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## Multiple codes, multiple impressions: An analysis of doctor–patient encounters in Nigeria<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** Existing studies on doctor–client interactions have largely focused on monolingual encounters and the interactional effects and functions of the languages used in the communication between doctors and their clients. They have neither, to a large extent, examined the several codes employed in single encounters and their pragmatic roles nor given attention to communication at doctor–client first meetings in a bilingual or multilingual setting. This paper catalogues the generic structure of the interactions at first meetings in Nigerian hospitals and examines the pragmatic features and functions of the codes used by doctors and clients at the different units of the generic structure. Seventy-five audio recordings of doctor–client interactions were randomly made in selected state-government owned and private hospitals in South-western Nigeria in 2002, 2007 and 2009. Analysis of transcripts was based on theoretical aspects of code alternation, Levinson’s notion of activity types and Sarangi’s concept of discourse types. Four discourse stages characterise doctor–client interactions at first meetings in Nigerian hospitals: Opening, Diagnostic Interaction, Announcement and Closing. Two code selection types run through the generic structure of the interactions: non-strategic and strategic. Non-strategic choices are necessitated by cultural, institutional and linguistic routines. Strategic choices are characterised by context-shaping and context determined acts. Codes are selected at the non-strategic level to express phatic communion, indicate deference and display personal styles. At the strategic level, they are employed to accommodate dispreferred code choices, relax tension, flaunt competence, assure, save face, joke, reformulate and warn.

**Keywords:** multiple codes, doctor–client interaction, activity types, discourse types, strategic choices, non-strategic choices

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# 1 Introduction

The significance of language use in medical practice has been reflected in the serious attention paid to it in the literature. A most recent and representative typification of studies on doctor–client interactions has been made by Heritage & Maynard (2006), who identify two directions in the research, namely, process analysis and microanalysis of discourse. The former, developed by Barbara Korsch and other scholars with her intellectual conviction, was built on Bales’ (1950) coding system ‘tagged Interaction Process Analysis’. Studies in this school focus on the role relationship in the encounter between the doctor and the client. The studies specifically concentrate on the satisfaction level of the client (see Korsch *et al.* 1968; Freemon *et al.* 1971; and Korsch & Negrete 1972). The process analysis engagement also benefits from the Roter Interaction Analysis System (RIAS) developed by Debra Roter and her colleagues. The coding system comprises 39 categories with 15 sub-divisions on socio-emotional behaviour and 24 on task-focused behaviour. With a scope beyond primary health care, it has shown how doctors and clients interact in the visits and how the patterns of interaction are tied up to the level of satisfaction of both doctors and clients (see Hall *et al.* 1994; Roter & Hall 1992).

The microanalytic approach originates in anthropological and sociological attempts to sidetrack the flaws of the process analytic approach (i.e. its non-‘address[ing] [of] issues of content, context and meaning in medical interaction ...’ by ‘deploy[ing] an essentially ethnographic and interpretive methodology [in] disclos[ing] the background orientations, individual experiences, sensibilities and objects that inhabit the medical visit” (Heritage & Maynard 2006: 4). Scholars in this tradition have recently investigated doctor–client relationships with respect to how practitioners suppress clients’ experience, a phenomenon that is, in accordance with Heritage & Maynard’s (2006) account, traceable to the social, economic and institutional power that is ascribed to the doctor (cf. Atkinson 1995). The present study identifies with the micro analytic tradition.

Scholars in the micro analytic school have largely focused on monolingual encounters and the interactional effects and functions of the languages (e.g. Maynard 1989, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c, 1992, 2003, 2004; Salazar 1998; Peräkylä 1995; Fisher & Groce 1990; Mishler 1997; Odeunmi 2005, 2006, 2008). While a number of the studies in this tradition have been committed to interpreter-mediated encounters in the hospital setting (see Davidson 1998, 2002; Lanza 2005; Collins & Slembrouck 2007), not much effort has been put on several (possible) codes in the interactions and the pragmatic roles of these codes. Another neglected area, with a possible exception of Sarangi & Roberts (1999), is the focus on doctor–client first meetings, which, of necessity, differ in dis-

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course structure and function from subsequent meetings. It is important to see how code selection in a bilingual setting contributes to meaning negotiation between the doctor and his/her client especially during first encounters.

In this paper, I look at the generic structure of doctor–client interactions at first meetings in Nigerian hospitals, and examine the pragmatic features and functions of the codes used by the parties as they appear at the different units of the structure.

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## 2 Methodology and design

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Seventy-five audio-recordings of doctor–client interactions were randomly made in selected state-government owned and private hospitals in South-western Nigeria in 2002, 2007 and 2009. The recorded interactions were a mixed bag of all meetings in the hospitals, first, second, multiple, and follow-up. Only ten of these, all of which were selected, were interactions between doctors and their clients at first meetings. All the interactions were considered in generating the generic catalogues and in classifying the strategies; illustrative examples for the strategies were taken from six of these interactions. Since all the ten first-meeting interactions were selected, the type of case or doctor played little or no role in the selection process. Informed consent was obtained from all the doctors, who also personally assisted in audio-recording the interactions because I could not be allowed into the consulting room for the privacy rights of the patients to be observed. As a native speaker of Yoruba and an English linguist, I translated the texts, but the translations were verified by an associate professor of Yoruba linguistics in the Department of Linguistics and African Languages, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The transcripts were analysed with insights from theoretical perspectives on code selection (and mixing/switching), Levinson’s notion of activity types, Sarangi’s discourse types and the generic structure model.

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In the next section, I discuss the concept of code selection and I review perspectives on code-mixing/switching. In section 4, I deal with the consultation structure and linguistic situation in the Nigerian hospital. I devote section 5 to the theoretical anchors of the paper, and section 6 to the analysis of the samples. In section 7, I conclude the paper.

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### 3 Code alternation and hospital interactions in Nigeria

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The term ‘code’ refers to a linguistic variety (cf. Boztepe 2003) used in communication. This linguistic variety could be the standard form or varieties or dialects of the standard code/language. In bilingual conversation, discourse participants often mix or alternate codes (Auer 1995, 1998, 1999, 2009). However, this does not happen in all situations, as sometimes certain participants can only cope with one code. These individuals communicate only in that code and the co-discourse participant is pragmatically constrained to switch to the code preferred by the other party even if his/her competence level in that code is low. The term ‘code-switching’ is thus associated with the concurrent use of two or more languages or language varieties in conversation. It provides these interactants with ‘a resource for indexing situationally salient context in speakers’ attempts to accomplish interactional goals’ (Heller 1988: 3). For Auer,

[c]ode-switching covers all instances of locally functional use of two languages in an interactional episode. Code-switching may occur between two turns, or turn-internally, it may be restricted to a well-defined unit or change the whole language of interaction; it may occur within a clause ... or between clauses. (Auer 2009: 491)

