

CODE SWITCHING IN TAIWAN DAILY TALK SHOWS AS A MULTIMODAL STAGING - A CORPUS-BASED STUDY

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Taiwan is a multilingual society in which individual bilingualism or multilingualism is still very common. The main languages used in Taiwan are standard Chinese or Mandarin (Guóyǔ), as the official language, Taiwan Southern Min, Hakka and Formosan languages, i.e. various Malayo-Polynesian languages of the indigenous peoples. Due to the large number of languages and language varieties used in Taiwan, code switching is a widespread phenomenon in everyday linguistic interaction. The oral and written use of code switching can be found in all conversational domains: during personal and official conversations or discussions, in commercials, in song lyrics, in print media, such as newspapers or magazines. Code switching in electronic media like the internet or television, especially between Mandarin and Taiwan Southern Min is also very common in Taiwan.

joy, consternation, excitement etc. Eight functions of code switching are identified: Taiwan Southern Min used for quotations, for filling lexical gaps, for addressee specification, for humorous effects, for poetic effects, for expressive effects, for intimizing effects and Taiwan Southern Min used as both object language and metalanguage.

These functions are to different degrees accompanied by paraverbal elements such as varying intonation and verbal pauses in speech, as well as nonverbal elements such as certain facial expressions and gestures. On the level of medial design, through the means of editorial postproduction, talk show editors complement the verbal interaction by adding "variety show elements" onto the TV screen. These include sound effects (canned laughter, artificial applause and fanfares) and graphemic on-screen inserts. These effects and inserts co-occur with code switching and other communicative features. I argue that all diffe-



Screenshot from *Lady Commander* (一袋女王). STAR Chinese Channel (衛視中文台), (2011, October 6).



Screenshot from *Kangxi Coming* (康熙來了). CTI Variety (中天綜合台), (2011, October 1)

In my PhD research, I examined the use of code switching from Mandarin into Taiwan Southern Min in Taiwanese variety talk shows. The analysis is based on a corpus of eight talk shows recorded in 2011, comprising a total of approximately fifteen hours and thirty minutes. The study distinguishes two levels of communicative action: the level of verbal action and the level of medial design. On the level of verbal action, while trying to achieve entertaining effects through code switching, speakers also pursue personal communicative goals. Foregrounding the specificity of media language, the study analyzes how code switching interacts with para- and nonverbal elements in order to achieve certain effects among the audience in the studio and among the viewers on the TV screen, such as

rent modalities (i.e. verbal, paraverbal, nonverbal, acoustic, and graphemic) that are found in variety talk shows, although situated on different levels of communicative action, do not occur independently from each other. Rather, they can be understood as parts of an overall multimodal communicative message, which is always subject to the fundamental demand for entertainment.

In my PhD thesis, the use of code switching from Mandarin to Taiwan Southern Min is part of the medially staged conversational domain of the talk shows. Contrary to former ideas that code switching is only the result of a deficient language proficiency, it is rather a language mode that requires complex bilingual skills and very often fulfills certain communicative functions in the context of linguistic interaction.

About the Author:

Martin Mellech completed his doctoral thesis at the Department for East Asian Studies (IAAW, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) in 2019. His PhD project on code switching in Taiwan daily talk shows as multimodal



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staging was supervised by Prof. Klöter. His research interests include the different varieties of Mandarin in Taiwan, Taiwan Southern Min, sociolinguistics, pragmalinguistics, code switching as well as paraverbal and nonverbal communication.