Bilingual interjections: Evidence from Croatian-English code-switching

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This paper examines the presence of English-origin interjections - affirmatives and negatives - in otherwise Croatian speech. Previous examinations of bilingual discourse marking has focused on habitualisation, pragmatic transference, cognitive processes (in terms of reducing the "mental load" of distinguishing between two systems) or psycholinguistic factors (eg. "non-deactivation" of pragmatic forms from one language which speakers habitually speak). However, such studies only address transference of pragmatic norms, whether features and/or forms. They have limited explanatory power where speakers employ discourse forms from one language and *equivalent forms from the other language there. This study examines the frequency and functionality of English-origin forms compared to Croatian ones. Findings here show that English forms generally co-occur with Croatian forms in a statistical sense and only displace Croatian ones where English forms are polyfunctional or perform more functions that their Croatian counterparts. This accounts for the higher statistical frequency of* yeah, *while forms such as* no *or* nah *occur roughly to the same degree as their Croatian equivalents. Thus, linguistic, in particular micro-discourse features are shown to influence selection of interjections.*

1. Introduction

Traditionally, nouns have been considered the grammatical category most likely to be transferred in language contact situations. Many early studies of language contact (e.g. Haugen 1950, 1956) postulated that lexical items, particularly those with a "transparent" or one-to-one relationship between form and referrent without other conspicuous grammatical features were most easily borrowed. Examples of such lexical items in English are "cultural" borrowings such as *perestroika*, *weltanschauung* or *karaoke*.

Some recent studies on synchronic language contact phenomena and "bilingual speech" have focused on discourse markers or "extra-clausal" forms, e.g. Maschler (1994, 1998, 2000), Matras (2000) and Blankenhorn (2001). Generally, elements such as interjections (and discourse markers) have a function, which is discourse-specific and subject to minimal syntactic restrictions. Some researchers of current code-switching models (e.g. Salmons 1990; Goss and Salmons 2000) examine discourse markers as a category which can be adopted *en masse* and which displace most or all forms which were previously employed. Adoption of discourse markers can occur as an apparent importing of forms, similar to other lexical items. Further, adoption of discourse markers may reflect an adoption of the pragmatic norms (together with the forms) of another language community. Clyne (1972:140) suggests that the occurrence of English discourse markers such as *and*, *anyway* and *well* in the speech of German-speaking migrants in Australia is, in part, motivated by their habitual contact with Australian English pragmatic norms resulting in transference of both feature and form into German. Clyne's (1972) German-English data are based on the speech of first- and second-generation speakers and *both* German and English discourse forms are recorded. Salmon's (1990) data are based on third- and fourth-generation members of German *Sprachinseln* in Texas in which English discourse forms have entirely displaced German ones. As such, length of contact with the other, sociopolitically more dominant language can be a predictor of linguistic outcomes: the longer the contact, the greater the likelihood that the minority language discourse markers will have been replaced by those of the majority language.

Sharing or transfer of pragmatic forms from one language to another is a process discernible longitudinally and at the macro-level. Other researchers have sought to account for how these macro-level outcomes eventuate by examining

individual speakers and positing that psycholinguistic process motivate these outcomes. Habitual contact with the pragmatic norms of another language and its speech community may lead to a situation where speakers are unable to "deactivate" discourse forms from one language even when in psycholinguistic terms it may not be the "selected" language of a communicative situation. The preponderance of English discourse markers in the speech of Dutch migrants in USA is described in the following way by De Bot and Schreuder (1993:200): ".. it could be that certain sets of features have such a high default level of activation as a result of continuous use, that they cannot be deactivated enough."

