Towards a grammar of other-language hybrid quotations[1]

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Abstract

This paper introduces 'other-language hybrid quotation' (*OLHQ*) and speculates that it is a rule-governed linguistic phenomenon. It looks to syntactic accounts of code-switching (*CS*) for elucidation of the 'grammar behind' the phenomenon. One such account, Poplack's Equivalence Constraint, is tested against a corpus of 257 examples. It emerges that most of these comply with the constraint, though not all. Consequences are drawn concerning the relationship between OLHQ and CS, and suggestions are made for further research.

1. Introduction

This paper is an attempt to outline a strategy for the study of a written discourse phenomenon that, to my knowledge, has received next to no attention from the linguistics community, a phenomenon I shall term 'other-language hybrid quotation' — *OLHQ* for short. In particular I wish to investigate the grammar which I hypothesise underlies OLHQ. This is by no means an innocent assumption, as it commits me to the view that the occurrence of OLHQ is regulated, at least in part, by writers' linguistic competence. It may be that I am wrong and that the constraints affecting OLHQ are entirely a matter of performance — in which case, some linguists would say, it falls outside the scope of linguistics proper. I believe, however, that OLHQ displays striking similarities with a phenomenon which hardly anyone would deny rests on linguistic competence, namely intrasentential code-switching (*CS*), and that these similarities make the present endeavour worthwhile.

This paper is also part of a larger research project, whose point of departure is the hypothesis that hybrid quotations, as in (1), are not a genuine variety of

quotation, as assumed in most of the literature (e.g. Cappelen & Lepore 1997; Recanati 2001; De Brabanter 2010).

(1)   Doyle **"always knew that Henry was going to go to America"**, as any archetypal Irishman should. (*The Independent*, *Arts*, 17/09/2004)

The rationale behind this hypothesis is that, in essence, quotations are iconic communicative acts (Clark & Gerrig 1990; Recanati 2001; De Brabanter 2017). What the literature calls a hybrid quotation is a string of words that simultaneously underpins an iconic act and is a part of an ordinary linguistic ('symbolic') act performed by uttering the sentence that hosts the quotation. Hence, that string cannot *be* a quotation: it is more than the quotation it hosts. Hereinafter, *hybrid* will designate the string that is both used and quoted; *hybrid quotation* is reserved for the quotational component of the hybrid, on the understanding that the quotation itself *is* not hybrid: instead, it *generates* the hybridity.

It follows from an account that treats the quotation in (1) as an add-on to a well-formed and self-sufficient structure that the presence or absence of the quotation cannot affect the grammaticality status of the host sentence. Yet, it appears that there are at least three types of challenges to the above prediction: hybrids (i) that contain elements that should not normally occur in indirect discourse (2), (ii) that contain expressions indexed to a deictic centre distinct from the speaker of the host sentence (3), (iii) that occur in a language different from that of the host sentence (4):

(2)   She cried that **oh no** it wasn't she **— the horror! —** who had put the gun in his hand. (constructed example)
(3)   Trump insisted there was **"zero chance I'll quit"**, telling The Wall Street Journal: "I never, ever, give up." (*The Times*, 09/10/2016)
(4)   Perhaps this is what the General meant when he talked about **"la nature des choses"**. (*TLS*, 08/01/1970)

I shall make the hypothesis that the three challenges can be responded to separately. In (2), one should probably treat the intrusions as parentheticals, with no impact on the syntax of the host sentence. The challenge illustrated in (3) is not clearly a grammatical one. It may instead be a semantic and pragmatic

challenge (but see Maier 2014). The challenge illustrated in (4) will be the sole focus of the present paper. I explore the possibility that the grammar of intrasentential code-switching offers a sound basis for a response.[2] Before I do that, however, I sketch the distinction between hybrid and 'closed' quotations, and OLHQ and intrasentential code-switching (Section 2). I proceed to a brief outline of syntactic accounts of code-switching (Section 3), followed by a description of the corpus (Section 4). Some results of the corpus study are then analysed (Section 5). The last section is devoted to some provisional conclusions.

