IDENTITY AND CODE CHOICE: CODE-SWITCHING AND SOCIAL IDENTITY AMONG JAPANESE/ENGLISH BILINGUAL SIBLINGS

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1. Introduction

More than a decade of work in linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics has shown that identity is neither a monolithic category, nor is it an a priori fact of one's existence[2]. Rather, identity is continuously created, indexed, and ratified through social behavior. According to Ochs, "It makes good sense to understand social identity as a social construct that is both inferred and interactionally achieved through displays and ratifications of acts and stances" (Ochs, 1993: 291). Ochs was referring to the language socialization of young children; however, I will argue that this interactive construction of identity goes on even as we get older. All people construct social identity by displaying acts and stances, including but not limited to, language behavior. Walters (1996) suggests that the unequal distribution of linguistic forms leads language users to orient toward the stances they index. Bilingual speakers construct their social identity through the use of various language behaviors, including code choice and code switching.

The current study looks at one site of identity construction. Within the family, siblings work to create separate, stable social identities. One of the jobs of language socialization is the acquisition and appreciation of appropriate forms with which to perform the acts and stances which create social role. Children learn which roles are expected of them, and which forms are appropriate for the enactment of these roles in part through "trying on" various roles which may then be ratified or rejected by other members of the family. In addition to ratifying sibling roles, however, older siblings may be involved in a struggle to maintain their own local position. First-born siblings,

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[2] See, for example, Bucholtz & Hall (2004) and included references.

having worked through the process of role acquisition themselves, may be threatened by the emerging social position of younger siblings. After all, within the family, social role may be defined at least partly through opposition to other family members. This paper is particularly interested in how older siblings guide younger siblings' socialization through ratification of social stance, while working to maintain their own role within the family hierarchy.

2. Methodology

This work is an off-shoot of ongoing research on the linguistic construction of social identity among Japanese/English bilinguals in Colorado. The main focus of that research has been on first generation Japanese immigrant women in American families, with second generation Japanese-American children and/or nonimmigrant partners. Within the materials gathered, however, I have noticed an interesting subsidiary issue. Bilingual siblings speaking to one another present another locus for the study of social identity.

Materials used for this study include audio tape recordings of conversations with the subjects' home. Several families in the Boulder, Colorado region were recorded; this paper includes data from one of these families. Subjects were given recorders and asked to record their own conversations. The consent form used describes the topic of the research this way:

> You will be asked to record casual conversations in your home. No topics or situations are specifically requested as the focus of the research. Rather, the researcher is interested in any naturally occurring conversation. Portions of these conversations will be transcribed, and may be referred to in any research work produced. This research focuses on people who speak both Japanese and English, but is not specifically looking for either language. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to record any conversation in your home. The research is primarily interested in the speech of adults, but children are not excluded. I would like you to simply turn on the recorder during dinner or another time when you are talking with your family, and record whatever conversation occurs.

The recorded conversations were analyzed for code choice and for instances of code switching. Selected portions of the recording were then transcribed.

Four subjects are included in this analysis. The mother of the family is an *issei*, or first-generation Japanese immigrant. She is a native speaker of Japanese, and speaks English as a second language. Older Sister is a nisei, or second-generation Japanese-American adult; she is a simultaneous Japanese/English bilingual. Younger Sister, age

14, and little brother, age 10, are also nisei and simultaneous bilinguals. The children's father, an issei, was not recorded, and so will not be considered in the current analysis.

The subjects are Colorado residents. According to an analysis of the 2000 US census (SSDAN, 2002), approximately 85% of Colorado residents are English monolinguals. In addition, approximately 11% of Colorado residents speak Spanish, while fewer than two percent claim to speak an Asian language, including Chinese, Japanese, and other languages. Thus, the Japanese speaking population of the region is quite small. Despite these small numbers, there is a fair degree of contact among Japanese speakers in the region. Japanese speakers meet through student and professional organizations based at the University of Colorado, a Japanese Saturday school in Denver, and an extensive, informal network of Japanese immigrants[3].

3. Previous work on sibling interaction

To date, most linguistic studies of sibling interaction have been carried out in the field of psycholinguistics. Many of these studies examine the bridge hypothesis. Mannle and Tomasello (1987) suggest that older siblings are less accommodating than mothers; Barton & Tomasello (1994) describe siblings (and fathers) as a necessary bridge between the Child Directed Speech of mothers and the less accommodating norms of the wider community. Such studies of the bridge hypothesis have tended to focus on monolingual, middle class western families. Studies of siblings in multilingual families have looked at issues of birth order and acquisition or language proficiency. For example, Shorrab (1986) found that the first born children of Arabic/English bilingual immigrant families in the United States tended to speak Arabic more fluently than their younger siblings. Shannon (1990) found that first born children of Mexican or El Salvadoran emigrant families in Northern California reported greater difficulty in learning English than did their younger siblings.

