

Code-Mixing as Diasporic Identity Negotiation in Evelyn Wang's Dialogues in Everything Everywhere All at Once

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Abstract

The film Everything Everywhere All at Once features instances of code-mixing that reflect the main character's bilingual experiences and diaspora identity. This study aims to identify the types of code-mixing used by Evelyn Wang, analyse their distribution according to interlocutor, and explain their role in representing diaspora identity. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method, analysing 14 of Evelyn's dialogues containing code-mixing using the theories of Muysken (2000), Myers-Scotton (1993) and Bhabha (1994). The results indicate that insertion is the most dominant type of code-mixing (50%), followed by alternation (35.7%) and mixed patterns (14.3%), whilst congruent lexicalisation was not found. The distribution of code-mixing was influenced by the conversation partner, with insertion being more dominant in conversations with Waymond, whilst alternation occurred more frequently in conversations with Joy in emotionally charged situations. This study also demonstrates that code-mixing functions not only as a communication strategy, but also as a means for Evelyn to negotiate her diasporic identity as a Chinese-American woman through the use of English, Mandarin and Cantonese in different interactional contexts.

Keywords: Code-mixing, Diasporic identity, Bilingualism, Sociolinguistic

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INTRODUCTION

Language not only functions as a device of communication, but also plays a role in shaping and reflecting identity, culture, and social relations between individuals. Differences in social backgrounds cause everyone to use language in different ways, both in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. This phenomenon of variation is one of the main focuses in the study of linguistics, especially in the field of sociolinguistics. This field examines how the social factors of speakers influence the form, variation, and use of language in a given context. One of the phenomena that is often found in daily life is code-mixing.

The phenomenon of language variation such as code-mixing influenced by social background does not only appear in everyday life. This difference in language can also be found in various expressions. One of the media that most clearly represents this phenomenon is film. In films, language variations are used to describe social identities, status, and relationships between characters (Androutsopoulos, 2012; Hoffmann & Kirner-Ludwig, 2020; Johnson &

Ensslin, 2007; Ranzato & Zabalbeascoa, 2024). The purpose why speakers or movie characters themselves use code-mixing is because it is to express identity, manage social relationships, and adapt to the environment (Myers-Scotton, 1993).

Code-mixing is a variation of language that uses two or more languages simultaneously and alternates in a single speech or sentence. As Wardhaugh & Fuller (2015) says, code-mixing occurs when speakers use two languages together in such a way that there is a change from one language to another in a single speech. Muysken (2005) explained that code-mixing is divided into three types, namely: insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization.

Code-mixing also helps to see the social identity aspects that the speaker has. The selection of dominant languages in language variations such as code-mixing also displays social actions such as showing identity, showing power, or adjusting to the interlocutor as stated by Myers-Scotton (1993) who also identifies the dominant language through the concepts of matrix language and embedded language. In addition, Bhabha (1994) also argues that code-mixing can be understood as a linguistic manifestation of the existence of a third space, i.e., a space where cultural identity is negotiated and reconstructed. The point is that identity in the context of the diaspora is not fixed or singular, but is formed in the space between the hybrid.

Therefore, the film *Everything Everywhere All at Once* was chosen as the object of research because it presents complex language interactions, especially between English, Chinese, and Cantonese. The film depicts the life of a Chinese immigrant family in the United States, so the use of code-mixing serves not only as a means of communication, but also as a symbol of cultural identity and generational conflict. And also, linguistically, the film is interesting because it shows how the characters move and mix languages in different situations, both in formal and informal contexts. In addition, the multiverse theme raised in this film also reinforces the representation of identities that are not single, but layered and dynamic. In addition, the film shows how language is used to negotiate identity, power, and social relations. Thus, this analysis is not only relevant in the study of linguistics, but also in understanding the dynamics of contemporary culture.

