

ON THE GRAMMAR AND RHETORIC OF LANGUAGE MIXING  
IN *PIERS PLOWMAN*

*1. Introduction*

In excerpt (1) below, the Dreamer of Langland's *Piers Plowman* is expressing his dissatisfaction with friars; the passage is a typical example of what is often called "macaronic language" – a conventionalized style where two languages (here Middle English and Latin, or a few times French) are mixed in a happy combination for fairly well-documented rhetorical purposes. In line (4) the Latin prepositional phrase *In fame et frigore* conjoins the Middle English NP *flappes of scourges*; lines (5) and (12–13) exemplify full clauses, with Biblical associations, in Latin. That Langland's virtuoso combining of Latin and English is a result of careful planning is shown by his occasional, extremely pointed metalinguistic comments, exemplified in this excerpt as well:

- (1) 1       Thanne seide I to myself so Pacience it herde,  
 2       'It is noȝt foure dayes þat þis freke, bifore þe deen of Poules,  
 3       Preched of penaunces þat Poul þe Apostle suffrede –  
 4       *In fame et frigore* and flappes of scourges:  
 5       *Ter cesus sum et a ludeis quinquies quadragenas ...*  
 6       Ac o word þei ouerhuppen at ech a tyme þat þei preche  
 7       That Poul in his Pistle to al þe peple tolde:  
 8       *Periculum est in falsis fratribus!*<sup>1</sup>  
 9       (Holi Writ bit men be war – I wol noȝt write it here  
 10       In Englissh, on auenture it sholde be reherced to ofte,  
 11       And greue þerwiþ þat goode men ben – ac gramariens shul rede:  
 12       *Vnusquisque a fratre se custodiat, quia, vt dicitur, periculum*  
 13       *est in falsis fratribus.*  
 14       Ac I wiste neuere freke þat as a frere yede bifore men on  
 15       Englissh  
 16       Taken it for hir teme, and telle it wiþouten glosyng! (B.XIII.64–75)<sup>1</sup>

During the past two decades, research on bilingual language mixing – the mixing of two or more linguistic varieties within the same conversational episode, often referred to as codeswitching – has proliferated. Most of this research has been based on data coming from naturally occurring, unplanned casual conversations; relatively few studies have been carried out on codeswitching within literary texts (but see Timm 1978 on French/Russian switching in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*; also, Howard-Hill 1998, Kreml 1998, Myers-Scotton 1998, Wilt 1998.) The relative scarcity of codeswitching studies on literary texts is most likely a result of the lack of plentiful materials to look at; codeswitching is regarded as an informal in-group phenomenon (Gumperz 1982), and most literary texts of today tend to be written in formal standard

<sup>1</sup> The references are to the lines of the B-version of the poem as edited by Schmidt 1995.

language where switching is not involved. However, in recent years both linguists and literary stylisticians have 'found' Middle and Early Modern English as a rich source for language contact studies. Wright (1994) has studied the Early Modern English business documents for their mixing patterns, Taavitsainen and Pahta (1998) have looked at medical texts, and Diller (1997) investigates codeswitching in Middle English drama. Voigts (1996) offers an insightful account of bilingualism in Late-Medieval England; Iglesias-Rábade (1996) focuses on the mixing of French, English, and Latin in the language of preachers.

The 13<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries were times of active, functional English-French bilingualism among many people in England, and the knowledge of Latin among the educated was a given. This is reflected in the writings of those centuries. In fact, mixing English and Latin was extremely common in the language of sermons; Wenzel (1994) has conducted an excellent and thorough study on what he, according to the convention, refers to as macaronic sermons.

Considerable research and documentation has been carried out on the Middle English text that is the focus of our paper: Langland's *Piers Plowman* (see, e.g., DiMarco 1982). Sullivan's study (1932) indicates that Langland uses lengthy Latin quotations not only for poetic and allegoric purposes but also for their ethical value, and that his shorter insertions of Latin elements – names of prayers, phrases from liturgical texts, and epithets referring to Christ – are often used for alliterative purposes. Alford (1992) is an excellent reference key to the quotations in the poem; Nolan (1985) investigates the functions of embedded Latin in *Piers Plowman*, and Machan (1994) takes a sociolinguistic approach to the mixing of Latin and English, seeing this mixing as a reflection of the changes in the earlier diglossic situation in Medieval England.

The term "macaronic" – often used of Middle English texts that exhibit the mixture of English and French, English and Latin (see, e.g., Alford 1992: 3), or all three of these languages – carries some slightly derogatory overtones or, at least, implies a degree of 'messiness.' In this paper, we intend to show two things. First, we will show how Langland's mixing of Latin and English (and Latin and French in a few instances) is highly structured and, for the most part, adheres to the expectations delineated in the current theories of bilingual language mixing. Secondly, we will argue that while Langland operates within a framework of tendencies that constrain all mixed languages – probabilistic constraints that may derive from the universal properties of language – despite these constraints, he uses the mixing of Latin into Middle English as a register marker: a rich source of indexing, for the reading audience, his learned background and his knowledge of religious literature.

