

## Acknowledgments

Growing up as a bilingual speaker of Norwegian and Dutch and engaging in daily in acts of code-switching, has undoubtedly enforced my interest in the study of code-switching. I would speak with my parents predominantly in Dutch, and still do when I visit, and code-switch to Norwegian whenever I lacked the Dutch word I needed. Although I have been aware of switching between languages for several years, it was not until I learned of the field of code-switching through my studies here at NTNU that I realized its relevance.

My interest in code-switching stems from a semester abroad at the University of New South Wales in Australia. At UNSW I had a lovely professor, Fiona Morrison, who opened my eyes to the world of code-switching within postcolonial literature, which laid the foundation for this thesis.

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### **Abstract**

This thesis explores the alternations between English and Malayalam, or the code-switching in Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things*. The foundation used for studying code-switching in literature is Meir Sternberg's model *Polylingualism and Translational Mimesis in Literature* (1981). This model has provided grounds for an in-depth look at the code-switching in the novel.

Several strategies of code-switching presented by Sternberg (1981), are found in the novel. They appear for example as visual linguistic differences between Malayalam and English or formal versus informal language discourse, both appearances with significance for and emphasizing the multilingual character of the novel. Various forms of code-switching coexist and interact with each other in the novel. Although specific categorical types of code-switching are more frequent than others, no one strategy dominates the novel in its entirety. As a whole, the different strategies of code-switching contribute to the multilingual universe of the novel.

The characters use of code-switching through the novel, in addition to their actions and the narrative description, emphasizes the differences in the character's social strata. Thus, also contributing to multilingual interpretation of the novel. Although Sternberg's model serves as a decent tool for studying code-switching in literature, it is difficult, if at all possible to use only these strategies to discuss the multilingual universe of the novel. However, since it is difficult to find any model which can account for code-switching in written literary works, Sternberg's model is perhaps most applicable, as long as there is critical consideration of how it is used.



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## **1. Introduction**

This thesis analyzes code-switching in postcolonial literature using Indian author Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things*, a book which features several instances of code-switching between English and Malayalam, a language spoken in the Indian region of Kerala. As such, this book is a relevant source for researching code-switching within literature. There are also a few instances of code-switching between English and Tamil. The code-switching instances between English and Tamil will be addressed, although they do not present the same challenges as the predominant code-switching between English and Malayalam.

### **1.1 Postcolonial Literature**

The postcolonial literature tradition is interesting in many respects, but the focus within this thesis is on language. Many authors within the postcolonial literature tradition have specifically chosen to write their novels in the languages of the former colonial powers. These literary works often feature not only the language of the former oppressor, but also segments or phrases in the original native language, giving a voice to the oppressed. We often call this type of change between two languages code-switching. Code-switching is the process of switching from one language to another within the same conversation and sometimes even the same sentence. This use of language is commonly used by bilingual speakers and in many former colonies where the population often speaks both the official language, usually that of the former colonizers, and their own national or native language (Edwards, 2008).

### **1.2 Literature versus Linguistics**

One of linguistics' most traditional usages is the study of language and style in literary works. This general area of interest has received increased attention in recent years after the swift development of stylistics. However, literature study does not have to rely on linguistics

for understanding literary works; no formal linguistic mechanisms need to be present to carry out a critical analysis of a literary work. Linguistic analysis can, though, add a great deal to our interpretation of a given text. Not only can it give us a vocabulary and a methodology with which we can discuss the text, it can also make us conscious of what we experience and why when we read works of literature (Traugott & Pratt, 1980).

Linguistics can help us establish a dependable analysis by giving us a different viewpoint on the text, and as such make us ask questions that we might not have asked when initially considering the language of the literary work. Linguistics can give literary critics means of textual description and enable them to recognize methodical regularities within a text. A sort of “grammar of the text” can be established by using linguistics to forge a theory about the language of a literary text (Traugott & Pratt, 1980).

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The novel *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy features a great number of instances of code-switching. This thesis aims to explore the features of code-switching in the novel and describe how the code-switching situates the novel within a fictional multilingual world. The research questions used to investigate code-switching in *The God of Small Things* are listed below:

- 1) Which strategies of code-switching are employed in *The God of Small Things*?
- 2) When do code-switching strategies come into play in the novel, and how do the features of code-switching bear significance for the multilingual interpretation of the novel?
- 3) What are the roles of the characters, and how does code-switching help to achieve characterization?



## 1.4 Thesis Structure

Chapter 2 gives a theoretical background for the discussion, and explores the topics of multilingualism, polylingualism and code-switching, with an emphasis on how these topics are applied within literature. The final section of Chapter 2 presents a model by Meir Sternberg, which is used as a point of departure for identifying instances of code-switching within *The God of Small Things*. Chapter 3 gives an outline of specific challenges related to the thesis, the novel, the author, the characters, the data presented in this thesis and how the analysis was conducted. The fundamental elements for discussion are presented in Chapter 4, followed by a discussion related to the three research questions presented above, in section 1.3. Chapter 5 concludes and summarizes the thesis and presents ideas for further research.



## 2. Theory

The theoretical foundation for this thesis requires an exploration of the (socio)linguistic terms multilingualism, polylingualism and code-switching. Although the term code-switching is discussed extensively later on in this chapter, it is necessary to define what the term code-switching means in this thesis, so that the term will be familiar to the reader while exploring the theoretical framework.

Code-switching is the use of switching from one language to another language within the same conversation to outline or express a specific identity.

Section 2.1 gives a brief outline of multilingualism before discussing how multilingualism is represented in literature. The next section, 2.2., presents the concept of polylingualism and introduces its use in literature. Section 2.3 gives a short overview of code-switching before moving on to discuss code-switching in literature and presenting a relevant strategic model for studying code-switching in multilingual literature.

### 2.1. Multilingualism

Multilingualism is when an individual or a community speaks more than two languages. Although this definition is straightforward, it is a subject of debate within sociolinguistics. It is difficult to measure multilingual competence:

- Should multilingual competence be measured against the competence of monolingual individual?
- Are multilingual individuals more competent in one of their languages?
- Should someone be considered multilingual if he or she can only use one language within a specific domain, while using the second in another?
- If someone can comprehend two language or more, but only speaks one of them, should they be considered multilingual (Lam, 2011)?

The assumption is therefore that the languages used by multilinguals are not only based on appropriate conditions, but also on the individual's competence, regarding the languages he or she speaks. This has long been an area of interest of sociolinguists, especially the question: Which language does a multilingual speaker choose to use in different settings?

One factor influencing choice of language is appropriateness (Traugott and Pratt, 1980). This is also referred to as situational switching. This means that speakers modify the way they speak depending on the situation, the context and topic of conversation, or the person they are talking to. A person might, for example, change from a colloquial dialect to more standardized language if addressing someone he or she does not know and who may not speak the same dialect.

Another point of interest regarding multilingualism within this thesis is the concept of diglossia, used by Charles Ferguson (1959). His understanding of diglossia can relate to the notion of appropriateness, as discussed above. Ferguson (1959) uses the term diglossia to describe the particular varieties of a language used with distinctly different purposes. He makes a distinction between a formal language ("high" or "H-language") and an informal language ("low" or "L-language"). The H-language is considered more sophisticated than the L-language, and often used in written literature and formal education. The L-language is more commonly used in informal situations (Traugott & Pratt, 1980).

