actively remember inserting Kreol words into English, because this act usually forms part of stylized and pragmatically planned manoeuvres. These have been discussed in Section 4 of this paper and correlates with Hinrichs (2006, p. 140) who posits that Creole is the code of choice for rhetorical functions over English” due to the greater communicative value in such symbolic contexts. Therefore, we can see the Markedness Model at play, whereby the switch does not usher in the expected (‘un-marked’) code but brings in the marked code. The interlocutor “chooses to negotiate the rights and obligations balance for such purposes as increasing social distance or creating an aesthetic effect” (Boztepe 2003, p.14). Conversely, the act of resorting to English when conversing in Kreol (which is a common occurrence) is likely to take on an unconscious aspect, particularly in view of the participants’ proficiency of spoken and written English. Other unconscious habits, such as triggering, use of formulaic routines are likely reasons why participants underestimated the frequency of their actions. It would be unwise at this stage, with the results of this small-scale study to elucidate which code is marked and unmarked in Seychelles web-writing. Wider investigations would need to be undertaken with a larger sample size, also looking at other forms of interactions: oral and (non-web) written.

There was a significant discrepancy between respondents who responded that they would respond to a Kreol post in English only (8%) and the actual number of English posts in the corpus. As much as surveys can provide further insights on multilingualism, it is not uncommon for people to display very different language use than they report doing. “Similarly with attitudes to languages, multilingualism or code-switching, the actual behaviour is different from interview or survey answers”. (Gardner-Chloros 2009, p.85).



Lastly, the three principal reasons that were advanced to justify recourse to English, point to the paucity of viable equivalents, perhaps not surprising, taking into consideration English's vast lexicon in comparison to Seychelles Kreol. This proposition echoes Annagret Bollée's concern that “Kreol has not yet fully adapted for elaborate articles or features, and its vocabulary is not sufficiently developed for dealing with all subjects of modern life (eg. medicine, technology, science, politics, economics)” (Bollée, 1993, p.92).

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Facebook corpus data, supplemented to a large extent by the survey results, reveals that Seychellois successfully use their well-developed bilingual lexicon to achieve a variety of discourse functions. In line with the categorisations of Gumperz (1982), Malick (1984) and Hinrichs (2006), the various discourse functions include: the creation of rhetorical meaning, stylistics, including word-play and use of double-voicing; showing of solidarity and support, personalisation versus objectivisation; economy of words, using the shortest and easiest route and last but not least, the lack of equivalent register. Of these, I will make specific mention of the more salient elements that emerged in this study: Kreol is indeed a strong solidarity marker and possessor of cultural value. It is frequently utilised in predominantly English clauses to introduce rhetoric or usher in solidarity (the “we-code”). Double-voicing to achieve these pragmatic objectives is often apparent and an indication of well-developed stylistic capabilities of the Seychellois online code-switcher – negating any hints of semilingualism. Other effects, such as repetition avoiding (to ‘sound’ original), can be frequently observed within the Seychelles CMC context and is arguably, best analysed with the Conversational Analysis framework. The factor “no equivalent or lack of suitably equivalent term” is particularly interesting as it emerges in both the qualitative corpus review and survey and backed by the writings of the key founder of Kreol orthography, Annagret Bollée. It is also worth noting that the lack of Kreol register for newer, more technologically-related jargon is an issue that requires attention as the proliferation of these English terms seem to be reaching quite critical proportions for Seychellois CMC participants. A case in my own experience: while undertaking the translation of survey, participant information and consent forms into Kreol, it was challenging to find viable Kreol equivalents. I do recommend that the translation of lexical items pertaining to the modern world (such as social media related terms: *download, share, post etc.*) is effected in the near future. Alternatively, borrowing in relation to such lexical items, which Meyers-Scotton calls as “cultural borrowings” (1993b) should be formalised. It would also be ideal if an online Kreol dictionary could be made available. Access to such an up-to-date dictionary would have provided me with greater accuracy of data in this study as well as time-efficiencies. Adding to my observation of the sociolinguistic factors for code-switching in Seychelles CMC, I would like to highlight the vast evidence for

‘crossing’. This was in fact of little surprise, in view of my personal observation of the Seychellois cultural and music scene in the past few decades. Furthermore, as Paollilo (1996) discovered, the tide of the English-centric globalisation (particularly in the technological and educational realms) was a huge factor behind CS behaviour in CMC. Seychelles is certainly no exception, as both corpus analysis and survey data strongly indicate. ‘Habitual use of English’ appeared to be a reason for CS, which makes perfect sense in the light of oral and written English proficiency; in fact, the situation makes it difficult to establish which code is the dominant language. Underpinning habitual language is the psycholinguistic approach which posits that in speech communities using mixed codes, language tagging information becomes lost cognitively over time and speakers become less and less aware of triggering effects (Franceschini, 1998, cited in Riehl, 2013).

Overall, the choice of research methodology and approach (mixed methods and online ethnography) provided me with the perfect lens to acquire a clear understanding of this emergent multilingual practice. I am also more convinced that a comprehensive theory of code-switching can only be effective if it takes into consideration the three – complementary - approaches: Sociolinguistic, Structural and Psycholinguistic. The survey results, even if they were not representative of the cross section of Seychellois society, were clearly indicative of the extremely important role that English plays in the life of most Seychellois. The lines between L1 and L2, marked and un-marked being quite blurred, present wide avenues for further research. The survey results were equally reflective of the relatively lower oral and written French competency levels and reticence to use this code. Finally, the fact that two thirds of survey respondents (across all age groups) found code-switching to be a normal aspect of online interaction in Seychelles may potentially inform language policy formulation. In the quest to establish new Kreol lexemes, it may be worth giving further consideration to a greater integration of anglicisms into Kreol. This has already been undertaken successfully with terms such as “kompiter” [computer]. Such an approach would certainly be more in line with the linguistic landscape of 21st century Seychelles.

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