The phenomenon of code-switching has been approached from the perspectives of sociolinguistics, grammar and discourse/pragmatics. In the sociolinguistic approach, the focus has been on languages in contact in the bilingual or migrant context and on the social and political rationales for the use of the languages (see Moyer 1998; Milroy & Wei 1995; Poplack 1980; Zentella 1990; Yamamoto 2001; MacSwan 2000). Here research has also been directed towards a speaker’s identification and alignment with a group (cf. Barker 1975; Hill & Hill 1986; Myers Scotton 1988, 1993; Myers Scotton & Ury 1977; Zentella 1997). Myers-Scotton’s markedness model accounts for the social motivation for code-switching. She observes that in a multilingual setting, social roles are assigned to every linguistic variety in a multilingual setting; these roles are described as ‘rights and obligations (RO) sets’ (Myers-Scotton 1993: 84). She contends that using more than one language opens up the negotiation of social roles between speakers who understand the social meanings of the codes being used. The markedness model operates with one principle, ‘The negotiation principle’, fashioned after Grice (1975) and three maxims: unmarked choice, marked choice and exploratory choice maxims. She states the maxims respectively thus: ‘Make your code choice the unmarked index of the unmarked RO set in talk exchanges when you wish to establish or affirm that RO set’ (Myers-Scotton 1993: 114);

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144 ‘Make a marked code choice when you wish to establish a new RO set as  
145 unmarked for the current exchange’ (p. 131); ‘When an unmarked choice is not  
146 clear, use CS [code switching] to make alternate exploratory choices as candi-  
147 dates for an unmarked choice and thereby as an index for an RO set which you  
148 favor’ (p. 142).

149 The grammatical approach, which takes a psycholinguistic dimension,  
150 explores bilingual language processing. It provides models which tell bilinguals  
151 from monolinguals in terms of their language internalisation processes. As  
152 such, scholars in this school have addressed how bilinguals construct messa-  
153 ges, how they gain lexical access and how they integrate lexical and syntactic  
154 forms in producing and understanding language (see Bialystok 2001; Dussias  
155 2001; Grosjean 1997; Muyksen 2000; Myers-Scotton & Jake 2002). The scholars  
156 of the grammatical approach contend that code-switching is governed by lin-  
157 guistic constraints and that switches are systematic.

158 In Blom & Gumperz’s (1972) influential work on code-switching, the two  
159 terms, ‘situational code switching’ and ‘metaphorical code switching’ were  
160 introduced. The former occurs when ‘a change in linguistic form represents a  
161 changed social setting’ (Nilep 2006: 8); the latter is applied when two language  
162 varieties are used in the same social setting. Gumperz (1982), realising the  
163 imperfection of describing a switch as either situational or metaphorical, intro-  
164 duced ‘conversational switching’ which made use of only metaphorical switch-  
165 ing. He treats the switch as a contextualisation cue, his list of functions of code  
166 switching including quotation marking, addressee specification, interjection,  
167 reiteration, message qualification and ‘personalization versus objectivisation’  
168 (Gumperz 1982: 80).

169 The discourse approach to code switching, proposed by Auer (1984, 1995,  
170 1998, 2009) takes the position that code-switches are subject to ‘local processes  
171 of language negotiation and code selection’ (Auer 1995: 121). Auer (1998: 14)  
172 identifies eight conversational loci where code switching frequently occurs:

- 173 1. Reported speech
- 174 2. Change of participant constellation (addressee selection and the use of  
175 code switching to include/exclude/marginalize participants or bystand-  
176 ers).
- 177 3. Parentheses or side comments.
- 178 4. Reiterations (quasi-translations into other language for the purpose of put-  
179 ting emphasis on demands, requests, for clarification, attracting attention  
180 and the regulations of turn taking).
- 181 5. Change or activity type (also referred to as mode shift or role shift).
- 182 6. Topic shift.

7. Puns, language play or key. 189
8. Topicalisation and topic/comment structure. 191

Code-switching in Nigerian hospitals is experienced in respect of 2, 4, 5 and 7 above. For Auer (2009), code-switching is functional language alternation and code-mixing is non-functional language alternation. He posits that ‘the frequent variation between the two “codes” has become a mode of interaction in its own right, that is a new code with rules and regularities of its own’ (Auer 2009: 491). Many studies on code-switching have supported Auer’s observation about the function-based dimension (cf. Boztepe 2003; Tay 1989; Baredo 2000; Shin 2010). Yet, leaving code-mixing out of the functional category requires great caution. Sometimes, like code-switching, items in code-mixing are employed for strategic purposes. This functional dimension has been explored by Tay (2003) and Leung (2010). I admit, however, that the strategic engagement of code-mixing is limited in scope.

Auer (2009) identifies discourse-related code-switching and participant-related code-switching. The former describes ‘the use of code-switching to organise the conversation by contributing to the interactional meaning of a particular utterance’ (Auer 1998: 4). This picks out the pragmatic value of code-switching as it reveals the marking of a new footing in the choice of language. The latter (participant-related code-switching) refers to situations in bilingual conversation where participants merely prefer a language as against another without necessarily pursuing a strictly pragmatic agenda.

In Nigeria, as in partly several bilingual communities in Africa (cf. Myers-Scotton 1993), except among the very elderly who are tied to maintaining the purity of the indigenous languages, code-mixing is a common practice among both the educated and the uneducated (see Essien 1995 for an example from the Ibibio of Nigeria). Auer & Eastman’s (2010) view aligns with this development, which differs from the practice in Hong Kong (Leung 2010: 417). It is therefore interesting to see how this practice of mixing/switching codes operates in the formal context of the Nigerian hospital.

## 4 Consultation structure and linguistic situation in the Nigerian hospital 221

Unlike the practice in most Western hospitals where appointments have to be booked with a doctor before a meeting, clients in Nigerian hospitals can go to any hospital almost any time of the day (day or night) if they notice any health 223  
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226 discomfort. They present duplicates of their registration documents, usually  
227 called ‘small cards’ to hospital records officers who will pull out their case  
228 notes, which are still, in many hospitals, in the hard copy form. These are  
229 placed before the appropriate doctor, and clients have to sit outside the doctor’s  
230 offices, waiting for their turn. At a client’s turn, s/he is invited by having her/  
231 his name called out (usually her/his full name without a title). S/he is seated,  
232 in most cases, on the left side of the doctor’s table, and consultation, usually  
233 lasting between 3–20 minutes, ensues.

234 Communication in Southwestern Nigerian hospitals is carried out in Stand-  
235 ard British or American English, Nigerian Pidgin and Yoruba (in single or com-  
236 binatorial forms). The code selected is determined by what either party first  
237 selects or maintains, what a party insists on in the course of the conversation,  
238 or what the interactional context necessitates. I have personally observed that  
239 English is used exclusively where the doctor (Doctor) and client (Client) or her/  
240 his relation (also referred to as ‘client’ in this research) can speak it. In most  
241 cases the English spoken in Nigerian hospitals is an interlanguage variety (cf.  
242 Bamgbose 1982 on Nigerian English in general).

