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Working Papers Series
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Working Paper No. 97

**THE ORGANISATION OF BILINGUAL SERVICE
ENCOUNTERS: CODE ALTERNATION AND EPISODE
STRUCTURE**

by

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1998

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the organisation of bilingual talk in a corpus of service encounters gathered in Catalonia. It explores how switching from the base code speakers have negotiated for their exchange contributes to the management of the service encounter. This study is based on naturalistic exchanges audiorecorded in a number of shops and public administration settings.

I draw on research on language alternation conducted within the conversation-analytic and ethnomethodological frameworks, and more specifically, on Auer's work on *language negotiation sequences* (1984, 1991, 1995, 1998) and Gafaranga's research on the concept of *medium* (1996; forthcoming). Following Auer (1984:7), I consider bilingualism as 'a displayed feature of participants' everyday linguistic behaviour'. My focus is thus on *code alternation* (Auer 1984), that is, on those cases of language alternation which are actually perceived as such by the participants themselves.

Participants engage in *language negotiation sequences* in order to establish the base code for their interaction. However, they can deviate from this base code for functional effects. Service encounters basically involve institutional talk consisting of a set of goal-oriented episodes but they may also contain mundane talk episodes. Code alternation is used as a *contextualisation cue* by participants in their joint enterprise to organise the fairly flexible episode structure of service encounters.

KEY WORDS

Code alternation

Ethnomethodology

Conversation Analysis

Episode structure

Service encounters

Institutional Talk

1. Introduction*

This paper investigates the organisation of bilingual talk in a corpus of service encounters gathered in Catalonia. As a result of the sociopolitical changes which have occurred in Catalonia since the end of Franco's dictatorship, Catalan and Castilian no longer stand in a diglossic relationship to each other and so both languages constitute legitimate choices in public interaction. Service encounters are thus a site which can provide us with interesting insights into bilingual talk organisation.

In my analysis, I draw on research on language alternation conducted within the conversation-analytical and ethnomethodological frameworks. Following Auer (1984:7), I understand bilingualism as a 'displayed feature of participants' everyday linguistic behaviour'. Auer's sequential approach to code alternation, further developed by Gafaranga (1996, forthcoming), implies a crucial analytic shift from looking at bilingual data from the analyst's standpoint to seeing it through the participants' eyes.

Studying bilingual talk from the participants' perspective requires the analyst to draw a distinction between *language alternation* and *code alternation*. Following Auer and Gafaranga, I use language alternation as a generic term for those instances where two languages can be observed to have been used in the same conversation. This is the linguist's description of the data. By contrast, code alternation refers to those cases of language alternation which are perceived as such by the participants themselves, that is, which are oriented to as instances of *other language*.

The present paper is organised as follows. Section two briefly describes the data on which this study is based. Section three outlines the characteristics of service talk and presents the generic structure of a service encounter. Section four discusses the organisation of bilingual talk in the service encounters under study from a sequential

perspective. In the conclusion, the main findings of this study are summarised and some guidelines are provided on how further research can proceed.

2. The data

The data on which the present study is based consists of a set of naturalistic exchanges audiorecorded both in the public administration and in shops. The encounters occurred in an industrial town near Barcelona and at a Catalan university. Five hundred and sixty minutes of recorded data were obtained, which approximately involve three hundred and sixty participants. The public administration exchanges were recorded in three different settings, namely a town hall reception area, an out-patient department reception in a state hospital in the same town, and an administrative office at university. The selling exchanges were obtained in the following four settings: a ladies' clothes shop, a fabric shop, an optician's, and a butcher's market stall.

3. Talk in action in the service encounters

3.1 Talk and social structure

A common distinction in research on conversation and social structure is that of *mundane* talk as opposed to *institutional* talk. Mundane talk is defined as interaction in which order, length and contents of turns are not controlled by prior arrangements (Wilson 1991:22). It is the default option in interaction from which all specific speech-exchange systems depart (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974:729-31). As argued in 'studies of work' like Boden and Zimmerman (1991), interaction is institutional insofar

as participants' institutional or professional identities are somehow made relevant to the activities in which they are engaged. Under this view, institutions are 'talked into being' (Heritage 1984:290).

