

# SWITCHING IN A ROMANIAN-HUNGARIAN BILINGUAL CONTEXT

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**Abstract:** The paper aims to be a descriptive account of the mixed utterances produced by unbalanced simultaneous Romanian-Hungarian bilinguals. The analysis of the mixed utterances in two longitudinal corpora reveals that the great majority is represented by Romanian utterances containing one switched Hungarian word, while Hungarian utterances with a switched Romanian word are practically non-existent. This would appear to fall in with the hypothesis that switching is motivated by imperfect linguistic performance, where the weaker language seeks functional support from the stronger one. However, it is argued here that often switching is as much a matter of personal choice as necessity and a result of the two languages being simultaneously active with all bilinguals.

**Keywords:** Romanian-Hungarian simultaneous bilinguals, unbalanced bilinguals, switching

## 1. Introduction

The paper offers a descriptive account of the mixed utterances encountered in two longitudinal corpora in a Romanian-Hungarian bilingual context. While it is true that Hungarian is the weaker language, and switched utterances contain for the most part Hungarian lexical items merged into higher Romanian syntactic structures, the paper in no way intends to argue that switching is no more than a need-driven strategy meant to cover for linguistic inadequacy. On the contrary, switching is closely related to the skill bilinguals have to combine and navigate through the two languages which are always simultaneously active and accessible.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 gives an overview of the data, Section 3 makes reference to previous research on switching, while Section 4 offers the analysis proper. The mixed utterances are classified according to the syntactic function of the switched constituent(s). One subsection looks at switched NPs as complements of verbs, prepositions or other functional categories. Switched adjectives are the subject of the next subsection; of interest here is word order (since the head-modifier/modifier-head parameter differs in the two languages) and especially gender (Romanian adjectives appear to agree in gender with genderless Hungarian nouns). The next subsection looks into switched verbs, as well as into switching at the IP/CP level. The last batch of utterances to be considered looks at switched adjuncts, and utterances where the constituents from the two languages do not seem to be in a subordination relation. One final subsection takes a look at utterances where functional projections appear twice, one for each language.

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## 2. Description of the corpora

The analysis relies on two longitudinal corpora of naturalistic, non-structured conversation in a Romanian-Hungarian bilingual context (Tomescu 2013). The children were recorded 30 to 60 minutes per week between the ages 1;3 and 3;10/2;8 respectively. The utterances used for the analysis belong to two brothers who were the object of the recordings and also to their older brother who was a participant. In addition, I have used diary data showing the linguistic evolution of the oldest brother. The boys grow up in a bilingual family (Romanian father and Romanian-Hungarian bilingual mother) in a Romanian speaking community. Aside from the mother, the only other family member who speaks Hungarian to the children is the grandmother, whom they only occasionally meet. Their Hungarian output is much lower than the Romanian one. For the two younger brothers, the MLU is lower throughout for Hungarian than for Romanian (MLU at 2;11 in the Toma corpus is 4.51 for Romanian and 2.55 for Hungarian, and in the Petru corpus, at 2;8, the MLU is 3.79 for Romanian and 1.14 for Hungarian; the highest values in the Toma corpus are 6.9 for Romanian at 2;10 and 4.68 for Hungarian at 2;9; in the Petru corpus, the highest values are 4.71 for Romanian at 2;5 and 2.43 at 2;1 for Hungarian). All three are unbalanced bilinguals.

Crucially, the input contains no intrasentential code-switching.

The corpora are described in Table 1 below:

**Table 1**  
**Summary of data**

<b>Child</b>	<b>Age range</b>	<b>No. of switched utterances</b>
Matei	2;6-3;0 4;8-7;1	98
Toma	1;7-3;10	216
Petru	1;10-2;8	113
		Total 427

## 3. Previous research on switching

As Grosjean (2001) pointed out, the two languages are always both present in the bilingual's mind: none of the languages is ever completely turned off, inactive. Switching between languages should be equivalent to switching between language styles. In Cantone (2007), child mixing is investigated on a par with adult mixing, as a matter of individual choice rather than as a flaw due to inferior language development, although, indisputably, in the early stages of acquisition mixing may be due to performance factors: the operation Select may not have had sufficient practice to pick words suitable to the language context (Cantone and Müller 2008). Bernardini and Schlyter (2004) have proposed the Ivy Hypothesis: unbalanced bilinguals combine higher syntactic structure from the stronger language with lower portions from the weaker language; the weaker language clings to the structure of the stronger language like ivy to the wall. It is a compensatory strategy, caused by unbalanced input. It has been pointed out (Müller

2009) that unbalanced bilinguals are more prone to mixing than balanced bilinguals; Gawlitzek-Maiwald and Tracy (2005) argue that the direction of mixing is related to which language is the strongest: functional categories (e.g. the IP) will mostly be chosen from the stronger language.

A very simplified account of switching is offered in McSwan (1999, 2000), where it is only the requirements of the mixed grammars that constrain switched utterances. Similarly, Borer (1984) proposed that in fact all language particular information (parameters) is restricted to the lexicon, and the computational system is invariant across languages. A Minimalist approach to code switching would predict that lexical items are drawn from either lexicon, and their features will be checked for convergence just like in monolingual utterances. The grammar of a switched utterance is therefore the union of the two lexicons.