243 English usage in the hospital reflects the linguistic character of the larger  
244 Nigerian society. In other words, many expressions used, especially by doctors  
245 and other medical professionals are instances of shifts/extension, transfer,  
246 abbronymy (Odebunmi 1996) and coinages. These expressions are largely used  
247 in oral communication while the standard medical terms are largely used in  
248 written communication. Another dialect of English used in Southwestern Nige-  
249 rian hospitals is Pidgin English, which is more popular in the big cities where  
250 the multilingual nature of Nigeria is most manifest. The use of Pidgin in the  
251 hospital is largely negotiated between doctors and clients (Odebunmi 2012).  
252 Sometimes, depending on the relationship between the parties and the goals  
253 of the encounter, doctors and their clients code-mix English, Pidgin and Yoruba,  
254 the native language of the people in Southwestern Nigeria. But where the client  
255 cannot speak English at all, the language s/he speaks usually, Yoruba, is  
256 selected for communication, provided the doctor is also able to speak it.

257 Apart from the language, the culture of the Yoruba also impinges on the  
258 interaction between the doctor and the client. This has been extensively dis-  
259 cussed in Odebunmi (2003, 2006 and 2008). The major issue raised in these  
260 publications is that the Yoruba place great importance on deference and pleas-  
261 antries, which they also expect from the doctor. This will be shown in the  
262 analysis below.

## 5 Theoretical perspectives

This work benefits centrally from Levinson's notion of activity types and Sarangi's discourse types. Also relevant is the concept of generic structure potential, in systemic functional grammar, which provides the tool for analysing the structure of doctor–client interactions. I discuss activity and discourse types in 5.1 and 5.2 respectively, and explain the symbols for generic structure catalogues in section 6.

### 5.1 Activity types

The choice of activity type (AT) lies in its reputation for being able to tackle institutional discourses such as hospital interactions. This is largely because it is capable of accommodating the activities of the participants (i.e. doctors and clients), the contextual rationale for the activities and the pragmatic influence of the activities.

The notion of activity type focuses on participants' use of language which is constrained by the activity they perform and the physical location of the talk (cf. Levinson [1979]1992: 69). These place high constraints on the contributions that could be made by the parties in interaction. This constraint factor brings in the pragmatic context, which gets the interactants to negotiate their meanings and intentions rather than depending strictly on the provision of the setting of interaction, a standard stance of the traditional concept of context (cf. Gumperz 1982; Levinson 1979, 1992; Thomas 1995; Mey 2001; Odeunmi 2008).

Levinson (1997) presents the position that utterances are capable of designing their own contexts. This same position is held by scholars such as Bourdieu (1991), Thomas (1995) and Sarangi & Slembrouck (1996). Bourdieu's (1991) argument is that utterance meaning relies on the status of the speaker and the role s/he plays in the interactional context. These status and role shift with activities, causing 'the interactional context [to] influence the sense and force of what is meant' (Sarangi 2004: 137). It may be argued, though, that beyond Bourdieu's (1991) argument, utterance meaning may be influenced by topics or other local interactional circumstances which are neither status nor role as reflected in my analysis in the present study.

Levinson (1992) states that the constraints placed on the contributions participants can make to an activity come with certain expectations, which correspond to 'the functions that any utterances at a certain point in the proceedings can be fulfilling' (1992: 79). This is because there is always a set of inferential schemata attached to an activity. These schemata 'help to determine how what

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299 one says will be taken, that is, what kinds of inferences will be made from  
 300 what is said' (1992: 97). Ultimately, the picture we have is that each discourse  
 301 participant plays a communicative role that suits the interactional context and  
 302 that is sensitive to the dynamism of the activities being carried out.

303 Thomas (1995) specifies the interactional features of AT as follows:

- 304 1. The goals of the participants
- 305 2. Allowable contributions
- 306 3. The degree to which Gricean maxims are adhered to or are suspended
- 307 4. The degree to which interpersonal maxims are adhered to or are sus-  
 312 pended
- 313 5. Turn taking and topic control
- 314 6. The manipulation of pragmatic parameters (i.e. power, social distance)

## 317 5.2 Discourse types

318 'Discourse types' as a theoretical concept is credited to Sarangi (2000). The  
 319 concept forms a sort of complementary relationship with AT. Sarangi (2000)  
 320 plugs the concept of discourse types (DT) into the broad circuit of AT to account  
 321 for the specific discourse/pragmatic acts that are performed in the activities.

322 DTs relate to talk forms that are goal-driven while ATs provide the broad  
 323 contextual background that can influence how DTs are interpreted. Whatever is  
 324 said by participants is bound to be constrained by the institutional context. DTs  
 325 thus refer to specific acts performed in ATs such as advice (DT) in counselling  
 326 (AT), questioning (DT) in interview (AT), and presentation (DT) in seminar (AT).

327 DTs, as Culpeper *et al.* (2008) rightly observe, strike a complex relationship  
 328 with ATs. They also have a lot in common with Mey's (2001) *practs*. While I am  
 329 not exploring these relationships in this paper, it seems operationally safe to  
 330 see DTs as specific acts, relative to ATs, and strictly institutionally-based, rela-  
 331 tive to *practs* as a preliminary distinction between the concepts. In this  
 332 research, I operationally treat DTs as situated speech acts (cf. Mey 2001). Over-  
 333 all, ATs and DTs are language behaviours based in the institutional and profes-  
 334 sional domain, a factor that establishes their relevance to the analysis of doc-  
 335 tor–client encounters.

## 336 6 Analysis and findings

337 Two levels of analysis are carried out in this study. The first is the generic  
 338 structure of the interactions between doctors and their clients; the second is

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the code selection strategies that are used in the interactions. First, I tackle the generic structure, adopting notations from Systemic Functional Linguistics. The generic structure model is chosen because it is capable of systematically explaining the interactional stages of the encounters and thus serving as a lead up to the main pragmatic analysis. Specifically I utilise the following notations due to Halliday & Hassan (1989): ( ), indicating optionality; unbounded elements  $\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ } \\ \text{ } \end{array} \right]$ , showing the obligatory status of the items; indicating iteration; }, showing that the degree of iteration for elements in square brackets is equal; ^, indicating sequence; and [ ] specifying restraints on sequence.

## 6.1 Generic structures of doctor–client interactions at first meetings

While limiting myself to first meetings, I hypothesise that first meetings present different structural constituents from other meetings because of the restriction with respect to common ground. Hence, the generic structure of the meetings detaches, in some respects, from that of other meetings already attempted in the literature (see Byrne & Long 1976; Mishler 1984; Heritage & Maynard 2006; Adebite 2009).