Drew and Heritage (1992) identify three features which seem to be recurrent across institutional talk data:

a) Unlike mundane talk, institutional interaction is normally task-oriented, that is informed by goal orientations conventionally associated with the institution in question. In the service encounters, the pragmatic goal (Eggins and Slade 1997:20-21), that is the service, is achieved through the participants' complementarity: one participant provides the service whereas the other one obtains it.

b) Institutional interaction may often involve special and particular constraints on what participants will treat as allowable contributions to the business at hand. In the services, participants are often oriented to negotiable understandings about the ways in which the institutional aspects of their activities may limit allowable contributions.

c) Finally, institutional talk may be associated with inferential frameworks and procedures that are particular to specific institutional contexts. Auer (1992) notes that, in institutionalised episodes, a set of contextual schemata related to social roles are taken to be relevant right from the beginning of the interaction. For instance, when we walk into a shop, we have certain expectations about the shopkeeper's behaviour before the interaction starts.

The sort of institutional encounters examined in the present study can be associated with *non-formal settings* as defined by Drew and Heritage (1992). They are less formal than those involving courtroom interaction or news interviews in the sense that patterns of interaction exhibit less uniformity. On the whole, there is room for considerable negotiation as to how the encounter will come to be managed. The talk is

institutional in that official task-based or role-based activities occur at least some of the time. However, the boundaries between institutional and ordinary talk may appear permeable and even uncertain at some points.

3.2 The generic organisation of service encounters

An interesting dimension of interactional conduct in the services is the overall organisation of the encounters since the institutionality of the interaction manifests itself in their overall structural organisation. Institutional encounters are characteristically organised into a standard task-related shape or order of phases. Mundane talk shows no such organisation. With the exception of the opening and closing stages, the locally contingent management of next moves in conversation, and the options speakers have even within particular sequences or activities, ensure that there is no standard pattern for the overall organisation of casual conversations. By contrast, research on institutional talk has shown that there are certain aspects of the organisation of sequences in which the institutionality of the encounters is managed such as information request and delivery.

Service encounters are an example of *activity type* (Levinson 1992:69). They consist of a set of goal-defined bounded events or *episodes*. Research on the conversational structure of service encounters (Halliday and Hasan 1989; Ventola 1983, 1987) show that service encounters are a mutually co-ordinated undertaking. Participants share a common interest in effectively pursuing the activity at hand in accordance with the overall plan outlined in (1) below .

(1)



The generic structure of a service encounter
(Adapted from Halliday & Hasan 1989:64)

The schema above shows that the stages of a service encounter have different status in the structure. Those between brackets are optional, whereas stages (iv) through (viii) constitute obligatory elements. Service *request* and service *compliance* make up the nuclear activity of the service element.¹ The next section will analyse how the structure of service exchanges is managed in bilingual interaction.

4. Managing the episode structure of bilingual service encounters

As was discussed in the previous section, service encounters are activity types organised into a series of episodes. In turn, each episode is organised into a series of prestructured sequences that may be required by convention. The structural properties of an activity constrain the verbal contributions that can be made towards it. Service encounters are initiated and terminated by routine episodes, namely the greeting and closing episodes, whose occurrence is predictable. By contrast, what occurs between

these two episodes is not fixed. Participants thus need to cooperate in the construction of the several subparts that make up a service encounter.

One of the strategies deployed by service seekers and givers to organise the episodes of the service encounter is code alternation. Switching of code signals shift of episode. Code alternation functions as a *contextualisation cue* (Gumperz 1982; Auer 1984, 1991, 1995, 1998) that marks transition to a new episode in the activity and thus corresponds to Auer's *discourse-related* code alternation. Section 4.1 will discuss how code alternation in openings and closings works as a strategy to frame the core service exchange. Section 4.2 will explain how code alternation contributes to the organisation of the episode structure in the nuclear service exchange.

4.1 Framing the encounter

Openings and closings constitute the outward bounding episodes of any conversation. According to Halliday and Hasan (1989), greetings and closing sequences in service encounters signal the existence of a personal relation rather than beginning and end of the sale or service transaction. In the openings, participants need to show their readiness to communicate. On the other hand, since the service encounter structure is fairly flexible, participants need to negotiate the point at which they want to bring both the service and their interaction to a close.

In the data, code alternation can be used to signal a move away from the greeting sequence to the core exchange. It can likewise mark a shift from the core exchange to the service closure episode or else the end of the interaction. Therefore code alternation offsets the service core from the recognition of the other participant as a potential agent in some activity or from the continuity of the relation after service closure.