Previous research has shown that the phenomenon of language variation, such as code-switching and code-mixing in audio-visual media, especially films, has been widely studied from various sociolinguistic perspectives. Research by Haq et al. (2026) examined the phenomenon of code-switching and code-mixing in the film *Assal Eswed* with a descriptive-analytical sociolinguistic approach. This study aims to identify the types, forms, and factors that influence the use of these two phenomena in character dialogue. Data were collected and analyzed using theories from Suwito and Chaer for code-mixing, Hoffmann and Saville-Troike for code-switching. The results showed that the code-switching found was entirely external switching, with the dominance of switching from Arabic to English. Meanwhile, code-mixing emerged in the form of words, phrases, and clauses, with the predominance of the insertion of English elements into the Arabic language structure. Factors that affect the emergence of these two phenomena include emotional expression, communication needs, social identity, situational adjustment, and certain lexical needs. Overall, this study shows that the use of code-switching and code-mixing in film not only serves as a communication strategy, but also reflects the dynamics of identity, bilingualism, and the influence of globalization in the context of contemporary Arab society.

Another study, Research by Javed et al. (2026), examined the phenomenon of code-mixing in digital communication, especially on Facebook posts among Pakistani teenagers. The study used a corpus-based approach by collecting about 150 data in the form of status, captions, comments, and hashtags from users aged 14-18 years, and supplemented with interviews to understand the motivations for language use. The results show that code-mixing is a very common and flexible practice, with the dominant form being intra-sentential mixing, followed by inter-sentential and extra-sentential mixing. The use of English and Urdu appears simultaneously in various digital communication contexts, with the highest distribution in status and captions. In terms of function, code-mixing is used for a variety of purposes, such as topic

adjustment, emphasis on meaning, expression of emotions, the use of intercession, and the marking of social and cultural identities. In addition, factors such as the influence of education, globalization, and the dynamics of social media also influence the choice of user language. Overall, the study concludes that code-mixing is not just a linguistic phenomenon, but also a social and cultural strategy used by teenagers to negotiate identity, demonstrate group affiliation, and balance between local culture and global influence in the digital space.

Although research by Haq et al. (2026) and Javed et al. (2026) shows that code-mixing functions as a communication strategy as well as identity negotiation in the context of film and social media, both studies still focus on the social forms and functions of code-mixing, but have not addressed in depth the cultural meaning and identity representations contained in it. Therefore, this study examines the phenomenon of code-mixing in the film *Everything Everywhere All at Once* with an integrative approach that includes structural analysis, social function, and hybrid identity interpretation. This study aims to (1) identify the types of code-mixing based on Muysken (2005) classification, (2) analyze the social function of language use through the Myers-Scotton (1993) framework, and (3) interpret cultural meanings and hybrid identity representations using the concept of third space from Bhabha (1994).

METHOD

This study applies a descriptive qualitative method. Taylor et al. (2016) explained that this method is used to examine descriptive data in the form of oral speech, written text, and observable behaviour. This method is considered appropriate for this study because the researcher analyzed the data in the form of written discourse and interpreted various linguistic aspects found in the data. Furthermore, this study focuses on linguistic data in the form of code-mixing phenomena found in the film *Everything Everywhere All at Once*.

To obtain the necessary data, this study applies several stages of data collection. First, the researcher watched the film *Everything Everywhere All at Once* in its entirety to understand the storyline, the context of the conversation, and identify dialogues that contain code-mixing elements. The research data was obtained from the dialogues spoken by the characters in the film. Then, the dialogues were verified by matching them with the movie scripts available online to ensure the validation of the data. After the verification process was carried out, the researcher documented the data in two forms, namely the original spoken version and the translated version that had been listed in the film script. Then, the researchers sorted out the data by only taking the speech spoken by Evelyn Wang. In addition, the researcher only chose English speech that contained Chinese inserts as research data. This restriction is made because Evelyn is the main character who is most often involved in bilingual interactions throughout the film, thus providing more consistent and representative code-mixing data for analysis. Meanwhile, the focus on mixing English and Chinese was set to maintain data consistency and allow for a more in-depth analysis of the form and function of code-mixing used by the figure.