McSwan (2000) notes that code switching is impossible at PF: therefore the two languages have separate phonological systems; switching is not possible below the  $X^0$  boundary. Apparent counterexamples are in fact instances of borrowing, where a stem is taken from one lexicon but treated with the morphology and phonology of the other language: e.g. the English stem combined with Spanish inflection *parqueando* (McSwan 2000). Contrary to this, Cantone (2007) finds counterexamples to the claim that switching cannot occur below the  $X^0$  boundary; in the corpora analysed she does find several mixed-language heads.

#### 4. The analysis

##### 4.1 Syntactic classification of the data

The data has been classified according to the syntactic function of the switched word or phrase or its position in the tree.

The majority of switched words (representing over half of the total of utterances considered for analysis) are Hungarian DPs/NPs (occasionally accompanied by a Hungarian modifier) inserted into a Romanian projection. Most of them are complements to Romanian transitive verbs or Romanian prepositions, but there is also a smaller group of predicatives. Hungarian nouns introduced by Romanian indefinite determiners or other functional categories (degree, quantifiers) were however considered separately, irrespective of their syntactic function.

Conversely, switched Romanian nouns introduced into Hungarian projections are very few.

Hungarian verbs also form an interesting subject for analysis, since very often they are only introduced as uninflected stems – this is phonologically possible since the stem is homonymous with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular present tense: the present tense suffix, as well as the 3<sup>rd</sup> person (singular) agreement suffix are both null. These stems are selected on occasion by Romanian (free) functional morphemes: the subjunctive mood marker or the auxiliary for the *perfect compus*. However, such examples are fewer in number than those containing switched Hungarian nouns. Other examples feature adjuncts – PPs and CPs.

As for switched adjectives, in either language, they are not at all numerous.

Finally, there are utterances where the switching does not occur within a phrase or clause but the two constituents, one from each language, are coordinated or juxtaposed.

#### 4.1.1 Switched DPs

The most frequently encountered switched utterances are the ones containing a Hungarian DP or NP merged as complement or specifier into a Romanian projection: 92 contexts include a Hungarian direct object of a Romanian transitive verb: 12% of Matei's total utterances, 19% of Toma's and 21% of Petru's.

Hungarian accusative nouns, unlike their Romanian counterparts, must bear an overt marker *-t*. The switched Hungarian direct objects in my data almost always appear bare (1a) – the Hungarian NP is merged directly and unproblematically as complement to V. Exceptions are very few. The oldest child produces 1 Hungarian noun with a Hungarian accusative suffix and the two younger brothers 2 each. In 7 utterances (5 and 2 respectively produced by the two younger ones), the noun is however preceded by the Romanian accusative differential object marker.

- (1) a.    Și să     miști *kez-ecske*.  
           and SUBJ   move hand-DIM  
           'And move the little hand.' (Toma 3;10)
- b.    Vreau *gesztenyé-t*.  
           want chestnut-ACC  
           'I want chestnuts.' (Petru 2;2)
- c.    uite -l                    aici pe *ruca*  
           look CL.ACC.M.3SGM here PE duck  
           'Here is the duck.' (Toma 3;10)

Hungarian nouns very often occur as complements of various Romanian prepositions: 78 contexts (18%, 19% and 11% respectively in the utterances produced by the three children). Note (2e) where the complement of the preposition is a (Hungarian) possessive.

- (2) a.    mie-mi place *ăla* când a căzut **în** *hó*.  
           me me likes that when has fallen in snow  
           'I like the one where he falls into the snow.' (Toma 3;9)
- b.    Merge camionul **pe** *sivatag*.  
           drives truck-DEF on desert  
           'The truck is driving on the desert.' (Matei 2;6)
- c.    mama **din** *málé* să nu~mi tai *katona*.  
           mother from cornbread SUBJ not me cut pieces  
           'mother don't cut up the cornbread for me' (Toma 3;7)
- d.    în parc **la** *gomba*.  
           in park at mushrooms  
           'in the park where the mushrooms are' (Toma 2;3)

- e. **cu** *Ioana autója*.  
with Ioana car-POSS  
'in Ioana's car' (Toma 2;4)
- f. un turn de ăsta **de** *tejpor*  
a tower of this of formula  
'a tower of formula (cans)' (Toma 2;4)

The switched Hungarian noun is the subject of a Romanian verb in 68 contexts (11%, 17% and 12% respectively). Note that the noun in (3b) is preceded by the Hungarian definite article, therefore it is a full Hungarian DP that is merged as subject to the verb. As for the noun in (3c), it bears a possessive suffix, although, were it part of a full DP projection merged in the subject position, it would also need to be preceded by a definite article. Note also the modified noun in (3d).