4.1.1 Openings

The extract in (2) is taken from an exchange which occurred at a town hall. The receptionist, REC, opens the exchange in Catalan. EN1 produces the second part of the greeting pair in the same language. Within the same turn, he then switches to Castilian to formulate the service request, that is to initiate the service encounter core, although REC's service bid in turn one is in Catalan. The switch to Castilian marks the start of a new episode, i.e. the information transaction, and thus the end of the greeting episode, which has been accomplished in Catalan. REC's convergence to Castilian signals her agreement to move onto the following stage in the encounter.

(2)

This exchange takes place between the receptionist and an enquirer at a town hall reception area.

*REC: bon dia senyor digui'm.

%eng: good morning sir can I help?

*EN1: hola bon dia.

%eng: hello good morning.

*EN1: **tengo que pasar arriba para justificar unos recibos para cobrar.** ←

%eng: I need to go upstairs to check some receipts in order to cash them.

*EN1: **me dijo que pasase.**

%eng: you told me to call in.

*REC: **a ver.**

%eng: let me see.

It should be noted that the alternation in (2) can also be considered to be *preference-related* (Auer 1984). Under Auer's approach, this switch is *polyvalent* in the sense that it serves both a discourse-related and a preference-related function. It signals the transition to a new episode. At the same time, REC's convergence to EN1 in turn three shows his attendance to EN1's code choice.

4.1.2 Closings

In Section 3.2, we saw that the service compliance - or the purchase in a business transaction - is followed by a final sequence consisting of a service closure episode and an optional goodbye. Schegloff and Sacks (1973) describe closings as having a sectional design that spans four turns at talk. This archetype closing, which is illustrated in (3), coordinates the mutual and warranted suspension of a turn's transition relevance. A first turn occurs which offers closing. A second closing turn takes up the offer and legitimises the production of a first terminal component which, in turn, provides for a second one. First and second closing turns are occupied by close components such as *okay* and *all right* (*eh* and *vale* in (3)). These components offer and accept closings in a closing implicative environment by neither continuing nor initiating topical material and display the relevancy of termination. Both speakers provide terminal components such as *goodbye* (*adéu* and *hasta luego* in the extract) and preserve actual termination as mutually accomplished.

(3)

This exchange takes place at the optician's. Customer CU1 has just paid for a new pair of glasses.

*CU1: **vale pues muchas gracias.** *closing sequence - turn 1*
%eng: OK so thanks very much.

*OP1: **vale a ti.** *closing sequence - turn 2*
%eng: no problem you're welcome.

*CU1: **eh # sí # vale # adéu.** *terminal sequence - turn 1*
%eng: right # yeah # OK # bye.

*OP1: **hasta luego.** *terminal sequence - turn 2*
%eng: see you.

In the data, code alternation serves as a strategy to negotiate the termination of the exchange. In (4), talk is conducted in Castilian until the closure episode. REC

switches to Catalan when uttering the second part of the closure sequence (\Leftarrow a), *d'acord*, and the subsequent first part of the terminal sequence, *adéu*. EN1's also switches to Catalan when she produces the second part of the terminal sequence (\Leftarrow b), which can be regarded as EN1's agreement to bring both the service and the interaction to a close.

(4)

This encounter takes place at the town hall between the receptionist (REC) and an enquirer (EN1). REC has asked EN1 to talk to another town hall employee over the phone. When the phone call has finished, EN1 asks REC about the location of a building (the Ateneu).

*EN1: **oye dónde cae el Ateneu?**
%eng: where is the Ateneu?

*EN1: **que no lo sé.**
%eng: I don't know.
%add: REC

*REC: **subiendo ahí la [/] donde está el estanco de la plaza del casino # que hay aquella escalerita.**
%eng: you go up the [/] where the newsagent's is by the Casino square # there are those steps.

*EN1: mmm.
%eng: uh uh.

*REC: **la torre de la izquierda.**
%eng: the house on the left.

*EN1: ah sí.
%eng: oh yes.

*EN1: **ahora ya sé dónde cae.**
%eng: now I know where it is.

*EN1: vale gracias A.
%eng: OK thanks A.

*REC: *d'acord adéu.* \Leftarrow a
%eng: OK bye.