Our questions derive from two different directions of interest. On the one hand, we are using the poem as a source of data to investigate what is possible in literary language mixing. This knowledge can contribute to our understanding of the syntax and the textual structure of language mixing and may potentially allow the formation of more comprehensive generalizations about the whole phenomenon, generalizations

that are based not only on conversational contemporary data. On the other hand, we are also looking at Langland's language mixing in order to better understand the text itself. Recent studies, for example Machan (1994), have shown that Langland's use of true language mixing, as opposed to his purely conventional citation of Latin Scriptural texts in separate clause units, is mostly "ornamental" (1994: 382). Machan has chosen to interpret this in the light of changes in bilingualism as an authority structure. Essentially, he argues that Langland's language switching shows "the moribund state of Latin" in late fourteenth-century England (1994: 382). According to Machan (1994: 385), Langland "challeng[es] and invert[s] the domains of Latin and English," wherein Latin was viewed as the authoritative language and English as the non-authoritative vernacular. However, we see the use of Latin in *Piers Plowman* somewhat differently. Since Latin would remain in place as the provider of ultimate religious and philosophical authority in England for a long time after Langland's death, we infer that his sporadic switches into brief Latin phrases are frequently motivated by his wish to show that he is part of the audience for which he is writing. That is, these linguistic moves represent Langland's way of asserting personal and social identity as an aspiring authoritative, learned voice addressing a bilingual and devout audience.

## 2. Data

In answering our first question about the syntactic structure of language-mixing in the poem, our data are limited to those mixes that take place within the sentence (intrasentential mixes). We have used the B-text of *Piers Plowman* as edited by Schmidt (1995) and extracted from the poem all sentence-internal mixed elements: Latin and French elements within English sentences as well as English elements within Latin. Our data include altogether 221 intrasentential switches. Well-established borrowings (those that would be known to lay people as well as the learned), such as the *Paternoster* and *Ave Maria*, have been left out. Since we are interested in the syntax of Langland's switching, we have excluded all the clearly intersentential quotations or citations from our data; these are most typically separate lines completely in Latin. Also all orthographically defined sentences (structures which Schmidt marks with final punctuation) that are fully in Latin have been omitted. In addition, those (typically Biblical) citations that are both lexically and orthographically defined as citations have been left out. In other words, if a Latin clause is introduced explicitly as a citation by, for instance, "he seide, quod he" and if the citation is introduced by Schmidt with a colon, it has been left out, since in these cases it clearly is outside the syntactic frame of the sentence. Examples (2–3) illustrate what we have excluded from our data as intersentential switches:

- (2) And þei hir deuoir dide, as Dauid seiþ in þe Sauter:  
*Iudica me, Deus, et discerne causam meam.* (B.XI.284)
- (3) Grace to go to hem and ofgon hir liflode:  
*Inquirentes autem Dominum non minuentur omni bono.* (B.IX.107)

On the other hand, clausal switches and citations have been included as intrasentential switches if they are orthographically marked by Schmidt as a crucial part of the sentence. For instance, when a Latin nominal clause is the direct object of an English verb, as in example (4), or when the sentence-length Latin citation is the direct object of an English verb, as in lines (4–5) in example (5), we include them. The Latin in lines 1 and 2 (example 5) have also been included since they are clearly intrasentential – objects of prepositions:

- (4) For I make Piers þe Plowman my procuratour and my reue,  
And registrer to receyue *Redde quod debes.* (B.XIX.260–261)
- (5) 1 Thanne hente Hope an horn of *Deus tu conuersus viuificabis nos*  
2 And blew it wiþ *Beati quorum remisse sunt iniquitates,*  
3 That alle Seintes in heuene songen at ones  
4 '*Homines et iumenta saluabis, quemadmodum multiplicasti*  
5 *misericordiam tuam, Deus!*' (B.V.507–509)

Admittedly, there are bound to remain certain gray areas in this classification. While we have followed the above principle strictly in defining what is part of our data of intrasentential switches, we do agree with Alford (1992) that counting the exact number of Latin quotations in *Piers Plowman* is a thankless task because of the difficulty of defining what is a quotation, and what is an established borrowing into English from Latin (see Alford 1992: 1, n. 2; 3–9).

3. *What can Langland contribute to our knowledge of the syntax of language mixing?*  
Current codeswitching theories tend to focus on linguistic performance of bilinguals. While some (Myers-Scotton 1993, Halmari 1997) attempt to make inferences to bilingual competence and the universal properties of language, bilingual performance data may pose problems in being exactly what it is: performance data. Bilingual varieties arise rapidly in language contact situations, and there is variation in the language mixing patterns of individuals, as well as variation from one bilingual speech community to the next. While 'on-line' bilingual data reveal what is possible in actual speech production, they may sometimes include those same slips of tongue that are typical of all language varieties, monolingual varieties included, and these may distort our understanding of the underlying deep principles of the phenomenon.