- (3) a. Merge *bálnacápa* prin apă.  
goes whaleshark through water  
'The wheelshark is swimming.' (Matei 6;0)
- b. *A kígyó* nu e.  
the snake not is  
'The snake is not.' (Toma 2;9)
- c. Unde este *Matei-é*?  
where is Matei-POSS  
'Where is Matei's?' (Petru 2;2)
- d. unde-i *nagy vonat*?  
where is big train  
'Where is the big train?' (Petru 2;1)

A distinct category consists of those Hungarian nouns where the functional projection selecting them is Romanian: a total of 40 (6%, 7% and 13% in the utterances of the three children respectively). In 15 cases we find the masculine indefinite article – but there is also one feminine indefinite article (4b).

- (4) a. mai e un *hordó*.  
more is INDEF.M barrel  
'There is another barrel.' (Petru 2;4)
- b. Uite sap o *gödrö-t* foarte lungă.  
look dig INDEF.F hole-ACC very long  
Intended: 'Look, I'm digging a very long ditch.' (Toma 3;6)

Demonstratives accompanying the noun are adjectives in Romanian. They can appear prenominally (5a) and postnominally (5b). When they occur in postnominal position, the definite noun (with a clitic definite determiner) may raise past the demonstrative to D<sup>0</sup> (N-to-D raising), the demonstrative being merged in a specifier position immediately below (Cornilescu 2003). Of course, the switched Hungarian noun in (5b) does not bear the clitic article.

- (5) a. celălalt *orsó*  
other spool (Petru 2;1)
- b. nu mai merge *ágyú* ăsta mama.  
not more works cannon this mother  
'this cannon is not working anymore' (Toma 2;6)

Other contexts include Romanian quantifiers or degree words. Some of the contexts, where the noun occurs in the context of a quantifier, have a plural referent, but the switched noun is singular. Indeed, Hungarian nouns must appear in the singular if plurality is overtly marked anywhere else in the sentence, namely on a numeral or a quantifier. It is interesting to note that the children respect this idiosyncrasy with switched nouns accompanied by Romanian quantifiers. Note also that the noun in (6b), *katona* ('soldier', but in child-directed speech it refers to 'pieces of cut-up food'), is interpreted as if it were a mass noun. The Romanian quantifier, *mult/multă* 'much M/F', is suitable for uncountable nouns; countable nouns require the plural quantifier *mulți/multe* 'many M/F'. Confusingly perhaps, the quantifiers for countable/uncountable nouns are homonymous in Hungarian (*sok* 'many/much' *több* 'more').

- (6) a. sunt două *dupla*  
are two double  
'there are two twin plums' (Matei 5;9)
- b. să -mi dai mai mult *katona* mâine dimineață  
SUBJ me give-2SG more much soldier tomorrow morning  
'give me more sandwich bites tomorrow morning' (Toma 3;7)
- c. uite ce *golyó* am desenat  
look what marble have drawn  
'look what a marble I have drawn.' (Matei 3;0)
- d. puțin de *lila*  
some purple (Matei 3;0)

There are two adjectives with Romanian degree morphemes:

- (7) asta mai *érett*  
this more ripe  
'the riper one' (Matei 5;9)

But Hungarian determiners combined with Romanian nouns are only two in number. This contradicts the prediction put forth in Moro (2001, who claims that in the case of Spanish-English bilinguals it is little likely for a Spanish noun to appear in the company of an English determiner, since the uninterpretable gender features of the Spanish noun cannot be deleted, making the derivation crash. The preference for the combination Spanish D – English N was also recorded in Liceras et al. (2008), although the reverse combination (English D – Spanish N) is also attested, to a small extent (5%), in the corpora they studied. It appears that the Romanian-Hungarian bilinguals mirror this

asymmetry: 15 instances of Romanian D – Hungarian N vs. 2 contexts with a Hungarian D and a Romanian N.

- (8) a. *Nem mert nem szereti a bilă.*  
 no because not likes the ball  
 ‘No, because the ball does not like it.’ (Toma 2;3)
- b. *A prăjitură cu mere*  
 the pie with apples  
 ‘the apple pie’ (Toma 2;4)

In 37 contexts (Matei: 9%, Toma: 5% and Petru: 13% of the total of mixed utterances belonging to each child), an overt Romanian copula occurs with a Hungarian predicative. The predicative is mostly nominal (9a), but 10 predicative adjectives are also switched (9b).

- (9) a. *Ai zis că ăsta'i șökőár.*  
 have said that this is tsunami  
 ‘You said this was a tsunami.’ (Matei 5;7)
- b. *Și al meu e ezüstös.*  
 and mine is silvery  
 ‘Mine is silvery too.’ (Matei 4;8)

In the utterances produced by the two younger brothers, 11 Romanian DPs (definite DPs - 10b, demonstratives, quantifiers and focused personal pronouns - 10a) are inserted as subjects of Hungarian verbs (excluding copulas). Note Toma’s first two-word utterance recorded, where the Romanian noun is the subject of the Hungarian particle.