When two languages serve different functions within the same speech community, the term diagglossic relationship is used. Saxena (2013) has created a revised concept of diglossia called critical diglossia. This concept highlights the ideological dimension of H- and L-language and the attitudes toward state-sponsored language. Critical diglossia holds that diglossia is first and foremost economic, political, and social, and not necessarily readily accepted by all minority language groups within a society. This is relevant when considering the attitude of some of the characters, particularly Kochu Maria toward the H-language,

English, as something unnatural, imposed on her by society's presumption of English as the formal language of the educated.

A study discussed by Gumperz (1982) – with relevance to the above-mentioned theory of diglossia and H- and L-language - shows that Spanish-English multilinguals living in Jersey City's Puerto Rican neighborhood, although claiming to speak only Spanish at home and primarily English at work, used a great deal of figurative code-switching in informal conversations. Figurative code-switching, or metaphorical code-switching as it is also called, refers to the selection of language according to its symbolic meaning and its ability to fit the theme (Wardhaugh, 2014). The participants in the study attributed their code-switching to their own factors unrelated to the assessments usually made by linguists: Some participants described their use of code-switching as grounded in poor education or a lack of control over the two grammars, while other subjects simply found it characteristic of informal conversation. Although we may assume that the two languages have distinctly different areas of use, the frequency with which code-switching occurs attests to the difficulty of separating the languages' functions, even based on the formality of the setting (Traugott & Pratt, 1980).

While situation may help determine the choice of language, language choices made by multilingual speakers can also be determined by motives to create situations, express attitudes, and make status relations. This phenomenon can be exemplified through the code-switching among Spanish-English bilinguals belonging to the Chicano society in the United States. Chicano Spanish is considered subordinate to both English, the official language of the United States, and standard Spanish. Basic Spanish and slang, often influenced by English, make up Chicano Spanish. In many Hispanic families, the older, first generation of immigrants speak only Spanish and no English. The second generation is mostly bilingual, with Spanish as their dominant language. The younger, third generation, are sometimes made to feel ashamed of their Spanish through messages promoted through the school system or

television, in which their Spanish is considered nonstandard. This generation often only uses Spanish at home or when speaking to older relatives who know little or no English. However, many third-generation Chicanos are starting to use Spanish more, taking pride in their ethnic identity. In these situations, language choice is greatly affected by attitude, as well as situation. Chicanos who prefer Spanish are often observed taking part in rapid language shifts between English and Spanish. This type of code-switching remains constant, the speakers' language switching occurs frequently without much consideration of the setting, and therefore cannot be explained by situational factors. This type of switching is thus very much in line with the speaker's attitude: English is used for new information and statement, while Spanish is used for interpretation and expressiveness (Traugott & Pratt, 1980).

The concept of multilingualism, although its definition seems fairly straightforward, can be hard to apply. Researchers differ in their opinion of how much language competence an individual should have in order to be defined as multilingual. The switch between languages seems to be dependent not only on the competence of the speakers but also on the conditions under which they appear. The notion of diglossia is significant for identifying possible reasons for situational switching. Some switching cannot be accounted for merely by situation, and the attitude of the individual or society towards the language shift also has to be taken into account.

**2.1.1. Multilingualism in Literature.** In the last decade, research, and serious study of multilingualism in former periods has emerged. Research in earlier periods focused principally on the representations of speech within written texts, such as for example Timm's (1978, as cited in Gardner-Chloros and Weston, 2015) research of Russian-French language switching in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. More recent studies of multilingualism within literature have a broader focus than previous research, discussing types and symbols of multilingualism represented in literary works. This expanded focus on the study of

multilingualism in literature can inform linguistic, historical, and psychological thought (Gardner-Chloros & Weston, 2015).

Writing in another language allows the writer to distance herself from the restrictions of her native language. The concept of writing in more than one language or in a language other than one's own, is termed translingualism. Translingualism is connected to, but not closely related to, self-translation. Code-switching often involves a form of self-translation (Gumperz, 1982, as cited in Gardner-Chloros & Weston, 2015), in which the bilingual speaker repeats what he or she just said in one language in another language.

The relationship between code-switching and translation is complex. It is often difficult to differentiate between translation and code-switching within a written context. In general, it is considered translation when a whole text is translated, while code-switching in written literature usually refers to a conscious mixing of two or more languages within a paragraph or sentence or even among a few simple words. Code-switching can be oral or written, while translation is largely a written phenomenon. Nevertheless, since translation is the rewriting of a text into another language to aid understanding, it contrasts with the motivations that are elemental to spontaneous oral code-switching. As such, writers that are considered translingual often deliberately avoid language mixing because it lessens their accomplishments (Gardner-Chloros & Weston, 2015).

By introducing ideas and terms from one language into texts of another, multilingual writers initiate cultural and linguistic change related closely to the mechanisms of linguistic borrowing (Gardner-Chloros & Weston, 2015). Linguistic borrowing is when a word is adapted from one language for use in another language (Haugen, 1950). In previous centuries, the production of multilingual works, such as poetry, was conceived as natural, and the writer was expected to produce works in several languages, in which each language could offer a different means for understanding (Forster 2009, as cited in Gardner-Chloros & Weston,

2015). This presupposed a certain level of multilingualism, and reserved the work for an educated, elite audience. This type of written multilingualism differs from cases found today. In some states and societies, a native literature coexists with the state's official language, which is accessible to most readers having general education (Gardner-Chloros & Weston, 2015).

In the twentieth century, there was an increase in translingual writers who not only aspired to move outside the limits of their native languages, but also to transform language in general, to be able to express everything (Kellman, 2014). However, Traugott and Pratt (1980) note in their studies that little research has been done within the field of multilingual literature. In her work, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction* (2013), Taylor-Batty supports this as still being the situation today. She attributes this lack to the fact that the speakers of Western languages such as English and French consider monolingualism to be the norm, rather than the exception, labeling multilingual literature as unconventional (Gardner-Chloros & Weston, 2015).

To suggest that multilingualism is disquieting or unnatural implies that juxtaposed and mixed language is by nature "abnormal" or "unreal" – it creates an ideological view in which the mixing of languages threatens the sense of national culture (Taylor-Batty, 2013). Multilingual literary text sometimes impairs the terms used to describe them. In some texts the linguistic diversity in fiction represent foreignness, in which the differences between and the separation of languages are highlighted. In other texts, such as by Samuel Becket, Jean Rhys and James Joyce, the idea of foreignness is weakened, and linguistic diversity is represented as a something which upsets the commonly held belief in language as something related to national and cultural identity. In many critical studies, there is thus a strain between the idea that multilingual literature reflects a linguistically universal reality, and the representation of the unnatural variety of multilingual texts examined (Taylor-Batty, 2013).



