

# SWITCHING CODES, AFFIRMING IDENTITIES: WRITING IN TEXAS CZECH

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## **Abstract**

This contribution focuses on English/Czech codeswitching (CS) in a collection of letters written by a third-generation Texas Czech to this author, a European Czech living in the US since the 1990s. Specifically, the article explores the writer's CS vis-à-vis her self-perceived ethnolinguistic identity. While the quantitative analysis establishes English as the letter's dominant language, CS itself, rather than English, is proposed to be this writer's unmarked choice, reflecting her dual ethnic membership and positive attitudes towards both codes. The qualitative analysis further shows that most switches to Czech serve identifiable pragmatic functions, such as letter openings/closings and a variety of parenthetical comments used for emphasis, humour, clarification, elaboration, topic closings/move-on, and mitigation.

## **Key words**

Texas Czech variety, written codeswitching, pragmatic functions, code markedness, ethnolinguistic identity

## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Defining codeswitching and the relevant theoretical concepts**

The study of CS, beginning with the seminal work by Blom and Gumperz (1972), is represented by a diverse body of literature examining such issues as what constitutes CS and borrowing (e.g. Garden-Chloros 1995, Myers-Scotton 2001, Pfaff 1979, Poplack 1990), whether it is constructive to distinguish between CS and codemixing and why (e.g. Genesee 2002), what triggers CS (e.g. Clyne 1987), what specific morphosyntactic constraints there are on CS (e.g. Myers-Scotton 1993a, Poplack 1980), whether this phenomenon need be examined using an interpretative, participant-oriented perspective of Conversation Analysts (Auer 1998 ed., Gafaranga & Torras 2002), whether it is primarily socially motivated (e.g. Gumperz 1982), with speakers as rational actors switching codes as a means to an end (e.g. Myers-Scotton 1999), and whether a single model, such as the Markedness Model (Myers-Scotton 1993b, 1998, 2002) or the optimality bilingual grammar (Bolonyai & Bhatt under review) is capable of accounting for the locally embedded, "society-specific communicative phenomenon" of CS (Meeuwis & Blommaert 1994: 417, Coulmas 2005: 124, Li 1998).

For this paper, I adopt a broad definition of CS as “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub-systems” (Gumperz 1982: 59). In order to establish relative frequency of both codes, however, I use a Complementizer Phrase, or complementizer followed by “a phrase with an inflected verb” (Myers-Scotton 2002: 210) as the unit of analysis (e.g. *he will be so happy* L#2<sup>1</sup>; cf. section 4.1 below).

In their classic study of CS, Blom and Gumperz (1972: 424-425) distinguish between situational and metaphorical CS. While the former is determined by a change in the social situation, the latter is tied to the subject matter of conversation, which makes it applicable to written CS as well (cf. McClure 1981, 1998; Montes-Alcalá 2001, Stølen 1992). Relevant to the qualitative analysis of Mrs. Novak’s letters are pragmatic functions of metaphorical CS, such as quotations, interjections, reiterations, message qualification, emphasis through repetition, clarification, greeting and closing, parenthetical comments, and idiomatic expressions (Gumperz 1982: 75-84, McClure 1998: 138-143, McClure 2001:183-187, Montes-Alcalá 2001: 201-204). McClure (2001), for example, shows how the use of Assyrian greetings and closings in English-Assyrian Internet posts serves to assert ethnic pride of Assyrians as a “voluntary immigrant group” with positive attitudes towards the US (189).

For immigrant language situations, Gumperz (1982: 66) suggested that “the tendency is for the ethnically specific, minority language to be regarded as ‘we code’ and become associated with in-group informal activities, and for the majority language to serve as ‘they code’ associated with more formal, stiffer, and less personal out-group relations,” though he emphasised that the link between communicative style and group identity “does not directly predict actual usage.” Such is the case of young Caribbean Londoners, for example, whose London English and London Jamaican both have some features of ‘we-’codes, showing that the relationship between a group identity and the language of an utterance is rather fluid: “social identities are made manifest through *talk*, not just through the actual language or ‘code’ used but also through the content and context” (Sebba & Wootton 1998: 264, 284). It is, therefore, unsurprising to find that the in-group vs. “out-group” indexicality of the codes spoken in historically immigrant communities whose members have undergone the process of ethnic redefinition, as has the community of Texas Czechs, will be more fluid, less stable, and less transparent. The examination of this writer’s CS, then, must consider the content and context of discourse in which the switches appear to afford an insight into the ways in which she negotiates both of her codes and identities.