- (10) a. *eu kavar*  
 I stir  
 ‘I’ll stir.’ (Toma 3;4)
- b. *avionu(l) nincs*  
 plane-DEF not-is  
 ‘There is no plane’ (Toma 2;1)
- c. *ouă be*  
 eggs into  
 Intended: ‘(put) the egg into (the train)’ (Toma 1;10)

In Hungarian, the third person present tense copula is null when the predicate is of the categorizing, qualifying or identifying sort. It becomes overt when it is needed as host to carry various other morphemes, such as tense, subjunctive mood, or agreement (É. Kiss 2004). In the present tense, third person, the copula is never overt, since both the present tense and the third person agreement morphemes are also null in Hungarian. Therefore sentences with a copula verb in the present tense, third person singular and plural do not have an overt verb and consist of a subject and a predicate or merely a

predicate. In 10 constructions there is a Hungarian predicative (adjectival or nominal) and a Romanian subject, with no overt copula.

- (11) a. *Ăsta róka.*  
 this fox  
 ‘This is the fox.’ (Petru 2;1)
- b. *da’ [tavanu(l) nostru<sub>Su</sub>] [más-valaki-nek a ház -a<sub>Pred</sub>]*  
 but ceiling-DEF our else-someone-DAT the house-POSS.3SG  
 ‘But our ceiling is someone else’s house.’ (Toma 3;6)

In addition, there are two utterances, produced by the two younger, with a Hungarian subject, a null copula and a Romanian predicative.

- (12) a. *az pește*  
 that fish  
 ‘That’s a fish.’ (Toma 2;1)
- b. *ez lemnu(l)*  
 this wood-DEF  
 Intended: ‘This is a ring<sup>1</sup>.’ (Petru 2;1)

8 Romanian DPs appear as direct objects to Hungarian transitive verbs in 8 contexts. The sentences are not as straightforward however as were their counterparts above, where a Hungarian DP was introduced as direct object to a Romanian verb. The Hungarian verb (inflected or stem) is often the complement of (part of) a Romanian IP. In 7 instances (5 produced by Toma and 2 by Petru), the direct object is differentially marked (13a). Also interesting is (13b), the Romanian demonstrative has a PP adjunct with a Romanian P, but a Hungarian noun merged as complement of this P; the word order here is a result of the DP being contrastively focused; in Hungarian the presence of the [+focus] feature requires the verb to move to Focus and the focused constituent to SpecFocus.

- (13) a. *vreau să -l scoți pe ruca.*  
 want SUBJ CL.ACC.3SG.M remove-2SG PE duck  
 ‘I want you to take out the duck.’ (Petru 2;4)
- b. *[[aia [cu [egérkék<sub>NP</sub>] PP] DP] akarom<sub>FocP</sub>]*  
 that with mouse-DIM-PL want  
 ‘I want the one with the little mice.’ (Petru 2;3)

#### 4.1.2 Switched adjectives

There are 8 switched Hungarian attributive adjectives and one PP noun modifier; they occur both prenominally and postnominally – importantly, in Hungarian it is the

<sup>1</sup> Compare to the Romanian *inelul* ‘ring’.



adjective that precedes the noun, while in Romanian it is the other way around. There are exceptions to the Romanian head-modifier rule: prenominal adjectives can be used with a certain stylistic effect and there is a group of adjectives that have different meaning according to their position. 11 Romanian adjectives modify switched Hungarian nouns; they are all postnominal.

- (14) a. da(r) și *finom* pară.  
 but also tasty pear  
 ‘but tasty pears too.’ (Toma 3;6)
- b. și olló *roșu*.  
 and scissors red  
 ‘And red scissors, too.’ (Petru 2;3)

What is striking about the Romanian switched adjectives is that some of them appear inflected for feminine gender agreement, although Hungarian does not have the grammatical gender feature activated. Tomescu (2017) argues that not only do these same bilinguals commit a not inconsiderable number of gender errors in Romanian, but these gender errors mostly appear to be random. There is no preference for the Romanian default masculine gender, but feminine forms are also used unnecessarily. This would also explain the occurrence of feminine adjectives in the absence of a noun with any gender feature in the mixed utterances.

Similar utterances have been attested for other language combinations, where the switched noun triggered unnecessary agreement in the other language – the question being whether the child might not in fact use the gender of the equivalent of the switched noun. As also argued by Cantone and Müller (2008), it would in fact be surprising – and inexplicably uneconomical – if the child sought out the gender of a noun that he or she is not in fact using and were to translate back and forth between the languages, transferring gender features. Not to mention the obvious case of different gender synonyms: which one could the child have chosen in order to transfer its gender feature onto the adjective?

In fact, in 14 of the cases, the gender of the adjective does not match the gender of the most likely Romanian equivalent, compared to 9 cases where there is indeed a handy equivalent of the same gender. See examples (15) below, compared to the Romanian equivalent nouns: *morcov* ‘carrot’ M, *foc* ‘fire’ M (SG), *rață* ‘duck’ F. Note (15a) where the gender of the adjective does not even match the gender of the indefinite article. Although I tried to argue against phonological transparency as being a helpful clue in the acquisition of gender (Tomescu 2017), the possibility should not be discarded that the phonological shape of the switched Hungarian noun might have constituted a clue for the child who then chose a suitable adjective to match the masculine or feminine-sounding noun, as was the case apparently in an experiment carried out in Cantone (2007). However, of the 12 erroneous adjectives, 10 would in fact clash with the noun if phonological transparency had been a guiding factor. See below examples (15a,b), where the nouns ending in a consonant may sound masculine, but the modifying adjectives are feminine, and, conversely, the noun ending in the vowel *-a* in (15c) sounds feminine in Romanian, while its modifier is masculine. To sum up, there does not seem to be any

reason why the child should have gone to the trouble of selecting the feminine form of the adjective. It rather seems in fact as if he had done it randomly.