Related to a process of habitualisation of imported forms is the notion that selection of one set of pragmatic forms, regardless of which language is the selected one in a sociolinguistic sense, represents a cognitively "lighter" load for some bilingual speakers. Thus, bilinguals may universally employ forms from their "dominant language" (in terms of pragmatics) when speaking either that language *or* another language. Matras (2000) states:

"[B]ilingual speakers, in an unconscious effort to reduce the mental effort which is necessary to monitor and direct the hearer's responses and reactions to the speaker's utterances, can simplify monitoring-and-directing operations by eliminating the language-specific options available to them, thereby automaticizing the choice of expressions." (p.505)

Although expedient in many explanations of linguistic phenomena (e.g. *simplicity* as a pertaining criterion in achieving *explanatory adequacy* in generative linguistics) I would suggest that the influence of "least mental effort" or "linguistic economy" should not be overstated.

First, it suggests that only one set of forms should be the result. In this data set, that is not the case. English interjections occur alongside Croatian ones and their presence is, in a statistical sense, additive not subtractive.

Second, the notion of habitualisation appears to explain why English discourse forms are present in otherwise Croatian discourse on a large scale, particularly if English has become the dominant language of the speakers examined.[1] In the New World speakers of transplanted, "immigrant" languages, particularly in urban areas, are massively exposed to the sociopolitically dominant language of the host country, in most cases English. Thus, frequent employment of English discourse markers in their Croatian speech is due to their habitualised and preferred employment of English[2] in almost all sociolinguistic domains. Native-like proficiency in English by definition encompasses appropriate control and employment of English discourse markers. Habitualised employment of English and, *a priori*, English discourse markers, can lead to their employment in situations where Croatian[3] is the expected language choice. The *habitualisation* argument is therefore able to account for why a large number of imported forms can be found in a bilingual sample, but it is does not explain why speakers choose English forms sometimes and Croatian forms at other times. Co-occurrence of equivalent, synonymous forms from both languages is a characteristic of this Croatian-English sample.

Affirmatives and negatives are a subset of interjections, which are, in turn, a hyponym of discourse markers. This study examines affirmatives and negatives as they straddle the divide between semantic content and discourse function. Further, comparison with Croatian equivalents and frequency of co-occurrence is provided to reveal micro-discourse features which may motivate selection of English versus Croatian markers.

2. Informants and sample

The corpus on which the data of this paper are based was collected from recorded interviews conducted in Croatian with 100 Croatian-Australians. Most informants (87) were born in Australia to parents who had migrated to Australia as adults and in both sociological and linguistic terms are considered members of the second generation of an ethnic group and speech community.[4] The sample consists of 50 male and 50 female informants. The age of informants ranged from 16 to 32, with an average age of 21.6 years old. The sample, thus, allows cross-examination of linguistic behaviour with the variables of gender and age. All informants are speakers of the Štokavski dialect of Croatian and all informants' parents arrived in Australia at the age of 15 or older. The recorded interviews were carried out from March to September 1996.

Recorded interviews with informants lasted between 20 and 120 minutes. A 15-20 minute segment was chosen from each interview and transcribed. In most cases informants' discourse was transcribed according to Croatian orthography.

The corpus numbers ca.148 000 tokens and contains 4223 English-origin unintegrated forms. Data on each informant is given in round brackets after each utterance. The first number refers to informant number, "M" or "F" refers to gender while the last number indicates the informant's age. For example, "73,M,21" signifies: informant number 73, male, 21 years old.

3. Extra-clausal switching - interjections and discourse markers

Forms such as interjections and discourse markers which have a discourse-specific function and which are subject to minimal syntactic restrictions may occur before, after or between clauses. This type of switching, formally not different from inter-clausal switching, is characterised by the general lack of "content" referents, ie. lack of elements with a stateable lexical meaning, and its discourse-specific function. Both these characteristics distinguish it from inter-clausal switching which typically refers to switching between clauses with contentive value. Most examples of extra-clausal switches have a relatively high frequency of occurrence and their various functions as pause-fillers, hedges, stylistic or intelligibility markers etc. are no different to their various functions in monolingual discourse. As a category, extra-clausal switches account for a large percentage of all English-origin forms found in this bilingual sample as Tables 1 and 2 show.

