Speech Modelling and Style Shifting in Javanese

Joseph Errington
Yale University

Though this paper is part of a broader project on bilingual Indonesian/Javanese interaction, it is intended to show why such usage cannot be dealt with independently of patterns of Javanese monolingual interaction. I deal here with aspects of Javanese usage which have implications for understanding Javanese-Indonesian usage and, I think, conversational code-switching more generally. But I back into these broader issues through a series of examples I hope are neither too numerous nor rapidly presented for proper digestion.

The payoff I seek is an empirically based argument against notions of code switching which are, in Erving Goffman's words, (1981:155) "too mechanical and too easy." I take it as no coincidence that Goffman's remark, in his paper "Footing," also cites work on code-switching by John Gumperz, which has since developed into the best known if not dominant paradigm in the study of bilingual interaction. So I sketch what I call Javanese speech modelling and speech style use in broad terms before moving on to conversational style shifting. Along the way I hope to raise some questions concerning convenient but perhaps misleadingly categorical assumptions about the strategic nature of codeswitching in bilingual interaction.

I should mention right away two unusual features of the Javanese Indonesian case. One which you may know of, at least as in its standard issue, Language and Culture 101 version, is the system of so-called Javanese speech levels, what I prefer to call speech styles. I’ve described them elsewhere (1988, 1985) in their most elaborate forms and within broader codes of polite interaction, focusing on style struc-
ture and normative use. The heuristic assumptions of that work led me to marginalize the kinds of transcriptions and interactional aspects of speech style use I take up today. The other unusual feature of Javanese-Indonesian bilingualism stems from the social history and character of Indonesian which, at least in Central Java, where I've done research, has no native speaking community. Indonesian began to enter the awarenesses and repertoires of most Central Javanese no earlier than the mid 1950's or so under the sponsorship of the Indonesian state; but the Indonesian state is itself dominated by ethnic Javanese. Javanese have mostly learned Indonesian from and used it with other Javanese, and have no ethnically distinct Indonesian speech community or outgroup: a "they" group, as John Gumperz (1982) would put it. Because Javanese speakers have no exposure to a native Indonesian reference point, or distinguishably native Indonesian interactional modes, there is good reason to look for an ethnic Javanese cast to Javanese use of Indonesian.

Some questions about Javanese dialects of Indonesian might fall under Uriel Weinreich's traditional rubric (1951) of 'interference', which could cover issues of structure at all levels from phonology to lexicon. But other questions, the kind I take up here, involve broader aspects of what might be called interactional practice. Bilingual, interlinguistic "code" switching needs to be considered with an eye to monolingual Javanese usage, specifically, intralinguistic "subcode" shifting between speech styles. Style shifting in turn needs to be relativized to another specifically Javanese conversational practice which I call speech modelling.

**Speech modelling**

My use of the phrase "speech modelling" may make me a termmonger, but it is sufficiently less misleading than the better known 'reported speech' that I am willing to run that risk. If there is a common assumption in the huge, various, and burgeoning literature on 'reported speech', it is that
reported speech is intrinsically bipartite. Vološinov (1986) described this doubleness as speech about speech which is simultaneously speech within speech. Roman Jakobson’s binarist classification (1974) schematized it as one type of reflexive language, messages about messages (M/M). Much attention has been devoted more recently to complex relations which can exist between the two parts of reported speech: that which frames and that which represents the content and perhaps form of an originary act-utterance. Reported speech which represents speech in ways which attenuate links between its originary form and re-produced content counts as relatively indirect, in Vološinov’s terms or, as John Lucy (1993:18) suggests, relatively analytic. Other reportings which present qualities and forms of speech, and so have more similitude or iconic fit with originary utterances, count as relatively direct or imitative reported speech.

But distinctions between indirect or analytic reported speech on one hand, and direct or imitative reported speech on the other, all presuppose this underlying distinction between one part which represents speech and another which frames it with metalinguistic verbiage (verbūm dicendi), setting it off and subordinating it in a reporting context. My first task here is to demonstrate the notable absence of such obligatory bipartiteness in Javanese ways of re-presenting talk, or modelling speech. I will try to show how this makes modellings difficult to identify and construe, at least for foreigners, because of the shifts in interactional roles which they presuppose. To model speech is to animate or ventriloquate utterances which are somehow not one’s own. One then shifts what Goffman calls footing, that is, one’s participant role in interaction. One temporarily adopts the guise of mediator between the speech event which one models, and the interactional here and now in which one conducts oneself as its animator or modeller. So relatively those copresent, minimally a former addressee, are
then temporarily accorded a different relation to the speakers' utterances as an audience or ratified bystanders.

A first example of modelled speech, text I, is extracted from the transcription of a recording made by my coworker and consultant, who can go by the name of Endhang.1 Endhang recorded this at the home of a relative who

**Text I**

W: Kandhani rong sasi ki blánjá dhité dhéwé kok. [laughs]  
A: Blánjá dhité dhéwé?  
E: Lha biasané nggo dhité sápá?  
W: Dhité wong-wong kuwi, dhit turahan ngono adaté, rong sasi ki blánjá nggo dhité dhéwé. [laughs]  
   Mbokné ngantèk ra takdhumi, wa is|   W: I'll tell you, two months I've been living on my own money. [laughs]  
A: Living on your own money?  
E: Well whose money do you usually live on?  
W: Those other people's money, the money left over, usually, two months now I'm spending my own money. It's gotten so I haven't given the wife anything, yeah well|   A: "Saiki kowé ra takdhumi sik, préi sik, mbokmu."  
W: "Préi sik" aku ngono.  
   "I'm not giving you anything. Not working now" mom."  

lives, like her, in a rural community in the uplands north of the city of Solo, in central Java. Endang is visiting with her Aunt Atma, represented as A on the transcription, and chatting on the veranda together with one of Atma's distant relative, a man named Wid, marked as W. This entire conversation, between persons of long acquaintance, is carried on in the ordinary, casual low style of Javanese called **ngoko**. Wid had been describing hard times in the livestock business, in which he works as a broker specializing in cows. At once