- (15) a. Sunt un *murok tăiată*.  
am INDEF.M carrot sliced-F  
'I am a sliced carrot.' (Petru 2;2)
- b. E *galbenă tüz*.  
is yellow-F fire  
'The fire is yellow.' (Toma 3;9)
- c. sunt *ruca uriaș*.  
am duck.F huge.M  
'I am the huge duck.' (Petru 2;4)

Some switched Hungarian nouns are doubled by Romanian clitics. Here as well the gender feature appears to have been chosen at random. Admittedly, the semantic gender might have contributed to the retrieval of the feminine in (16b). Nevertheless, Tomescu (2017) argues that semantic gender is mainly ignored (especially in Toma's case): 37% of all clitics with a person referent had the wrong gender.

- (16) a. uite -l pe *ruca* în apă  
look CL.ACC.3SG.M PE duck in water  
'Here's the duck in the water.' (Toma 3;10)
- b. Haide s- o lășăm pe *lány*.  
let's SUBJ CL.ACC.3SG.F leave PE girl  
'Let's forget about the girl.' (Toma 2;4)

#### 4.1.3 Switched VPs

In 16 contexts (10 are produced by the eldest, 5 by the middle child and 1 by the youngest), the Hungarian verb is selected by a Romanian complementizer/subjunctive mood marker. The verbs are correctly inflected in all cases and some have arguments of their own. (17a) is a direct object clause, belonging to a Romanian main clause, with a Romanian complementizer and only containing a Hungarian verb, complete with particle and the definite agreement marker licensing a referentially recoverable null object. (17b) is a *wh*-question, with a Romanian *wh*-word and, again, a verb with a null object whose existence is signalled through the definite agreement marker. (17c) is a conditional clause, which also happens to include a Romanian adverbial. (17d) is a purpose clause, where the verb, interestingly, precedes the particle, as it should were there a Hungarian complementizer (*hogy*); the verb also bears the subjunctive affix, required in such a subordinate.

- (17) a. nu-mi place dacă *le-húz-od* că înseamnă că...  
not me likes if off-pull-DEF.2SG because means that  
'I don't like it if you pull it off because it means that....' (Matei 4;8)

- b. de ce *fúrnak*?  
why drill-3PL  
'Why are they drilling?' (Matei 2;6)
- c. Dacă *le-esik* undeva *el-török és jön a bácsi*.  
if down-falls somewhere P-breaks and comes the man  
Intended: 'If it falls, it will break and the neighbour will come.'  
(Toma 2;6)
- d. Aici *îl* pun *să ved-d fel*  
here CL.ACC.3SG.M put SUBJ take-SUBJ-DEF-2SG up  
'I'm putting it here for you to pick up.' (Matei 3;0)

In 11 contexts (produced by the two eldest) the Romanian subjunctive mood marker *să* selects a Hungarian stem. The Hungarian verb stem is in fact homophonous with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular present form, since the present tense is not overtly marked and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular has Ø affix, hence the stem can appear in isolation, in contrast with Romanian, where the derivation would crash at PF without some affix on the verb. The *phi*-features, normally overt on the verb, can be pragmatically inferred from the context or from the antecedent.

- (18) a. Stai *să színez alma*.<sup>2</sup>  
wait SUBJ colour apple  
'Let me colour the apple.' (Matei 6;0)
- b. Nu pot *să olvas* cu xxx.  
not can SUBJ read with xxx  
'I can't read with... ' (Matei 6;0)

It is usual for Hungarian verbs to be preceded by particles or nominal verbal modifiers. Some of the stems are correctly preceded by such elements.

- (19) a. pun *kalapács* aici ca *să nu mai zaj-t csap*  
put hammer here that SUBJ not more noise-ACC make  
'I'll put the hammer here so I won't make any more noise.' (Toma 2;9)
- b. *Să te dai* la o parte ca *să be-fordul*  
SUBJ CL.REFL give at a side that SUBJ P-turn  
'Make way so I can turn.' (Matei 3;0)

In 7 utterances, the Hungarian stem was selected by the auxiliary of the Romanian periphrastic past tense form (the *perfect compus*); the *phi*-features are present on the auxiliary, which would normally be followed by a Romanian participle.

- (20) a. *Și acolo l-am tép* asta.  
and there CL.ACC.3SG.M have-1SG tear this  
Intended: 'I have torn it there too.' (Toma 2;3)

<sup>2</sup> Note that the accusative noun lacks its overt marker.