Table 1: Number of turns and examples of switching across sample

No. of turns	5677
No. of monolingual Croatian turns	3043 (53%)
No. of monolingual English turns	311 (6%)
No. of non-lexicalised turns (i.e. *uh-huh* or mm)	47 (1%)
No. of turns containing switch/es	2276 (40%)
No. of transfers	4223

Table 2: Categories of switches and numbers of transfers

		Single items	Multiple items	Total
Extra-clausal switching				
Eng element and position in turn	a) initial	1330	87	1417
	b) medial	323	63	386
	c) final	862	22	884
Cro element and position in turn	a) initial	0	0	0
	b) medial	0	0	0
	c) final	1	0	1
	Total	2516	172	2688
Inter-clausal switching	Total	137	140	277
Intra-clausal switching	Total	962	296	1258
	Grand total	3615	608	4223

Due to the large number of affirmatives and negatives found in the corpus I distinguish them from other (non-lexical) interjections which are not presented in this paper.

Extra-clausal transfers are examined here for their form and frequency and frequency of Croatian equivalents. In addition, affirmatives are analysed according to their semantic value and position. Extra-clausal transfers are examined here without regard to their function as triggers or accompanying phenomena for other, contentive switches.

4. Interjections - affirmatives and negatives

The subject matter of this section includes interjections with affirmative or negative value, formally lexical or non-lexical. It also includes those forms which are formally identifiable as affirmatives but which co-function as discourse-pragmatic markers, eg. "end-of-turn" or "floor-relinquishing" signallers. These examples of *yeah* could equally well be categorised as discourse markers or pause fillers but are included here to show the various functions taken on by *yeah*.

4.1 Affirmatives

Verbalised affirmative responses may be given in different ways, while the form of response may vary according to interlocutor, situation and/or discourse type. Lexical items which themselves formally express an affirmative response usually occur in a position succeeding utterances, usually interrogatives or declaratives, which invite an affirmative (or negative) response. Examples include *yes*, *yeah* and *yep*, all of which are found in the corpus. Examples of non-lexicalised affirmative responses, *uh-huh* and *mm* are found while examples of multiple word (PRON.+AUX.VERB) constructions employing such as *Did you...? I did* are not found.

Table 3: Frequency of English-specific affirmatives

Form	No. of instances and % of total	No. of speakers	Ave. no. instances per speaker
yeah	2252 (95%)	99	23
yep	7 (0%)	6	1
yes	3 (0%)	1	3
uh-huh	66 (3%)	36	2
mm	46 (2%)	26	2
Total	2374		

The form *yeah* is conspicuous both by the high number of instances and the fact that it appears to be the form which is almost exclusively chosen of all lexicalised forms available. In studies of speakers of Greek (Tamis 1986: 204) and Spanish (Kaminskas 1972: 211) in Australia *yeah* is the only (transferred) affirmative interjection reported. The strong preference for *yeah* may be indicative of its high frequency in (Australian) English speech, especially in semi-formal conversation between interlocutors of a similar age group and also because it may be used in a variety of functions:

(i) Affirmative:

(1) *Hoćeš li jednog dana posjetiti Evropu ili Hrvatsku ili što ja znam..?* (J.H.)

Do you want to visit Europe or Croatia or whatever one day.. ?

[jea]..[jea].. *možda, um.. za pet, šest godina.. kad sakupim novce..* (87,F,17)

Yeah.. yeah.. maybe, um.. in five, six years.. when I've saved up the money..

(ii) Agreement/recognition/comprehension marker:

(2) *.. zima nije baš najbolje vrijeme da ideš tamo.. hladno je i puše bura..* (J.H.)

.. winter isn't the best time to go there.. it's cold and windy..

[jea].., *ali.. zima meni nije toliko loša.. ja volim sve.. jer.. htjela bi ići..* (96,F,17)

Yeah, but.. I don't mind winter that much.. I like everything.. because.. I'd like to..

(iii) Marker of non-commitment/indifference/brevity:

(3) *.. preuzmu kontrolu sa svojim letjelicama.. i kako napadaju ljude i tako dalje..* (J.H.)

.. and take control with their flying machines.. and how they attack people and so on..

