**Language in Cultural Context: Code-Switching & Language Crossing**

**Sub-topics of: Language & Identity, Bilingualism, Translation, Community**

**Code-Switching**

*Code Switching is the use of two languages simultaneously or inter-changeably.*

- It implies a good level of fluency in the two languages.

- It can be the ‘norm’ in some communities, or seem very odd in others.

It is used to:

- fill a gap

- establish an identity different from one that can exist in either language

**Language Crossing**

*The use of a language that isn’t generally thought to ‘belong’ to the speaker.*

- Involves a sense of movement across sharply-felt social or ethnic boundaries.

- People experiment with alternative identities.

- Raises questions of legitimacy/authenticity and identity construction through language.

Ex: Black youth language that can create an aura of toughness and street smarts.

Ex: Teenage white boy who liked hip hop, identified with the styles and the culture and adopted the language.

Mike (age 16): You ever hear of Frank Frazetta? Dis is some phat shit, yo. Yo, when the dude dies, this book will probably be worth like a thousand dollars. Yo tell me that shit is not phat!

– C. A. Cutler (1999). Yorkville Crossing: White teens, hip hop, and African American English. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *3*(4) 428-442.