After all the data was collected, the researcher conducted an analysis through several stages. First, the data was selected by taking only English-language dialogues that contained Chinese or Cantonese inserts. Furthermore, the selected data is classified and grouped based on two categories, namely the type of code-mixing according to Muysken (2005) and the type of interlocutor involved in the conversation. After the classification process is complete, all data is analyzed using Myers-Scotton (1993) theory to identify the function of using code-mixing in each dialogue. In addition, certain data that show aspects of identity were also further analyzed to reveal the representation of Evelyn's diaspora identity reflected through the code-mixing practices she used based on Bhabha (1994).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discussion of research based on the objectives and research questions that have been formulated previously. The discussion focused on the analysis of the social function of code-mixing based on the Myers-Scotton theory and the representation

of diaspora identity based on the Bhabha theory contained in Evelyn Wang's dialogue in the film *Everything Everywhere All at Once*. The research data is in the form of a dialogue that contains code-mixing with English as a matrix language and Chinese or Cantonese as an embedded language. From the data collection process, the researcher obtained 14 data that met the research criteria. All data is then classified and grouped based on two criteria: the type of code-mixing according to Muysken and the type of interlocutor involved in the conversation. The results of this classification then became the basis for analyzing the function of the use of code-mixing and representation of diaspora identity displayed by Evelyn Wang.

The researcher grouped them based on two criteria (Muysken-type & interlocutor) because they are needed to achieve the maximum analysis results. The grouping of data by type of code-mixing is carried out in order to find out the concrete patterns in code-mixing.

1. Distribution of Code-Mixing Types

Table 1 below presents the distribution of code-mixing instances in Evelyn's dialogue according to Muysken's (2005) typology.

Table 1. Distribution of Code-Mixing Types in Evelyn's Dialogue

Type of Code-Mixing (Muysken, 2005)	Frequency	Percentage
Insertion	7	50.0%
Alternation	5	35.7%
Mixed (Insertion → Alternation)	2	14.3%
Congruent Lexicalization	0	0%
Total	14	100%

As shown in the table above, the insertion type was the most dominant type of code-mixing found, which was as many as 7 out of 14 data (50%). This type is followed by alternation, which appears as many as 5 data (35.7%). In addition, 2 data (14.3%) were also found that showed mixed patterns in one speech, namely the combination of insertion and alternation. The mixed pattern will be discussed further in the section 3.

Interestingly, no cases of congruent lexicalization were found in this study data. This finding is in line with the opinion of Muysken (2005) who stated that congruent lexicalization tends to appear in languages that have a relatively high level of typological similarity and grammatical structure. In this study, English and Chinese/Cantonese have significant syntactic differences so that they do not provide a shared grammatical framework that allows the insertion of lexical elements freely from the two languages. Therefore, the linguistic conditions that generally favor the emergence of congruent lexicalization are not found in Evelyn Wang's dialogue.

The relatively balanced proportion between the insertion and alternation types is one of the key findings of this study. The insertion type generally indicates a more spontaneous or habitual form of code-mixing, namely through the insertion of lexical elements with cultural significance into sentence structures dominated by English. Conversely, the alternation type involves a shift in more complex linguistic structures, which generally occurs in situations with a stronger emotional or relational charge. The fact that alternation accounts for more than a third of the total data suggests that Evelyn's code-mixing practices are not merely habitual or stylistic, but are also used systematically in response to the emotional intensity of a conversation. This pattern will be discussed further in Section 4.

2. Distribution Across Interlocutors

Table 2 presents the distribution of code-mixing instances according to Evelyn's interlocutor in each instance.

Table 2. Distribution of Code-Mixing Instances by Interlocutor

Interlocutor	Frequency	Percentage	Dominant Type
Waymond (husband)	7	50.0%	Insertion
Joy (daughter)	5	35.7%	Alternation
Strangers / public	2	14.3%	Insertion (formulaic)
Total	14	100 %	—

Table 2 shows that patterns of code-mixing are influenced by the interlocutor. A total of 50% of all code-mixing data was found in Evelyn's dialogue with Waymond, her husband, who is also a first-generation immigrant. In these interactions, the insertion type was the most dominant form. Meanwhile, 35.7% of the data appeared in Evelyn's conversations with Joy, her daughter who was raised in the United States, and the majority of this consisted of the alternation type. The remaining 14.3% was found when Evelyn spoke to other people in public or semi-public spaces, such as customers at her family's laundry business and guests at the New Year's celebration hosted by her father. In these contexts, the code-mixing used consisted solely of brief, formulaic insertions.