Four discourse stages are identified in the interactions: Opening, Diagnostic Interaction, Announcement and Closing. The generic structure of these stages is presented below:

$$[(\text{Opening})]^\wedge [\text{Diagnostic Interaction}]^\wedge [(\text{Announcement})]^\wedge [(\text{Closing})]$$

The catalogue shows that the only compulsory element in the interaction is Diagnostic Interaction (DI). Opening, Announcement and Closing are optional. It also shows that each is restrained in terms of position of occurrence. For example, Announcement cannot come before Diagnostic Interaction. The GS of each of these stages follows:

### 6.1.1 Opening

Opening covers the pre-business stage of the consultation. It is characterised by an exchange or sharing of social information between doctors and clients:

$$[(\text{Ins})]^\wedge (\text{Iv})^\wedge (\text{RI})^\wedge (\text{Grt})^\wedge (\text{RG})^\wedge (\text{Pls})$$

Opening at first meetings does not have any compulsory element: Instruction, Invitation (Iv), Response to Invitation (RI), Greeting (Grt), Response to Greeting

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371 (RG) and Pleasantries (Pls). Instruction is restrained in terms of position wher-  
 372 ever it occurs. Instruction is issued by the doctor to an attendant or nurse to  
 373 invite the client; Invitation made through the calling out of a name by the  
 374 attendant or the nurse identifies the client that is due for consultation with the  
 375 doctor; Response to Invitation is the verbal acknowledgement of the invitation  
 376 extended to the client; and Pleasantries refer to jokes or other relaxing talk by  
 377 doctors or clients.

### 378 6.1.2 Diagnostic Interaction (DI)

379 Diagnostic Interaction describes doctor–client exchanges that centre on the cli-  
 380 ent’s health condition. It is structurally captured in the catalogue below:

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$$\left[ \text{BR} \right]^{\leftarrow} \left( \text{EI} \right)^{\leftarrow} \left( \text{Int} \right)^{\leftarrow} \left\{ \text{CI}^{\leftarrow} \text{CR}^{\leftarrow} \text{CI}^{\leftarrow} \text{CR}^{\leftarrow} \dots \right\}^{\leftarrow} \left( \text{Pls}^{\leftarrow} \right)^{\leftarrow} \left( \text{Ass} \right)^{\leftarrow}$$

383 The generic structure shows that only BR (Broad Request), always made by  
 384 Doctor, CI (Condition Specific Information), always provided by Client and CR  
 385 (Cue-based Request), always made by the doctor are obligatory. By BR is meant  
 386 a general request made by Doctor about the state of health of Client (e.g.  
 387 ‘What’s your problem?’). CI refers to the response of Client in which s/he speci-  
 388 fies the actual problem (e.g. ‘It’s malaria fever’), and CR refers to the request  
 389 made by Doctor based on the specific condition mentioned by Client (e.g. ‘When  
 390 did it start?’). BR always occurs at the initial part of the interaction, but CI and  
 391 CR could be intervened by other optional stages such as EI (Echoic Information)  
 392 and Int (Interjection). Echoic Information refers to a client’s response which  
 393 merely repeats the contents of the Doctor’s BR (e.g. ‘What’s the problem (BR)’ –  
 394 ‘There is really a problem’ (EI)), while Interjection is used to refer to all forms  
 395 of interactive insertions that are not part of the main consultative line, e.g.  
 396 ‘Sorry Baba’. Int is repeatable at some other points in the interaction. CI and  
 397 CR always have an equal number of occurrences. In other words, a piece of  
 398 Condition specific information provided necessitates a Cue-based request. Pls  
 399 (Pleasantries, usually jokes), and Ass (Assurance, e.g. ‘There is no problem’)  
 400 are largely optional.

### 401 6.1.3 Announcement

402 Announcement refers to the doctor’s disclosure of his observation regarding the  
 403 client’s state of health and subsequent medical procedures or activities to the  
 404 client. The generic structure follows:

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$$\begin{array}{c} \leftarrow \\ (Ass)^{\wedge} (TP)^{\wedge} (Int) \end{array}$$

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No unit in Announcement is obligatory. In fact, in all the interactions studied, only TP (Treatment Procedure), which is iterative, is announced (e.g. ‘I will examine you’). Ass (Assurance) and Int (Interjection) sometimes occur when Treatment Procedure is being announced. This generic structure is largely opposite to the structure of multiple meetings where three types of announcements are possible: Prescription, Therapy Procedure and Follow-up Interaction.

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#### 6.1.4 Closing

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Closing signals the end of the consultative session. Its generic structure is presented below:

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$$(App)^{\wedge} (Rapp)^{\wedge} (FR)^{\wedge} (RFR)^{\wedge} (DC)$$

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Just as in Opening and Announcement, no unit in Closing is obligatory. App (Appreciation, e.g. ‘Thank you’), Rapp (Response to Appreciation, e.g. ‘Thank you’/‘Okay’), FR (Follow-up Request, e.g. ‘When should I come back?’), RFR (Response to Follow-up Request, ‘Monday next week’) and DC (Departure Communication, ‘Bye’, ‘Till Friday, doctor’) are optional. App and RApp are, however, more frequent because they align with cultural doxas in Southwestern Nigeria.

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I now move to the code selection strategies that characterise the generic structures in the next section.

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## 6.2 Code selection strategies: Analytical design

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From all the code selection models reviewed in section 3 above, I have come up with two terms: non-strategic code selection and strategic code selection, which have been adapted from Myers’ Scotton’s unmarked choice maxim and a part of Auer’s participant-related switching, Gumperz’s conversational switching, Myers Scotton’s marked choice maxims and Auer’s discourse-related switching. Therefore, non-strategic code selection, in this research, means predictable bilingual language choices which may be institutional or contextual; strategic code selection refers to unpredictable language choices in bilingual encounters which are tied to institutional or local interactional contexts. The strategies are taken in turn.

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### 6.2.1 Non-Strategic code selection

There is non-strategic code selection, or what I term ‘interactional routines’, when the choices made in the conversations are predictable to participants. Two categories of these routines occurred: cultural and institutional routines, and linguistic routines. Across all the examples in the analysis, Standard British/American English is italicised, Yoruba is underlined, Pidgin is represented in bigger bold fonts and Nigerian English simply appears in bold. Arrowed lines point to the items being focused at particular points of the analysis.

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#### 6.2.1.1 Observance of cultural and institutional routines

Cultural routines are common in Openings, while institutional routines occur more frequently in Diagnostic Interactions. Sometimes, institutional routines occur in Openings where there are Invitations, but they do not occur at all in Closings.

Cultural routines occur in Greetings, Response to Greetings and Pleasantries. Alternations of Standard English and NE between participants occur in the interaction below:

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Doctor: *Good morning, dear*=

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Patient: *Good morning, ma*<sup>–2</sup>

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‘Good morning’, a Standard English expression and both ‘dear’ and ‘ma’ (Nigerian English words) are mixed by both participants. ‘Dear’, as used by Doctor, is an NE word for giving positive face to strangers, and not necessarily, as in Standard English, for expressing love or intimate relationships. This expression of respect is reciprocated by CL with the choice of ‘ma’ (from the Standard English word ‘Madam’) which gives regard to the greater age and institutional authority of Doctor. ‘Ma’ in NE is used to refer to a female person who is either older or has greater status than the speaker.