## 2.2. Polylingualism

More recent views on multilingualism and code-switching show that in reality, especially within the context of globalization, most people have a “truncated multilingualism” (Blommaert, 2005), which means that people have greatly differing levels of competence in the languages they use to code-switch. This is where the notion of polylingualism becomes important. Polylingualism underscores that language users make use of whichever linguistic features they have at their disposal to obtain their communicative goals, despite their incomplete mastery of those languages. Polylingualism diverges from the concept of multilingualism, in which the language users are considered to know three or more languages with a relatively high level of competence. In general, multilingual speakers code-switch between two or more languages of which they have active knowledge. Polylingual speakers, on the other hand, can be monolingual but code-switch using words or phrases from another language, though they might not necessarily know the language itself. Multilingual speakers may use different languages in different settings and in different ways. If, however, a multilingual speaker uses features that are not considered part of any of language the speaker knows, it is considered a discrepancy and categorized as a borrowing. Polylingualism, however, accepts this type of borrowing and deems it part of the mainstream use of language (Møller & Jørgensen, 2009).

**2.2.1. Polylingualism in Literature.** The representation of polylingualism in literature can be challenging. In many ways, the depiction of a polylingual reality is an issue of translation or, as coined by Sternberg (1981), translational mimesis. Taylor-Batty (2013) states that fictional literature is rarely as polylingual as the fictional world it presents, and that the languages used in the text are to some extent “translated” into the dominating language of the work. Attempts to present languages other than the dominate language of the literary work demonstrate the difficulty of linguistic representation. Sternberg finds that linguistic

representation presents a tension between the language as represented object and language as a representational medium. It creates a strain between the discourse the author wants to present and the language that he or she uses to represent it (Taylor-Batty, 2013).

### **2.3. Code-Switching**

The concept of code-switching is closely tied to multilingualism and polylingualism, since it concerns the switching between two or more different languages. Code-switching is thus a feature of multilingual or polylingual speech. Today code is understood as an umbrella term for dialects, languages, registers, styles, etc. Code has largely taken over for the term “variety” to cover different entities of language. The notion of “switching” is clearer and describes speakers’ alternation between different varieties of dialects or languages. Code-switching is thus, as previously mentioned, a term which implies the use of various languages or dialects within the same sentence or conversation. Practically everyone who is, to some extent, in contact with more than one dialect or language, is affected by code-switching (Gardner-Chloros, 2009). This means that both multilingual and polylingual discourse can feature code-switching. In terms of speaking, rather than writing, it is in fact monolingualism that is the exception globally, because most people are to some extent multilingual (Gardner-Chloros & Weston, 2015).

**2.3.1. Approaches to Code-Switching.** There are several approaches to understanding or analyzing code-switching. The first is the psycholinguistic approach, which aims to describe the underlying cognitive functions that are involved in bilingualism (Bullock & Toribio, 2009). The second is the structural approach, which seeks to explain the structures of language used in code-switching. This approach inherently claims that the motivations involved in code-switching are systematic and controlled by the speaker’s grammatical structures and patterns (Bullock & Toribio, 2009). The third approach to code-switching, which is a point of departure for this thesis, is the sociolinguistic. As described by Anna

Giacalone Ramat, the sociolinguistic approach is based on the relation between languages and social factors:

In the search of general principles underlying CS, one should keep in mind that the sociolinguistic approach has a kind of priority over the grammatical or structural approaches in CS studies, since the choice and the alternation between different languages or varieties is triggered by social or psychological factors rather than by the internal linguistic factors of the languages involved (Ramat, 1995, p. 46).

External linguistic factors, such as gender, race, or class, are acknowledged within the sociolinguistic approach (Ramat, 1995, p. 46). As stated by Gardner-Chloros (2009), social factors involved in code-switching can provide relevant information about the speaker's social identity and desire to belong to a specific group. The underlying motivation for code-switching in the sociolinguistic approach is not based solely on the speaker's competence or that of the receiver, but on the expression of identity through language (Gardner-Chloros, 2009).

**2.3.2. Code-Switching in Literature.** Traditionally linguists have paid far greater attention to conversational code-switching than to code-switching in writing. One reason for this absence of research may be the sociolinguistic practice of prioritizing oral language and the description of phonological variations. This focus on oral as opposed to written code-switching can be related to principles defined by Labov, who enjoys a large following with the sociolinguistic tradition: "The vernacular, in which the minimum attention is paid to speech, provides the most systematic data for linguistic analysis" (Labov, 1972, as cited in Gardner-Chloros & Weston, 2015). Another problem of studying code-switching in written text was raised by Lipski in 1982 (as cited in Gardner-Chloros & Weston, 2015), namely that written media contains not only conscious reflection of the implied code-switching, but also can be edited, corrected, and rewritten. Thus, Lipski stated, these types of multilingual text could not be considered spontaneous linguistic production. Though spontaneous linguistic

production continues to be the main concern of sociolinguistics, the relatively unexplored relationship between written literary production and other ways in which language is used is still of great significance. The difference between written forms of code-switching and oral spontaneous production can serve to display how a society or culture views what a language actually is (Gardner-Chloros & Weston, 2015).

Code-switching has a myriad of viable functions within multilingual literature. Most code-switching in literature transpires in dialogue between characters and in stream of consciousness writing (Callahan, 2004, as cited in Gardner-Chloros & Weston 2015). Code-switching can create a more diverse and realistic impression through its informal register and rejection of literary standards, which in turn enhances the orality of the text (Gardner-Chloros & Weston, 2015). In postcolonial literature, the author often uses it to evade the predicament of writing either in the language of the former oppressors or severely limiting the audience of their texts by writing solely in their local language (Gardner-Chloros & Weston, 2015).

During the last few decades, the research on code-switching in conversation has developed more understanding of how it is used both at conversational and grammatical levels. However, research on code-switching within literature is still limited, and most of this research has been confined to specific historical eras (Gardner-Chloros & Weston, 2015). Code-switching can have several functions within literary texts. It can give different voices to different characters, it can represent a community with mixed languages, or it can lend a comical or humoristic effect if there is a large amount switching within a grammatical system, such as in Shakespeare's *Henry V*. Code-switching can also be seen as representing hesitant speech in characters that are not speaking their native language (Gardner-Chloros & Weston, 2015).

#### **2.4. Meir Sternberg's Model on Translingualism and Mimesis in Literature.**

One of the main works on the study of code-switching in literature is Meir Sternberg's *Polylingualism as Reality and Translation as Mimesis*. This book presents several strategies for differentiating and analyzing different types of code-switching in literature.

Translational mimesis, a concept integral to the book, is a strategy of writing that indicates that the fictional language is translated by the narrator, the person who tells the story, for the narratee, the fictional person within the text to which the story is told. The translation event is indicated by the use of hybrid language. This is a contrast to self-translation, in which the character presents the translation event by switching from one language to another. Both types of translation feature the translator as an agent of text, indicating that the translation occurs on a deeper narrative level. The translator of a text can thus be either a character or the narrator. In the case of translational mimesis, the narrator, is as previously stated, the translator of the text. The character in the level of the story thinks or speaks in his or her native language, in the narrational level the text is translated by the narrator for the narratee, for whom the language is unfamiliar and foreign. The aim of translational mimesis is to shift the reader's focus onto the interruption the translation creates through code-mixing, and to disrupt the notion of direct access to the represented language. Translational mimesis does not intend to mimic the foreign languages; however, it does try to depict the foreign language in the language as a medium (Klinger, 2014).