This distribution supports the Markedness Model proposed by Myers-Scotton (1993), which states that the social relationship between the speaker and the addressee has a significant influence on language choice. In this study, the degree of social closeness between Evelyn and her interlocutor appears to be a more decisive factor in determining the frequency of occurrence and the structural complexity of code-mixing than the topic of conversation or grammatical necessity alone.

3. Insertion

The insertion type is the most dominant pattern of code-mixing in Evelyn's dialogue with Waymond. This dominance reflects what Myers-Scotton (1993) refers to as 'unmarked code choice', that is, a choice of language that is considered natural and has become customary in close, long-standing bilingual relationships. Several examples illustrating this pattern are presented in the following discussion.

EVELYN: Later. Maybe. I need to finish this before 爸醒來 (Dad wakes up) 你先去 (you go) steam the table cloths for tonight.

This utterance occurred when Evelyn and Waymond (her husband) were having a casual conversation at home or at work. The topics discussed related to routine activities, so the interaction took place in a relaxed atmosphere without any conflict or emotional tension. As a married couple who are both first-generation immigrants, they are accustomed to switching between English and Mandarin in their everyday communication.

In this utterance, two short clauses in Mandarin are inserted as temporal adverbials and directive expressions into a sentence dominated by English, without altering its main syntactic structure. This insertion occurs in the context of an everyday conversation between a husband and wife, thus reflecting a type of insertion that constitutes a routine and low-marked form of code-mixing. The use of this form does not require any special interpretative effort on Waymond's part, as he shares the same bilingual competence as Evelyn.

EVELYN: ...you know what your father does? He brings her cookies. 神經病! (crazy person!)

This statement came up whilst Evelyn was recounting an experience that had left her feeling annoyed and stressed following her meeting with a tax officer. During the conversation, she gave a lengthy account in English, but at certain points she inserted Mandarin expressions to convey her emotions more spontaneously.

In this utterance, the Mandarin interjection 神經病 (literally meaning ‘nerve disease’, but colloquially meaning ‘crazy’) is used to emphasise emotion within an English-language narrative about her tense encounter with a tax officer. The expression carries a strong affective charge and was not translated by Evelyn into English. This suggests that certain emotionally charged vocabulary is more readily accessible through a speaker’s first language, a pattern frequently observed in bilingualism research on the relationship between emotion and language (Pavlenko, 2005). Interestingly, the same interjection also appears in Evelyn’s conversation with Joy, for example in the utterance “神經病 Why would I go”. This repeated occurrence suggests that 神經病 functions as a consistent and readily accessible emotional marker within Evelyn’s bilingual repertoire, regardless of who her conversation partner is.

EVELYN: ‘Dissolution of marriage’? 什麼? (What?)

This utterance occurred when Evelyn was reading a document from another universe and came across the phrase “dissolution of marriage.” The term startled her as it implied divorce, prompting her to react spontaneously to the information she had just received.

In this utterance, Evelyn inserted the Mandarin interrogative 什麼 (shénme, ‘what?’) after uttering the English phrase ‘dissolution of marriage’. This insertion emerged as a spontaneous response to the emotional shock she experienced. The emergence of a first-language element in the middle of an English utterance indicates that in situations involving sudden emotional stress or cognitive disruption, bilingual speakers tend to revert to the language that is most automatic and most deeply embedded in their linguistic repertoire. This finding is consistent with Gardner-Chloros (2009) view that not all instances of code-mixing are conscious or strategic; some occur automatically as a reflection of deeply rooted bilingual competence.

EVELYN: 你哥... (Your brother) gets divorce and now you think divorce is okay?

Evelyn made this remark whilst discussing divorce. During the conversation, she referred to her conversation partner’s brother as an example to challenge the view that divorce is acceptable.