Institutional routines, as earlier stated, are observed in Invitations in Openings. An instance can be cited in below:

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2 Utterances in standard British English are given in italics, those in Nigerian English are in boldface, those in Yoruba are underlined and those in Nigerian Pidgin English are recte.

- (2) Doctor: ((To the attendant)) *Alright, call in the next patient* 472  
 Attendant: *Baba ( ) =* 473  
 ('Mr.') 475  
 → Patient: **Sa::** 478  
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Doctor initiates Invitation through Instruction directed at the attendant who carries it out by calling out: 'Baba', to which CL responds 'Sa::' ('sa::' is a combination of Standard English and Nigerian English sounds). It is equivalent to the Standard English 'sir' when neither elongated nor adapted to the peculiar Nigerian interactive context. It is interesting to note the institutional power attached to the doctor's position: the attendant is a woman, but CL's Response to Invitation points to the doctor and not to the attendant who is rated lower than the doctor. The doctor is thus perceived as the superior agent in the whole consultation process. It is important to note that all the institutional and cultural cues are expected by participants in the interactions and are therefore merely regarded as givens. They serve as discourse types of phatic communication, summoning and deference. 484  
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### 6.2.1.2 Linguistic routines 496

By linguistic routines I mean code-switched choices that are so routinely made by doctors that they are expected at certain points in their speeches. In this case, the linguistic elements are more connected with the doctors' talk style than a strategic language use. 497  
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Code selections revealing linguistic routines are found almost exclusively in Diagnostic Interactions and Announcements. The few instances found in Openings occur as nomenclatural prefixes to signal greater age (e.g. 'Baba Sunday Azeez' in Interaction 1). No instance of code-mixing is found in Closing. Good examples of code-mixing that demonstrate linguistic routines are cited below: 501  
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- (3) 27. Patient: >Bo se bere nipe< mo ni <kata [catarrh]. After kata yen bi ijo keji ni  
 → iba mu mi ojiji;> 508  
 (How it started is that I had catarrh. After catarrh that like days two 513  
 is malaria caught me suddenly) 514  
 ('How it started is that I had catarrh. After the catarrh, on the second 515  
 day, I had fever all of a sudden') 516  
 28. <Gbogbo owo ati ese tutu>. Mo lo gba treatment. (0.2) Ni ana mo 517  
 → (All hand and leg cold. I went to take treatment. In yesterday I) 520  
 ('All my hands and legs were cold. I went for treatment. Yesterday I ...') 522  
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- 528 → 29. *notice ara riro to <wa tun lagbaa gan> (0.5).*  
 528 (notice body pain that was again serious very)  
 529 ('noticed serious body pains')
- 530 30. *O tun wa remi, enu mi n koro; <mo weaki gan ni>*  
 532 (It again was tired me, mouth my getting bitter. I weak very )  
 533 ('Also I am weak, my mouth is bitter; I am very weak')
- 535 31. (0.5)
- 538 → 32. Doctor: *So, major thing to ku ni pe o re yin?--*  
 540 (So major thing that remains is that it weak you)  
 542 ('So, the major complaint now is that you are weak')

543 CL inserts English 'kata', 'after kata', 'treatment' and 'notice' into his Yoruba  
 544 speech. Each insertion agrees with grammatical rules in Yoruba, and each of  
 545 the insertions is recognised as an English word by any competent Yoruba  
 546 speaker of English as there are alternative Yoruba words for them, for example  
 547 *finkinfin* for 'catarrh' and *iwosan* for 'treatment'. The same applies to Doctor  
 548 who inserts 'So, major thing'. These instances, and others noticed in the pre  
 549 and post consultative encounters, show that no strategic intent is in play, given  
 550 the pattern of code selection that characterises this conversation. Each partici-  
 551 pant naturally contributes to the conversation with his peculiar style. CL merely  
 552 objectively describes his state of health and the steps taken while Doctor  
 553 responds to these by trying to measure the extent to which CL still needs help.  
 554 In fact, expressions like the following which align with the participants' code-  
 555 mixed utterances: 'Mo sick' ('I am sick'), 'Mo ni malaria' ('I have malaria fever'),  
 556 'Mo ni cold' ('I have cold') are routinely made in Nigerian hospitals. One point  
 557 to note with respect to the word 'kata', however, is that it is gradually phasing  
 558 out the Yoruba equivalent *finkinfin*, which is hardly known to many children  
 559 or young adults brought up exclusively in the Western fashion. This develop-  
 560 ment validates Auer & Eastman's (2010) observation that '[b]ilingual talk may  
 561 not only reflect convergence between two languages but also actively contribute  
 562 to it, making the two languages more compatible than they used to be'.

### 563 6.2.2 Strategic code selection

564 Strategic code selections are made largely by Doctor, but sometimes by Client as  
 565 a pragmatic response to certain contextual conditions. In the meetings studied,  
 566 Diagnostic Interaction accounts for the largest number of instances of this strat-  
 567 egy, while Announcement and Closing yield very few instances. No strategic  
 568 code selection is made in Opening. This could be accounted for by the new  
 569 encounters in which Doctor and Client are located, which offers them no shared

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background knowledge or common ground on which strategic communication could be built. Two pragmatic acts characterise strategic code selections: context-shaping and context-determined acts. Context-shaping acts are indexed by code negotiation cues, while context-determined acts are characterised by institutional and local contextual constraints. I take these factors in turn.

### 6.2.2.1 Context-shaping acts: Code negotiation cues

Sometimes, codes are negotiated between Doctor and Client. This situation works in concert with Auer's concept of participant-related code-switching. There is sometimes a contest for the code for a while between Doctor and Client until one of the parties yields to the pressure of the other and switches to the other's code choice. This switch, as will be seen shortly, is shaped by the context of the interaction.

An interesting instance of this code selection strategy is provided in the interaction that follows:

- (4)
- 1. Doctor: (( To the attendant)) *Alright, call in the next patient*
2. Attendant: Baba ( ) =  
(‘Mr.’)
3. Patient: **Sa::**  
(‘Sir’)
4. (0.5)
5. Doctor: Too Baba, [sorry].  
(Oh! elderly man)  
(‘Oh! old man’)
6. Patient: [MORING]
7. Doctor: *Any problem?* ↑=
8. Patient: Ah, Doctor, oh na wa::: o::: na problem dey o:::-  
(Ah, Doctor, oh! serious o!. It problem there is o)  
(‘Ah, Doctor, it is serious; there is a problem!’)
9. Doctor: **Oh, sorry- sorry=**
10. Patient: \*A\*-
11. Doctor: **Sorry** (.)
12. Patient: \*A:\* °This leg <dey trouble me:: well well [seriously>] (.)  
(This leg is troubling me seriously seriously)  
(‘This leg is troubling me seriously’)
13. Doctor: [ ( ) ] (.)
14. Patient: \*E::\*, na <yesterday> this thing happen o (.)  
(It yesterday this thing happen o)  
(‘It was yesterday this thing happened!’)
15. Doctor: *Just yesterday?* ↑=
16. Patient: EN. *I went to farm yesterday NOW*  
(‘Yes. I went to the farm yesterday; you see!’)