## 1.2 Written codeswitching: The case of letter-writing

Comparatively few analyses have explored the subject of written CS in fiction and non-fiction (e.g. Callahan 2002, 2005; McClure 1998, 2001; Montes-Alcalá 2001, Stølen 1992). Focused on CS in personal bilingual letters, Lattey and Tracy (2001) examine a substantial collection of letters by a first-generation German American to her German relative. German is the letters' base language. The evidence (esp. instances of orthographic interference, triggering, and types of noun switches to English) supports the processing view of code co-activation and leads the authors to describe such switching as "a case of linguistic creativity," rather than that of "language loss or confusion" (429). In a corpus-based study, Graedler (1999) compares several issues of a Norwegian entertainment magazine to a collection of English-Norwegian letters where Norwegian is the base language. The author proposes criteria for distinguishing established loanwords from "codeswitching proper" (330)<sup>2</sup>, and analyses characteristics of the switches in both types of data to show how genre-specific conventions and communicative functions affect the type, positioning, and graphic representation of codeswitched segments.

## 2 Methodology

In addition to 16 hand-written letters addressed to this researcher, this study draws on an ethnographic interview with Mrs. Novak (a pseudonym) recorded during fieldwork in the historically Czech Moravian communities in central Texas, a written autobiographical questionnaire, and a phone conversation about her letter writing strategies. The only criterion used to select these letters was the date received to maintain the coherence of content. The letters were coded for monolingual Czech or English Complementizer Phrases (CPs), bilingual Czech- and English-based CPs, and composite CPs. The same categories applied to all remaining phrases without an inflected verb (i.e. non-CPs). All CP counts were compared category by category and in totals to confirm the dominant code for the entire piece of discourse. In the qualitative analysis, both intra-CP switches (e.g. *Proto sem se opozdila with my writing* \*That's why [I]'m late with my writing\* L#2) and inter-CP switches (e.g. *No tak děvča, ukončím* \*Well, girl, [I]'ll close\* and *I'll look for ur. ans.* L#7) were examined and coded for the types of pragmatic functions and patterns of use.

### 3 Context

#### 3.1 Texas Czech variety

Texas Czech can be defined as a reduced immigrant variety of Moravian Czech (Dutkova-Cope 2001: 33), the latter being a full-fledged variety of European Czech “characterised by full conventional knowledge” (Polinsky 1994: 257). Briefly, this definition considers its roots in the dialects of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Moravia, mixing and levelling of dialects over time and across generations, as well as the outgrowth of the contact between these dialects and English in Texas<sup>3</sup>. Judging their Texas Czech against European Czech, Texans of Czech Moravian descent typically view their variety as “inconsistent” or “broken”. Such definitions highlight the features that community members perceive as conspicuously non-Czech, namely morphosyntactic integrations of nouns, adjectives, and verbs (e.g. *šůze* \*shoes\*, *braunovy* [*brown-ovy*] \*brown\*, or *jůzovat* [*use-ovat*] \*use-INF\*), and code-switches (e.g. *měla vysoký* \*[she] had high\* *blood pressure* L#13) (cf. Dutkova-Cope 2001: 35) Examples 1 and 2 below illustrate the distinction maintained in this paper: a morphosyntactically integrated diminutive noun *kartku* \*card-ACC\* in example (1) is contrasted with a singly-occurring switch (noun insertion) *groceries* embedded within the Czech-based bilingual CP in (2)<sup>4</sup>:

- (1) *V loňi jsem poslala kartku a peňize* \*Last year [I] sent a postcard and money\*(L#1)<sup>5</sup>
- (2) *... a ten druhy potrebuje groceries* \*...and the other needs groceries\*(L#5)

#### 3.2 The writer’s biography

Mrs. Novak’s life story helps explain why she has maintained, and continued to use, her native Czech throughout her adult life, even though English has become her primary language. Mrs. Novak was the only girl born to a Czech couple farming a piece of land in Jarrell, Texas, in 1927. She believes her grandparents came to Texas from the Moravian region of the Austro-Hungarian Empire but has never learned the specific location. Czech was the only language spoken in her home. Her mother had no education but was literate in Czech. Mrs. Novak completed her basic education at a Catholic School in Corn Hill where, in her words, “no Czech [was] offered at this time. We basically memorised our lessons in English. We did really well”. Importantly, she recalls that the children were free to use Czech among themselves. She was able to formally study Czech in the

ninth grade. Unlike her eight brothers, Mrs. Novak has maintained the language into adulthood, which she explains by a deep interest in her ethnolinguistic heritage. In the early fifties, while working in San Antonio, Texas, she helped three émigré nuns from Czechoslovakia translate Czech-written reports for the Bishop. In 1960, she married a Jewish American businessman whose business she continued to run after his death. As a member of the Council of International Relations in San Antonio, she added Spanish and French to her linguistic repertoire. In 1990, she retired in a small Texas Czech community close to her hometown where she continues to care for the elderly, many of whom are of Czech Moravian descent. She emphatically identifies herself as Czech: *Tož ja sem česká, ano! Dyby se mne negdo optal what is your nationality, tag ja sem Čech, jake narodnosti si, ja sem Česka, zme byli narozeni Češi, maminka byla Čech, tatinek byl Čech* (\*Well, I'm Czech, yes! If somebody asks me what is your nationality, then I am Czech, what nationality are you, I am Czech, [we] were born Czech, mother was Czech, father was Czech\*).