In this utterance, the Mandarin kinship term 你哥 (nǐ gē, ‘your older brother’) is inserted at the beginning of a sentence that is otherwise in English. This insertion is a form of insertion, as a lexical element from Mandarin is incorporated into the syntactic structure of English without altering the grammatical framework of the sentence. The use of kinship terms in the first language also indicates that lexical categories such as family titles have strong cultural and emotional ties. According to Zentella (1997), kinship terms are among the elements most frequently retained in the first language by bilingual speakers because they are acquired from an early age and carry relational meanings that cannot be fully represented by their English equivalents. Therefore, the use of 你哥 not only serves to refer to a family member, but also reflects Evelyn’s cultural closeness and linguistic identity as a bilingual speaker.

EVELYN: 新年快樂。 (Happy New Year) Thank you for coming. Another year... wow... what do I even say?

Evelyn made these remarks whilst addressing the guests attending the New Year's celebration organised by her family. Unlike previous examples, which were directed at family members or close interlocutors, these remarks were addressed to a wider audience in a public or semi-public setting.

In this utterance, Evelyn began her speech with a New Year's greeting in Mandarin, 新年快樂 (Xīnnián kuàilè, 'Happy New Year'), before continuing in English. This insertion is a formulaic expression commonly used in the context of Chinese culture. Unlike the spontaneous interjections in the previous data, the use of code-mixing in this utterance is ritualistic and performative, as it is used as part of the opening of a communicative event in front of an audience. Through the use of this greeting, Evelyn first establishes a shared cultural frame with the guests before switching to English. Thus, the insertion in this data no longer represents an unmarked code choice in everyday conversation, but rather a deliberate choice to display Chinese cultural identity before a diverse audience. This finding also serves as an introduction to the discussion on the performance of diaspora identity in Section 4.

4. Alternation

Alternation, which involves the insertion of a full clause in Mandarin or Cantonese into a turn dominated by English, is primarily found in two contexts. Firstly, when Evelyn speaks to Joy about sensitive family or relationship issues. Secondly, when she interacts with Waymond in situations involving emotional stress or a crisis. The following examples illustrate this pattern.

EVELYN: Check the pot in 5 minutes. 爸最討厭煮爛的麵。(Dad hates overcooked noodles.) And which paint did you use?

This statement occurred whilst Evelyn was giving a series of instructions to her family members as they prepared a meal. In the middle of these instructions, she interjected a comment about her father's habit of disliking overcooked noodles, before resuming her instructions in English.

In this utterance, Evelyn inserts a full clause in Mandarin, 爸最討厭煮爛的麵 ("Dad hates overcooked noodles the most"), between two imperative sentences in English. The Mandarin clause serves as additional information explaining the reason behind the instructions given, rather than as an element that is grammatically dependent on the surrounding English sentences. As the clause has a complete syntactic structure and can stand alone as a utterance, this data is categorised as alternation. This classification is in line with Muysken's (2000) criteria, which state that alternation occurs when two linguistic units, each with an independent syntactic structure, are used side by side within a single turn.

EVELYN: 妳爸阿...過了這麼多年 (Your dad... after all these years) I still don't understand how his brain works.

Evelyn uttered these words to Joy whilst the two of them were discussing Waymond. During that conversation, Evelyn expressed her frustration and confusion regarding her husband's behaviour after many years of marriage.

In this utterance, Evelyn begins with a complete clause in Mandarin, 妳爸阿...過了這麼多年 ("Your father... after all these years"), then continues the same idea in English: "I still don't understand how his brain works." As the Mandarin clause has a complete syntactic structure and stands independently before the switch to English, this data is categorised as alternation according to Muysken's (2005) classification. This language switch occurs whilst Evelyn is expressing a personal grievance regarding her marriage, a topic with strong emotional connotations. This suggests that, unlike insertion, which generally occurs in

everyday conversation, alternation tends to be used when Evelyn needs to express deeper attitudes, emotions or feelings through the expressive resources available in her first language.

EVELYN: How did you... what is happening? 我們真的要離婚嗎? (Are we really getting divorced?)

This conversation took place at the height of the conflict between Evelyn and Waymond. After hearing Waymond's statement, which was influenced by events across the multiverse, Evelyn felt confused, shocked and found it hard to believe the situation she was facing.