*EN1: *adéu.* \Leftarrow b
%eng: bye.

The extracts in (5) and (6) below are taken from a fairly long exchange. As will be discussed below, this exchange is particularly interesting because it shows co-occurrence of contextualisation cues (Auer 1992).

(5)

This conversation takes place at the town hall between the receptionist (REC) and a former employee (EN1).

*EN1: **sí que es verdad.**

%eng: that's absolutely right

*REC: <i ara ja porto aquí> [>] +/.

%eng: and now I've been here +/.

*EN1: **<yo aún puedo> [<] disfrutar de una semana más.**

%eng: I still have another week to go.

*REC: però en fi aguantarem.

%eng: but anyway we'll survive.

*EN1: [=!laughs]molt bé A.

%eng: [=!laughs]very good A. ←

*REC: molt bé.

%eng: very good.

%com: EN1 goes and comes back after a while.

The exchange is carried out in a bilingual mode² from the beginning up to EN1's initiation of the closure in the arrowed position: REC uses Catalan and EN1 uses Castilian systematically. There is no orientation to other-languageness, which indicates that this alternating mode is normative (in the ethnomethodological sense). Under Auer's analysis, the alternation pattern in (5) could be interpreted as a prolonged process of code negotiation, which ends up in convergence to Catalan. However, it seems rather counterintuitive to claim that the code is established at the very point where the exchange is brought to a close. EN1 switches to Catalan at the initiation of the exchange closure. The switch is preceded by laughter. Both EN1's laughter and the switch seem to work as contextualisation cues bundling together to mark the end of the exchange. It should be noted that in this particular encounter, it is up to EN1 to terminate the exchange since she is the one that has approached the reception desk at which REC works.

EN1 goes back to REC's desk after a while. Their second exchange is reproduced in (6) below.

(6)

EN1 goes back to REC's desk and initiates a new exchange with him. Their conversation is interrupted when a new enquirer, EN2, approaches the desk.

*EN1: **no hacen las reuniones aquí?**
%eng: don't they have their meetings here?

*REC: se'n van a l'Ateneu.
%eng: they go to the Ateneu (name of a building).

*EN1: **ah # ah sí sí que me habían <dicho si quieres venir> [>] +/.**
%eng: oh # oh ye yes they had asked me do you want to come +/.

...

*EN1: **ya quedé much [>] muy harta de las reuniones.**
%eng: I ended up sick and tired of the meetings.

*REC: pues+... ←a
%eng: so +...

*EN1: [=!laughs].

*REC: unes quantes no?
%eng: quite a few of them right?

*EN1: **unas cuantas y unos cuantos años eh.**
%eng: quite a few and for some years.

*REC: **pues # no [/] no vienen aquí no.** ←b
%eng: so # no [/] they don't come here no.

*REC: bon dia senyora.
%eng: good morning madam.

*EN2: **mire quería hacer una pregunta.**
%eng: I would like to ask you a question.

The talk is resumed in the bilingual mode. The participants are acquaintances since they call each other by their names. The content of their small talk reveals that in fact they are ex-colleagues. Given that the participants are acquainted with each other, this bilingual mode has probably been established as the norm through previous experience. The resumption of the same mode supports the idea that the code switch in (5) above functions as a contextualisation cue that signals the end of the interaction. Later on in (6), the same mechanism is used by REC to terminate their second exchange (←b).

In (\Leftarrow a), REC produces a passing turn containing the pre-closing item (Schegloff and Sacks 1973:303) *pues*, which indicates that he has nothing else to say and gives EN1 a free turn (*ibid.*:304) to initiate a new topic. This possibility is not taken up by EN1. Thus in (\Leftarrow b), REC proceeds to close down the encounter by using a topic-bounding technique which is commonly used in the closing of monotopical conversations (Schegloff and Sacks 1973:307; Levinson 1983:316). This technique consists of referring to material occurring at the beginning of the exchange, which in turn shows the participant's orientation to the monotopicality of the conversation. REC repeats the answer to the question with which EN1 has initiated their second encounter (i.e. *no hacen las reuniones aquí?*). REC's repetition closes the topic brought up by EN1 at the beginning of their second exchange and, at the same time, shuts down the encounter. It must be noted that the actual end of the encounter occurs later on in the interaction as the exchange between REC and EN1 is temporarily interrupted by the appearance of EN2.