## 4 Data analysis

### 4.1 Code dominance and markedness

The sixteen letters analyzed in this paper contain 560 Complementizer Phrases (CPs) and 83 non-CPs<sup>6</sup>. To determine the structure of bilingual CPs, I differentiate between the Matrix Language (ML) and the Embedded Language (EL) as proposed in Myer-Scotton's (1993a, 2001) Matrix Language Frame (MLF) model. In the model, the ML constitutes the base language and the EL is the donor language. The ML sets the grammatical frame for an utterance, supplying both content and system morphemes (typically, grammatical inflections, quantifiers, and specifiers), while the EL enters this frame via content morphemes (typically, verbs, nouns, adjectives, prepositions, and discourse markers). In my data, such bilingual CPs are infrequent (25/4.4% Czech-based CPs vs. 18/3.2% English-based CPs), and monolingual CPs, dominated by English, prevail (80/14.3% Czech CPs vs. 432/77.1% English CPs) (see Figure 1 below). A third possibility within the MLF model, the composite matrix language, arises if the speaker has insufficient access "to the frame of a target matrix language" (Myers-Scotton 2001: 52). In such cases, the utterance's "abstract lexical structure" will come from both languages involved (ibid.). My data include only five (1%) composite CPs. Examples 3-7 illustrate the CP types found in the data:

- (3) A monolingual Czech CP: *Dnes mám volno* \*Today [I] am free\* (L#1)
- (4) A monolingual English CP: *Thank you for the new address* (L#2)

- (5) A bilingual Czech-based CP: *Proto sem se opozdila* \*That's why [I] am late\* *with my writing* (L#2)
- (6) A bilingual English-based CP: *This job is in the Czech R. anebo zde?* \*or here?\* (L#4)
- (7) A composite CP: *Ale mám velké* \*But [I] have [a] big\* “favor” *to ask you*<sup>7</sup> (L#1)

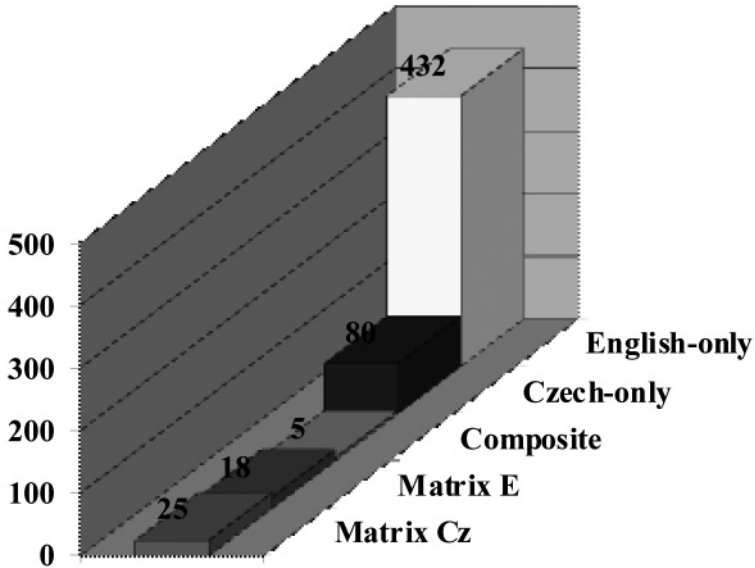


Figure 1: Distribution of 560 Complementizer Phrases in the database

Overall, the frequency count indicates the prevalence of monolingual English CPs (432/84.4%) over monolingual Czech CPs (80/14.3%), and a slight lead for bilingual Czech-based CPs (25/4.4%) over English-based CPs (18/3.2%). The latter reflects the writer's tendency to switch from Czech to English for dates, culture-specific terms, or technical terms for which she likely lacks Czech equivalents. A majority of such switches (18 of 25/72%) are single-word insertions (e.g. *Přešla sem* \*[I] went through\* *Colonoscopy* L#2). Furthermore, if the composite ML should result from the speaker's inadequate access to the target ML frame (as explained above), the low presence of composite CPs in these letters should point to Mrs. Novak's continued ability to structure Czech-only CPs with ease<sup>8</sup>.