In this utterance, Evelyn first speaks the English phrase, "How did you... what is happening?", before switching to a full clause in Mandarin: 我們真的要離婚嗎? ("Are we really going to get divorced?"). As this Mandarin clause has a complete syntactic structure and can stand alone as a question, this data is categorised as alternation in accordance with Muysken's (2000) classification. The language shift at this moment coincides with a highly intense emotional state, namely when Evelyn is facing the possibility of her marriage coming to an end. The use of Mandarin indicates that, whilst experiencing high emotional stress, Evelyn spontaneously reverted to her first language to express her most fundamental feelings. This phenomenon is consistent with Dewaele's (2010) view, which states that bilingual speakers tend to switch to their first language or the language acquired in childhood when experiencing strong emotional responses, as the cognitive control required to maintain the use of the second language is reduced.

EVELYN (to a customer): 哇，他的鼻子很大哦 (Wow, what a big nose) Welcome, how can I help you?

This dialogue took place whilst Evelyn was serving a customer at her family's laundry business. Before formally greeting the customer, Evelyn first made a brief comment in Mandarin about the customer's appearance, then immediately switched to English to greet them and offer her assistance.

In this utterance, Evelyn speaks a complete clause in Mandarin, 哇，他的鼻子很大哦 ("Wow, his nose is really big"), before continuing in English, "Welcome, how can I help you?" As the Mandarin clause has a complete structure and stands independently before switching to English, this data is categorised as alternation according to Muysken's (2005) classification. Unlike the previous example of alternation, which was triggered by emotion, the language switch in this data reflects a difference in communicative function. The Mandarin clause is used as a personal comment not intended to be understood by the customer, whilst English is used as a formal service language addressed to the customer. The blending of the two languages within a single turn demonstrates Evelyn's ability to manage two registers of communication simultaneously: an intimate, personal register through Mandarin and a professional register through English. Thus, the practice of code-mixing in this data functions not only as a communication strategy but also reflects Evelyn's position as a diaspora individual who continually negotiates her cultural and social identities in accordance with the context of the interaction. This phenomenon aligns with the concept of 'in-betweenness' proposed by Bhabha (1994), namely the condition in which a person's identity is shaped through movement and negotiation between two distinct cultural spaces.

5. Mixed (Insertion to Alternation)

Two instances of data in this study reveal a pattern of code-mixing that differs from the previous category: a single turn that begins with insertion and then develops into alternation as the emotional intensity of the utterance increases. This pattern demonstrates that the

type of code-mixing used by Evelyn can change gradually in line with the development of the topic and the emotional state she is experiencing.

EVELYN (to Joy): 你媽对你交往女朋友的事，已經很 open 了。還是個老外。But Gong Gong, I don't think his heart could take that. Especially not after that flight. Coming all of the way from China just to die like that.

Here is the translation based on the script.

EVELYN: your mother is open to you dating a girl. A white girl. But Gong Gong, I don't think his heart could take that. Especially not after that flight. Coming all of the way from China just to die like that.

Evelyn said this to Joy whilst they were discussing Joy's relationship with Becky and how Gong Gong might react to it. At first, Evelyn explained that she had tried to be open-minded about her daughter's relationship. However, as the conversation continued, the focus shifted to her concerns about Gong Gong's health and his conservative views should he find out the truth.

At the beginning of the utterance, Evelyn uses Mandarin as the matrix language, inserting a single English lexical item, 'open', so this section is categorised as an insertion. The use of the word 'open' indicates the insertion of a single lexical item into the syntactic structure of Mandarin without altering its grammatical framework. Interestingly, this pattern is the reverse of most of the data in this study, which generally uses English as the matrix language and Mandarin as the inserted language.

As the conversation progressed, Evelyn then switched entirely to English when discussing her concerns about her health and Gong Gong's possible reaction. The shift to a full clause in English indicates an instance of alternation, as the language used changed completely and formed an independent syntactic structure. This shift from insertion to alternation coincides with an increase in the emotional intensity of the conversation, moving from the relatively neutral conveyance of information regarding her more open attitude towards Joy's relationship to a deeper expression of concern for her father. Thus, the change in the pattern of code-mixing in this data not only reflects a shift in language, but also reflects a change in the focus of the conversation and the increasing emotional weight that Evelyn wishes to convey.