[jeə]. (91,M,17)

Yeah.

(iv) Linking device which also distinguishes juncture of ideas:

(4) *.. ako mi se ne sviđa, onda uvijek imam tu diplomu.. tu marketing diplomu da mogu, kao kasno..* [jeə].. *i onda dobre.. dobre ocjene sam dobio, neće biti teško da nađem posao..* (66,M,21)

.. if I don't like it, then I've always got the diploma.. the marketing diploma so that I can, like late.. yeah.. and then good.. I got good marks, it won't be hard to find a job, um..

(v) Pause filler which "buys" time for sentence organisation:

(5) *.. kako treba pričat, govorit ljudima, i onda san tako počela i sada oni meni treniraju,* [jeə].. *ić,* [jeə].. *ići u, još studirat kao teologiju i tako bi voljela..* (64,F,22)

.. how you're supposed to talk, speak to people, and then I had just begun and now they're training me, yeah.. to go, yeah, to go to, to still study like theology and that's what I'd like to..

(vi) Turn-termination marker:

(6) *Po kućama više, ko zna, može biti doma ali.. čini mi se kao Australija..* [jeə].. (63,M,17)

By the houses more, who knows, it could be back home but.. it looks to me like Australia.. yeah..

A statistical distribution of *yeah* as an affirmative, (i), and as marker of other functions, (ii) to (vi), reveals that *yeah* is employed in 64% of all instances as a true affirmative. This function also usually coincides with clause-initial position.

Table 4: Function and clause position of yeah

Function	True affirmative (i)	Other functions (ii - vi)
No.	1431	821
Position	Clause initial	Clause final
No.	1422	830

As is shown, the many discourse-pragmatic functions performed by *yeah* contribute to its high incidence. The above examples are not "clear-cut" instances of pragmatic transference itself, as there exist Croatian pragmatic markers which can perform and fulfil all of these functions. For example:

(i) Affirmative:

(7) *On je iz tamo, kod Međugorja?* (J.H.)

He's from over there, near Međugorje?

Da, on je iz Međugorja. (32,F,32)

Yes, he's from Međugorje.

(ii) Agreement/recognition/comprehension marker:

(8) *.. pa smo sa trajektom putovali gore do Rijeke i onda smo bili u Poreču par dana..* (12,M,25)

.. so we travelled by ferry up to Rijeka and then we were in Poreč a few days..

U Istri? (I.H.)

In Istria?

Da.. i onda kroz Karlovac smo putovali.. (12,M,25)

Yes.. and then we travelled through Karlovac..

(iii) Marker of non-commitment/indifference/brevity:

(9) *Ili više voliš egzotično jelo?* (I.H.)

Or do you prefer exotic food?

Da, ali mislim, vidi.. egzotično jelo ne bi mogla svaki dan.. (13,F,27)

Yes, but I think, look.. I couldn't eat exotic food daily..

(iv) Linking device which also distinguishes juncture of ideas:

(10) *.. rodbina je više u Hrvatskoj a ima ih dosta u Njemačkoj i.. u Švicarskoj.. i onda smo išli dalju u Francusku, Italiju, Austriju..* (29,F24)

.. relatives are more in Croatia but there are a lot of them in Germany and.. in Switzerland.. and then we travelled on further to France, Italy, Austria..

(v) Pause filler which buys time for sentence organisation:

(11) *.. vidio sam još jedan film, ovaj.. francuski, zvao se "La Haine"..* (15,M,24)

.. I saw one more film, this.. French (one), it was called "La Haine"..

(vi) End-of-turn marker:

(12) *.. da bi radje bila kao u.. um.. di ima muški i ženski.. i tako..* (14,F,27)

.. so that I would rather have been like in.. um.. where there are male and female.. and so..

Insertion of *yeah* therefore appears to be facilitated by the many discourse-pragmatic functions that it fulfils for which various Croatian equivalents are required. The higher frequency of *yeah* compared to equivalent Croatian forms indicates that switching of *yeah* as shown in the above examples is a product of discourse structures more typical of Australian English speech than monolingual Croatian speech. In homeland Croatian non-affirmative forms or unfilled pauses are more likely to perform these functions, especially functions iv), v), and vi).