Our purpose in this paper is to look at the language of a language mixer who was not producing his mixed variety 'on-line'; on the contrary, Langland spent much of his life revising and re-revising his poem, *Piers Plowman*. Since Langland was fluent in Latin, we trust that his mixing patterns reflect language that is a possible language, albeit the language of poetry, which sometimes may twist and turn the 'normal' syntax a bit. We trust that Langland operated well within the limits of linguistic naturalness; hence, by looking at his carefully constructed Middle English syntax and the Latin inserted therein, it is possible to gain some insight into what features in language mixing are the truly steady, permanent, and central ones.

According to Myers-Scotton's (1993; see also Myers-Scotton and Jake 1995) Matrix Language Frame Model, language switching tends to happen within the frame of a matrix language (Myers-Scotton 1993); in *Piers Plowman*, this matrix language for most intrasentential switching would be English, and into this English frame, embedded Latin elements are inserted, as *primus heremita* in example (6). Intrasentential insertions of English elements into Latin matrix sentences are not uncommon either, even though they are much less frequent; example (7) shows the English PP *to a preest*, an English modifier to the Latin *confessio*). Myers-Scotton's observation about the frame language certainly seems to describe a lot of the *Piers* data well:

- (6) Poul *primus heremita* hadde parroked hymselfe,  
That no man myzte hym se for mosse and for leues. (B.XV.286–287)
- (7) *Per confessionem to a preest peccata occiduntur* (B.XIV.91)

Nevertheless, we see Langland's mixing patterns as evidence that the distinction between the matrix and the embedded language *per se* is not a crucial distinction for explaining what is possible in language switching. Example (8), for instance, is a sentence where the subject NP *Qui loquitur turpiloquium* comes from Latin and the predicate VP *is Luciferes hyne* comes from English. Deciding which of these languages is the so-called matrix language is here quite problematic:

- (8) *Qui loquitur turpiloquium* is Luciferes hyne. (B.Pr.39)  
SUBJECT NP / PREDICATE VP

Additionally, we do not agree with the Matrix Language Frame Model in another of its premises, according to which inflectional morphology – unless it is in a so-called “Embedded Language Island” (see Myers-Scotton 1993) – needs to come from the matrix language, while the embedded language may provide only lexical elements (that is, content words). Example (9) shows that inflectional morphology may be attached to single-word switches, which Myers-Scotton does not regard as qualifying for the status of embedded-islandhood, since she claims that Embedded Language Islands consist of more than one lexeme (Myers-Scotton 1993: 138). In (9), the English-framed PP *wip turpiloquio* includes a Latin noun *turpiloquium*, in the ablative case *turpiloquio*.

- (9) *Wip turpiloqui + o*, a lay of sorwe, and Luciferis fipele. (B.XIII.457)  
ABL

Based on Langland's mixing patterns, we believe that what determines the likelihood of switching is the syntactic ‘involvement’ of the structures to be affected: elements that are not in syntactically governed positions are more likely to be switched than elements that are in syntactically governed positions. On the other hand, in those syntactic structures that are in governed positions – that are assigned

case by a case-assigner (e.g., by a transitive verb, by a preposition, or under subject-verb agreement) – the case should emerge in that language which is the language of the case-assigner (for technical details, see DiSciullo, Muysken, and Singh 1986, Halmari 1997). According to this line of argument, language mixing should be less frequent between the transitive verb and its object or between the preposition and its complement NP, since transitive verbs and prepositions are case-assigners; similarly, switching between the subject NP and the predicate VP should not be frequent, since there is an agreement relation between the subject and the inflection (INFL) of the verb, under which the INFL assigns the nominative case to the subject NP. This framework supports the notion of case-assignment relations as potentially hindering factors – or at least complicating factors – in mixed varieties, and it has received support from current conversational language-mixing data from various language pairs (see, e.g. Treffers-Daller 1995, Backus 1996, Halmari 1997), even though the issue remains controversial (e.g., Myers-Scotton and Bolonyai 1999).

The above examples (8–9) already seem to be counterexamples to this hypothesis since it assumes resistance to switching for elements in case-assignment (i.e., government) relations. We will return to discuss these examples below and will show that the **content** of the mixed element is an extremely important factor in explaining our so-called ‘problematic’ switches – that is switches in between the case-assigner and the element to which it assigns case. Langland’s use of Latin is highly purposeful; for him it is a register marker, which follows the medieval conventionalized pattern but is also his individual way of marking his identity as a learned man to his audience.

### 3.1. *The syntactic positions of the mixed elements in Piers Plowman*

According to Machan (1994: 359), Langland’s characters in *Piers Plowman* “can change languages at apparently any topical or syntactic point.” Even though current theories of bilingual codeswitching no longer rule out any switches as completely impossible, there is a consensus among the researchers that some probabilistic constraints do hold and lead to what are more likely switching patterns (see, e.g., Myers-Scotton 1993, Bhatt 1997, Halmari 1997). Our purpose is to show that, as much as Langland mixes English and Latin, very little of this switching from one language to another takes place in syntactically strategic positions; and when it does, it is mostly switching for Scriptural citations or titles, or it is licenced by the typological similarities between Middle English and Latin, which share several morphological and syntactic patterns.