EVELYN (to Joy, climactic reconciliation): 你可能係身上蛟倒你自己最大嚇恐懼。我一直都好希望佢唔會似我。(In Cantonese) But she turned out stubborn, aimless, a mess just like her mother. But now I see it's okay that she's a mess. Because just like me, 讓他在這個空間找到一位善良，有耐性又可以包容她的人

The translation:

EVELYN: You may see in her all of your greatest fears squeezed into one person. I spent most of her childhood praying she would not end up like me. But she turned out stubborn, aimless, a mess just like her mother. But now I see it's okay that she's a mess. Because just like me, the universe gave her someone kind, patient, and forgiving to make up for all she lacks.

These words are spoken at the climax of the scene where Evelyn and Joy are reunited. After going through various conflicts and misunderstandings, Evelyn finally expresses her acceptance and love for her daughter. At this moment, she reflects on the similarities

between herself and Joy and realises that her daughter has found someone who is able to accept her just as she is.

This data represents the most complex form of code-mixing in this study. The utterance begins with a full clause in Cantonese, followed by a clause in English, and concludes with a full clause in Mandarin. This pattern demonstrates two instances of alternation flanking a main section in English. Unlike the other data, which is dominated by Mandarin, this is the only utterance that uses Cantonese as part of the code-mixing practice.

The choice of Cantonese at the beginning of her speech does not appear to be a coincidence. In the film, Cantonese is associated with Gong Gong as the family dialect representing the previous generation. By using Cantonese during the moment of reconciliation with Joy, Evelyn linguistically links her role as a mother to the relationship she had as a child with her father. Meanwhile, the middle section, which is in English, conveys a more universal message: that it does not matter if someone has many shortcomings, as they can still be accepted and loved. Towards the end, Evelyn returns to Mandarin to express her hope that Joy has found someone who is kind, patient and able to accept her for who she is.

The shift between Cantonese, English and Mandarin within a single speech turn demonstrates that code-mixing in this data serves not only as a communication strategy, but also as a means of representing Evelyn's emotional experiences and cultural identity. The complexity of the linguistic patterns employed reflects the most comprehensive process of identity negotiation in the film, namely when Evelyn is able to harmonize her identities as a child, a mother, and a woman of the diaspora living amidst various languages and cultures. Consequently, this data constitutes the most powerful representation of the process of identity negotiation, which will be discussed in greater detail in the section on diaspora identity.

6. Code-Mixing as Diasporic Identity Negotiation

Overall, the findings presented in Sections 1 to 5 support the main argument of this study, namely that code-mixing in Evelyn Wang's dialogue is not merely a stylistic device or a coincidental linguistic variation. Rather, code-mixing is a linguistic practice employed systematically as a means of negotiating her diasporic identity. In line with the concept put forward by Bhabha (1994), diaspora identity is not understood as something fixed or singular, but is continually shaped, negotiated and constructed through social interaction and the choice of language used in various communicative contexts.

There are three key patterns that are particularly important for interpreting the findings of this study. Firstly, the predominance of insertion in Evelyn's conversation with Waymond indicates that Mandarin functions as an unmarked code in their relationship—that is, a language used naturally and requiring no special explanation or adjustment, as both share the same linguistic and cultural background. In other words, Mandarin serves as a kind of 'familiar linguistic space' within their relationship.

Secondly, the high frequency of alternation in Evelyn's conversations with Joy, particularly during moments involving emotional vulnerability and family matters, suggests that more complex use of her heritage language tends to emerge when Evelyn's identity as a Chinese mother becomes more prominent. In such situations, language functions not only as a tool for communication, but also as a means of expressing values, emotions and cultural identity that are difficult to convey fully through English.

Thirdly, the limited occurrence of code-mixing in interactions with the public, as seen in the data on comments to customers and New Year's greetings, suggests that Evelyn's use of her bilingual repertoire is heavily influenced by her audience. Within the family setting, she uses both languages relatively freely. However, when interacting with the wider American community, her use of Mandarin or Cantonese becomes far more limited and generally appears only in the form of brief, in-group remarks or formulaic expressions related to cultural traditions. This pattern suggests that Evelyn's language choices are not

random, but rather tailored to the social context and the identity she wishes to project in each communicative situation.