Linguistic factors may facilitate *yeah* insertion. *Yeah* has a homophonous equivalent in Croatian which can also function as an affirmative. The phonetic form of *yeah* [jeə] is very close to that of the Croatian form *je* [je] '(it) is'. *Je* is a short form for *jeste, jest* '(it) is', and, while in standard Croatian *je* does not stand alone or function as an affirmative, it may do so in many non-standard varieties of Croatian. Instances of *je* functioning as an affirmative is based on the model of repeating the 3.SG. form of the AUX.VERB 'to be' as in present tense non-standard interrogatives (*Je li ide..?* 'Does he go..?') or past tense interrogatives (*Je li išao..?* 'Did he go..?'). Employment of the finite short form, *je*, (often followed by additional text elaborating the affirmative response) is non-standard but present in many lects of Croatian. This function of *je* is exclusively affirmative and does not include any of the other functions of *yeah* presented above.

There is also counter-evidence in the data that (near) homophony is a facilitating factor in switching. The very low incidence of *yes* (three instances given by one informant) which has the equivalent near homophonous forms *jeste, jest* (3.SG. "long" form of *biti* 'to be') shows that homophony is not an operating facilitator. It could be postulated, however, that *yes* is a marked form in semi-formal discourse between similar-aged interlocutors in Australia anyway.

The influence of a (near) homophonous form in the other language is not shown to facilitate insertion of English affirmatives and negatives in other immigrant languages in the New World. Haugen (1953) reports that:

".. *nâ*, 'no' has largely replaced Norwegian *nei*, but the Norwegian *ja* has rarely been replaced by *jess* (Eng. 'yes'). Since *yah* is the usual midwestern word for *yes* in American English, possibly through German-Scandinavian influence, the result is that the *yes-no* system in American Norwegian is exactly like that of American English" (p.92).

For American Swedish, Hasselmo (1961,1970) reports similar findings. Some German-speakers in Australia, such as those in rural enclaves, are reported to use *ja* three times more frequently than any English equivalent while incidence of *yeah* is significantly lower than *yes* (Clyne1972:137). Clyne (1972) also finds that *nein* is still the preferred negative for most groups of speakers except for one old and established former language enclave.

Daan (1971: 208) reports for American Dutch that ".. *nee* has been largely replaced by *no*, but that *ja* has not or hardly been replaced by *yes*". Non-replacement of *ja* with *yes* is accounted for by the wider variety of functions that *ja* can perform as compared to yes. There is therefore evidence from American Dutch which indicates that lack of functional restriction is a facilitating factor in choice of interjection. This correlates with the findings of this study, in which *yeah* is shown to be less functionally restricted than *da* or any other Croatian equivalent. *Yeah* therefore appears more frequently than *da*. Frequency of the Croatian equivalent, *da*, is not as high as that of *yeah*, as the following table shows:

Table 5: Frequency of Croatian-specific affirmatives

Form	No. of instances (% of total)	No. of speakers	Av. no. instances per speaker
da	400 (96%)	50	8
Repetition of Croatian VP	9 (2%)	8	1
Long forms of *biti* 'to be' e.g. *jesam* (1.SG.), *jeste, jest* (3.SG.)	8 (2%)	6	1
Total	417		

Da is by far the most widespread Croatian affirmative as Table 5 suggests. There exists only a slight stylistic difference between *da* and other forms which represent an affirmative response:

(13) ***Jesi li to gledao i jesi li se razočarao?*** (J.H.)

Did you watch it and did you get disappointed?

Jesam, jesam, gledao sam, gledao jutros Engleska i Njemačka, i gledao.. (54,M,16)

I did, I did, I did watch it, I watched this morning England and Germany and I..

Da does not only function as an affirmative as in the above functions (i) to (iii), but may also perform the function of an end-of-turn marker - a function which *da* does not perform in homeland Croatian.