REC's repetition involves a switch to Castilian.³ Subsequently, within the same turn, REC switches back to Catalan to greet EN2. Repetition and code-switching in this case can be considered as two co-occurring contextualisation cues signalling REC's invitation to terminate the encounter. In this sense, Gafaranga (personal communication) argues that talk is organised linearly and thus every step will move current conversational task forward or else it will be deviant. If deviance occurs, it can be either an instance of repair or it can be functional (Gafaranga forthcoming). The inter-turn repetition in (\Leftarrow c) is deviant in the sense that it is a *second part* of a question-answer adjacency pair which already has a second part. However, it involves no repair with respect to the original utterance *se'n van a l'Ateneu*. It does not cancel what it repeats. Therefore it must be functional. It signals the termination of the encounter. I will now turn to another function that code alternation serves in biligual service exchanges, which is organising the nuclear service structure.

4.2 Doing the nuclear service exchange

In the generic service encounter structure outlined in Section 3.2, we saw that some of the episodes were compulsory whereas others were not, which requires participants to manage their encounter locally. Also it must be noted that the generic structure in (1) is rather rigid in the sense that not all the interaction in service encounters corresponds to institutional talk. An optional element of service exchanges is mundane talk. In this respect, Goffman (1981:142-144) notes that mundane talk is an embedded part of a ritualised procedure rather than an embedded part of a wider conversation.

In the data, shift from a given core exchange (e.g. service compliance) to casual talk or vice versa can be signalled through code alternation. This discourse function is also attested in the service encounter data studied by Blom and Gumperz (1972), the difference being that in my encounters, direction of the switch does not seem to play a role since the languages do not stand in a diglossic relationship. In the Catalan context, Nussbaum (1990) also reports the use of code alternation as a way of organising discourse in her classroom data.

In (7), Castilian is established as the base code in (\Leftarrow a) and the exchange is carried out in this monolingual mode until the child attracts NU1's attention in (\Leftarrow b), who switches to Catalan. NU1 talks with CHI for a while about a book the latter is carrying. The shift of language signals a shift from the service transaction proper to mundane talk. Other-languageness is attended to by PAT, who briefly switches to Catalan in (\Leftarrow c).

(7)

The conversation takes place at the out-patient department at hospital. The participants involved are a nurse (NU1), a patient (PAT) and a child (CHI), who is probably the patient's daughter.

*PAT: hola.
%eng: hello.

*NU1: bon dia.
%eng: good morning.

*PAT: bon dia.
%eng: good morning.
%sit: PAT gives some papers to NU1.

... (PAT talks to CHI)

*NU1: mira el catorze d'abril.
%eng: so the fourteenth of April.

*PAT: **no puedes darme antes?**
%eng: can't it be any earlier?

*NU1: **te estoy dando antes.** ←a
%eng: I'm giving you the earliest.

...

*PAT: **pero claro si me espero y luego lo que me tardan unos análisis y todo +/.**
%eng: but if I wait and then the time it takes to get the test results and everything +/.

*NU1: **xxx ocho días.**
%eng: xxxx eight days.

*PAT: sí vale.
%eng: yeah OK.

*CHI: mira mira.
%eng: look look.
%add: NU1
%sit: CHI shows NU1 a Walt Disney book.

*NU1: a veure!
%eng: let me see! ←b

*NU1: a veure!
%eng: let me see!

*PAT: ah que la veus per'quí?
%eng: oh do you see her through there? ←c

*PAT: no sabia que te viera.
%eng: I didn't realise she could see you.

*NU1: a veure.
%eng: let me see.

Later on, PAT intervenes in the exchange between the nurse and the child to provide an other-initiated repair in Catalan. Her switch to Catalan in (←d) below shows her awareness of the new code for the interaction. Subsequently, the participants engage in a

discussion of a film, which is also carried out in Catalan. The shift from the service proper to the discussion of the film is therefore accompanied by a switch of code.

*NU1: i quina t'agrada més?
%eng: and which one do you like best?

*CHI: la de no dibuixos.
%eng: the one with no cartoons.

*NU1: la de dibuixos?
%eng: the one with cartoons?

*NU1: clar.
%eng: of course.

*PAT: la de no la de no dibuixos. ←d
%eng: the one with no the one with no cartoons.