Following Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model (MM) (e.g. 1993b, 1998), the CP frequency counts would suggest that English is the unmarked code, while the prevalence of inter-CP switching and functional "flagging"<sup>9</sup> of many Czech switches would identify Czech as its marked counterpart (cf. Myers-Scotton 2002: 209-10, 1989: 344). However, other sociolinguistic factors lead to a proposition that CS itself is the unmarked code of Mrs. Novak's letters. According to the MM, unmarked CS tends to occur among bilingual peers, where CS tends to symbolise dual ethnolinguistic memberships and where both codes involved are positively evaluated by the interlocutors. Structurally, intra-CP and intra-word switching should be more frequent in unmarked CS, though its occurrence will at least in part depend on the speaker's bilingual ability (Myers-Scotton 1993b: 113-149, 119-120), which, in Mrs. Novak's case, remains relatively high. Also, the fact that so few intra-word switches appear in the letters may be explained by the writer's consideration of her European Czech addressee (though she is aware of this recipient's positive attitudes toward her language variety), and the written mode itself.

## 4.2 Pragmatic functions of CS

The most salient pragmatic functions in Mrs. Novak's CS pattern as follows: Linguistic routines opening the letters (4.2.1); linguistic routines closing the letters (4.2.2); parenthetical comments used for emphasis (with or without repetition), humour, clarification, elaboration, explanation, topic closing and move-on, and mitigation (4.2.3); quotation and message qualification (4.2.4). In addition, some switches can be attributed to lexical need (4.2.6).

### 4.2.1 Linguistic routines: Letter opening

Letter-opening routines in Czech appear in eleven of the 16 letters. The first pattern has particles signalling the beginning of the text (*no, tak/tož* \*well, so\*) and an emotional/evaluative particle *konečně* \*finally\* (as in example 8). The second set concerns an extended greeting with or without a weather-related comment (as in 9), while the third set includes clauses referring to the letter's receipt immediately following the initial greeting<sup>10</sup> (in 10):

- (8) [All-English greeting] *Tož konečně mám day off* \*So finally [I] have [a] day off\* [So will try to catch up on my mail] (L#6)
- (9) [Draha Lida a maminko,] *Dobře rano! Dnes je tu pod mračenem* \*Good morning! Today it's cloudy here\*, and windy as all get out! [I'm sending ...] (L#16)
- (10) [Draha Lida,] *Psaňičko došlo včera* \*[The] letter-DIMIN arrived yesterday\* [As always I was happy...] (L#7)

### 4.2.2 Linguistic routines: Letter closing

Letter-closing routines in Czech appear in nine of the 16 letters. The first pattern has in common the use of discourse markers (*dobře* \*OK/well\*, *tak/tož* \*so\*, *no tak* \*well so\*) to signal the wrapping up of the text (as in example 11). The remaining two patterns consist of a parting utterance wishing all the best or sending regards (as in 12), or an explicit parting expression *Na zhledanou* \*See you\* (in 13).

- (11) [...who would be so glad to see an outsider] *Tož tak je to.* \*So that's how it is\* [Lida, I'm runnin' to the P.O.] (L#15)
- (12) [Yes, how time flies.] *Tak mějte se hešky.* \*So have a nice time\* [Stay well.] (L#5)
- (13) [God Bless you Both,] *Na zhledanou.* \*See you\* [I Love you.] (L#8)

### 4.2.3 Parenthetical comments

Very prominent in Mrs. Novak's letters is the use of parenthetical comments for emphasis, humour, clarification (via translation or self-correction), elaboration, explanation, topic closing and move-on, and mitigation (examples 14-17). Out of 25 such comments, most (17/68%) are Czech CPs or non-CPs embedded in or following English-based or English CPs. English parenthetical comments embedded within Czech-based or Czech CPs are fewer in number (4/16%).

- (14) Emphasis: As Always, glad to hear from you (*no, doopravdy* \*but really\*) [English CP follows] (L#4)
- (15) Clarification: We served almost 5 hundred (*pět set* \*five hundred\*) *lidi* \*people\* for lunch... (L#12)
- (16) Elaboration: *Budu se těšit na maly obrazeček* \*[I]'ll look forward to a small picture\* (*also one with you & the Baby and Mommy*). *Thank you do předku* \*in advance\* (L#9)
- (17) Explanation: It will be hard when you're both working (*ale máš tam drahou maminku* \*but [you] have your dear mom there\*) [English CP follows] (L#9)

The remaining four (16%) instances include an English-based and a Czech-based parenthetical comment (as in example 18) and two monolingual comments embedded in or following the same-language CPs (as in 19):

- (18) Elaboration: I think of her as I would my mother. (*Maminka zemřela na vše Svate nov. 1, 1969* \*[My] mom died the All Saints Day Nov. 1, 1969\*) [Czech CP follows] (L#11)
- (19) Clarification (Self-correction): So start a little savings plan for him now, *po dalej (dále) jak bude myt jeden rok,* \*then later (later) when [he] is one year old\* [Czech CP follows] (L#9)



A notable number of parenthetical comments reiterate an expression or phrase given in the other code as a way to clarify and/or emphasize an utterance (cf. Gumperz 1982: 78). Like parentheses, underlining often serves the purpose of clarification or emphasis (e.g. *Tož konečně mám day off!* \*So finally [I] have [a] day off!\* L#6).