- b. Nu, în ăla alb care l- am ki-pukkaszt  
 no in that white which CL.ACC.3SG.M have-1SG out-pop  
 Intended: ‘No, in the white (balloon) which I popped.’ (Matei 6;0)

The IP selecting the Hungarian verb includes a clitic in five cases; the clitic may be the only overt functional element preceding the VP (21a), but other functional elements may be present, such as the *perfect compus* auxiliary above (20) or the mood marker in (21b) below. The Romanian clitic must in any case find a slot in the projected Romanian left periphery to attach to (e.g. FP, as argued in Avram and Coene 2009, following Uriagereka 1995).

- (21) a. Îl öl cu sabia trenul ăla.  
 CL.ACC 3SG.M kill with sword-DEF train-DEF that  
 Intended: ‘I’m killing that train with my sword.’ (Petru 2;3)
- b. Să o tēp?  
 SUBJ CL.ACC.3SG.F tear  
 ‘Shall I tear it?’ (Toma 2;3)

Some Hungarian verbs are negated by the Romanian negative element *nu*. In some cases the verb appears under the form of a stem, such as in (22a) below, where the phi-features are absent and the referent must be identified deictically. But three full Hungarian verbs are also negated by *nu*, such as (22b). Note also the Romanian *nu* possibly negating a null copula in (22c). There is only one Romanian verb with Hungarian negation (22d).

- (22) a. Ba nu fáz.  
 no not be-cold  
 Intended: ‘No, I am not cold.’ (Petru 2;3)
- b. Aici nu fáj.  
 here not hurt-3SG  
 ‘It does not hurt here’ (Petru 2;3)
- c. Asta nu merge.  
 this not angry  
 ‘This one is not angry.’ (Petru 2;1)
- d. Toma nem face prostii.  
 Toma not makes mischief  
 ‘Toma is not being naughty.’ (Toma 2;0)

Other Hungarian functional elements with Romanian verbs are not to be found, such as modal auxiliaries or perhaps particles; Hungarian being an agglutinative language, most functional morphemes are of course suffixes.

#### 4.1.4 Switched adjuncts

Another type of combination is represented by an adverbial from one language adjoined to a projection from another, such as the Hungarian (negated) frequency adverbial in (23a), or the Romanian manner adverb in (23b), the Hungarian time clause in (23c) and the Romanian conditional clause in (23d), or the PPs in (23e) and (23f). The Romanian PP actually selects a Hungarian complement: modifier-noun.

- (23) a. De ce *nem mindig?*  
why not always (Matei 2;6)
- b. *Mondta hogy hóember, monda așa.*  
say-PAST-DEF-3SG that snowman say-PAST-DEF-3SG thus  
'He said snowman, he said it like this...' (Matei 4;8)
- c. *Mikor kész lesz mănânc.*  
when ready become-3SG eat-1SG  
'When it's ready I'll eat.' (Toma 2;3)
- d. *Nem forró az aragáz dacă pui ceva fierbinte.*  
not hot the stove if put something hot  
'The stove isn't hot if you put something hot.' (?) (Toma 2;9)
- e. *vreau să fac pipi a șobă-ba.*  
want SUBJ make pee the room-in  
'I want to go pee in the (hotel)room.' (Toma 2;4)
- f. *Segít Matei cu háromszínű laska*  
help-3SG Matei with three-coloured pasta  
'Matei will help with the pasta in three colours.' (Matei 3;0)

#### 4.1.5 Coordinated or juxtaposed mixed constituents

22 utterances contain constituents from both languages that are not in a relation of subordination. Sometimes two constituents from either language are coordinated/juxtaposed, but it may also be the case that it is merely the coordinating conjunction which is switched (24a).

- (24) a. *játszóhely și csúzda*  
playground and slide (Toma 3;10)
- b. *A zis și focă mama, hallottad?*  
has said also seal mother hear-PAST-DEF-2SG  
'He also said seal, mother, did you hear?' (Matei 4;8)
- c. *ide oda oda acolo bravo.*  
here there there there bravo (Matei 4;8)
- d. *...a gombóc și te mănânc.*  
the dumpling and CL.ACC.2SG eat-1SG  
'(you're the) the dumpling and I'm going to eat you up.' (Matei 6;3)
- e. *De igen mă doare.*  
yes me hurts  
'It does hurt.' (Petru 2;3)

There is also an additional group of 15 utterances where the merger between the languages was less fluent than above, either because the c-selection procedure appears to have encountered a glitch, and/or the meaning of the resulting utterance is not always straightforward. Note (25b), where the preposition appears to select an inflected verb – certainly, the pragmatic intention of the child is clear, therefore we might assume that the Hungarian verb was quoted at some metalinguistic level, hence acceptable. The stems in (25b) follows a preposition, and might be considered a truncated verbal noun.

- (25) a. *a lány fără korcsolyázik*  
 the girl without skate-3SG  
 Intended: ‘the girl, never mind the skating’ (Matei 5;8)
- b. *da’ unde mergem după vasal?*  
 but where go-1PL after iron(stem)  
 Intended: ‘But where are we going after the ironing?’ (Toma 3;9)

#### 4.2 Double functional elements and portmanteau sentences

It can be observed from the data that there are many instances where morphological markers are doubled in switched utterances, no doubt because the child is led by a desire for hypercorrectness; after all it has been argued that bilinguals resort to language mechanisms that are peculiar to L2 learning, such as analogy, overgeneralization (Sorace 2009, Müller 2009, Luk et al. 2011, etc.).