*NU1: ah la de no dibuixos.
%eng: oh the one with no cartoons.

*PAT: sí a mi també.
%eng: yes so do I.

*NU1: sí?
%eng: really?

*PAT: és molt més maca.
%eng: it's much nicer.

Towards the end of the encounter, NU1 switches to Castilian, which marks the return to the blood test topic. PAT also switches to Castilian, which acknowledges the resumption of the service compliance.

*NU1: <xxx> [<] **en ayunas y allí**.
%eng: xxx without any breakfast and (it's) over there.

*PAT: **de acuerdo**.
%eng: OK.

Episode structure can be related to another aspect of conversation, namely the participants' involvement and participation in social interaction. Participants achieve meaningful interaction by aligning their individual actions (Stokes and Hewitt 1976). A change of episode often implies a redefinition of the participants' alignment to each other. Thus, in terms of *footing* (Goffman 1981), code alternation in the data also marks a shift in the alignment that participants take to each other in the interaction. Footing

changes constantly over the course of the interaction and ranges ‘from gross changes in stance to the most subtle shifts in tone’ (Goffman 1981:128).

Changes in footing are commonly signalled by linguistic markers such as pitch, volume, rhythm, stress and tonal quality. Code alternation can function as one such marker in my service data. The use of code alternation to mark a change in the participants’ alignment to each other has been reported elsewhere in the literature. See for instance Goffman’s (1981:126) discussion of Blom and Gumperz’s (1972) study or Moyer’s (1998) work on conversation strategies in bilingual interaction in Gibraltar.

In my analysis of footing, I consider both the speakers’ and the recipients’ production and perception of utterances. My approach is in line with Clayman (1992), who points out the need to find out how footing operates in interaction. His approach to footing shifts the traditional emphasis on the speaker to the recipient. It focuses on the ways recipients orient to a speaker’s footing during its production and in their subsequent responses to it by either ratifying, contesting, or ignoring it.

In the encounter from which (8) has been taken, Catalan is the code of the business transaction between OWN and CU4 all along. However, OWN switches to Castilian at a given point (⇐a) and CU4 accepts Castilian as the new base code. Later on, OWN switches back to Catalan (⇐b), which becomes the base code again.

(8)

The conversation takes place at a butcher’s stall. The stall owner (OWN) is serving customer CU4 while talking to customer CU6.

*OWN: <C què més vols> [<?]
%eng: C would you like anything else?
%add: CU4

... (OWN is serving CU6 in Catalan at the same time. CU4 is participating in their conversation)

*OWN: **C que hay gente aquí esperandol** ⇐a
%eng: C there are people waiting here!

*CU4: xxx.

*OWN: **Espabila no?**
%eng: hurry up will you?

*CU4: **ya está nada más.**

%eng: that's it nothing else.

*OWN: **ya está?**

%eng: is that it?

*OWN: **y para eso tanto+...**

%eng: and because of that +...

*CU4: **para eso tanto follón.**

%eng: such a fuss because of that.

*OWN: **qué barbaridad!**

%eng: my goodness!

*OWN: **yo digo [/] yo digo vendrá hoy a portarse como una mujer.**

%eng: I say [/] I say she's come today to behave like a woman.

*CU4: no xxx.

%eng: no xxx.

*OWN: mil cent noranta-dos C.

←b

%eng: one thousand one hundred and ninety-two C.

*CU4: xxx.

... (customer CU7 interrupts and has a short conversation with OWN and CU4)

*OWN: mil cent noranta-dos C.

%eng: one thousand one hundred and ninety-two C.

*CU4: quant?

%eng: how much?

*OWN: mil cent noranta-dues # què voldrà aquest senyor?

%eng: one thousand one hundred and ninety-two # can I help sir?

The first switch to Castilian marks a move away from the selling exchange to banter. The change of episode is not only signalled through code alternation but also through OWN's louder voice. In addition, loudness and code alternation signal a change of footing, which is triggered by the change of episode. The new footing builds up a more intimate relationship between the participants. Participant CU4 converges to the new language and this way acknowledges the change of episode and the new alignment.⁴

OWN's switch to Catalan in (←b), which was the original base code of the exchange, marks the return to the selling transaction. In terms of footing, it indicates return to the roles of server and customer. CU4 takes up OWN's offer to resume the service transaction, i.e. the purchase episode, by also switching to Catalan.