#### 4.2.4 Quotation and message qualification

Used more sparingly, quotation marks set off one switch to Czech within an English-based CP (*It looks like Baby “Tomáš” is anxious... L#7*) and two switches to English within Czech-based CPs (e.g. ... *a že Tomášek je* \*and that Tommy is [a]\* “good boy” L#12).

In the two instances of message qualification (cf. Gumperz 1982: 79), the central message is given in Czech, and English is used to qualify it (e.g. *Víš to není žádný špas* \*[You] know it’s no joke\*, *those winds* L#15).

#### 4.2.6 Lexical need

Some of the items in this category appear to have been inserted due to the writer’s lack of knowledge of a Czech equivalent or her inability to quickly access the existing Czech equivalent. One’s motivation for such switches, however, is difficult to ascertain. The instances include dates (e.g. *Aji narozeniny jsem měla Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>* \*Also my birthday was Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>\* L#16), holidays (e.g. *Mějte se hesky na Easter* \*Enjoy Easter\* L#16), frequently used expressions, some of which have fully adapted variants in Texas Czech (e.g. *rozbil truck* \*[he] trashed [his] truck\* L#12), idiomatic expressions (e.g. ... *bude myt* \*[he] will have [a]\* *vacation of a lifetime* L#13), and terminology (e.g. ...*potom* \*then\* *Berium X-Ray* L#2).

## 5 The writer’s perspective

Whether CS can be considered a conscious strategy is a subject for debate. Regarding conversational CS, Gumperz (1982: 61) suggests that while linguists look for predictable constraints on CS, interlocutors “are often quite unaware which code is used at any time”. Poplack (1980: 601) notes that “a seeming ‘unawareness’ of the alteration between languages” comes with skilled CS, which involves larger segments than singly-occurring switches and usually lacks metalinguistic commentary and repetition of preceding or following segments. As for written CS, Montes-Alcalá (2001) notes that such switching “can be considered a literary device in itself, of which the author is self-conscious despite its natural and spontaneous production”, though I would add that the genre is a significant variable where strategic writing is implied. When asked, “When you write, do you think about whether to use Czech or English?” Mrs. Novak replied,

“No, it just comes naturally.” She also said to me in an interview and a phone conversation (abridged comments in excerpts under 20-22):

- (20) *When I write, when I want to explain something, when I want something special – unusual to say or write, I’ll jump into Czech then*
- (21) *It’s a matter of expression, I guess you would say, tož jak se citim \*so depending on how [I] feel\*. Ty si tam \*You are there\*, you know, you speak Czech, tož “dobře rano” \*so “good morning”,\* you know, to greet you. If it’s the person of the same language, you could be inclined to greet them in that language*
- (22) *... when something comes to you better... it’s better in English or you can express yourself in your native language*

Mrs. Novak’s comments suggest that she is quite aware of her tendency to switch to Czech to explain, clarify, or elaborate, as well as to greet and part with her addressee. She is also aware that the topic and audience, with whom she shares a “native language”, significantly influence her code choice. She repeats that code choice is a matter of expression which also depends on what “comes to you better” at a particular moment. Overall, her comments tend to focus on the communicative effect of her writing. Attempting to take the writer’s perspective, then, I suggest that for the most part, Mrs. Novak selects her codes automatically, following the “social norms or rules [...] which form part of the underlying knowledge” interlocutors draw on to convey meaning (Gumperz 1982: 61). However, when it comes to the few intra-CP switches, especially the expressions for which she may not have Czech equivalents, she appears to employ – perhaps consciously – whatever linguistic resources she has available to complete her thoughts.

## 6 Conclusion

The frequency-based analysis has determined that Mrs. Novak’s letters are written largely in English. A further analysis, involving the criteria outside the letters’ print, has led to the conclusion that the writer’s CS itself is the unmarked choice. Most switches to Czech, apart from those where the compensatory nature of CS is more apparent, have been shown to serve identifiable pragmatic functions.

While Texas Czech is a dying immigrant variety of Moravian Czech, it continues to live in Mrs. Novak’s repertoire as her “native language” and one of the means of communication. Where the retention of and desire to use Czech are considered, hers is no typical case. Attending an ethnic festival or church picnic, Mrs. Novak is unlikely to sport a T-shirt with a Czech slogan or an English phrase declaring her Czech roots. Instead, she will continue to claim her heritage

by speaking Czech whenever an opportunity presents itself. While the writer and her addressee are bilingual peers, we do not share the same speech community. In fact, I speak the “high Czech” to which Texas Czechs tend to compare, often unfavorably, their heritage code. However, it is doubtful that Mrs. Novak, writing to a friend about everyday matters, dwells on comparing our levels of “Czechness” and evaluates the degree of grammaticality – or even purity – of the codes she weaves together to communicate.