Sternberg deliberately avoids using sociolinguistic terms such as multilingual and monolingual; instead, he uses the terms polylingual and unilingual. Sternberg's reason for distinguishing these terms is that a literary work can represent a polylingual discourse reality, even though each individual character or the social milieu is strictly monolingual; or, on the other hand, the work can depict a unilingual discourse reality even if each character is conceivably multilingual (Sternberg, 1981). In a polylingual discourse reality, the novel can,

for example, be written in English though it presents a foreign society in which the characters do not actually speak English. In the other case, when the characters in inter-text dialog - the dialogue taking place within the novel - interject foreign words or phrases to signal their monolingual language competence, we get a polylingual text which represents a monolingual society. As such, a multilingual language community can also be represented by unilingual discourse; this would most likely occur in stating the foreign language used without actually switching to it (e.g., “‘He doesn’t know!’ he whispered in French.”). Sternberg also uses the term “heterolingual” for uses of a foreign language that is usually not the language used in the reporting speech-event. In a heterolingual discourse, several language or dialect varieties interact within the same text (Sternberg, 1980).

The question of how an author should represent a culture or language that is foreign to their audience is challenging. Methods of representation range from non-translation, in which the audience encounters limitations regarding their language knowledge and understanding, to complete assimilation, in which the presence of cultural and linguistic barriers is hidden (Klinger, 2014). According to Sternberg (1981), the problems of translational mimesis can mostly be avoided through three drastic procedures:

1. Referential restriction
2. Vehicular matching
3. Homogenizing convention

Referential restriction often excludes interlingual or interdialectal tensions and instead confines itself to describing essentially monolingual discourse. Literary works of this kind rarely have foreign characters and never have dialectal variation. The work’s language usually corresponds with the speech-patterns of the intended audience.

As opposed to referential restriction, vehicular matching accepts linguistic diversity and conflict as a natural part of society and communication (Sternberg, 1981). This means

that the text can feature relatively long, untranslated passages in the foreign language which are not explained to the reader (Taylor-Batty, 2013).

Homogenizing convention, by contrast, dismisses linguistic variations and views them as a distracting factor. Within this convention, foreign characters automatically speak the native language fluently. For example, in George Orwell's novel *Animal Farm*, the farm animals all automatically speak English and can communicate with each other and the humans fluently without any hiccups (Sternberg, 1981).

With the three aforementioned representations, the general problem is that they, each in their own way, manage to eliminate the difficulty of imitating foreign speech. Writers concerned with the interactions of different cultures and language are constrained by referential restriction if they wish to portray language mimetically. Vehicular matching often demands too much polylingual knowledge, both from the audience and the writer, which can distract from the matters actually at hand. Finally, the problem with homogenizing convention is that it, relying heavily upon the unilingual mode of language, undermines and discriminates the polylingual reality, and so completely removes the stylistic features of code-switching (Sternberg, 1981).

Because of the problems with representing foreign speech through referential restriction, vehicular matching or homogenizing convention, Sternberg has found four specific procedures in which to describe language variation and translational mimesis. These procedures lie between the two extremes of homogenizing convention and vehicular matching:

1. Selective reproduction. This procedure can best be described as occasional quotations uttered by the fictional characters in the midst of the heterolingual discourse. Within this strategy there is a subcategory called mimetic cliché, which consists more or less of solitary interjections, such as "OH!" The audience of a text featuring selective

reproduction does not necessarily need to be bilingual to grasp the meaning of the words in context.

2. Verbal transposition. Transposition does not directly incorporate polylingual speech or heterolingual discourse, but rather implies it through a unilingual medium, instead of an openly mixed framework. It is represented by irregular features of the dominant language, which go against the general rule of language use. This can occur through any verbal level at which the languages involved are not similar to each other. The harsh effect of this strategy can be due to reflecting what in the target language becomes:

- a. Phonic or orthographic idiosyncrasy. This strategy can be represented through spelling out words in the way they are pronounced as opposed to the way in which they are actually spelled. E.g., the Indian pronunciation of “sir” can be featured in the text as “sar.”
- b. Grammatical irregularities and ill-formedness. This strategy incorporates features such as incorrect grammar. For example, the sentence structure of the foreign language can be used while writing in the dominant language. E.g., “Going to the dogs India is.”
- c. Lexical deviance. This strategy often features the incorrect use of words, often by mistake, assuming the word’s meaning without knowing its actual meaning or confusing it with another, similar word. E.g., “They would need some rigorous exorcise,” instead of “They would need some rigorous exercise.”
- d. Disregard for language rules. Using stylistic features that go against the usage of the language in question. This can include instances such as speaking backwards. For example, “The sign read *POTS*.” Or, the thought process may move from the specific to the general, instead of the other way around.



3. Conceptual reflection. This strategy is to reference the fundamental cultural and social norms depicted in the text, as opposed to focusing on verbal forms in the foreign language. This approach lies somewhere between reality and language. An example of conceptual reflection can be using the foreign culture's measures of time, as in "She had not seen him for several days, maybe as many as a *paksha* – a fortnight."
4. Explicit attribution. The author or narrator reports which language is being spoken. E.g., "..., he said in French."

This strategic model presented by Meir Sternberg features several strategies for locating and interpreting instances of code-switching within literary texts. Sternberg's strategies will be used as the grounds for analyzing code-switching in *The God of Small Things*. It is relevant to note, however, that Sternberg when himself using this strategy focuses solely on the literary effects presented through code-switching, while this thesis will also try to account for sociolinguist reasons for code-switching in the novel. A critical consideration of Sternberg's model is therefore necessary.

Although Sternberg's model is perhaps the most applicable model for studying instances of code-switching in literature, it is still difficult to incorporate all instances of code-switching within this model. We must be aware that Sternberg's general model can be difficult to apply to specific works. Most writers who incorporate multilingualism or code-switching into their works are likely not trying to represent Sternberg's model; therefore, passages in literary works might be more ambiguous than perhaps desired by Sternberg.



### 3. Methodology

In this chapter, the first section, 3.1., overviews some generic challenges of code-switching in writing, as well as the challenges faced when working with this thesis. Next, section 3.2 introduces the novel, its author and the characters that are important for the analysis. Then in section 3.3., the written code-switching data is accounted for, and finally section 3.4 previews how the data is analyzed in Chapter 4.

#### 3.1. Challenges

The models by noted researchers, within the field of multilingual discourse and code-switching, such as those by Gumperz or Myer-Scotton, were developed to study oral speech rather than written texts. In light of this, it can be problematic when researchers try to apply the speech models to a different medium. Using models developed for spoken discourse when studying written code-switching can severely limit the written data in terms of how it is studied and which phenomenon that are deemed valuable to study (Sebba, 2012).

Another issue is that most researchers focus on written data as text, within the field of spoken code-switching more so than written. Even these researchers who focus on oral code-switching tend to elevate the linguistic aspect of this phenomenon. This means that the text is considered as a sequence of written words on a page, instead of an assembly of visual contexts as perceived by the readers – “as a text encircled by other texts, in which font-size, style and color can aid the reader in his or her interpretation of the medium” (Sebba, 2012, p. 12).