2.   (Other-language) hybrid quotations contrasted with other phenomena

2.1. *Hybrid vs. 'closed' quotations*

What is the difference between direct speech reports and hybrid quotations? When governed by a reporting frame, the former are 'closed' quotations, the latter 'open' quotations (Recanati 2001). Closed quotations, as in (5), are 'recruited' as NPs with metalinguistic or metadiscursive reference; open quotations, notably hybrid ones as in (6), are not referential expressions.

   (5)   Nicola said, **"Blue with white dots"**.
   (6)   Nicola said the dress was **"blue with white dots"**.

The quotation in (6) has only the most basic function of quotations: focusing the addressee's attention on some property of the quoted string (Clark & Gerrig: 1990). This quotational dimension can be removed with no damage to grammaticality. Not so with the closed quotation in (5), whose quotational nature is essential to grammaticality: no acceptable reading of (5) is possible in which the string in boldface is not understood as a quotation. Another distinctive feature of closed quotations is that their internal structure is segregated from that of the host sentence — which explains why one can quote any string in any language. In hybrid quotations, by contrast, the form of the quoted material is entirely constrained by the syntactic environment of the host sentence (see Table 1).

	closed Q	hybrid Q
refers to	mostly sth linguistic (speech act, AdjP)	does not refer
removing quotation?	not OK	OK
internal syntax	not part of host structure	part and parcel of host structure
material between quote marks	'anything goes'	category strictly constrained

Table 1: Main features of closed and hybrid quotation

2.2. *CS vs. OLHQ*

Space limitations prevent me from doing more than provide the table below, which lists the main differences from a sociolinguistic and semantic/pragmatic point of view.

	CS sentences	sentences with OLHQ
Sociolinguistically	usually spoken & spontaneous	written & carefully crafted
	widespread norm of communication in certain multilingual communities	very specialised function
Semantically/ pragmatically	CS strings are 'used ordinarily'	hybrid strings are 'used and mentioned'
	switch not underlain by metarepresentational intention	switch triggered by metarepresentational intention

Table 2: Main differences between CS and OLHQ

3.   The grammar of code-switching

Among the many competing theories of the grammar of CS, I distinguish three main approaches:
- accounts positing constraints on surface structure
- the 'Matrix-Language Framework'
- accounts consonant with Chomsky's 'Minimalist Program'

The first approach is regarded by many (though not all) as no longer worth pursuing. The last two are the main contenders nowadays. In what follows I sketch the main features of these approaches, point out some challenges they pose for the study of OLHQ, and explain my choice of an 'old-fashioned' constraint-based account for the present study.

3.1. *Constraints on surface structure*

There have been numerous attempts at formulating constraints accounting for the empirical facts of CS. Here, I choose to focus on what is perhaps the most famous, Poplack's view that CS is subject to two constraints, one on internal word structure (the 'Free Morpheme Constraint'), the other on word order (the 'Equivalence Constraint'). The former is of little interest for present purposes because the careful engineering of OLHQ practically precludes switches *within* a word. In what follows, I concentrate on the Equivalence Constraint, which Poplack (1980: 586) characterised as follows:

> Code-switches will tend to occur at points in discourse where juxtaposition of L_1 and L_2 elements does not violate a syntactic rule of either language, i.e. at points around which the surface structures of the two languages map onto each other. (Poplack 1980: 586)

In other words, switchers will steer clear of 'conflict sites', i.e. positions in a structure where the grammatical requirements of the two languages differ (see e.g. Poplack & Meechan 1998: 132; Vanden Wyngaerd 2016). This is just the sort of expectation one would form about such a carefully monitored process as OLHQ: after all, they are quotations produced by expert writers for one of the most prestigious reviews in the English language (see Section 4), i.e. writers who would be wary of putting their foot wrong. This is a good enough reason for testing the Equivalence Constraint against the OLHQ data. Another is that it seems easy to test: (i) replace the L_1 constituent before the switch by its L_2 counterpart, and check if the outcome is acceptable; (ii) replace the L_2 constituent after the switch by its L_1 counterpart (ditto). Applied to example (4), this yields (4') and (4''), both of which are grammatical:

> (4') il parlait de **"la nature des choses"**
> (4'') he talked about **"the nature of things"**

We will see in Section (5) that the test nevertheless raises some issues, as it is not entirely clear whether it just requires constituents as a whole, or also their internal structure (e.g. word order), to match.

3.2. *The Matrix-Language Framework (*MLF*)*

The 'Matrix-Language Framework' (*MLF*, e.g. Myers-Scotton & Jake 2009) states that there is an asymmetry in CS, with one language acting as 'matrix language' (*ML*) and the other as 'embedded language' (*EL*). Roughly, the ML imposes constituent order and is the sole provider of so-called 'outsider late system morphemes', i.e. grammatical morphemes whose form depends on some external element (2009: 345) — typical examples are agreement morphemes.

The MLF seems particularly well-suited to account for the present data, all of which originate from articles that are unquestionably *English* texts. It is therefore tempting to assume that in those articles English functions as ML, and French as EL. But testing the MLF against the OLHQ data proves difficult, for two reasons. First, identifying outsider late system morphemes is not a straightforward affair. Second, the MLF makes allowances for one type of exception, so-called *EL islands*, i.e. well-formed constituents in the EL showing internal structural relations (2009: 344). At first sight, other-language hybrid quotations are quite similar to islands, making it likely that any apparent violation of an MLF prediction could be put down to its occurring within an island. It is therefore unclear whether the MLF makes *any* useful predictions for the grammar of OLHQ. Naturally, this would deserve more thorough consideration and a finer-grained analysis, but that is more than I can take on in this paper.

3.3. *Minimalist accounts*

The central claim here is that there is no 'third grammar', i.e. there are no constraints other than those imposed by the languages involved in the bilingual utterances (e.g. MacSwan 2009). On this view, it is the lexicon that encodes the features that determine grammatical differences at the surface level. Without a complete elucidation of the lexicons of English and French, it is impossible to test the predictions of, say, MacSwan (2009) against the OLHQ data. One would need to know for every switch site whether it involves 'weak' or 'strong' features, whether it triggers 'head movement' or 'XP movement'. It is impossible to gather all the relevant information (when it exists) for a study that addresses a great variety of sites. Considering the complexity of the theoretical apparatus, this kind of study would probably be the stuff of several papers.

3.4. *In an ideal world*

Given the carefully monitored nature of OLHQ, it would have been sensible to start by testing the most restrictive theory of CS, presumably one that has been shown to be too restrictive. Had the theory stood the test, we could have safely concluded that the grammatical constraints behind OLHQ licensed a narrower set of switch sites than those behind CS. Unfortunately, the various theories cannot be neatly ordered along a scale of restrictiveness. To give just one example, the Equivalence Constraint has been criticised as both too restrictive (e.g. Bentahila & Davies 1983: 318-320) and not restrictive enough (e.g. Belazi et al. 1994: 225-227). In the end, my focus on Poplack's account was dictated by (i) its direct relevance to the data under scrutiny, (ii) the (apparent) ease with which it can be tested.

4.   The corpus

I started by identifying the genre most likely to contain a large enough number of relevant examples: the written review of books published in languages other than English. The richest source of such reviews I found to be the *Times Literary Supplement* (*TLS*). In the end, the bulk of the material consists of hybrid quotations in French, simply because these vastly outnumber examples in other languages, the likes of which I found only in Italian, German and Spanish, in decreasing order of frequency (see Table 3). This presumably reflects the *TLS* editors' assumption that a much larger segment of their readership will be familiar with French, and perhaps also show a greater interest in French publications.