It has been suggested that the ‘we’-code/‘they’-code dichotomy originally proposed by Gumperz (1982) is difficult to uphold in many bilingual minority communities (e.g. Sebba & Wootton 1998: 263). In historically Texas Czech communities once a distinct ‘we’-code is a matter of the past, and it is only special occasions aimed to display the heritage and culture of Czech Texans that encourage an occasional Texas Czech greeting *Jak se máš?* \*How are you?\*, as one way to highlight the context-appropriate ethnolinguistic identity. Where the use of both codes brands a Texas Czech speaker, reflecting the redefined ‘we’-code/‘they’-code boundaries, very little or no Czech need be spoken by those who maintain their community membership largely through non-linguistic means (Dutkova-Cope 2000, 2003). While Mrs. Novak’s letters reflect her multiple ethnolinguistic identities as a Czech, Texan, and American, she skillfully frames her largely English writing not only to uphold a special meaning of our friendship but also to affirm her self-perceived ethnolinguistic identity as a Czech born in Texas.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> L#1-#16 refers to the source of examples: Letters #1-16. Translations from Czech to English begin and end with an asterisk (\*).
- <sup>2</sup> Naturally, the manipulation of print is one of the most distinct characteristics of written CS (e.g. the use of underlining, quotation marks, or capitalization to either highlight the switch orthographically or give it an emphatic function). Another feature, invented spelling, such as *peñize* for *penize* \*money\*, is characteristic of reduced language varieties (cf. section 3.1). Importantly, eliminating borrowings in analyses of written CS tends to be more difficult especially because phonological signals are lacking. McClure (2001) relies, at least in part, on orthographic signals such as the use of quotation marks and italics. Graedler (1999) finds these signals unreliable as they can have other textual functions as well.
- <sup>3</sup> A fuller explanation of the origins and characteristics of the Texas Czech variety is beyond the scope of this paper. Consult, for example, Dutkova-Cope (2001) or Eckert (2004).
- <sup>4</sup> 'Morphosyntactic integrations,' or intra-word CS, salient in Texas Czech but nearly non-existent in Mrs. Novak's letters, are open-class words that have acquired Czech inflections. (Phonological adjustments cannot be always ascertained in written data.) The word *kart-a* \*card-NOM\*, with a different meaning, exists in European Czech [ECz]. 'Singly-occurring switches' are unmodified lexical insertions from the embedded language (cf. 4.1 below).
- <sup>5</sup> I will not address inconsistencies in the placement of orthographic markers (e.g. *loñi* for ECz *loni* \*last year\*) or any other aspects of written renderings of Texas Czech, which ECz speakers would consider ungrammatical.
- <sup>6</sup> The letters contain a total of 83 non-CPs, specifically 66 (79.5%) monolingual English non-CPs, nine (10.9%) monolingual Czech non-CPs (e.g. *Dobre rano!* \*Good morning\* L#11), and eight (9.6%) composite non-CPs, the latter found solely in greetings (e.g. *Draha Maminko y Lida* \*Dear Mommy and Lida\* L#8). Most non-CPs are greetings, sign-offs, and phrases indicating when and where a letter was written. These phrases will not be discussed here.

- <sup>7</sup> Quoting “*favor*” suggests the writer noted (not necessarily consciously) the utterance’s non-Czech structure. This expression may have triggered the nonfinite clause *to ask you*. It could be argued that a covert subject in *Ale \_ mám \*But [I] have\** suggests Czech as the CP’s ML. Other than the covert subject, however, there is no semblance to the ECz version of this clause (*Ale chci/musím tě o něco požádat \*But [I] want/must you-ACC for something ask-INF\**).
- <sup>8</sup> Many direct observations of Mrs. Novak’s conversational skills in her native language would only support this conclusion.
- <sup>9</sup> ‘Functional flagging’ (e.g. repetition, metalinguistic commentary, etc.) tends to draw attention to a code switch.
- <sup>10</sup> Square brackets in examples (8)-(13) enclose the (non-)CP that precedes or follows the utterance in question. Similarly, parenthetical comments in (14)-(19) are given in the context of the preceding and/or following (non)CP.
- <sup>12</sup> Note on the Appendix: English within Czech utterances is given in capital letters. Square brackets [ ] are used for additions/corrections; curly brackets { } for explanations. The transcription preserves the main features of Mrs. Novak’s speech, such as forward assimilation to voiced consonants (e.g. *tak > tag \*so\**) and various features that originate in her ancestral dialect (e.g. shortened vowels and softened [l] as in *ale > al’e \*but\**). Descriptive details for Texas Czech speech are given in Dutkova-Cope (2001).