The code-switching and language in *The God of Small Things* presents specific methodological challenge, which is that the sequences of code-switching are primarily in Malayalam, a language I do not speak. To find solid and reliable translations of the units which are not immediately translated or gathered from context, I have relied upon the study

guide for *The God of Small Things* by Brians (1998). This work provides translations and guidance for nearly all instances of code-switching in the novel.

A second, thesis-specific challenge was the applicability of Meir Sternberg's model of translation and mimesis to all aspects of code-switching in the novel. Some code-switching instances are ambiguous as to which category they belong, making it difficult to calculate a specific number of entries for each particular category of code-switching. Some instances of code-switching in the novel, in fact, do fit any of the categories proposed by Sternberg. Further discussion of the applicability of Sternberg's model will be presented in Chapter 4.1.

### **3.2. The Novel**

*The God of Small Things* is Arundhati Roy's first and – as of today – her only novel. The book won the Booker Prize in 1997 and stayed on the *New York Times* bestseller list for ten weeks (Surendran, 2000). The novel is in English, but features extensive code-switching with Malayalam and occasionally other languages, as well as other stylistic language traits that demonstrate the novel's rich multilingualism.

The novel is set in Ayemenem in the Indian region of Kerala, where the local language is Malayalam. Most of the novel takes place in 1969, viewed as flashbacks from its main protagonist Rahel in 1992, when the fraternal twins Rahel and Esthappen are reunited at the age of 31. They have their lives destroyed by the "Love Laws", societal norms determining that people of different castes cannot be together. The novel tries to highlight ways in which "Small Things" influences people's behavior and their lives. Different sides of Kerala life are shown through the novel, such as the caste system and the Keralite Syrian Christian way of life. The book opens with the return of Rahel and Estha, Rahel's brother, from their concurrent "exiles" in the United States and New Delhi, respectively: "And now, twenty-three years later, their father had re-returned Estha" (Roy p. 9). After the tragic death of Velutha,

the Ipe family's trusted handyman and Ammu's lover, Estha was sent to live with his father. After twenty-three years, Estha's father had had enough, and he returned Estha to Ipe family, as Estha's mother was no longer alive.

**3.2.1 The Author.** Arundhati Roy was born in Shillong, Meghalaya in 1961. Like the main character in her novel, Rahel, Arundhati Roy's mother was a Syrian Christian who married a Bengali Hindu (Surendran, 2000). As a child, Roy moved with her mother back to Ayamanam in Kerala, to live with her mother's parents. As an adult, Roy went to architecture school, where she met her first husband Gerard, from whom she divorced four years later. All these striking resemblances to the protagonist in *The God of Small Things*, Rahel, bring up the question of whether the novel is in a sense autobiographical (Surendran, 2000).

**3.2.2 The Characters.** *The God of Small Things* contains a great number of characters. Some we follow through the whole novel, while others are encountered only briefly, though they are significant for the story. Both the reoccurring characters and the cameos influence the code-switching in the novel. The characters presented below are those who appear most frequently and produce the majority of the code-switching in the novel. These characters are relevant for interpreting and understanding the text as a piece of multilingual literature.

Although living in the same close vicinity, the characters have different backgrounds and belong to various social strata of the Indian caste-system. This caste-system, which was originally Hindu, also led to a caste-system within the Syrian Christian religion, which was especially prominent in Kerala (Fuller, 1976). The different characters in the novel belong to different castes within the Kerala region, in which Syrian Christians individuals were generally considered to belong to the highest castes. The rest of India does not include Christians in the caste-system, and as such it is important to be aware of this adaption of the caste system in Kerala. Awareness of the caste-system and the social differences it creates is

thus important for considering the representation of the characters, for both the intended readers of the text and scholars studying code-switching in the novel. I have therefore chosen to divide the characters presented below into three categories: those belonging to the high social stratum, the mid social stratum, and the low social stratum. The criteria for assigning a character's social stratum are their presented ethnicity, wealth, education and language knowledge.

**3.2.2.1 High Social Stratum Characters.** All the high social stratum characters belong to the wealthy Syrian Christian Ipe family. This class includes bilingual, educated speakers of both English and Malayalam, with the exception of Sophie Mol, who is a monolingual speaker of English. Sophie Mol, however, can be argued to belong to the high social stratum because she is the daughter of Chacko and because she is perceived as white. This stratum includes the grandaunt, Baby Kochamma; the grandmother, Mammachi; Rahel and Estha's uncle, Chacko; and Rahel and Estha's cousin, Sophie Mol.

**3.2.2.2 Mid Social Stratum Characters.** The mid social stratum includes three members of the Ipe family: Ammu, who lost her high social standing after her marriage to and subsequent divorce from a Hindu man, and her two children, Rahel and Estha. The other two members of this stratum are Margaret Kochamma, Chacko's British ex-wife who comes from a working-class background, and Comrade Pillai, the leader of the marxist party of Kerala with important connections to both his lower-class party members and more prominent politicians. With the exception of Margaret Kochamma, who only speaks English, these characters are all bilingual speakers of English and Malayalam.

**3.2.2.3 Lower Social Stratum Characters.** Two of the three members of the lower social stratum, Velutha and Kochu Maria, are monolingual speakers of Malayalam. The third member, the Orangedrink Lemondrink man, is presented as a native speaker of Malayalam with limited English knowledge. Velutha, Ammu's lover, is an untouchable and belongs to

the Paravan caste. Kochu Maria, is the Ipe family's cook, who converted to Christianity during the British rule. Converting to Christianity during this period meant being looked down on by the majority-Hindu society at large and by the Christian minority which already existed and which forced these new Christians to build their own churches, separating them from the wealthy old Christian families. Thus, Kochu Maria falls outside the caste system and therefore also belongs to the lower social stratum. Finally, the Orangedrink Lemondrink man, who molests Estha, works a demeaning job selling soft drinks and candy to the more fortunate at the cinema in Abilash.

### 3.3. The Data

The data gathered from the novel *The God of Small Things* consists of narrative text as well as the direct utterances of the characters. As presented in the theory section 2.2.2.1, I will be using Meir Sternberg's model on translingualism and mimesis in literature to categorize the different types of code-switching in the novel. The different types of code-switching will relate the specific utterances to the novel's themes of language and identity. Relevant utterances will be presented for all seven categories defined by Sternberg.

Instances of code-switching in the narrative are presented in the following manner, preceded by the text's page number, and maintaining the original italics:

p. 23

Long after he grew up and became a priest, Reverend Ipe continued to be known as *Punnyan Kunju* – Little Blessed One....

When a specific character or several characters are responsible for the utterance(s), and are mentioned in the same sentence, the sequence is presented as following:

p. 178–179

"*Kando*, Kochu Mariye?" Mammachi said. "Can you see our Sopia Mol?"  
 "*Kandoo*, Kochamma," Kochu Maria said extra loud.

In sequences in which the character who utters the statement is not directly mentioned in the text, that character's name is presented before the utterance, divided by a dash, as below:

p. 31

Ammu – “Maybe a boy does need a Baba.”