Machan (1994: 368) accurately points out that “the syntactic locations of code switching are partially motivated by discursal ease” but the way Machan defines this discursal ease deviates somewhat from how we understand it. We agree with Machan when he writes that it is “because switches at sentence boundaries require no syntactic accommodation at all that they are the most common” (1994: 368). However, we do not entirely agree with him when he writes that “a switch for an isolated adverb [...] not only disrupts the linguistic uniformity of the node but may

well require a second switch – back to English for the remainder of the verb phrase” (1994: 368). What we have observed is that switches of certain syntactic elements are more likely and ‘easier’ – for instance, adverbs (or adverbial or adjunct switches, to be more general) are exactly the kinds of switches that are the ‘easy’ ones, because these elements are not necessarily syntactically governed by the verb. Other ‘easy’ switches include switching of those sentence elements that are also outside the government relations imposed by the governing verb; in addition to adverbial-type verb modifiers, these include adjectival modifiers, switches of such extracentential elements as vocatives, appositives, clausal or NP-level parentheticals or asides, switches after the copula verb (which is assumed to be a non-governing or non-case-assigning verb), switches involving conjoining conjunctions, and switches of tags (which are often in the form of conjunctive adverbs). On the other hand, switches of subject NPs (the so-called ‘sentence slot one’ switches) are not typical; neither are switches of such verbal complements as objects of transitive verbs (the so-called ‘sentence slot three’ switches).

This of course does not mean that Langland would not switch between the subject NP and the predicating VP; nor does it mean that he would not switch between the verb and its object NP, or between the preposition and its complement NP. On the contrary, as examples (8–9) have already indicated, this type of switching is quite common in *Piers Plowman*. However, when this type of switching from English to Latin occurs, Langland is evoking a certain register, which **requires** the importing of Biblical, citational elements into his mostly English-framed sentences.

Table (1) below shows the distribution of Langland’s insertional language switches according to the syntactic function of the switched element in our data of 221 switches:

*Table 1. Intrasentential switches according to the syntactic position of the mixed element (N=221). (Percentages have been rounded.)*

	%	N
Syntactically ‘non-involved’ switches (65%/N=143)		
Clausal or NP parentheticals or asides	15	(33)
Adverbial elements/adjuncts	14	(31)
Switches next to conjunctions or complementizers	14	(30)
Vocatives, appositives	7	(16)
Switches after a copula verb	6	(13)
Adjectival modifiers	5	(11)
Tags/Conjunctive adverbs	3	(6)
Elements as part of a list	1	(3)
Syntactically ‘involved’ switches (35%/N=78)		
Objects of preposition	16	(36)
Objects of transitive verb	11	(23)
Switches at subject NP-VP boundary	7	(16)
Switches of verbs	1	(3)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>(221)</b>

Table (1) divides the switches into two different categories according to their syntactic position. The first category (syntactically ‘non-involved’ switches) includes such elements that are outside the tight syntactic frame of the core sentence as defined via government relations. The second category (syntactically ‘involved’ switches) includes switches between the assumed case-assigner and its complement.

### 3.1.1. Syntactically ‘non-involved’ switches

Table (2) condenses the data in Table (1) to show that, indeed, switches of elements that are in ungoverned positions are altogether quite a bit more common than switches in positions that are in government relations with other-language elements: 65 percent of all the switches are switches of elements in syntactic positions that are not subject to government and/or case-assignment relations.

*Table 2. Switches outside government/case-assignment relations (‘non-problematic’ switches) vs. switches in governed positions (potentially ‘problematic’ switches).*

‘Non-problematic’ switches	65 %	(143)
Potentially ‘problematic’ switches	35 %	(78)
	<b>100 %</b>	<b>(221)</b>

As Table (1) shows, the 65 percent of all the intrasentential switches that fall outside the core syntactic frame of the verb or the preposition include switches of parentheticals or asides, adverbial elements or adjuncts, clausal switches next to coordinating conjunctions or after complementizers or NP switches involving coordinating conjunctions, switches of vocatives and appositives, switches after copulas, and switches of adjectival modifiers, tags, and elements that are part of a list.

#### 3.1.1.1. Clausal or NP parentheticals

The most common type of those switches that are not in government relations with other sentential elements is switching for parenthetical comments or asides. These constitute fifteen percent of all the switches, altogether thirty-three instances. Out of these thirty-three parenthetical switches, twenty are clausal (examples 10a-b), and thirteen are in the form of a noun phrase (examples 11a-d; The information about the Biblical references comes from Alford 1992):

- (10) a. And also I haue an houswif, hewen and children –  
*Vxorem duxi, et ideo non possum venire* –  
 That wollen bymolen it many tyme, maugree my chekes.  
 [Lk. 14:20] (B.XIV.3–4)
- b. But in hir holynesse helden hem stille  
 At Auynoun among Iewes – *Cum sancto sanctus eris...*  
 Or in Rome, as hir rule wole, þe relikes to kepe [Ps. 17:26] (B.XIX.425–427)



- (11) a. The lord of myght and of mayn and alle manere vertues –  
*Dominus virtutum*. [Nico. 21:3, Ps. 23:10] (B.XVIII.319)
- b. Ne borweþ of hise neighebores but þat he may wel paie:  
*Possessio sine calumpnia*. (B.XIV.294)
- c. A collateral confort, Cristes owene gifte:  
*Donum Dei*. (B.XIV.298)
- b. He is blessed by þe Book in body and in soule:  
*Labores manuum tuarum...* [Ps. 127:2] (B.VI/251)