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- 632 17. *By the time I came back, \*a\* (.) me i no enjoy myself*  
 633 (I, I not enjoy myself)  
 634 ('I, I did not enjoy myself')
- 635 18. Doctor: **Sorry** (.)
- 638 19. Patient: Na *this moring*, <the thing wey dey make an so worry now>  
 639 (It was this morning, the thing which is making it so worrisome  
 640 now)  
 641 ('It was this morning, what makes it worrisome now?;')  
 642 20. (.) *this moring wen i wake up* (.), i don carry my:: hand  
 644 (This morning, when I woke up, I had carried my hand)  
 645 ('This morning, when I woke up, I lifted my hand,')
- 646 21. <no do- no gree>  
 648 (Not move – not agree)  
 649 ('It did not co-operate')
- 650 → 22. Doctor: He no gree carry am! (.)  
 654 (It not agree carry it)  
 655 ('It did not co-operate!')

657 Doctor opens the consultation in a mixture of Yoruba (*Too Baba*) and NE  
 658 (**sorry**). 'Sorry' in NE is used to sympathise with an addressee whether or not  
 659 one is responsible for their mishap, which differs from the use of the word in  
 660 Standard English. Client responds in Pidgin (*Moring*). In the Diagnostic Interac-  
 661 tion, Doctor makes his Broad Request in English (line 7), but Client supplies his  
 662 Echoic Information in Pidgin (line 8). Client here merely reformulates Doctor's  
 663 question and circumlocutes with the clause NA 'problem dey' which does little  
 664 to address Doctor's question. Doctor switches to NE in his Interjection (**Oh,**  
 665 **sorry, sorry**, line 9), but Client insists on Pidgin in his Condition Specific Infor-  
 666 mation (lines 12 and 14). Doctor continues in English in the subsequent Cue-  
 667 based Response (line 15), but Client sticks with Pidgin with little intervening  
 668 Standard English (line 16). The insistence of Client on his code choice eventu-  
 669 ally influences a switch from Doctor who sees the need to strike a linguistic  
 670 association with Client at the critical point of the encounter, i.e. when Client is  
 671 providing a historical account of the ailment (lines 19–21).

672 Doctor eventually submits to the linguistic sway of Client to be able to allow  
 673 him to relate well with him and allow him more freedom with his preferred  
 674 code. But Doctor, after this submission, occasionally switches to English as the  
 675 exchanges progress. One reason for this is Doctor's limited competence in  
 676 Pidgin as shown in his expressions. His 'He no gree carry am', for example,  
 677 should, in Pidgin, be expressed as, 'He no gree make u carry am'. So when  
 678 Doctor says:

680 (5) <Anyway> (.) *But have you:: (.) ever visited any hospital in the past?*—

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it is most likely that he could not reach for the right Pidgin expression to convey his point. The same happens in his next Cue-based Response:

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(6)

Doctor: [And did they tell you your]  
Patient: [ dey worry me ]  
( is worrying me )  
Doctor: blood pressure is high? =

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But Client's insistence on Pidgin brings him back to Client's code preference in his confirmatory check on Client's hypertensive condition:

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(7)

Dem no tell you –  
(They not tell you)  
(‘They did not tell you’)

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The conversation, by and large, shows that Doctor tries partly to accommodate the client's code choice despite his institutional power to be able to ensure a successful professional transaction. A similar situation has been noted by Myers-Scotton (1993).

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#### 6.2.2.2 Context-determined acts

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The two context-determined acts, institutional contextual constraints and local contextual constraints are taken in turn.

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##### 6.2.2.2.1 Institutional contextual constraints

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Institutional contextual constraints, which occur only in Diagnostic Interaction and Announcement, are acts determined by the rapport between the norms of medical practice and the context of doctor–client interactions. In example (8), the institutional contextual constraint is revealed through the informing discourse type at the Diagnostic Interaction stage. This involves a switch between Pidgin English and Standard English. It thus exemplifies Auer's discourse-related code-switching. It happens at the point where Doctor and Client share information about Client's hypertensive condition:

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(8)

49. Doctor: [And did they tell you your]  
50. Patient: [dey worry me ]  
(‘They were worrying me’)

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- 730 51. Doctor: blood pressure is high? =  
 732 52. Patient: No=  
 734 53. Doctor: Dem no tell you –  
 736 (‘They did not tell you’)  
 738 54. Patient: No, dem no tell me \*A:\*(.)  
 739 (No, they not tell me)  
 740 (‘No, they did not tell me’)  
 742 → 55. Doctor: As the thing be now (.). Okay. I will look into your problem. I will  
 745 examine  
 746 (‘As the thing is now’)  
 748 56. you; you understand, and be able to see. But as i be now, you no fit  
 749 carry your leg and hand (.)=  
 750 (But as it is now, you not can carry your leg and hand)  
 752 (‘But, as it is now, you cannot move your leg and hand’)

753 Doctor demanded to know if the diagnosis of high blood pressure had been  
 754 announced to Client earlier (lines 49–53). Client’s Condition Specific Informa-  
 755 tion, in Pidgin, indicates otherwise. All along, Doctor had interacted with Client  
 756 in his chosen code, i.e. Pidgin. He attempts to continue under the influence of  
 757 this imposition at the moment he embarks on explaining Client’s condition and  
 758 analysing the prognosis of his condition, spurred by Client’s Condition Specific  
 759 Information (line 54) and expression of pain (\*a:\*) when he says, ‘As the thing  
 760 be now,’ but there is a frame shift with Doctor’s sudden switch to English (line  
 761 55). After a brief pause, he changes the direction of his discourse, perhaps  
 762 considering the needlessness of pursuing the prognostic explanations, given  
 763 Client’s limited education, which might turn the whole effort into a clumsy  
 764 verbalisation, especially because Doctor himself has limited Pidgin. He then  
 765 prioritises healing as Client’s ultimate goal and abandons the information pro-  
 766 cess he had attempted to embark upon. This change is signalled by the transi-  
 767 tion marker ‘okay’ (line 55), which is followed immediately by an English utter-  
 768 ance: ‘I will look ...’. At this point, he intends to demonstrate his competence  
 769 to assure the client of ability to heal him. To do this successfully, he has to  
 770 push aside his poor Pidgin. He thus takes up his power as a doctor and speaks  
 771 authoritatively to Client. But as soon as he completes this act, he comes back  
 772 to Pidgin, which he alternates with English up to the end of the Diagnostic  
 773 Interaction.