The bilingual child will insert an affixed Hungarian word into a Romanian functional projection which already contains overt material under the form of free morphemes (the auxiliary of the *perfect compus*, the subjunctive mood marker, the comparative degree, etc.). Some – more innocuous - examples are discussed above, but other examples are pleonastic in the sense that the functional category appears twice, once in each language.

Here are some examples: in (26a) the possession is marked twice: the Hungarian suffix *-ja* and the Romanian D *lui*. The Romanian preposition *la* – which is a dialectal version of the dative and is part of the adult input and therefore the children’s speech as well – also seems to match the other half of the possessive construction with the Hungarian possessed noun in (26b). Note that in Hungarian the possessor would indeed be marked with a dative suffix in a similar construction.

- (26) a. *Hol van a másik pár-ja lui ziua lui*  
 where is the other pair-POSS.3SG POSS.3SG.M day-DEF POSS.3SG.M  
 întuneric?  
 darkness  
 Intended: ‘Where is the other card belonging to the day/night pair?’  
 (Toma 3;0)
- b. *La nici una nu e șenesvagon-ja aicea*  
 LA neither one not is tender- POSS.3SG here  
 ‘None of their tenders are here.’ (Matei 5;1)

The degree morpheme is double below: the Romanian *mai* and the Hungarian *-ebb*.

- (27) Eu sunt cel mai *ügyes-ebb* gyerek din lume  
 I am SUPERL COMP clever-COMP child from world  
 'I am the cleverest child in the world' (Matei 3;0)

PPs are good candidates for such iteration (see also Tomescu 2013), since Romanian has pre- and Hungarian *postpositions*. In example (28c) the noun is inflected with a pointless Dative case marker.

- (28) a. cu *kiskanál-lal*.  
 with teaspoon-with  
 Intended: 'with the teaspoon.' (Toma 2;1)
- b. Am pus-o pe *háztető-re*.  
 have put CL.ACC.3SG.F on roof- on  
 Intended: 'I have put it on the roof.' (Toma 2;6)
- c. cu *tatá-nak*.  
 with father-DAT  
 Intended: 'with father' (Toma 1;11)

IP elements are also doubled. In (29a) the Hungarian infinitive verb follows a Romanian subjunctive marker. The verb in (29b) has both a perfect compus auxiliary and the Hungarian past tense marker. The subjunctive is marked twice in (29c): once with the Romanian mood marker and by the Hungarian subjunctive affix.

- (29) a. Hai să nu mai *vasal-ni*.  
 let's not more iron-INF  
 Intended: 'Let's not iron anymore.' (Matei 3;0)
- b. Ca aia care ai *főz-t-ed* când am dormit  
 like that which have boil-PAST-DEF-2SG when have slept  
 Intended: 'Like the one you baked when I slept.' (Toma 2;10)
- c. Aici îl pun să *ved-d* *fel*  
 here CL.ACC 3SG.M put SUBJ take-SUBJ-DEF-2SG up  
 'I'm putting it here for you to pick up.' (Matei 3;0)

The reflexive clitics below are superfluous in the company of a Hungarian intransitive verb. In (30a) the Hungarian verb is also preceded by an aspectual particle, not only by the middle marker<sup>3</sup> *se*, which would indeed appear with similar Romanian intransitives. Neither does the Hungarian intransitive verb in (30b) need the Romanian clitic.

- (30) a. nu că uneori se *be-ragad* așa tare  
 no because sometimes SE P-sticks so hard...  
 Intended: 'No, because sometimes they stick so ...' (Matei 4;8)

<sup>3</sup> Thus defined in Kemmer (1993). See also Cornilescu (1998).

- b. m- am \**botlot*<sup>4</sup> în tricicletă  
 REFL.1SG have-1SG trip in tricycle  
 Intended: ‘I tripped over the tricycle.’ (Toma 2;10).

One portmanteau sentence actually contains two verbs: the Romanian existential *be* requires a noun subject (*sete* ‘thirst’), while the child chose to insert instead the (otherwise complete and self-sufficient) Hungarian sentence.

- (31) mi- e *szomjas vagyok*.  
 CL. DAT.1SG is thirsty am  
 Intended: ‘I am thirsty.’ (Toma 3;1)

Note the superfluous possessive in the portmanteau sentence below. The first half of the sentence, with a Romanian transitive verb, would require an accusative direct object. However, the child used the possessive, which would have appeared as subject to existential *be* (*van*) in the Hungarian equivalent of the sentence.