The data were collected by scanning through all the articles published in the *TLS* in 1970, 1980, and 1990. I also did partial surveys of 1985, 1995, 2000, and 2010. I would identify every article that reviewed a book published in French, and look for markers of quotation — italics and, especially, quotation marks — writing down useful occurrences. However, I would not systematically record every example that contained a quotation in French: those that were of a type I already had many instances of were regularly ignored.

This unsystematic sampling method and my wilful neglect of some relevant data mean that this is not a methodical corpus study. But nor was it ever intended to be. Since my goal is to uncover the putative grammatical rules underlying

other-language hybrid quotations, leaving out examples that provided no new grammatical insight was definitely warranted.

The present paper examines 257 occurrences, all of them enclosed in quotation marks. I made sure that each example was 'echoic', i.e. that the highlighted words were attributable to some author. This was to avoid including instances, mainly single words or compounds, which could perhaps be seen as borrowings. Borrowings are a matter of controversy in studies on CS (e.g. Poplack & Meechan 1998; Stammers & Deuchar 2012), so that it seemed cautious to discard any example that might be regarded as a loanword. The *TLS*'s policy in this regard is not fully consistent. Though the vast majority of echoic quotations are signalled by quotation marks, some quote-marked strings are clearly not echoic (7), and some occurrences in italics may be echoic (8). In the corpus are included only unquestionably echoic examples.

Also discarded are echoic examples whose status as hybrids is controversial. Typically, these are complements of a <V+*as* > construction in which the V is a linguistic or mental verb like *define, characterise*, *describe*, as in (9). In those examples it is not certain that the quotation is not a closed quotation.

(7)   For de Gaulle, we will have the **"petite histoire"** as well as the serious study.
(8)   Céline is prurient and fatherly by turns, alternately questioning and offhandedly counselling his ***amies***.
(9)   One result of this is a marked hostility to Frieda, whom he refers to as **"ce jeune animal bruyant et sauvage".**

echoic hybrid Q in French	echoic hybrid Q in other languages	echoic occurrences of quotations after <V+*as*>
257	20	34

Table 3: Numbers of examples in three categories

5.   Analysis

The vast majority of the examples comply with the Equivalence Constraint (henceforth *EC*). Table 4 gives figures for the ten most frequent types of switches, with numbers for possible violations of EC, to be examined below. Had

data collection been systematic, the proportion of putative violations would be lower still. The top five types of switches are illustrated after the table. All the descriptive terminology is borrowed from Huddleston & Pullum (2002). The hash sign indicates the onset or the end of a switch. Strings between two hash signs are necessarily in French.

description	total	violation of EC?	description	total	violation of EC?
Det # Nominal # (residue)	43	0	# NP as supplement #	15	2
V # NP #	43	0	(Det) Modifier # Nominal #	10	3
Prep # NP #	40	5	# PP #	10	0
that # content clause #	23	1	copula # AdjP #	8	0
NP # VP #	19	2	X # main clause #	8	0
			Total	**219**	**13**

Table 4: Most frequent types of switches + putative violations

<u>Det # Nominal # (residue)</u>

(10) Confronted by an infantilizing mass media, increasing racism and a **"remontée massive et écoeurante de religiosité"**, it is too easy […].

(11) His encounter […] helped him to overcome the **"esprit superficiel"** of his youth. [*of his youth* is the 'residue' of the Nominal]

<u>V # NP #</u>

(12) […] those who would revive **"la liberté des anciens"** […].

<u>Prep # NP #</u>

(13) […] the journals and letters are marked, as he put it, by **"l'habitude de parler pour la galerie"** […].

that # Content Clause #

 (14) Although they insist that **"Les chiffres ont leur éloquence"**, […], they are also careful […].

NP # VP #

 (15) Hugo says that the tale of the Bishop of Digne **"ne touche en aucune manière au fond même de ce que nous avons à raconter"**, […].