Some recent studies have focused on issues of access and motivation in international families. Richards & Yamada-Yamamoto (1998) examined the children of Japanese temporary residents in Britain. They found that, while parents claim to value the acquisition of English and Japanese equally, their preschool children were exposed

[3] It is my own family's involvement in this informal network which originally lead me to study Japanese/English bilinguals.

mainly to Japanese in the home. Looking at another type of international family, Yamamoto (1995) analyzed children living in Japan with one Japanese parent and one non-Japanese speaking parent. She found that such children tend to speak to their siblings using the language of instruction in their schools; that is, children studying in English-medium schools spoke English with siblings, while children studying in Japanese-medium schools spoke Japanese with siblings. Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson (1999) examined the children of immigrant parents in Europe in order to offer practical advice to such parents. They suggest that children tend to speak with their siblings in the majority language of the country in which they live. In their analysis of families speaking to one another in the home, Cunningham-Andersson and Andersson suggest that older siblings may use their parent's minority language when speaking to younger siblings in order to exert authority. This finding stands in contrast to Zentella's (1997) suggestion that Spanish speakers in New York City orient toward English as the language of authority.

Studies of bilingual siblings have, to date, tended not to focus on issues of language socialization. Research has suggested that older siblings play a beneficial role in the acquisition of certain grammatical or pragmatic forms, but the sibling role in the formation of social role has not been investigated. In order for our understanding of sibling interaction in acquisition and language socialization to be complete, this gap should be addressed.

4. Findings

In the data analyzed, Mother uses Japanese as the home language. Except for borrowing and some code switching[4], she speaks Japanese almost exclusively in the home[5]. Fragment 1, below, shows a pattern of borrowing typical of Mother's speech.

Fragment 1

Little Brother:	a ha?	*huh?*
Mother:	({otooto} ja/) **table clean** ni shite/	
	Son, now, ***clean the table*** *LOC IMP*	
Mother:	hai	*yes*

[4] Especially when dealing with sequential bilinguals, I have found no firm metric for differentiating borrowing from code switching. See Muysken (2000) and Auer (1984) for a discussion of the issues at stake.

[5] When talking with me, she will speak English.

Younger Sis: shite *do it*

This type of code mixing is usually termed borrowing, since it situates English content words in an essentially Japanese syntax. Note the word order and the use of the Japanese locative particle and imperative verb. In addition to this sort of lexical borrowing, Mother produces one or two word utterances in English. These uses may suggest a lack of control of English syntax.

Japanese issei mothers interviewed for this study claim that they prefer to speak only Japanese in the home as a means of language maintenance. Similarly, the mother considered in this paper is actively trying to pass her Japanese language to her children. In addition to speaking Japanese herself, Mother demands that her children speak Japanese at home. She even goes so far as to censure "excessive" use of English, as will be illustrated below.

Older Sister has cast herself in the role of the family's language authority. She has some claim to this role, since she is fluent in both English and Japanese, while her mother is not. In her role as authority, Older Sister is in a powerful position relative to her siblings. By negotiating and judging language use, she enacts an expert stance and claims a privileged position within the family hierarchy. Fragment 2 illustrates a typical assertion of this expert stance.

Fragment 2

1 Younger Sis:	[@ @	
2 Older Sister:	[@@	
3 Mother:	[ano:	*um*
4 Mother:	nan tte no	*what should I say*
5 Mother:	kono:	*this*
6 Mother:	honno chotto n dakedo	*just a little but*
7 Mother:	nan tte iu no dokka ni	*well, somewhere*
8 Mother:	niku wo sashiten no	*skewer the meat*
9 Mother:	ana [ga aiteru toko] ni kooshite ne	*through this hole*
10 Older Sister:	[@ niku]	*meat*
11 Older Sister:	datte=	*well*
12 Younger Sis:	=**I think they went diagonally** ..	
13	**when they pierced it** (1.4)	
14 Older Sister:	˚honma˚…	*really*
15 Older Sister:	@@@	
16 Younger Sis:	**I showed** {Older Sister} **my cool bath towel**	
17 Older Sister:	[mmm]	
18 Younger Sis:	[**don't you**] **remember/ was it on this** [**sside**	

19 Mother: [iie Nihongo	*no, Japanese*
20 Older Sister: [@@	
21 Younger Sis: [@@	
22 Older Sister: dochi demo ii	*either one is OK*
23 Younger Sis: katte ni deta no	*it just came out that way*
24 Older Sister: @@	
25 Younger Sis: @h	
26 Younger Sis: ikkai ne hajime hh	*once I start*
27 Younger Sis: hajimeru to ne	*I start and, you know*
28 Younger Sis: sono mama ni nacchau no=	*it continues that way*
29 Older Sister: =to omoo	*you think*
30 Younger Sis: wakanai	*I don't know*

In this fragment, Mother is telling her daughters how to prepare a recipe. Her use of imperatives in lines 8-9 (*sashiten*, *kooshite*) cast her in the role of teacher. Mother's hedges (*chotto*, *nan tte iu no*) and interrogatives (*nan*, *dokka*) indicate that she is having some difficulty explaining her idea. When, at line 12-13, Younger Sister suggests the proper technique, she does so in English. This switch to English serves to mitigate her assumption of the teacher role. Goffman (1979) suggests that mitigation or aggravation of a command is a type of footing, and thus a site for code switching. This mitigation of role transgression is a similar occasion for switching.