#### 774 6.2.2.2.2 Local contextual constraints

775 By local contextual constraints I mean pragmatic conditions, other than institu-  
 776 tional constraints, as seen in 6.2.2.3, that influence utterances within the imme-  
 777 diate situation of talk. These factors, in the context of doctor–client first meet-

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ings, have little to do strictly with doctoral authority; rather they work more closely with the variables of the situation and the goal of the encounter as designed by either party. Unlike the acts under institutional constraints which can be performed by almost any Doctor, given the same condition, acts here depend strictly on the individual doctor's approach and the affordances of the context. Local contextual constraints are features, largely, of Diagnostic Interaction. However, very few instances are observed in Announcement and Closing. An interesting demonstration of these constraints is observed in the following interaction:

- (9) 778
16. Doctor: Se ese re ko wu?= 780  
(Does leg you not swell?) 781  
(‘Is your leg swollen?’) 782
17. Patient: Ko wu= 783  
(It not swell) 784  
(‘It is not swollen’) 785
18. Doctor: Kin lo ti lo si i?= 786  
(What you have used to it?) 787  
(‘What have you been using?’) 788
19. Patient: Mo ti lo oogun si i. Oogun Yo’oba ni mo saaba maa n lo si i. 789  
(I have used medications to it. Medications Yoruba are I mostly used 790  
to it) 791  
(‘I have used medications. I have mostly used Yoruba medications’) 792
- 20. Doctor: **O::kay:** @ 793
21. Patient: (said no word, but stared at the doctor) 794

When asked here about the medications he has taken since the onset of the illness (line 18), the client digresses, ‘Mo ti lo oogun si i,’ using an avoidance strategy. He flouts the Gricean maxim of quantity, but observes the maxims of relation, quality and manner. He addresses Doctor’s Cue-based Response, but Doctor requires more definite Condition Specific Information which Client hesitates to supply. He provides this in his next statement, ‘Oogun Yo’oba ni mo saaba maa n lo si i,’ which again is not specific enough but is adequate for Doctor’s needs at that point. Doctor’s elongated ‘**okay**’ (a switch to English), with a laugh not warranted at this critical point of the interaction, said as a response to this Condition Specific Information is not neutral. In actual fact, with the laugh, it carries Doctor’s denigration of traditional medicine. It is an NE expression for ‘I can see why’. It therefore conveys Doctor’s conclusion about the prolongation of Client’s condition. This consideration turns the expression into a face-saving strategy. Damage could be done to Client’s negative face if the statement is made uneconomically in Yoruba: ‘A bajo ti aisan re

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828 fi pe' ('No wonder your sickness has lasted so long'). Gaining an uptake of  
 829 Doctor's criticism and contempt of the therapy he had undergone, Client's  
 830 silence and stare at Doctor's face could be said to imply his admittance of  
 831 Doctor's covert charges.

832 I have argued earlier in this paper that contrary to some opinions in the  
 833 literature, code-mixing can be used to perform strategic functions. A good  
 834 example is offered in Nigerian sexual discourse. Many Nigerian adults, espe-  
 835 cially married males, are shy to tell pharmacists or chemists that they want to  
 836 buy 'condoms' because it is associated with heterosexuality. To avoid the  
 837 attendant stigma, many of these men prefer to say, 'Mo fe ra CD' (I want to  
 838 buy CD), playing on the double meaning of the computer 'CD' and the private  
 839 abbreviation of 'condom', the knowledge of which they share with many of the  
 840 salespeople, to prevent other customers from accessing knowledge of the object  
 841 of their purchase. This type of strategic use of code-mixing is carried into the  
 842 consultative context of the Nigerian hospital. When it occurs, it foregrounds  
 843 participants' (usually Clients') points. Some interesting instances can be found  
 844 in the interaction below, which is basically in Yoruba:

845 (10)

- 846 27. Patient: >Bo se bere nipe< mo ni <kata [catarrh]. After kata yen bi ijo keji ni  
 847 iba mu mi ojiji>;  
 848 'How it started is that I had catarrh. After catarrh that like second day  
 849 was malaria caught me suddenly')  
 850 ('How it started is that I had catarrh. After the catarrh, on the second  
 851 day, I had fever all of a sudden)  
 852 28. <Gbogbo owo ati ese tutu>. Mo lo gba treatment. (0.2) Ni ana mo  
 853 ('all my hands and legs were cold. I went for treatment. Yesterday I  
 854 notice ara riro to <wa tun lagbaa gan> (0.5).  
 855 (noticed serious body pains')  
 856 → 30. O tun wa remi, enu mi n koro; <mo weaki gan ni>  
 857 ('Also I am weak, my mouth is bitter; I am very weak')  
 858 31. (0.5)  
 859 32. Doctor: So, major thingto ku ni pe o re yin?--  
 860 ('So, the major complaint now is that you are weak')  
 861 → 33. Patient: O re mi. Mo weaki (.)  
 862 ('It weak me. I weak')  
 863 ('I am weak. I am weak')

877 'Kata', 'treatment', 'notice', and 'so major thing' play no strategic roles in the  
 878 interaction as observed earlier. However, 'weak[i]', repeated twice is strategic.  
 879 Client has earlier, in line 30, expressed his weakness in Yoruba: 'O tun wa  
 880 remi'; then in English: 'Mo weak[i]'. The same is repeated in line 33: 'O remi;  
 881 mo weaki'. Client's repetition of his present health condition in English works

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to foreground his point, which he believes could best be told to an orthodox practitioner in Nigeria in English, which is generally recognised as the language of doctors' training, and which patients often believe gives a clearer picture of their conditions to doctors. This clicks the right space as Doctor is able to pick the import of the emphasis and then repeat the condition in Yoruba, and not in English: 'So major thing to *ku ni pe o re yin*'. His response in Yoruba, and his consistency in the choice of Yoruba to describe Client's state of health, seems to contradict Client's belief about the Nigerian bio-medical institution's identification with English. Doctor is more dynamic in his choice of codes. The prefatory part of his Cue-based Request is performed in English ('So, major thing'), but the main issue is constructed in Yoruba ('*ni pe o n reyin*') which is CL's native language, and which Doctor sees as a better code to negotiate the common ground with Client.

At this point, I turn to the strategic use of code-switching. Codes in this capacity occur between English and Yoruba, English and Pidgin, and Standard English and Nigerian English. At the stage of Diagnostic Interaction or Announcement, participants switch their codes to relax, flaunt, assure, joke and warn.