It can be shown that these examples obey the Equivalence Constraint by applying the method sketched in Section 3.1:

 (10') Eng.: Confronted by a "massive and sickening upsurge of religiosity"
     Fr.: Confronté à une "remontée massive et écoeurante de religiosité"
 (11') Eng.: to overcome the "shallowness" of his youth.
     Fr.: à dépasser l'"esprit superficiel" de sa jeunesse.
 (12') Eng.: those who would revive "the freedom of the ancients"
     Fr.: ceux qui voudraient raviver "la liberté des anciens"
 (13') Eng.: marked by "the habit of playing to the gallery"
     Fr.: marqués par "l'habitude de parler pour la galerie"
 (14') Eng.: they insist that "Figures have their (own) eloquence"
     Fr.: ils insistent que "Les chiffres ont leur éloquence"
 (15') Eng.: the tale of the Bishop of Digne "has no bearing whatsoever on the very core of the tale we have to tell"
     Fr.: l'histoire de l'Évêque de Digne "ne touche en aucune manière au fond même de ce que nous avons à raconter"

Though the bulk of the data is like the examples above, some occurrences appear to violate EC. Below, I provide examples for each type of breach, together with the attendant substitution test.

Prep # NP #

> (16) […] Guattari's work with Gilles Deleuze, including an essay on **"drogues machiniques"** […].
> Eng.: including an essay on "mechanical drugs"
> Fr.: *y compris un essai sur "drogues machiniques"

> (17) […] a socialism directed at **"épanouissement individuel et collectif"** […].
> Eng.: a socialism directed at "individual and collective self-fulfilment"
> Fr.: *un socialisme consacré à "épanouissement individuel et collectif"

The conflict site here is the boundary between NP and Nominal when the headnoun is plural or noncount. The French counterparts are ill-formed, as a definite article is missing in both cases. The English ones are well-formed, if EC is not interpreted too strictly. If we took the equivalence requirement to also concern the internal word order of the constituents on either side of the switch, then the English counterparts to (16) and (17) would also signal violations of EC, since they would feature constituents like *drugs mechanical* and *self-fulfilment individual and collective*. I will not pursue this option, because it seems to clash with Poplack's intent. Yet, the fact that the question may be asked means that testing for EC violations is not entirely straightforward.

that # Content Clause #

> (18) […] a process which was to lead a "Colonel d'Alger" to mutter in the late 1950s that **"un article de Mauriac, ça vaut dix bataillons de fellagha"**.
> Eng.: ??to mutter in the late 1950s that "an article by Mauriac, it is worth ten battalions of fellagha"
> Fr.: à marmonner à la fin des années 50 que "un article de Mauriac, ça vaut dix bataillons de fellagha"

The English counterpart is of doubtful acceptability: left-dislocation is much less prevalent in English than in French. This seems particularly true when the dislocation construction is a subordinate clause.

NP # VP #

(19) […] equated with Lawrence's **"avoir redouté de ne pouvoir s'attacher une femme, de manquer de l'ascendant qui subjugue les âmes"**.
Eng.: *equated with Lawrence's "have feared not to be able to secure a woman's commitment"
Fr.: *assimilé à (de?) Lawrence "avoir redouté de ne pouvoir s'attacher une femme"

(20) Johnson shrewdly argues that what the text dramatizes **"ce n'est pas tant la réussite d'un genre d'écriture que l'échec d'un genre de lecture."**
Eng.: ??what the text dramatizes **"it is not so much the success of a genre of writing"**
Fr.: ce que le texte met en scène **"ce n'est pas tant la réussite d'un genre d'écriture"**

Example (19) has no acceptable counterpart in either English or French. It is a clear-cut violation of EC. The English counterpart of (20) is barely acceptable if one takes EC to require that a substitute for the switch instantiate the same category, in this case a complete finite clause with a subject pronoun (rather than the subjectless VP required in English).