Table 6: Function and clause position of da

Function:	**True Affirmative (i)**	**Other functions (ii - vi)**
No.	379	21
Position:	**Clause initial**	**Clause final**
No.	358	42

Table 6 above shows that while the function and position of *da* is overwhelmingly that of an affirmative in clause-initial position, other functions and positions are also reported:

(14) .. [a:].. .. *možda jes.. proljeće, jesen, ne znam.. proljeće ili jesen.. da..* (50,M,18)

.. ah.. maybe aut.. spring, autumn, I don't know.. spring or autumn.. yes..

Da and *yeah*, as the almost exclusive means of expressing affirmatives in each language also occur together, in the same turn. *Yeah* preceded by a Croatian equivalent appears 22 times, while *yeah* followed by *da* or a long form of *biti* appears 27 times. Repetition of an affirmative is, by itself, of little significance as this is a frequently employed emphasis-marker. Occurrence of two affirmatives between which a switch is found is revealing of sociolinguistic and discourse-pragmatic factors. Normative pressures which may be expected to operate in situations such as recorded (sociolinguistic) interviews may be responsible for switching to Croatian within the same speech act. In this case *da* can be interpreted as a "face-saving" element through which a speaker shows knowledge of and ability to use the equivalent Croatian form.

(15) *To je kao regionalni vlak, ne kao gradski vlak ili tako nešto?* (J.H.)

That's like a regional train, not like an suburban train or something?

[jea].. *da, da*.. (62,F,19)

Yeah.. da, da..

This is not the case where *yeah* is inserted between *da* and other Croatian items. Because of its lower frequency compared to *yeah*, *da* may be perceived to be more marked stylistically and functionally restricted, leading to *yeah*-insertion as a stylistically-neutral marker of affirmativeness. It is unlikely that *yeah* may be considered a linguistic marker of second-generation membership as it is commonly found in the speech of first-generation speakers.

(16) *Kao što, kao prodavačica?* (J.H.)

Like what, like a sales assistant?

Da, da.. [jea].., *i samo čišćenje i, više prodamo kruha i kolače i tako*.. (62,F,19)

Da, da.. yeah, and just cleaning and, we sell more bread and cakes and so on..

Alternately, *yeah* and *da* may, for some speakers, function as discourse-stylistic co-hyponyms which may freely co-occur and recur to emphasise any of the functions (i) to (iii) above. Clyne (1972: 136) also reports from Australian German that "...some speakers followed the interjection from one code by that from the other code for emphasis in German discourse: *yes ja, ja yes, nein no, no nein*".

(17) *Samo kao pomagalo kojega se drži da se popne gore.. na vrh?* (J.H.)

Just like a helping device that you hold on to to get up there.. to the top?

[jea].. [jea], [jea].. *da, da, da* [jea]..*i*, [am].. *kad sam došla doli tu, ovi su*.. (60,F,26)

Yeah.. yeah, yeah.. da, da, da, yeah and, um.. when I got down here, these ones..

Non-lexicalised forms, *uh-huh* and *mm* also occur as affirmatives. Both forms are found in both Croatian and Australian English, although *uh-huh* in Croatian is considered by some speakers to be an import of recent vintage restricted to the lects of younger, urban speakers. In English, *uh-huh* [aha] together with homophonous nasally released forms [aⁿhⁿaⁿ] etc. may be perceived as more unequivocally affirmative and perhaps suggestive of a response of recognition, more so than mm [m:] or [m:ⁿ], a "casual yes" form (Quirk et al., 1985: 414).

(18) *Znači, tri, četiri predmeta za taj tečaj?* (J.H.)

That means, three, four subjects for that course?

[aha] *i to traje za tri godina...* (24,F,18)

Uh-huh and that lasts three years...