- (32) *ăsta are nev-e*  
 this has name-POSS  
 ‘This one has got a name.’ (Petru 2;4)

There are also two portmanteau sentences where it is the noun which is doubled, (b) appears to be somewhat worse than (a):

- (33) a. în camera *hálószoba*.  
 in room-DEF bedroom  
 Intended: ‘in the bedroom’ (Petru 2;3)  
 b. *édes-túró-t* fără brânză  
 sweet-cheese-ACC without cheese  
 ‘soft cheese without cheese’ (?) (Toma 2;4)

Functional categories may on occasion appear doubled in all-Romanian or all-Hungarian utterances as well. Petru’s corpus contains doubly marked possession in Hungarian utterances (less than a handful), while Toma’s corpus contains one double Hungarian accusative<sup>5</sup>. Double Romanian accusative clitics (a preverbal and a feminine post-verbal) are also encountered in his corpus<sup>6</sup>. Similarly, let us consider (b), where the Romanian clitic precedes a Hungarian verb with a definite agreement marker – the

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the correct *bele-botlot-t-am* (into-it-trip-PAST-1 SG).

<sup>5</sup> Similar errors have been recorded for L1 Hungarian (Weber 2011).

<sup>6</sup> The doubling of Accusative clitics was also one of the error types made by Romanian-Hungarian bilinguals in an elicitation production study (Tomescu and Avram 2016); the authors’ suggestion was that such constructions can be considered ‘peripheral structures’ (Uriagereka 2007 in Tomescu and Avram 2016), that is with no consequences for core syntax, involving learning mechanisms which are not I-language specific, mechanisms that are favoured by the bilingual context. Moreover, the structure is not wild – it is licensed by UG since it is attested in older stages of Romanian.



function of this latter, while not very clear in modern-day Hungarian (Bárány 2012), does seem to involve the licensing of null referential objects (É.Kiss 2004) which would also make the presence of either the clitic or the agreement marker somewhat redundant and would suggest the inclusion of this utterance with the rest of the portmanteau sentences.

- (35) a. \*I- am dărmăt-o.  
 CL.ACC.3SG.M have topple CL.ACC.3SG.F  
 Intended: 'I have toppled it over.' (Toma 2;4)
- b. Vreau să le hord-ja- 0 doar pe astea.  
 want SUBJ CL.ACC.2PL.F wear-DEF-3SG only PE these.F  
 'I want him to wear only these ones.' (Toma 2;10)

### 4.3 Quantitative summary

Looking at the data merely from a quantitative perspective, mixed utterances contain a bigger proportion of Romanian words. Moreover, in mixed utterances, the switched Hungarian words are to a greater extent lexical categories. Romanian sentences with nothing but a Hungarian noun represent 62% of all mixed utterances. A further 2% can be added if we consider sentences where the Hungarian noun is suffixed. 6% of all mixed utterances contain nothing but a Hungarian verbal stem, and 5% an inflected Hungarian verb. 8% of utterances contain various Romanian constituents plus one or two switched Hungarian adjective. Overall, Romanian sentences with one single switched Hungarian word (which may indeed include affixed nouns or verbs) represent 84% of all mixed utterances. Hungarian sentences with only one switched Romanian word however only represent less than 3% of the data. The remaining percentage includes sentences where the two languages balance out, quantitatively speaking.

## 5. Conclusion

The quantitative summary in section 4.3 allows to conclude that, for the most part, the bilingual children prefer to insert Hungarian lexical items (occasionally with morpho-syntactic affixes) into a higher Romanian functional projection. Consequently, the children appear to have little difficulty in retrieving a Hungarian lexical item but find it easier nevertheless to project the functional tree in Romanian. This seems to conform to the Ivy Hypothesis (Bernardini and Schlyter 2004): lexical items as well as lower syntactic structure from the weaker language are inserted into higher syntactic structure from the stronger language, in the same way in which creepers use the wall as support.

On the other hand, this does not explain why the children should resort to switching at all: they could much more easily have chosen to speak Romanian in the first place and avoid the complications of accessing two languages at once. Actually, one suggestion could be that in terms of vocabulary, they find Hungarian richer or more appropriate in the discourse contexts. Food items, elements from stories, even clothing items or toys might never or seldom have been named in their presence in Romanian, hence it might be the case that they simply do not know the Romanian word for it. Which

would make Romanian the stronger language syntactically, but Hungarian the richer lexically, at least in certain circumstances. We come to the absurd conclusion that both languages are inadequate.

This paper does not argue that switching is necessarily and directly motivated by reduced performance (or, indeed, poverty of vocabulary). It is rather proposed that the Romanian-Hungarian bilingual children switch not because they must, but because they can. The ease with which bilinguals switch between the two languages is a sign of the metalinguistic awareness which comes from the early necessity to distinguish between the languages (see also Tomescu and Avram 2017). Bilinguals are good at comparing and making analogies (see also Müller 2009, Sorace 2009, Luk et al. 2011, Bialystok 2011, Barac and Bialystok 2012). Neither of the two languages is ever completely blocked out, which would make switching handy and intentional, even playful, and not a flawed attempt to salvage a tottering tree (Grosjean 2001, Cantone 2007, Sorace 2011). Bilinguals have a desire to show off their ability to speak and alternate the two languages. The corpora contain sequences of utterances where the children alternate Romanian and Hungarian equivalents of the same word/phrase, for no obvious reason other than they enjoy playing with the language (see also Tomescu 2013, 2016). They are aware that they speak languages rather than a language, and more or less consciously, more or less jocularly, partly in a desire to be better understood, alternate and combine the two.

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