### Appendix: Ethnographic Interview (a representative excerpt)

Mrs. Novak (1927) Recorded 11-3-1997 in Granger, Texas (sampled from pages 1-5 of a nine-page transcript)<sup>12</sup>

LC	Kde jste chodila do školy?	Where did you go to school?
Mrs. N	Do tej katolickej školy, zrovna tam při tym hřbitově. Ja mam obrazek gdesik IN STORAGE z te stare školy katolicke.	To that Catholic school, just by the cemetery. I have a picture somewhere in storage from that old Catholic school.
LC	A co potom? Šla jste na COLLEGE?	A then? Did you go to college?
Mrs. N	Ja sem byla v San Antoně [...]	I was in San Antonio {gives the name of the college}
LC	Co jste studovala?	What did you study?
Mrs. N	FRENCH – francúsky, ano, to nemělo žádné CREDITS, by se řeklo, to bylo enem že ja sem to chtěla brát’, protože ja sem byla, jak se řekne, MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. Dyž přijeli AMBASSADORS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES, my zme museli zebrať THE RED CARPET a to – MEET THEM AT THE AIRPORT, a třebaš dyž mluvil francúsky, tak poslali toho co mluvi. Dyž mluvil česky, tag já sem šla, a tak, krz toho, ohledně toho to bylo – IT WAS KIND OF NECESSITY ALMOST, al’e ja sem nevyškolila sem se jak bysem se byvala chtěla vyškolit na fra- ON FRENCH – sem neměla kdy, sem měla ten obchod a tak dal. Ftedy už mi muž zemřel (pp. 1-2).	French E – [in] French, yes, it didn’t have any credits, one would say, it was only that I wanted to take it, because I was, how to say, [a] member of the Council of International Relations. When came the ambassadors from other countries, we had to bring the red carpet and that – meet them at the airport, and maybe when he spoke French, then they sent the person who spoke it. When he spoke Czech, then I was to go, and so, because of that, it was because of that – it was kind of [a] necessity almost, but I did not learn as much as I would have wanted to on [in] French -- I had no time, I had that store and so on. By that time my husband already died (pp. 1-2).

SWITCHING CODES, AFFIRMING IDENTITIES: WRITING IN TEXAS CZECH

LC	[...] Jakto že ještě pořád mluvíte tak dobře česky?	[...] How come you still speak Czech so well?
Mrs. N	Ja nevím, jag byti to řekla. Tam sem pracovala – já možu řeknúť to – tam byly sestřičky tři, ony byly utečené z Československa, ftedy to bylo, ftedy, to už je dávno, roky a roky, to muže byt' FIFTY YEARS AGO, a potom udělali taky – jak by se řeklo, takyten klášter. Ten ORDER, co byl jako ten, co oni patřá k temu, jak se to pravi – je slovo pro to –	I don't know how I would tell you this. I worked there – I can say that – there were three nuns, they emigrated from Czechoslovakia, back then it was, back then, that's very long ago, years and years, it can be fifty years ago, and then they made this – how would one say, that monastery. That order, which was like that they belong to, how to say – there is a word for it –
LC	řád?	"order"?
Mrs. N	Řád, jo, a byl jako velice přísný. [...] My zme překládali biskupovi, ona se mně ledaco ptala, a potom jak sem –	The order, yes, and it was like very strict. [...] We were translating for the Bishop, she would ask me things, and then when I –
LC	Jak jste překládala?	How did you translate?
Mrs. N	Z češtiny do angličtiny, ano, tak. Alebo oni dělali take dopise, by se řeklo, takové REPORTS, neco takového, viš? Protože ony musely byt zodpovědně temu biskupovi za ledaco.	From Czech to English, yes, just so. Or they would make such letters, one would say, such reports, something like that, you know? Because they had to be responsible to the Bishop for things.
LC	A ony neuměly dobře anglicky?	And they didn't know English well?
Mrs. N	Ne, ne tak dobře.	No, not that well.
LC	[...] Vaši bratři taky umí česky?	Do your brothers also know Czech?
Mrs. N	Ano, tož my zme ináč doma nemluvili, šak ftedy ja sem chodila do školy tudy. A potom zme se nastěhovali nedako tudy za město. Tak ftedy sem brala – profesor Joches, on byl z East Bernard, mně učil česky. Ja sem brala češtinu ftedy, mysim sem byla v osmej nebo devatej, tak nejak.	Yes, well, we didn't speak anything else at home, at that time I went to school here. And then we moved just outside the town. So then I was taking – Professor Joches, he was from East Bernard, he was teaching me Czech. I was taking Czech then, I think I was in the eighth or the ninth grade, something like that.
LC	Uměla jste anglicky když jste šla do školy?	Did you know English when you started school?
Mrs. N	Ne, tož ja pochybuju.	No, well I doubt it.
LC	Ale nebylo to pro vás těžky se naučit, že?	But it wasn't difficult for you to learn, right?
Mrs. N	Tož po tem ne, ja sem s Džanů, zme to dělali dohromady, zme se učili dohromady.	Well, after that, no, I with John {= brother John}, we did it together, we were learning together.
LC	A mezi sebou, jako děcka, jste mluvili jak?	And amongst yourselves, as kids, how did you speak?