Overall distribution of affirmatives and affirmative-like forms is the following:

Table 7: Frequency of English and Croatian affirmatives and affirmative-like forms

Form	No. of instances and % of total	No. of speakers	Ave. no. instances per speaker
English			
yeah	2252 (79%)	99	23
yep	7 (0%)	6	1
yes	3 (0%)	1	3
English + Croatian			
yeah + *da*	23 (1%)	17	1
yeah + finite form of *biti*	4 (0%)	4	1
da + *yeah*	22 (1%)	15	1
Croatian			
da	400 (14%)	50	8
Repetition of Cro VP	9 (0%)	8	1
Finite form of *biti*	8 (0%)	6	1
Non-lexical			
uh-huh	66 (3%)	36	2
mm	46 (2%)	26	2
Total	2840		

The interjection *yeah* is by far the most commonly employed affirmative switch and by far the most commonly employed form which expresses affirmativeness from either language variety. Functions of *yeah* include those which are additional to (semantic) affirmativeness and those whose primary role is discourse-pragmatic. *Yeah* is employed over 51/2 times more often than the next most frequent form, *da*, which, through pragmatic transference, has experienced an extension of functional capabilities. While *yeah* is employed almost universally, only half of all informants use *da*. Cross-reference of individual informants pertaining to the variables gender and age reveal that there is an aged-based preference for *da* - employed by 32 older (those 21 years old or older) and only 18 younger (under 21 years old) informants. Non-lexicalised forms, *uh-huh* and *mm*, which are common to both languages, make up 5% of affirmatives.

4.2 Negatives

Negatives generally appear less frequently than affirmatives. Crystal (1987) reports that yes is the twelfth most common word in spoken English while no is not found amongst the twenty most-frequently occurring words (1987:86). In the speech samples of German-English bilinguals Clyne (1972: 137) reports that affirmative forms from either language outnumber negatives by a ratio 4:1. These findings concur with data from this sample in which occurrence of negatives, either English or Croatian, is significantly lower than that of affirmatives. Frequency and variety of negative forms, both English and Croatian, are presented below in Table 8.

Table 8: Frequency of English and Croatian negatives

Form	No. of instances and % of total	No. of speakers	Ave. no. instances per speaker
English			
no	52(20%)	25	2
nah [na:]	65(25%)	27	2
noop [noup]	1(0%)	1	1
English + Croatian			
no + neg. form of *biti* 'to be'	1(0%)	1	1
Croatian			
Neg. form of *biti* 'to be'	1(0%)	1	1
ne	144(55%)	55	3
Total	264		
(Total number of affirmatives - 2840)			

The average number of negatives per informant is also much lower: ca.2.4 compared to ca.10.6 for affirmatives. Negatives are functionally much more restricted than affirmatives and do not perform any other functions in the sample apart from expressing negative response:

(19) *Ne voliš?* (J.H.)

You don't like it?

No, ne interesira me soccer.. (9,F,20)

No, soccer doesn't interest me.

(20) *Dobro, i onda poslije mature, onda si išao na fakultet, je'l tako?* (J.H.)

Okay, and then after completing high school, then you went on to study, is that right?

Nisam, ja sada radim zanat, stolar. (48,M,21)

(No) I didn't, I have a trade now, (I work as a) carpenter.

(21) *Da.. ili jesu li oni tebi nešto govorili?* (J.H.)

Yes.. or did they say anything to you?

Ne.. (smije se).. samo su me pogledali kad sam ja vidjela nju.. (32,F,32)

No.. (laughter).. they just looked at me when I saw her..

The slightly higher occurrence of *ne*, the Croatian form, than the imported forms *no* and *nah* combined contrasts with data on negatives from American Norwegian (Haugen1953), American Swedish (Hasselmo 1961) American Dutch (Daan 1971). But higher occurrence of *ne* concurs with data on a large number of speakers of Australian German (Clyne 1972) and data from Brussels Dutch and Brussels French (Treffers-Daller 1994). No sociolinguistic or discourse-pragmatic factors appear to influence choice of which form is chosen. Rather, use of which negative is based on speaker-specific factors. In contrast to *yeah* which is employed universally (and to which *da* functions additively in the speech of some informants) there is no single negative which appears in the interviews of all or even a large number of informants. Thirty-six of the 55 informants who employ ne (144 times) do not use *no* or *nah*, while around half of those who employ *no* or *nah* do not use *ne*. This indicates that there is speaker-specific distribution of negatives.