All the inserted Latin clauses or phrases in (10–11) are parenthetical remarks or asides; none of them is syntactically relevant. However, they are extremely relevant for what Langland is attempting to achieve through their use: he is evoking a Scriptural or philosophical context. That Langland mixes Latin into English much more than vice versa clearly suggests that he is, indeed, using mixing as a shorthand to refer to ideas considered learned or sacred. The mixing does happen in the other direction as well, but it is of a quite different nature, as example (12) indicates. Of the thirty-three parenthetical mixes only two are inserted English elements within Latin, and both include the word *quod*:

- (12) ‘*Paupertas*,’ quod *Pacience*, ‘*est odibile bonum* –’ (B.XIV.276)

### 3.1.1.2. Adverbial elements/adjuncts

Of all the intrasentential switches in our data, the switching of adjuncts (traditionally referred to as adverbials) is the third largest category. Adjunct switches amount to thirty-one, or fourteen percent of all switches. That adjuncts are going to be among the most often switched elements is predictable: they are exactly those sentential constituents which are not in government relations with elements outside themselves and whose case is not assigned from beyond the adjunct phrase. Excerpts in (13) are examples:

- (13) a. And þere I sauþ sooply, *secundum scripturas*,  
Out of þe west coste, a wenche, as me þouzte,  
Cam walkynge in þe wey; to helleward she loked. (B.XVIII.112–114)
- b. *In sudore* and swynk þow shalt þi mete tilie (B.VI.232)
- c. And made of holy men his hoord *in Limbo Inferni* (B.XVI.84)
- d. Saue þo he leched Lazar, þat hadde yleye in graue  
*Quatriduanus* quelt – quyk dide hym walke. (B.XVI.113–114)
- e. ‘The bisshop shal be blamed bifore God, as I leue,  
That crouneþ swiche Goddes knyghtes þat konneþ nozt *sapienter*  
Synge, ne psalmes rede, ne seye a masse of þe daye. (B.XI.311–313)
- f. Wiþ half a laumpe lyne in Latyn, *Ex vi transicionis*,  
I bere þerinne aboute faste ybounde Dowel (B.XIII.152–153)

None of the adjuncts in (13) [*secundum scripturas* ‘according to the Scriptures’ (13a), *in sudore* ‘in the sweat’ (13b), *in Limbo Inferni* ‘in the border region of hell’ (13c), *quatruiduanus* ‘for the space of four days’ (13d), *sapienter* ‘wisely’ (13e), and *ex vi transicionis* ‘by the power of transition’ (13f)] is needed for syntactic reasons. They are detached from the syntactic frame of the sentence and can, thus, be easily switched. Machan has also reported Langland’s fondness “of switching entire adverbial phrases” and he argues that this type of switching is “syntactically uncomplicated” (1994: 371). The account that we have offered here – based on the adjuncts’ lacking external government relations – explains, and not merely describes, why switches of adjuncts are so common.<sup>2</sup>

That adjunct switching is, indeed, syntactically uncomplicated is shown by the fairly high frequency of switching into the less common direction: switching from Latin to English (14a), or insertion of English adjuncts into otherwise Latin frame sentences (14b–c). Also French adjuncts may be inserted, as in (14d):

- (14) a. “*Beatus est,*” seiþ Seint Bernard, “*qui scripturas legit*  
*Et verba vertit in opera fulliche to his power.*” (B.XV.60–61)
- b. ‘*Contra!*’ quod I as a clerc, and comsed to disputen,  
 And seide, ‘Sooply, *Sepcies in die cadit iustus.*  
 Seuene siþes, seiþ þe Book, synneþ þe rightfulle (B.VIII.20–22)
- c. quik – *laudabimus eum!* (B.XIV.103)
- d. And preide hem, *pur charite*, er þei passed ferþer (B.VIII.11)

### 3.1.1.3. Switches next to conjunctions or complementizers

Switching of coordinate clauses, complementizer clauses (often *that* clauses), and conjoined NPs is almost as common as switching of adjuncts. There are thirty intrasentential switches of this type, which means that they constitute fourteen percent of all intrasentential switches. Clausal switching after the Latin conjunction *et*, the corresponding English conjunction *and*, and the English *or*, *ac* and *for*, is common. Clausal switching takes place also next to the complementizer *that*. Examples follow:

- (15) a. Crist calleþ hem salt for Cristene soules,  
*Et si sal euanuerit, in quo salietur?* (B.XV.430)
- b. And plet[e] al wiþ pacience and *Parce michi, Domine*,  
 And couered hym vnder conseilte of Caton þe wise (B.XIX.297–298)

<sup>2</sup> While Machan suggests that switching of “entire adverbial phrases” is “syntactically uncomplicated” (1994: 371), he also writes that “a switch for an isolated adverb [...] not only disrupts the linguistic uniformity of the node but may well require a second switch – back to English for the remainder of the verb phrase” (1994: 368). We, of course, see switching of ungoverned adjuncts (whether consisting of several words or of just one) as equally uncomplicated.