This kind of context-dependent and context-adapted use of two languages is consistent with the concept of the ‘third space’ proposed by Bhabha (1994). From this perspective, Evelyn does not possess a single, fixed linguistic identity. Rather, her identity is continually shaped and renegotiated in accordance with the context of the interactions she encounters. In certain situations, she appears as a wife who uses Mandarin to build closeness with Waymond; in other situations, she becomes a mother who utilises code-mixing to express emotions and bridge her relationship with Joy; whilst when interacting with the wider community, she predominantly uses English as a business owner in America. These various identity positions do not fully coalesce into a single, stable identity, but continue to shift in response to different social contexts.

This pattern is most fully realised in the reconciliation scene between Evelyn and Joy, as discussed in Section 5. In this exchange, Evelyn chooses to speak Cantonese—a dialect associated with her father (Gong Gong)—to express her acceptance of her daughter. This choice of language symbolically bridges two intergenerational relationships: that of Evelyn as a daughter to her father, and as a mother to Joy. Thus, the linguistic and emotional distance that had hitherto fuelled the conflict in the film is momentarily bridged through a single sequence of speech.

Based on these findings as a whole, code-mixing in Evelyn’s dialogue not only reflects her diaspora experience, but also serves as a key means of shaping and negotiating that identity. Each instance of code-mixing represents the process through which Evelyn displays, questions and negotiates her identity as a Chinese-American woman, a mother, a wife and an immigrant. Ultimately, as shown in the film’s final scenes, this linguistic practice also forms part of the process of identity reconciliation that Evelyn undergoes, as the various identities that previously appeared to be in conflict begin to find common ground.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyse code-mixing in Evelyn Wang’s dialogue in the film **Everything Everywhere All at Once** (2022) based on three research questions: the types of code-mixing used, their distribution across various interactional contexts, and their sociolinguistic functions in the process of negotiating diaspora identity. The analysis was conducted on 14 data points containing instances of code-mixing between English-Mandarin and English-Cantonese, using Muysken’s (2005) structural typology, Myers-Scotton’s (1993) Markedness Model, and the concept of the ‘third space’ proposed by Bhabha (1994).

Based on the first research question, the findings indicate that insertion is the most dominant type of code-mixing, accounting for 50%, followed by alternation at 35.7%. Furthermore, a mixed pattern was identified, accounting for 14.3%, comprising utterances that evolve from insertion to alternation within a single turn. Meanwhile, the type known as ‘congruent lexicalisation’ was not found in this study due to the considerable typological and syntactic differences between English and both Mandarin and Cantonese, which precluded the formation of a ‘shared grammatical frame’ which is a prerequisite for the emergence of this type.

Turning to the answer to the next question, the distribution of code-mixing usage shows a strong correlation with the interlocutor. Insertions were most frequently found in Evelyn’s conversations with Waymond, reflecting an intimate relationship and the use of unmarked code. Conversely, alternation occurred more frequently in conversations with Joy, particularly in situations involving conflict or emotional vulnerability. As for interactions with other people in public spaces, the code-mixing used tends to be limited to the insertion of brief, formulaic expressions. These findings support Myers-Scotton’s Markedness Model (1993), which states that the social relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor is one of the main factors influencing language choice and patterns of code-mixing.

Based on the final research objective, this study demonstrates that code-mixing in Evelyn's dialogue is not merely a spontaneous linguistic variation, but rather an integral part of the process of negotiating her diasporic identity. Evelyn's choice of language represents a constant shift between the Chinese cultural identity she has inherited and the life she leads as an immigrant in the United States. This process of negotiation reaches its climax in the scene of reconciliation with Joy, when Evelyn uses Cantonese to express her acceptance of her daughter. In line with Bhabha's (1994) concept of the 'third space', this moment represents the point at which Evelyn's various cultural identities, family ties and diaspora experiences are negotiated and fused through the practice of code-mixing, thereby making language the primary medium for both shaping and representing her diaspora identity.

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