Cross-reference of individual informants pertaining to the variables gender and age reveal that Croatian negatives, in general, are used most by older (21 years or over) male and younger (under 21 years) female informants and that those who use exclusively *no* and *nah* tend to be younger informants.

6. Conclusion

As shown above in 4.1, *yeah* is by far the most widespread and recurrent affirmative. *Yeah* occurs 2253 times while *da* appears 400 times. The influence of Croatian homophones in contributing to higher frequency of *yeah* is estimated to be slight due to the low frequency of *yes* which also has a homophonous Croatian equivalent. Further, *yeah* is employed almost universally while *da* is found more frequently in the speech of older informants. This appears to be congruent with the notion of length of contact between languages outlined above in section 1 that predicts that younger (and later-generation) speakers are more likely to have a higher number of transferred forms in their speech. Overall, *yeah* is displacing da as the most popular way of expressing affirmativeness. The preponderance of *yeah* is first and foremost attributed to its polyfunctionality. *Da* does not have the same polyfunctionality of *yeah* and becomes a less amenable form due to its restrictiveness comparative to *yeah*. *Yeah* now performs the function of not only an affirmative but also many other discourse functions.

As a consequence of *yeah*'s polyfunctionality, some speakers in some instances transfer *yeah*'s non-affirmative functions to its Croatian equivalent *da* in ways that *da* is not usually employed in homeland Croatian. Thus, *da* becomes for some a polyfunctional marker, not only an affirmative. However, this subsequent extension of *da*'s functions is not widespread and in a numerical sense does not match *yeah*'s role as the most common form. This discourse-semantic transference of the features of *yeah* onto those of *da* represents an interesting example of the interplay of functions and forms but is not a phenomenon statistically frequent enough to revive the use of da.

Yeah is five and a half times more frequent than the most frequent Croatian affirmative *da*, while *ne* slightly outnumbers the total number of English negatives, *nah*, *no* and *noop*. I posit that the lower number of English negative forms relative to affirmative forms is due to their monofunctionality: *nah*, *no* and *noop* function as negatives only. They are not employable for other discourse functions. English forms are therefore monofunctional like Croatian ne and do not perform any functions that Croatian ne does not already perform. Therefore, Croatian *ne* is able to "hold its own" as the default or statistically more favoured negative form.

Discourse analysis of the employment of English versus Croatian affirmative and negative forms shows that those forms from one language which are have greater functionality than comparable forms from the other language are more likely to become habitualised or "less easily deactivated" in psycholinguistic terms.

The findings here offer an insight into the forms employed by a group of bilingual informants who have discourse forms available to them from both languages. Other studies of bilingual discourse markers have focused on displacement and wholesale adoption, "unsuccessful" deactivation, habitualisation and adoption of a single pragmatic system with a set of forms from one language only as operating processes. Such processes have little explanatory power when forms from both languages occur together or alternately. This study shows that a micro-discourse analysis of forms' functionality can account for their co-occurrence and comparative frequency.

Notes

1. All informants who provided linguistic data for this article reported that English was their dominant language, alongside the fact that Croatian was the language with which they had first contact. Otherwise, assumptions of linguistic proficiency and "dominance" are unimportant to the discussion here.

2. "English" is employed here as a hypernym referring to any variety of Australian English, whether "monolingual" or containing Croatian-origin emblematic forms. The only sociolinguistic domains in which "monolinugal" English is not the habitualised choice are the home/family and religious domains.

3. Croatian is a hypernym which refers to any variety of Croatian, "monolingual" or inclusive of English insertions.

4. A smaller number of informants (13) were born in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia or Germany and came to Australia as young children. Their inclusion here as *second-generation* informants is justified by the fact that all arrived in Australia at pre-school age (5 years old) and have had all their education in Australia in English, which is the case with those born in Australia.

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