Sequences which require a translation (i.e., where the foreign language is not apparent from context and does not have an in-text translation) are presented as follows, translation or explanation in bold, in between brackets, following the text:

p. 71

Rahel – “Velutha! *Ividay!* Velutha.”  
 [“**Velutha! Over here! Velutha.**”]

### 3.4 The Results

The next chapter presents the results found through the analysis of in relation to the thesis questions they try to answer. The first section, 4.1., introduces a framework for discussion, presenting important challenges that are discussed in subsequent sections. The second section, 4.2, presents different interpretative passages of code-switching data found in the novel. This section relates to the first thesis question: Which strategies of code-switching are employed in *The God of Small Things*? This section overviews the types of code-switching found in *The God of Small Things* and interprets these as strategies from Meir Sternberg’s model for translation and mimesis.

The next section, 4.3, describes how instances of code-switching are marked in the text and in what situations code-switching arises. This addresses the second thesis question: When do the different code-switching categories come into play in the novel, and how does this feature hold significance for the multilingual interpretation of the novel?

The last section, 4.4, then looks more closely at the third thesis question, which concerns which characters participate in different types of code-switching and how these features are represented within the novel.



## 4. Results

The first section of the chapter, section 4.1. presents a framework for discussion, introducing challenges relating to the representation of Malayalam presented through the English medium. Section 4.2 demonstrates how passages of code-switching can be related to Sternberg's mode. The third section, 4.3 elaborates the two challenges related to the complex relationship of dialogue in fact occurring in Malayalam, though usually represented in English. The final section, 4.4 addresses the characters' motivation for code-switching, based on the speakers' expression of identity through language.

### 4.1. Framework for Discussion

For most authors writing in English today, English is just one of many languages, and possibly cultures, the author can access. This is often the case for authors situated within the field of postcolonial literature, such as Arundhati Roy. Many authors within this sphere have made use of their other languages in combination with English to represent a multilingual society within their literary works. Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* is often noted as a remarkable work of multilingual fiction. However, the novels use of English as the main medium to depict a multilingual universe in which Malayalam is represented as the primary language can present challenges.

The first challenge is to discern how Sternberg's (1981) model on polylingualism and translanguaging in literature can be applied to identify instances of code-switching within the novel. Roy likely did not write her novel thinking of how the code-switching would be interpreted; as a result, code-switching instances within the novel can be ambiguous in their classification, and their interpretation is sometimes less straightforward than Sternberg's model assumes. Although shorter passages easily can be identified with strategies presented in Sternberg's model, longer passages are challenging to associate with specific strategies. In

many cases, passages are ambiguous and feature more than one strategy of code-switching. Section 4.2. considers five passages of code-switching and relates them to Sternberg's model.

A second challenge is that the writing of Roy's novel in English constricts how monolingual, non-English-speaking characters are represented. This leads to a complex paradox in which code-switching – which typically indexes bilingualism – is used to portray the opposite: monolingualism. Sternberg observes that a literary text can be unilingual and still contain multilingual characters. A text may also be polylingual and represent the monolingual characters or communities within it (Sternberg, 1981). As stated in Chapter 2, attempts to present a language other than the dominant language of the literary work draws attention to the problem of linguistic representation. A strain exists between the discourse that Roy wants to present and the language that she uses as vehicle of representation (Taylor-Batty, 2013). The problem of linguistic representation influences Roy's presentation of the intercharacter dialogue. Through the frequent use of code-switching and explicit attribution, Roy presents the dialogue as in fact occurring in Malayalam, though usually represented in English. The two challenges related to this complex relationship are elaborated in section 4.3.

The final challenge regards how Roy's characters express their identity through the dominant English medium. The dominant language, English, and the interjected language, Malayalam, index each other, without there being a direct relationship between the languages. Indexing in relation to language, known as indexicality, refers to the ability of the language to indicate something, without referring to it directly (Anderson, 2008). In Roy's novel, the two languages thus point to each other, without doing so implicitly. Within the mental universe of the novel, there is also an indexicality between the characters' identity and language. The ways the characters use language indicate unspecified identities the characters enact within the novel. This can be closely related to the sociolinguistic approach described by Anna Giacalone Ramat (1995), in which external-linguistic factors such as class and race are

acknowledged as features of code-switching. According to Gardner-Chloros (2009), the characters' underlying motivation for code-switching is based on the speakers' expression of identity through language. This challenge is discussed in section 4.4.

#### 4.2. Code-Switching Strategies in the Novel

This section presents specific passages of code-switching from *The God of Small Things* and analyzes the issues that arise when categorizing them according to Steinberg's strategies of code-switching as presented in Chapter 2. As Sternberg (1981) states, various forms of intertextual translation, or code-switching, may coexist and interact with each other in the same literary text. This is certainly the case within this novel. Although some categorical types of code-switching are more frequent than others; no one strategy dominates the novel in its entirety.

(1) p. 256

Suddenly the blind old woman in her rickrack dressing gown and her thin grey hair plaited into a rat's tail stepped forward and pushed Vellya Paapen with all her strength. He stumbled backwards, down the kitchen steps and lay sprawled in the wet mud. He was completely taken by surprise. Part of the taboo of being an Untouchable was expecting not to be touched.

The first passage, example 1., contains cultural beliefs about class distinction. Within the Indian society, an untouchable belongs to the lowest caste. As the name reflects, the individuals belonging to this caste are not to be touched by people outside of their caste, because they are in some sense considered dirty. While initially this passage does not appear to present code-switching, arguments can be made for placing this passage under the strategy of conceptual reflection. Conceptual reflection involves references to cultural and social norms which serve to illustrate the novel's foreignness. This strategy is even further removed from the original discourse than Verbal transposition, which represents foreign speech through a unilingual medium, by representing grammatical irregularities as notion of otherness. Conceptual reflection does not include direct representation of the foreign code; rather, it uses the underlying socio-cultural norms of the novel's reality. The concept of

Conceptual reflection is thus situated between language and reality (Sternberg, 1981).

Additionally, it is not the passage as a whole which is under the strategy of conceptual reflection, as it is only the last part and the reference to the untouchable social caste which denotes the cultural foreignness.

(2) p. 228

Rahel approached quietly. She saw that his skin was looser than she remembered. He wasn't *Kochu* Thomban any more. His tusks had grown. He was *Vellya* Thomban now. The Big Tusker. She put the coconut on the ground next to him. A leathery wrinkle parted to reveal a liquid glint of elephant eye.

The passage presented in example 2., contains two Malayalam words, *Kochu* and *Vellya*. Although these words remain untranslated, they can be understood from the context as *small* and *big*. As the meaning of these instances of code-switching are gathered from context, the passage can arguably be considered to use the strategy of selective reproduction. Selective reproduction usually consists of intermittent utterances made by the characters during a heterolingual discourse. This type of code-switching requires little or no bilingual competence from the reader, as the meaning can mostly be gathered from context or is given in translation (Sternberg, 1981). Although this passage can be considered to use selective reproduction, conceptual reflection should be considered in addition. The passage incorporates distinctly foreign elements: in many societies, it could be considered unnatural to approach an elephant, yet it seems as if this is natural for Rahel. The ambiguity of this passage highlights the difficulty of assigning specific instances of code-switching to Sternberg's particular strategies. It must always be considered whether instances of code-switching can cross over between strategies.