During Diagnostic Interaction in the conversation that follows, Doctor reaches for a joke (Pleasantries) as a device to relax the tension of Clients:

- (11) 902
1. Doctor: *Good evening. What's wrong with your baby?—* 905
  2. Father: *It's cold and stooling, – and the stooling is frequent (.)* 906
  3. Doctor: *For how long has she been stooling like that? =* 908
  4. Mother: *For about 24 hours now (.)* 910
  5. Doctor: *What have you used for her? =* 912
  6. Mother: *I've been giving her ORT –* 915  
(*'Oral therapy'*) 916
  7. Doctor: *Does she take it well? =* 918
  8. Mother: *She has finished a sachet.* 919
  9. Doctor: (*Feels the baby's body*) (.) 922
  10. *Does she run temperature?—* 923
  11. Mother: *Not really –* 925
  - 12. Doctor: ((*comically*)): *Well, omo yin fe jagbado ni=* 928  
(*baby your wants eat maize*) 931  
(*'your baby wants to eat maize'*) 932
  13. [😊] 933
  14. (0.5) 935
  - 15. *She's praying for another set of teeth. She'll be okay.* 938
  16. ((*writes his prescription*)) 942
  17. (0.9) 943

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946 After Doctor has taken the baby's diaorrhea (stooling) history, he switches from  
 947 English to Yoruba at the point he is expected to move to Announcement. Doc-  
 948 tor's switch to Yoruba at line 12 is a joke (a pleasantry), '... omo yin fe jagbado  
 949 ni' introduced at a critical point in the Diagnostic Interaction. This is effective  
 950 because both Doctor and the parents or clients laugh, recognising the punch  
 951 line of the joke. The switch is strategic as it changes the footing of the interac-  
 952 tion; it helps to cheer up the parents who are worried about the health condi-  
 953 tion of their baby. The joke is built on the (superstitious) belief among the  
 954 Yoruba that a baby would fall ill constantly when s/he is growing teeth. This is  
 955 equally linked with the desire of the baby to participate in the annual consump-  
 956 tion of maize in the particular year, as believed by the Yoruba. Doctor, however,  
 957 performs a further pragmatic act. Even when Clients laugh, which may be a  
 958 response to the switch to Yoruba or to the punch line of the joke, he reformu-  
 959 lates by a switch to English for a clearer meaning (line 15: 'She is praying for  
 960 another set of teeth')

961 Finally, Doctors, after interactively establishing the linguistic competence  
 962 of certain clients, code-switch, having reckoned that another code might be  
 963 more effective in expressing their perspective. The following interaction pro-  
 964 vides an excellent example:

- 965 (12)
- 968 8. Doctor: Kin lo n se o?--  
 969 (What is doing you?)  
 970 ('What is the problem with you?')
- 972 9. Patient: Malariani--  
 973 (Malaria is)  
 974 ('It is malaria fever')
- 976 10. Doctor: Lati igba wo?--  
 977 ('Since when?')
- 978 11. Patient: Yio ti to last week (.)  
 980 (It should have been last week)  
 981 ('It should be since last week')
- 982 12. Doctor: Oogun wo lo lo nigba yen?--  
 984 (Medications which you used at that time?)  
 985 ('What drug did you use then?')
- 986 13. Patient: Fansida=
- 988 14. Doctor: O de lo o tan↑ Se e se LAUTECH?=  
 990 (You and used it finish? Is it not LAUTECH?)  
 991 ('And you completed the dose. Is it LAUTECH?')
- 992 15. Patient: Bee ni--  
 994 ('Yes')
- 996 → 16. Doctor: *Nowadays, you don't treat Malaria on your own; the resistance is*

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17. *high=*  
 18. Patient: *Yes sir.*

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‘Malaria’ and ‘Fansidar’, selected by Client, are not strategic. But Doctor changes the footing of the interaction with the switch to English: ‘Nowadays, you don’t treat Malaria on your own; the resistance is high’, by moving from the discourse type of informing to that of warning. He is able to locate the competence of Client to cope with full English from his Cue-based Request: ‘Se e se LAUTECH’ (enrichable as ‘Are you a student of LAUTECH’), to which Client responds: ‘Beeni’. ‘LAUTECH’ (Ladoke Akintola University of Technology) is the only university in the town where the hospital is situated. Doctor’s decision to switch is therefore built on the assumption that a university student in Nigeria should speak and understand English well. This is confirmed in Client’s prompt switch to English: ‘yes sir’. Doctor has reckoned the medium of English the best to communicate with the elite group, especially higher institution students in Nigeria whose competence in their native languages is sometimes very poor. The English medium is therefore considered the most appropriate container for the warning Doctor intends to get across.

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## 7 Conclusion

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It has been shown in the analysis and findings that four stages characterise doctor–client interactions at first meetings in Nigerian hospitals: Opening, Diagnostic Interaction, Announcement and Closing. While Diagnostic Interaction is obligatory, all the others are optional. Each of the stages is characterised by sub-stages/units that are largely optional.

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Two code selection techniques, developed from the literature on code alternation and theoretical insights from AT and DT, run through the generic structure of the interactions, namely, non-strategic and strategic. Non-strategic choices are guided by cultural, institutional linguistic routines while strategic choices are characterised by context-shaping and context-determined acts. Unlike non-strategic choices which occur at different stages in the consultations, strategic choices occur only in Diagnostic Interactions and Announcements. Codes are selected at the non-strategic level to express phatic communion, indicate deference, display personal styles and accommodate dispreferred code choices. At the strategic level, they are employed to relax tension, flaunt competence, assure, save face, joke, reformulate and warn.

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While DT is evident in the two code selection strategies, AT, especially as systematised by Thomas (1995) is more pronounced in the strategic than the

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1038 non-strategic approach. The latter manifests institutional, cultural and linguistic  
 1039 discourse types influenced by the goals of the participants and awareness  
 1040 of institutional power. The former takes into account the whole of Thomas'  
 1041 (1995) AT heuristic: the goals of the participants; the amount of the contribu-  
 1042 tions allowed, turn-taking and topic control considerations and the manipula-  
 1043 tion of pragmatic parameters which bend power scale to the doctor; and  
 1044 observance/non-observance of Gricean and interpersonal maxims which get  
 1045 participants engaged in context-sensitive goal negotiations.

1046 Overall, the phenomenon of code selection in Nigerian hospitals reflects  
 1047 the multi-code nature of the interactions, shows the culture–institution nexus  
 1048 that governs the meetings, reveals linguistic flexibilities despite the dominance  
 1049 of English in the Nigerian orthodox medical institution and presents a context-  
 1050 sensitive communicative terrain that permits linguistic and goal negotiations.  
 1051 The several codes in the encounters are thus shown to give context-controlled  
 1052 impressions which ultimately constrain the discourse choices made by partici-  
 1053 pants. Future research can compare codes at first and subsequent meetings,  
 1054 and investigate the point of contact between first meetings in African and West-  
 1055 ern hospital interactions.

1056

## Bionote

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 1063 Nigerian English' (in *Review of Cognitive Linguistics*, 2010), "'Concealment in  
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