At line 16, after a pause of more than a second, Younger Sister begins speaking on a new topic. Despite the change in topic, she continues to use the code selected in the previous turn, English. Mother rejects this turn with the overlapping *iie Nihongo*, "No, Japanese". Younger Sister has failed to speak as Mother expects, and so is censured. At line 22, though, Older Sister forgives Younger Sister's usage. Note that, although Older Sister protests Younger Sister's right to choose the code, she makes her assertion in Japanese. Thus, while the content of her utterance aligns Older Sister with Younger Sister, the form (speaking Japanese) aligns her with Mother.

Following Older Sister's protest, Younger Sister pleads her own innocence. She suggests that, since English "just came out that way" (*katte ni deta no*), she should not be subject to censure. Nonetheless, Younger Sister does orient toward Mother's criticism by making her plea in Japanese. Older Sister, in her role as linguistic authority, invites Younger Sister to judge her own arguments at line 29: *to omoo*, "You think so?" Younger Sister's response is noncommittal: *wakanai*, "I don't know".

Code switching in a situation where a single language has been selected[6] forces interlocutors to orient toward the new code. Taking up the new code or otherwise acknowledging the function of the code switch may be seen as a ratification of the stance enacted. A failure to orient toward the new language may signal a refusal to ratify the social stance. In fragment 3, below, Older Sister utilizes code switching to achieve a frame break. Like the mitigation strategy in fragment 2, breaking a frame is an example of footing (Goffman, 1979), and is frequently an occasion for code switching. As we shall see, not all of the participants in this conversation orient toward the role enacted by code switching.

Fragment 3

1	Little Brother: ˚ichi ni san shi go roku shichi hachi kyu to˚	*one two three four five six seven eight nine ten*
2	Older Sister: ( )	
3	Mother: soo ne	*right*
4	Little Brother: kyuu ryoobi	*pay day*
5	Older Sister: **hold on wha-**	
6	**you're there already**	
7	Little Brother: ni-man go-sen (aru yo) (3)	*(there are) twenty-five thousand*
8	Younger Sis: (shotokuzei mo)	*including income tax*
9	Little Brother: (sore ichi-man yon-sen)	*that's fourteen thousand*
10	Older Sister: **thís is hé:rs**	
11	Younger Sis: **yeah**	
12	Little Brother: ni-man yon-sen	*twenty-four thousand*
13	Older Sister: nande?	*why?*
14	Little Brother: ni-kai aru kara kyuu ryoobi ga	*because there are two pay days*
15	Younger Sis: aa honto da	*oh that's right*

In fragment 3, the three children are playing a board game. Mother is present in the room, but she is not playing the game. Although the game is labeled in English, the players have established Japanese as the language for game play. Little Brother counts out his position on the board and makes a claim for payment in lines 1 and 4. At line 5, Older Sister switches to English as she changes role, from a game player to judge or arbiter. This type of frame break is frequently cause for code switching; in addition, the use of English in this context may be an assertion of authority. Little Brother continues to play the game, and continues to speak Japanese. At lines 10-11, Younger Sister

[6] See Myers-Scotton (1993), however, for discussion of code switching as an unmarked choice.

follows Older Sister, speaking English to agree with her argument. Little Brother does not speak English, but continues to play the game. Eventually, at lines 13-15, both sisters resume speaking Japanese, and pay Little Brother's claim. In effect, Little Brother has won the argument by refusing to participate and refusing to speak English.

Fragment 2 showed Mother's attempt to censure an inappropriate code choice; fragment 4 shows a similar condemnation from Older Sister. Fragment 4 continues the game seen in fragment 3. Younger Sister is apparently trying to cheat by paying too little money at line 3. Older Sister blocks this attempt, leading Younger Sister to comment on her own strategy at line 6. This is a frame break similar to that made by Older Sister in fragment 3, and as such receives no comment. At line 8, again after a relatively long pause, Younger Sister continues to speak in the code established by a code switch (cf fragment 2). Older Sister's laughter, quickly followed by Little Brother, marks Younger Sister's usage as transgressive. Younger Sister quickly returns to Japanese at line 11, but Older Sister rejects this attempt to escape censure[7].