(3) p. 277

"*Oru kaaryam parayattey?*" Pillai switched to Malayalam and a confiding, conspiratorial voice. "I'm speaking as a friend, *keto*. Off the record."

This third passage, example 3., contains several code-switching features. The first part of the passage contains an untranslated question. This part could be considered as belonging to the strategy of vehicular matching, which accepts linguistic diversity as a natural part of

discourse (Sternberg, 1981). This strategy includes untranslated words and phrases that cannot readily be interpreted through context. Another instance of code-switching occurs in the second part of Pillai's speech at the mention of the Malayalam word *keto*. This instance can be closely related to the strategy of selective reproduction, and can be understood based on context, to mean something along the lines of *you know*. However, arguably the most interesting aspect of code-switching in this passage is the text's direct acknowledgement of the language shift. This statement relates to the strategy of explicit attribution. The strategy of explicit attribution is perhaps one of the more visually transparent categories and defines the situation when the narrator specifies the language or dialect being used.

Example 3 is complex because it contains three strategies of code-switching within two sentences. A question arises about the significance of these code-switching instances. Is it necessary to be able to interpret the meaning of the first utterance, made entirely in Malayalam, for the passage to make sense? If the question of relevance regarding the first utterance is taken into consideration, the utterance seems to be less important to the overall comprehension of the passage. The significance of the selective reproduction code-switching is also rather small. The important feature in this passage is the highlighted shift in language through explicit attribution. If conveyance of the shift is the most important aspect of the passage, the passage all together could be interpreted as using explicit attribution. Three types of occurrences are defined within this passage, relating to three different types of code-switching. One of the difficulties of using Sternberg's model is that it does not provide a foolproof understanding of what functions code-switching performs in a given novel.

(4) p. 143

Adoor Basi, the most popular, best-loved comedian in Malayalam cinema, had just arrived (Bombay – Cochin). Burdened with a number of small unmanageable packages and unabashed public adulation, he felt obliged to perform. He kept dropping his packages and saying, "*Ende Deivomay! Eee sadhanangal!*"

The fourth passage, example 4., includes another utterance wholly in Malayalam with no translation. In this sense, it can be related to the strategy of vehicular matching, explained above, which involves untranslated sentences and clauses in a foreign language, whose meaning cannot be gathered from context. Although the context of the passage is quite clear, the meaning of Adoor Basi's utterance cannot be ascertained. Translating this passage might be viewed as insignificant for the story, yet it is difficult to understand how Adoor Basi has become one of the best-loved Malayalam comedians what he says cannot be understood. His utterance is depicted as though it is funny, yet if one does not know Malayalam, one may not see it as such. It is difficult to justify the whole passage as belonging to vehicular matching, as only the last utterance is rendered incomprehensible. Yet if the utterance made by Adoor Basi had been excluded, the passage would arguably lose significance as an instance of code-switching.

(5) p. 19

She had made them practice an English car song for the way back. They had to form the words properly, and be particularly careful about their pronunciation. Prer NUN sea ayshun.  
*Rej-Oice in the Lo-Ord Or-Orlways, And again I say rej-Oice, RejOice, RejOice, And again I say rej-Oice.*

The fifth passage, presented above as example 5., is in the dominant language of the novel, English. Although the passage mentions the English language, it is merely suggested and not stated that the passage is in English, and these are not enough grounds for relating the passage to explicit attribution. Instead, this passage features spellings of words as they are pronounced, and this type of code-switching belongs to the strategy of verbal transposition. Verbal transposition does not include code-switching from one language into another, but uses the unilingual medium of the text, in this case English, to imply different languages or dialects. Here verbal transposition highlights a shift in the discourse from Malayalam to English. This strategy includes grammatical irregularities and ill-formedness, lexical deviance, stylistic features that flout the rules of language and, as seen in example, the phonological spelling of words. This passage is perhaps not as ambiguous as some of the

passages presented earlier, and it is perhaps possible to relate the whole passage to the strategy of Verbal transposition. Nonetheless, the suggested language shift in the passage is still interesting considering that most of the novel's discourse is presented to be in Malayalam, though represented in English. Here, however, the discourse and its representation are both in the dominant, English medium of the novel.

Finally, we come to the last strategy of code-switching as represented in the novel. These instances do not fit any of the categories Sternberg proposes. Yet these instances, consisting of quotations from the English literary canon as expressed by characters in the novel, are significant for the multilingual universe of the novel. As presented in section 4.1., the discourse of the novel is complex, as Roy wishes to present the dialogue as taking place in Malayalam, but represented in English. This allows for the novel to be written in English with occasional code-switching into Malayalam. If, though, the dialogue is to be interpreted as Malayalam, this would indicate that the quotations from canonical English literary works – as in example 6., in which Rahel quotes Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* – should be considered as instances of code-switching.

(6) p. 61

Rahel – “It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done,” she would say to herself sadly.

This example may lead us to ask why not all instances of code-switching fit Sternberg's model of translational mimesis. As discussed in Chapter 2, although Sternberg acknowledges that multilingual fiction can be interesting in relation to sociolinguistics, his model focuses explicitly on the artistic effects which the different code-switching categories produce (Gardner-Chloros & Weston, 2015).

In *The God of Small Things*, no examples were found of two of Meir Sternberg's categories, referential restriction, and homogenizing convention. Their absence can be attributed to different factors. The strategy of referential restriction relates to discourse that is

substantially monolingual, from which foreign characters, language or dialect variation are generally excluded (Sternberg, 1981). Referential restriction, which limits the entire text to being set in one language, for obvious reasons does not occur in a novel so clearly bound in a multilingual framework. Homogenizing convention, on the other hand, dismisses language variation as irrelevant; in these type of texts, the characters automatically converge to speaking one standard language (Sternberg, 1981, p. 224). Homogenizing convention poses a different complexity than referential restriction, namely the effacement of language variation all together. In *The God of Small Things* there is by no means a dismissal of Malayalam as the foreign language; as demonstrated by the novel's rich code-switching, this strategy also does not apply.

The broad spectrum of code-switching functions helps to firmly establish *The God of Small Things* within a multilingual framework. Some of the novel's constant use of code-switching are more explicitly represented than others. Through the usage of both explicit categories, such as vehicular matching and selective reproduction, and less transparent categories, such as conceptual reflection, the audience is more deeply immersed in the cultural and social setting of the novel than if the code-switching belonged to only one mimetic strategy. The distinction between English and Malayalam becomes blurred through the constant interjection and juxtaposition of code-switching in many forms. The multitude of code-switching strategies can explain the cultural and social setting of the novel, which in turn creates an accept of the foreignness of the novel. However, the two languages' juxtaposition should also be critically considered. Although one would assume that the juxtaposition gives the novel a sense of authenticity related to the bilingual society it depicts, the constant interjections, which blur the distinction between the two languages, can also make the novel confusing. If the language cues are not apparent due to the constant interjection, then the intercharacter dialogue would not only be perceived as represented by the dominant language



English, it would also be presented as English. This is one of the challenges of trying to present the discourse as taking place in Malayalam through English.

### 4.3. Malayalam Dialogue Represented through English

In the following example (7), the first passage of discourse in the novel, the police officer is noted as speaking in Malayalam. As there is no apparent switch from English to Malayalam, it is assumed that the discourse is taking place primarily in Malayalam, though represented through the dominating language in the novel, English.