Mrs. N	Česky, pořád česky, my zme doma vubec anglicky nemluvíli. {smích}	Czech, always Czech, we never spoke English at home. {laughs}
LC	A vaši uměli anglicky?	And did your parents know English?
Mrs. N	Ano, al'e maminka nechodila do školy, a ty neuvěřiš jak pěkně uměla podalejš psat', protože pět mojich bratru bylo na vojně – pomysli si, jo, a ten co eště žije byl poraněny, on mněl veliky šrapnel, HE WAS A NAVY MAN, jak se řekne. A tak henaj oni dva, a tak oni byli poraněni, al'e všeci kluci přišli zpátky (p. 3)	Yes, but my mom didn't go to school, and you won't believe how well she could write, with time, because my five brothers served in the army – just think, yeah, and the one that is still living was wounded, he had a big shrapnel, he was a navy man, so to speak. And so they two, and so they were wounded, but all the boys came back (p. 3)
LC	A v San Antonu, kde jste mluvila česky?	And in San Antonio, where did you speak Czech?
Mrs. N	Enem s tymy sestřičkami, a potom s Medkem, eště zme ten Čech heritage ftedy. Ale viš, oni tak moc nemluvíli pomezí sebou, jag by se řeklo, česky, tož mluvilo se po boku třebaš, tak když se zebralej jeden z druhym, tag doma, al'e tak pomezí lidmi – protože ty Češi si zebralej třebaš Amerikánky. Tak to už potom muselo se mluvit' anglicky, to je ten problem tady.	Only with those nuns, and then with Medek, we also had that Czech Heritage {= the Czech Heritage Society} then. But, you know, they didn't speak much amongst themselves, how would one say, Czech, so it would be spoken on the side for example, so when people married each other, then in the home, but amongst people – because those Czechs married, say, American women. Then English had to be spoken, that's the problem here.
LC	Vý jste ale taky musela!	But you had to as well!
Mrs. N	Ja sem mluvila.	I spoke {= I spoke Czech}
LC	Ale váš muž byl Američan.	But your husband was American.
Mrs. N	Ano (p. 4)	Yes (p. 4).
LC	[...] Ptává se vás někdo na přízvuk? DO THEY TELL YOU THAT YOU HAVE AN ACCENT IN ENGLISH?	[...] Does anybody ever ask about your accent? Do they tell you that you have an accent in English?
Mrs. N	Oh jo, ptali se mne, jo. A ja pravim, "MAKE A GUESS, hádaj, hádaj." {smích} Tak hádaju, "WELL, GERMAN, GERMAN," a ja řeknu, "ne, neni to GERMAN, německe, NO, IT'S Čech." {smích} A ja jim řeknu – "jo tak, to je OK." Oni nevěď'a že ja se menuju tak alebo tak, mne tudyk lide vubec neznajů. Jako mě znajů vic než já jich, protože sem tu nebyla. Ja sem ztratila tych pědašetyricet roku jak sem byla v San Antoně. A ti co tu byli, co su aji do rodiny, to už je pomřete.	Oh yeah, they asked, yeah. And I say, "make a guess, guess, guess." {laughs} So they guess, "well, German, German," and I say, "no, that's not German, German, no, it's Czech." {laughs} And I tell them, "yeah well, that's OK." They don't know that my name is this or that, people here don't know me at all. Like they know me more than I do them, because I was not here. I lost those forty five years when I was in San Antonio. And those who were here, even from our family, that's {= they are} already dead.



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LC	A vycházíte s lidma dobře?	And do you get along well with people?
Mrs. N	Vel'ice lehko, jo, ja nemam, jak se řekne, trubl se žadnym, jako se domluvit' alebo hlásit' se k člověkoví.	Quite well, yeah, I don't have, how to say, trouble with anybody, like to communicate or call on a person.
LC	A mluvíte s někým česky? Diví se, že tak dobře umíte?	And do you speak Czech with anybody? Are they surprised that you know it so well?
Mrs. N	“Oh, a vy eště mluvíte česky?” Ja pravim, “Tož ano, dyt' jak se to raz naučí, to nezapomene tag lehko.” Je jim to trošku podivne, no, jak ty říkaš (p. 5).	“Oh, and you still speak Czech?” I say, “Well yes, clearly, when once learned, it is not forgotten so easily.” They find it a bit odd, yeah, like you're saying (p. 5).