The exchange in (9) also involves a shift of footing marked by code alternation. But, unlike in the previous instances, the new alignment creates distance between the participants.

(9)

This encounter takes place at the butcher's. A shop assistant (ASS) is serving customer CU1.

*CU1: posa'm mig quilo de llonganissa.
%eng: I'd like half a kilo of llonganissa (long pork sausage).

*ASS: vale què més?
%eng: OK anything else?

*CU1: xxx una miqueta de lloimillo?
%eng: xxx a bit of loin?

*ASS: **le pongo de allí que es más tiernecito.** ←a
%eng: I'll give you some from there that is more tender.

*ASS: sí?
%eng: OK?

*ASS: **cuánto?**
%eng: how much?

*CU1: **házmelo finito que tiene la boquita mal.**
%eng: cut it thin for me because (s)he's got toothache.

*CU1: **ponme medio quilo.**
%eng: give me half a kilo.

*ASS: **ya ha cambiado de compañía eh.** ←b
%eng: you've changed your company right.

*CU1: xxx deixaràs aquell tall d'allí? ←c
%eng: xxx are you going to give me that chunk there?

*ASS: no # **le queda un poquín de ahí eh.**
%eng: no # you still have a bit from there right.

*ASS: **hágame caso que de ahí es muy melosito.**
%eng: believe me this one's very tender.

*ASS: **si quiere xxx eh?**
%eng: if you wish xxx right?

...

*ASS: **si quiere le pongo de otro eh.**
%eng: if you wish I can give you some of another kind you know.

*ASS: **a mí me da igual.**
%eng: I don't mind.

*CU1: no no posa-me'l. ←d
%eng: no no I'll take it.

*CU1: xxx però xxx de+...
%eng: xxx but xxx of +...

*ASS: **ahor [ɪ] ahora ya va pa'trás y ya no le sale.**
 %eng: n [ɪ] now it's going to the back and you won't get it.

*ASS: **ya no le sale.**
 %eng: you won't get it now.

*CU1: **ya pero yo me la llevo.** ←e
 %eng: yeah but I've already got it.

*CU1: **y mi sobrina eh no se come +/.**
 %eng: and my niece erm doesn't eat +/.

*ASS: **le pongo de otro mujer.**
 %eng: I can offer you a different one you know.

*ASS: **y el de ahí?**
 %eng: that one over there?

*CU1: **ponme el de ahí.** ←f
 %eng: I'll have that one over there.

*ASS: **a mí me da igual.**
 %eng: I don't mind.

The language alternation pattern of (9) is rather complex. The exchange opens with the service request, which is made in Catalan. The service compliance in turns two and three consists of an adjacency pair whose components also occur in Catalan. In turn four, a change of footing takes place: the shop assistant takes a decision on behalf of the customer (←a).⁵ Departure from the conventional service structure and roles is marked here by a switch of language and by the ratification seeking element *sí? (OK?)*. The change of roles is ratified by the customer, who adopts Castilian. This language becomes the base code for a while.

In (←b), the assistant initiates a small talk episode, but the following turn (←c) reveals that the customer disattends to it by ignoring ASS's comment and making a disapproving remark. ASS's switch of topic is rejected because the customer is not satisfied with the service. Disattendance is marked by another switch of language. The switch in (←c) leads to a new code for the exchange, i.e. a bilingual mode, which offsets the competition between the participants in the purchase episode to show they are right about the quality of the goods. In (←d), CU1 provides a dispreferred answer in Catalan to ASS's offer in Castilian *si quiere le pongo otro eh*. This is perceived by ASS as still showing dissatisfaction since in her next turn she tries to reassure CU1. Subsequently,