- c. “*Reddite Cesari,*” quod God, “þat *Cesari* bifalleþ,  
*Et que sunt Dei Deo, or* ellis ye don ille.” (B.I.52–53)
- d. Ac as he made þat maistrie, *mestus cepit esse,*  
And wepte water with hise eizen (B.XVI.115–116)
- e. To sette sadnesse in songewarie – for *sompnia ne cures.* (B.VII.151)
- f. As clerkes in Corpus Christi feeste syngen and reden  
That *sola fides sufficit* to saue wiþ lewed peple (B.XV.387–388)

Conjoined phrasal-level categories, such as NPs, are also switched frequently. As (16c) indicates, this type of switching can involve French as well:

- (16) a. And bicam man of a mayde, and *metropolitanus* (B.XV.515)
- b. ‘Thanne is Dowel and Dobet’ quod I ‘*dominus and kny3thode?*’ (B.X.329)
- c. But if it be fressh flesh ouper fissh fryed ouper ybake –  
And þat *chaud or plus chaud,* for chillynge of his mawe. (B.VI.309–310)
- d. *In fame et frigore* and flappes of scourges (B.XIII.67)

The high frequency of these switches is again explicable because of case-assignment and government relations: conjunctions neither govern nor assign case to the elements adjacent to them.

#### 3.1.1.4. Vocatives, appositives

Vocatives are extrasentential elements, hence outside the syntactic relations imposed by elements within the sentence. Appositives are phrasal-level categories and seem to be easily switchable as well. (17a) is an example of a French vocative; (17b) of a Latin one. (18a–d) illustrate switched appositives:

- (17) a. Thanne Iacob iugged Iosephes sweuene:  
‘*Beau fitz,*’ quod his fader, ‘for defaute we shullen –  
I myself and my sones – seche þee for nede.’ (B.VII.162–164)
- b. So is þe Fader a ful God, formour and shappere:  
*Tu fabricator omnium* (B.XVII.168)
- (18) a. And þo was he cleped and called nozt oonly Crist but Iesu –  
A fauntekyn ful of wit, *filius Marie.* (B.XIX.117–118)
- b. ‘Poul *primus heremita* hadde parroked hymselue,  
That no man myzte hym se for mosse and for leues. (B.XV.286–287)
- c. *Anima* she hatte; [to hir haþ enuye]  
A proud prikere of Fraunce, *Princeps huius mundi* (B.IX.7–8)
- d. Konne þe firste clause of oure bileue, *Credo in Deum patrem omnipotentem* (B.XV.607)

Altogether, switches of vocatives and appositives account for sixteen examples and constitute seven percent of the data.

### 3.1.1.5. Switches after a copula verb

There were thirteen switches after a copula verb, in subject complement positions. These switches constitute six percent of the data, and they are possible because copula verbs are not case-assigning verbs. (19a–d) are examples of Latin insertions; (19e) of a French one:

- (19) a. Thei hadde þanne ben *infamis* þe firste day, þei kan so yuele  
hele counseil. (B.V.166)
- b. It is *licitum* for lewed men to segge þe soþe (B.XI.96)
- c. “I am *via et veritas*,” seiþ Crist, “I may auauunce alle.” (B.IX.161)
- d. Ac þow art lik a lady þat radde a lesson ones,  
Was *omnia probate*, and þat plesed hire herte – (B.III.338–339)
- e. He myzte neiþer steppe ne stande, ne stere foot ne handes,  
Ne helpe hymself sooply, for *semyvif* he semed,  
And as naked as a nedle, and noon help abouten. (B.XVII.55–57)

### 3.1.1.6. Adjectival modifiers

Adjectival modifiers can be switched, whether they are in the form of a PP (20a), adjectival relative clause (20b), NP (20c), or participial (20d). This would indicate that they fall outside the immediate government relations. There were eleven switched adjectival modifiers, which means that these constitute five percent of the data. (20c) is an interesting switch: the adjectival modifier is in the Latin genitive case<sup>3</sup>. (Note also the switch into an English adjunct *at ones* in (20b)):

- (20) a. *Per confessionem to a preest peccata occiduntur* – (B.XIV.91)
- b. A[c] wel worþe Piers þe Plowman, þat pursueþ God in doynge,  
*Qui pluit super iustos et iniustos at ones* (B.XIX.434–435)
- c. The legende *sanctorum* yow lereþ more largere þan I yow telle. (B.XI.160)
- d. Thanne cam *Pilatus* with mucche peple, *sedens pro tribunali*,  
To se how doghtiliche Deep sholde do, and deme hir boþeres  
rizte. (B.XVIII.36–37)

<sup>3</sup> This Latin genitive form *sanctorum*, surfacing within an English matrix sentence, is evidence against the Matrix Language Frame Model (Myers-Scotton 1993), which argues that inflectional morphology must come from the matrix language; simultaneously it stands as evidence that the genitive case is assigned inherently (i.e., it is not assigned under government).