NP as supplement

(21) Even George Sand, **"prophète puissant"**, was "tourmentée et malade".
Eng.: ?? George Sand, **"powerful prophet"**, was "tormented and ill"
Fr.: George Sand, **"prophète puissant"**, était "tourmentée et malade"

(22) The novel is dedicated to Marcel Proust, **"grand peintre de l'amour"**, […].
Eng.: Marcel Proust, **"great portrayer of love"**
Fr.: Marcel Proust, **"grand peintre de l'amour"**

My initial hunch regarding (21) is that an NP-supplement headed by a singular

count noun required a determiner in English. This feels less essential in (22), for reasons that are unclear to me. Naturally, if (22) turns out to involve no violation of EC, that weakens the case for a violation in (21).

<u>(Det) Modifier # Nominal #</u>

(23) He hoped that he would not go further than the promised **"côtelette pas trop saignante"**, […].
Eng.: the promised **"not too rare/not underdone pork chop"**
Fr.: ??la promise **"côtelette pas trop saignante"**

(24) Anne, sixteen-year-old **"lycéenne modèle courant"** and an engagingly bright, modest heroine […].
Eng.: Anne, sixteen-year-old **"run-of-the-mill high school student"**
Fr.: *Anne, de seize ans **"lycéenne modèle courant"**

The difficulty with both examples stems from the divergent word order within the English and the French NP. English adjectival modifiers normally occur in prehead position. By contrast, their French counterparts typically occur in posthead position. Examples like (23) and (24) mix the two structures.

6.   Discussion and tentative provisional conclusions

Widespread compliance with EC has been found. At the same time there emerged a range of clear-cut violations, and some contentious cases. Note, additionally, that there were some violations in less frequent switches, which cannot be shown here due to space limitations. The very finding that OLHQ does not exclude switches at conflict sites is in itself interesting enough.

The picture that is revealed is not very different from many studies of spontaneous CS. Thus, Poplack (2001: 2064; underlining mine) states that "[t]he equivalence constraint has been verified <u>as a general tendency</u>" in several previous studies on different pairs of languages — she lists eight. Hence, the present study does not clearly confirm that the higher degree of planning by the authors of the examples results in a greater avoidance of conflict sites than in at least some studies of spontaneous CS. At this stage, it cannot be safely

concluded that the grammar of OLHQ is a stricter version of that of CS. It actually remains possible

- that it is the same grammar,
- that it diverges from the grammar of CS in other ways than in its strictness,
- that it is not a grammar in the strict sense, because whatever regularities OLHQ exhibits are a matter of performance.

What should be done next? First, data collection should continue. Second, the (apparent) violations of EC should be subjected to further analysis, to see if some pattern emerges. Third, testing should, in spite of the misgivings expressed in Sections 3.2 and 3.3, be extended to the MLF and to Minimalist accounts. Note, as a sort of preview, that some examples in the corpus raise issues for at least some predictions taken on board by Minimalists like MacSwan, witness (25):

(25) […] this is said in the caption to have **"inspiré à Toulouse-Lautrec une affiche célèbre"**.

MacSwan accepts Belazi et al.'s (1994: 230) judgment that no switch is licensed between English auxiliary and Spanish complement (or vice-versa). Although I cannot presume that French and Spanish auxiliaries are alike — this would require extensive knowledge of the features that Minimalists associate with auxiliaries in the respective lexicons — examples like (25) are intriguing. However, as I stated in the introduction, a Minimalist might want to dismiss any challenge from OLHQ data as failing to tell us anything about competence. These issues are tricky, and any solution to them must await further research.

Notes
[1] I would like to thank Emma Vanden Wyngaerd and two anonymous referees for useful comments.
[2] Mosegaard Hansen (2000) proposes that direct speech, in which she includes hybrids, be treated as a grammaticalised form of code-switching. Despite some kinship with the account I outline, the differences are too substantial for me to be able to discuss within the limited space allotted. I thank an anonymous reviewer for the reference.

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