the customer gives in, which is signalled by her convergence to ASS's preferred language ($\Leftarrow e$). Eventually, the customer accepts ASS's offer of some other goods by providing a preferred answer which involves no language alternation ($\Leftarrow f$). The exchange is carried out in Castilian from that point onwards. Recapitulating, Extracts 6 through 8 show shifts of episode signalled by switching of code. The shift of episode introduces a new footing that builds up both a more intimate or a more distant interaction between the participants.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have analysed the function of code-alternation in a corpus of Catalan-Castilian service encounters gathered in Catalonia, which has been briefly described in Section two. Section three has characterised the talk that occurs in service exchanges and has outlined the generic structure of a service encounter. It has been argued that service encounters basically involve institutional talk as they consist of a set of goal-oriented episodes but they may also contain mundane talk episodes. Section four has analysed and discussed the organisation of bilingual service talk from a sequential perspective. It has been shown that bilinguals use code-alternation as a contextualisation cue in their joint enterprise to organise the episode structure. Code-switching can be used to frame the encounter, that is, to mark the beginning of the service proper, its closure or else the complete end of the interaction. In addition, it has been shown that it can indicate departure from the business transaction to a non-institutional interaction episode such as small talk, as well as return to the nuclear service activity.

Furthermore, I have discussed how switching the code can signal a shift in the participants' orientation towards each other, which is brought about by the change of episode. In my data, code-switching is used by the participants to move away from the anonymous roles of server and customer and build up a different relationship between the participants. In service encounter interaction, participants can adopt a variety of roles apart from those of service seeker and service giver. Code alternation can also be seen in

this sense as a verbal procedure directed to the management of the participant's social identity.

Finally, further research could investigate the link between micro- and macrosocial dimension as Auer (1998) suggests. Following the approach put forth in 'studies of work' like Boden and Zimmerman (1991), it would be interesting to study how aspects of the macro-social Catalan context like Woolard's (1989) *bilingual norm* or Tusón's (1990) *institutional norm* are 'talked into being' (Heritage 1984:290) in actual conversations, that is at the micro-social level.

APPENDIX: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

The data has been transcribed following the guidelines set out in the *LIDES Coding Manual* (LIPPS Group, forthcoming). Accordingly, participants' utterances are reproduced on a main tier using standard orthography. Each main tier begins with an asterisk, the speaker's codename and a colon. A free English translation of the utterances is provided below the main line on the dependent tier %eng. Other dependent are listed below, which provide specific information about the main tier. Unlike in LIDES, language contrast is indicated through the use of different type faces in order to facilitate reading.

Catalan	Plain style stands for stretches of talk in Catalan
Castilian	Bold style stands for stretches of talk in Castilian
<u>Underlined</u>	Underlined utterances correspond to those stretches of talk where the language cannot be determined by the researcher (e.g. when a given utterance is the same in the two languages)
+...	trailing off
+/.	interruption
#	pause
xxx	unintelligible material
[=! text]	paralinguistic material (e.g. coughing, laughing)
[/]	retracing
< > [>]	overlap follows
< > [<]	overlap precedes
...	omitted fragment

%add	This dependent tier specifies the addressee.
%com	This dependent tier provides a comment relevant to the understanding of the utterance.
%sit	This dependent tier specifies contextual information relevant to the interpretation of a given utterance.

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NOTES

* I gratefully acknowledge the support of the Direcció General de Recerca, Autonomous Government of Catalonia, for grant no. 1996BEAI200470.

¹It should be noted that (1) schematises the structure of selling exchanges, where goods and money are involved. The archetypical structure of administration encounters is slightly different. As these services are usually public, stages (vi) through (viii) do not occur.

²See Gafaranga and Torrás (1998), Torrás (1998) and Torrás (forthcoming) for a discussion of the bilingual mode as a possible base code for interaction between bilingual participants.

³The language of REC's two previous turns is not clear from the analyst's perspective. *Pues* is originally Castilian but is widely used in Catalan monolingual speech. On the other hand, the phonology of *unes quantes no?* is virtually the same in the two languages. Nevertheless, as Schegloff (1984:36) argues, what is perceived as ambiguous by the analyst is 'quite straightforwardly available or analysable' for the conversationalists. Nothing in the participants' behaviour in Extract 5 suggests that a switch of code occurs before (⇐b).

⁴In terms of Brown and Levinson's (1978) Politeness Theory, it could be argued that the service seeker, OWN, perceives asking her customer to hurry up as a *face threatening act*. OWN's switch of code introduces a new footing. By moving away from a server-costumer relationship and creating a more intimate relationship, OWN minimises the possibility of damaging her customer's negative face in putting across her message. It is not the server who is asking CU4 to make haste, but a bantering friend.

⁵As was discussed in relation to Extract 7 (see fn. 4), code alternation in this case can be regarded as a pragmatic strategy that prevents damaging the customer's negative face.