### 3.1.1.7. Tags

Tags, or conjunctive adverbs, are clearly outside the government relations of the sentence and hence allow switching easily. The data include six instances of switched tags; that is, three percent of the switches were switches of tags. Out of these, four were switches of the Latin *ergo*, but also *contra* was used to introduce an otherwise English sentence:

- (21) *Ergo* is no name to þe name of Iesus (B.XIX.19)

### 3.1.1.8. Elements as part of a list

While phrasal switching within lists is not common – these switches constitute only one percent, or three instances, of all intrasentential switches – this type of switching is highly possible, and in (22a) Langland seems to use it for purposes of content translation:

- (22) a. For al is but oon God and ech is God hymselue:  
*Deus Pater, Deus Filius, Deus Spiritus Sanctus* –  
 God þe Fader, God þe Sone, God Holy Goost of boþe (B.X.240–242)
- b. Patriarkes and prophetes, *populus in tenebris*,  
 Songen Seint Iohanes song, ‘*Ecce Agnus Dei!*’ (B.XVIII.324–325)

## 3.1.2. Syntactically ‘involved’ switches

Thirty-five percent (N=78) of all the intrasentential switches took place in syntactic positions that were governed. These were objects of prepositions (governed by the prepositions), objects of transitive verbs (governed by the transitive verb), switches at the subject NP-VP boundary (where agreement relations between the INFL and the NP take care of the assignment of the nominative case to the NP), and switches of VPs. If we assume that the case of the governed position would need to be in the same language as the language of the case-assigner, these switches are syntactically problematic. However, we believe that the content of these switches in *Piers Plowman* is what has made them possible: most of them are frozen Scriptural citations, quotes, titles of songs, and liturgical elements. These type of switches are exactly the ones that Langland uses to evidence his knowledge of the Bible – most of the syntactically ‘problematic’ positions are nominal positions (objects of prepositions, subjects, and direct objects), and hence for referential purposes and to maintain the Latinate, learned style, Langland imports full Latin NPs.

### 3.1.2.1. Objects of preposition

Switches of objects of prepositions constitute actually the largest category of switched elements. Sixteen percent, or thirty-six instances of switches, were of this type. With a few exceptions, these were Scriptural quotations, titles of songs or hymns, or liturgical elements. Thus, they are clear formulaic expressions and hardly qualify as what current theories would call codeswitching proper. They are mostly

inserted to evoke a Scriptural context, which reinforces Langland's rhetorical style. (23a) is directly from the Apostles' Creed; (23b) is another Biblical citation, and (23c) is a rubric, constituting the last words of a mass:

- (23) a. And rendren it and recorden it wiþ *remissionem peccatorum, Carnis resurreccionem et vitam eternam. Amen.* (B.XV.611)
- b. In *Misere mei, Deus*, wher I mene trupe (B.V.276)
- c. Come I to *Ite, missa est* I holde me yserued. (B.V.413)

Some one-word switches provide interesting data in terms of their case-assignment. (24a) has the Latin nominative-accusative case; this should be problematic if we assume that the case of the governed object of preposition needs to be in the same language as what the language of the case-assigning preposition is. However, the close typological relationship between Middle English and Latin allows the hypothesis that the case of *fornicatores* may indeed be in English – after all both words in plural would end in the sibilant. (24b) is an instance of double morphology: the instrumental content of the phrase *wiþ turpiloquio* is signaled both by the English preposition and by the Latin ablative case. What has assigned the Latin ablative case? A possible answer is that it has been assigned internally. After all, in classical Latin, the preposition *cum* would not be needed, but *turpiloquio* could surface alone<sup>4</sup>.

- (24) a. And fecchen [oure] vitailles at *fornicatores* (B.II.181)
- b. Wiþ *turpiloquio*, a lay of sorwe, and Luciferis fiþele. (B.XIII.457)

Only a couple of the mixes in the position of the object of preposition were of non-Scriptural nature. (25) is an example; this is a formulaic expression as well, now in French:

- (25) And Diues in deyntees lyende and in *douce vie* (B.XIV.122)

### 3.1.2.2. Objects of transitive verb

Eleven percent of the switches (N=23) are switches of direct objects after transitive verbs. Almost all of these, again, are names of hymns (26a-b), other rubrics or beginning words of liturgies (26c), or formulaic Scriptural citations, none of which would qualify as codeswitching proper.

- (26) a. And how *Osanna* by orgene olde folk songen (B.XVIII.8)
- b. Aungeles out of heuene come knelynge and songe, *Gloria in excelsis Deo!* (B.XIX.74)
- c. Ac a porthors þat sholde be his plow, *Placebo* to sigge (B.XV.125)

<sup>4</sup> We are grateful to Joseph Wittig for offering his insight on this issue.

The non-Scriptural content in the direct object was also citational and formulaic (27a–b):

- (27) a. Forþi seiþ Seneca *Paupertas est absque sollicitudine semita*. (B.XIV.306)  
 b. For I make Piers þe Plowman my procuratour and my reue,  
 And register to receyue *Redde quod debes*. (B.XIX.260–261)

Switching into English for the direct object takes place twice. Both of these switches are shielded, i.e. there is an intervening element between the case-assigning Latin verb and the English direct object. For (28a), this element is an intervening vocative *man*; for (28b), this shielding element is the conjunction *nec*.