Fragment 4

1 Little Brother: ((moving game piece))
2 Little Brother: ando/ (1.8) *and*
3 Younger Sis: (dakara) ni man [(yon sen) *so 24,000*
4 Older Sister: [ni man go sen tte/ itta jan .. *I said 25,000*
5 Older Sister: ni man go sen (2.7) *25,000*
6 Younger Sis: ˚(**it worked before**)˚ ..
7 Older Sister: h@ (1.5)
8 Younger Sis: **It's been my: pleasure** ((tsbın ma:y plɛžər))
9 Older Sister: @[@@
10 Little Brother: [@@
11 Younger Sis: hai/ go sen mo [( ) *yes, and five thousand*
12 Older Sister: [no no no no no
13 Little Brother: [@@@
14 Older Sister: **excu:se my: pleasure** ((ɛksukyu:zu ma:i purɛža:))
15 Little Brother: @@ ((claps hands))
16 Older Sister: hai *yes*

[7] Early reviewers have pointed out that Older Sister's "no no no no no" in line 12 is uttered in English, perhaps following Younger sister's code choice. While the word "no" is certainly English, this may be an example of borrowing (cf note 3), as Japanese monolinguals do sometimes use the word. Due to the lack of syntactic structure, however, I have very little evidence for this position. Hiromi Sumiya (personal correspondence) prefers to call this use code switching. She notes that Japanese speakers tend to use the word more often when there are non-Japanese speakers present. Sumiya goes on to say, "No' is one of the first English words that creep up in code-switching, so I've heard Japanese-English bilingual speakers of various proficiency levels using it."

17 Older Sister: soo soo *right, right*
18 Little Brother: a- arf arf
19 Older Sister: aho/ aho/ *stupid stupid*

At line 14, Older Sister repeats Younger Sister's transgressive statement, changing the wording slightly to make the utterance nonsensical. In addition, the use of exaggerated Japanese phonotactics highlights the "wrongness" of speaking English in a situation where Japanese is the established code.

5. Discussion

In the data analyzed here, Older Sister and Mother each accept some level of code switching, while rejecting other code switches. Frame breaks and other footing switches are generally tolerated, as illustrated in fragments 2, 3 and 4. However, the use of English in other situation is rejected. According to Ochs (1993), there may be a local understanding of how particular forms are associated with particular social statuses. Failure to establish social identity may arise from choosing the wrong linguistic forms in which to enact that identity. Mother and Older Sister accept that certain social functions can be performed through code switching or done in English. However, certain roles, such as the doting sister in fragment 2 or the cooperative game player in fragment 4, can only be enacted through the use of the appropriate code: Japanese.

These data also illustrate Older Sister's attempts to hold on to her role as the family's linguistic authority. Because Older Sister controls both English, the majority language of Colorado, and Japanese, the language of the family, she holds a privileged role within the family. The presence of younger siblings can present a threat to the first born sibling's position in a family. Within an immigrant family such as this one, younger siblings may be a double threat. Since they will control both languages, they can potentially take over the role of linguistic authority. This paper shows that the enactment of social behavior, including linguistic acts, is a locus for the negotiation of social role. Yet to be fully explored are issues of power as expressed by relative position within a family hierarchy.

The position of linguistic authority may be seen as a privileged position within an immigrant family. Since they control both their parent's minority language, and the majority language of the country in which they reside, first-born children control greater symbolic resources than their own parents. This can put the child in a locally important

and relatively powerful position within the family. By displaying appropriate language behavior, as well as ratifying or refusing to ratify certain behavior by other family members, a bilingual offspring can attempt to hold on to this family position. Interaction with younger siblings may provide a first-born child with a means of solidifying or reinforcing their power within the family. Older siblings may be an especially important link to the community outside of an immigrant household. This importance may confer increased local authority. On the other hand, the younger siblings will eventually control the very symbolic resources that secured the first-born's position. How is this complicated social dynamic negotiated? Much work remains to be done on this and related questions. Linguistic anthropology has an important contribution to make in the understanding these arrangements within the family.

Transcription conventions

Japanese utterances are transliterated essentially in the Hepburn romaji style.

Bold face type indicates English words –either code switching or loans– transcribed in standard English orthography.

[	onset of overlapping talk
[mmm]	overlapping sections
=	latching
( )	inaudible or unintelligible portion
(aru)	transcriber's best guess of unintelligible portion
(( ))	transcriber's notes
@	laughter
a:	lengthened segment
doo-	interruption or self interruption
/	falling intonation
?	rising intonation
..	pause of 0.2-0.4 seconds
...	pause of 0.5-1.0 seconds
(1.4)	pause of greater than one second, expressed in seconds
˚soo˚	portion lower in volume than surrounding talk
{otto}	personal name omitted to preserve confidentiality

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