- (28) a. And seide, '*Noli mittere*, man, margery perles  
 Among hogges þat han hawes at wille. (B.X.9–10)  
 b. For hir eiþer is endited, and þat of "*Ignorancia*  
*Non excusat episcopos nec ydiotes preestes*." (B.XI/315–316)

(29) is an example where the direct object *transgressores* is in Latin. We can hypothesize either that this word qualifies as a Biblical citation (albeit a single word), or that because of the similarity of the English and Latin plural marking, it is unclear whether the plural inflection is in Latin or, indeed, in English:

- (29) And taken *transgressores* and tyen hem faste (B.I.96)

### 3.1.2.3. Switches at subject NP-VP boundary

There were sixteen switches at the subject NP-VP boundary; this constitutes seven percent of the data. All but three of the switched subjects are in Latin, which is an indication that they, again, are nominal switches for the purpose of, evoking a full Scriptural (30a–c) or other learned (30d) context:

- (30) a. That Poul prechep of hem I wol nat preue it here:  
*Qui loquitur turpiloquium* is Luciferes hyne. (B.Pr.38–39)  
 b. *Dominus pars hereditatis mee* is a murye verset (B.XII.188)  
 c. Crist to a commune womman seide in commune at a feste  
 That *Fides sua* sholde sauē hire and saluen hire of alle synnes.  
 (B.XI.216–217)  
 d. Caton kenneþ men þus, and þe Clerc of þe Stories:  
*Cui des, videto* is Catons techyng (B.VII.71–72)

Example (31) illustrates a switch between an English subject *þat* in the relative clause and the following Latin VP. We can hypothesize that this is possible since the Latin subject could be in null form; if it is, there is no discrepancy between the Latin inflection in *peccat* and the hypothesized, underlying, Latin null subject. In this case

it seems to be the predicate that is evoking the Scriptural context, not the subject, which after all is merely a relative pronoun:

- (31) For he prikeþ God as in þe pawme, þat *peccat in Spiritu[m] Sanct[um]*.  
(B.XVII.199)

#### 3.1.2.4. *Switches involving verbs*

Finally, insertions of Latin verbs within an English frame sentence constitute one of the smallest categories: only one percent of all switches. Also here, switches are clearly citational. (32) is directly from the Apostles' Creed. One indication of its formulaic nature is that it does not have the form that would be required by the English grammar, i.e., infinitive; it is in its original form, in third person singular preterite.

- (32) I drow me in þat derknesse to *descendit ad inferna* (B.XVIII.111)

#### 4. *On the rhetoric of mixing*

Langland's Latin insertions, regardless of their syntactic positions, seem to follow a rhetorical purpose; he uses this mixing in a manner typical of religious texts of the time. Most Latin is inserted for **topical reference** – to be the key to a theological argument that Langland wants to introduce and elaborate. Simultaneously, through this conventionalized switching pattern, Langland is enforcing, and re-enforcing, his own clerical and scholarly identity.

Within the context of recent American culture, we can, in fact, compare Langland's language mixing pattern with that deployed by older Fundamentalist preachers. Figures like D. L. Moody and R. G. Lee were accustomed to citing, in the midst of sermons in modern English, Scriptural proof texts from the King James Bible – what Langland would have called the *incipits* of Biblical texts. But they not only cited such authorities within discrete clausal boundaries; sometimes they incorporated King James English into the syntactic patterns of their contemporary discourse. Whether Langland's mixing of different languages, and whether the Fundamentalists' habit of citing proof texts in Early Modern English, can be referred to as codeswitching or not is arguable and will ultimately depend on how codeswitching is defined. If it is defined broadly as mixing two language varieties within the same discourse, regardless of what the purpose of this switching is, both types certainly qualify. However, if the definition excludes citing *incipits*, inserting Biblical quotes and citations, or phrases and titles from a foreign variety into the vernacular (Latin and French in Langland's case, Early Modern English in the case of modern-day Fundamentalists), then we cannot talk about codeswitching. Yet, whatever the phenomenon is called, it needs to be accounted for, both for the sake of better understanding bilingual grammars and ultimately language universals, and for the sake of better understanding Langland.

We argue that it is exactly Langland's purpose of switching into Latin that sometimes leads to deviations from what is expected based on current bilingual



conversational data of language mixing. Langland's massive use of Latin in *Piers Plowman* is intended to evoke the whole rich world of Scriptural knowledge for his audience, a group already well versed in this knowledge. If the passage in the C-version of the poem, where Will is justifying his non-clerical professional position to Reason and Conscience and expressing concern about being mistaken as a peasant, can, as we believe, be taken as biographical and thus as an indication of Langland's own worry about not being identified as part of the learned world, the more reason there is to employ plenty of Latin to establish his identity as a scholar.

For Langland, every Latin word, every Latin phrase, and every Latin clause provides a full referential artillery – a key to the world of Scripture and the philosophy provided there. Simultaneously, what better way of communicating his authority and his in-group membership in the world of *clergye* could there be than the use of Latin?

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