(7) p. 7

Ammu asked for the Station House Officer and when she was shown into his office, she told him that there had been a terrible mistake and that she wanted to make a statement. She asked to see Velutha. Inspector Thomas Mathew's moustaches bustled like the friendly Air Indian Maharajah's, but his eyes were sly and greedy. "It's a little too late for all this, don't you think?" he said. He spoke the coarse Kottayam dialect of Malayalam. He stared at Ammu's breasts as he spoke. He said the police knew all they needed to know and that the Kottayam Police didn't take statements from *veshyas* or their illegitimate children.

Although there is an assumption that the discourse in the novel takes place in Malayalam, switches to English in the discourse also occur, as presented in example (8):

(8) p. 278

Comrade Pillai – "See her, for example. Mistress of this house. Even she will never allow Paravans and all that into her house. Never. Even I cannot persuade her. My own wife. Of course inside the house she is Boss." He turned to her with an affectionate, naughty smile. "*Allay edj*, Kalyani?" Kalyania looked down and smiled, coyly acknowledging her bigotry. "You see?" Comrade Pillai said triumphantly. "She understands English very well. Only doesn't speak."

Comrade Pillai's remark about how his wife understands what they are saying, although she cannot speak English herself, clearly indicates that this discourse takes place in English. The possible reasons for a shift from Malayalam to English in the discourse can be related to diglossia. As already mentioned, the concept of diglossia describes two overall language uses in multilingual or multidialectal societies: The L-language used in everyday, informal settings, the H-Language used in formal settings (Ferguson, 1959). This is certainly an ideal generalization, since aforementioned studies have shown that this division is not necessarily as clean cut as speakers perceive it, and especially in informal settings, a great deal of code-

switching actually occurs (Gumperz, 1982, p. 62). The usage of language, however, is rarely black and white. Nonetheless, diglossia can still be useful to describe a switch from one language into the other based on setting and context, as long as we consider that individuals do not have firm rules to switch based on situation, but they often choose to do so. Within the Indian society depicted in the novel, the H-language is English, while the L-language is Malayalam. The discourse seems to occur in the H-language when the discourse is more professional, as in passage (8) above, which is part of a longer discussion between Chacko and Comrade Pillai about Velutha, one of Chacko's workers.

As already mentioned, the L-language, Malayalam, is portrayed as being the language of the novel's discourse. Most of the everyday dialogue, in and around the Ipe family home, takes place in the L-language. Evidence for this can be found among the Ipe family's monolingual staff, such as Kochu Maria, and the workers at Mammachi's pickle factory, such as Velutha. Their speaking the L-language is implied through their lower social stratum characterization, as well as through their use of code-switching, which features rich use of words or phrases in Malayalam, which highlights their monolingualism. These characters are frequently depicted in dialogue with multilingual characters, but only speak Malayalam.

Apart from when the Ipe family receives the foreign visitors Margaret Kochamma and Sophie Mol, a switch to the H-language in the home-setting only occurs as part of Rahel and Estha's formal education or when other family members quote literary fiction. This fits with the practice of one language being used informally in everyday life, while the other is used for formal instances such as education and literature. Another example of the formal switch into the H-language is Comrade Pillai's aforementioned code-switching into English when he speaks with Chacko, with whom he does business; a switch to H-language in this case would conform with norms for language use in work situations. In the novel, this type of switch is often executed through explicit attribution, as in example (8).

The diglossic relationship depicted between English and Malayalam is of great significance to the Indian culture described. It strongly invokes India's colonial past, which is still a vital element of Indian culture. English is still an official language of India, although it is rare to find an Indian who speaks English as his or her first language. This language hierarchy is depicted in the novel in the uses of Malayalam in dialogue within familiar settings and English in more formal settings, such as education and business deals. Moreover, in India today, English is a lingua franca, connecting speakers of the many regional languages in the country. This also is depicted in the novel when Estha, traveling to his father, must communicate in English with his fellow travelers on the train because they speak Tamil and not Malayalam. The instances in examples (9) and (11) presented below use explicit attribution, while example (10) is labeled selective reproduction since the previous utterance, example 9, directly precedes example 10, rendering the translation for this utterance, it should be considered Selective reproduction as opposed to Vehicular matching.

(9) p. 323

Tamil lady on the train – “Try one. Verry sweet,” she said in Tamil.

(10) p. 323

Tamil lady on the train – *Rombo maduram*.

(11) p. 323

“Sweet,” her oldest daughter, who was about Estha's age, said in English.

Perhaps the large variety of languages in India is one reason Roy chose to write her novel in English, to reach a larger public. However, the code-switching into Malayalam is relevant here, as Roy then does not have to choose specifically which language she wants to use to present the novel. According to Gardner-Chloros and Weston (2015), through code-switching, the author evades the predicament of writing either solely in the language of the former oppressor or immensely limiting their audience by writing solely in their native language.

It is difficult to adequately analyze bilingual texts without considering typography and layout. In many bilingually complex texts, elements such as fonts, position, and form supply contextualization cues for interpreting the language strings which they apply to (Sebba, 2012). An important aspect of code-switching in *The God of Small Things* is how its use is textually highlighted by italics, a common means within written media to contextualize elements of other languages (Sebba, 2012, p. 6). Yildiz (2013) claims that many languages' orthography requires highlighting foreign words with italicization in order to create a visual distinction between the foreign language and the dominate language of the text. Pandey (2016) expands on Yildiz's claim and is of the impression that the italicization of foreign words makes readers experience a profound "visibility of otherness" (Pandey, 2016, p.21). The writer's choice to use italics can be interpreted as a visual indication as to how foreign the writer understands a particular word to be, or how foreign the writer wishes the word to be perceived (Gardner-Chloros & Weston, 2015). These claims regarding italicization are interesting exactly because the aim of the code-switching in the novel is also to present a distinct impression of otherness. Through visual marked-ness, such as italicization, the language distinction becomes far more prominent, and there is a greater sense of separation between the two languages. In this case, the novel's code-switching is richly conveyed through selective reproduction and vehicular matching, which are marked visually by italics, and through more integrated means such as conceptual reflection and explicit attribution. The italicization of certain types of code-switching lends the novel an instinctive air of foreignness and immerses the audience in the Indian setting.

Within *The God of Small Things*, the use of italics is especially prominent in cases of vehicular matching, where the clause or sentence in Malayalam is always italicized to signal the language shift. The other category that uses italicization is selective reproduction, in which Malayalam clauses or sentences, followed or preceded by a translation, are always

italicized. In contrast, instances where the word or clause in Malayalam can be inferred from context are only occasionally italicized. Verbal transposition is italicized in approximately half of the instances it appears, across all the categories that belong to it. The quotations of other literary works, a type of code-switching which does not fit any of Meir Sternberg's categories, also use italics to signify the shift in the text.

#### **4.4. Social Status Represented through Language**

As described in Chapter 3, the novel's characters belong to different social strata and make use of different types of code-switching. As mentioned, Traugott and Pratt (1980) have stated that while situation may help determine language choice, code-switching can also be used express status relations. The code-switching of the characters in the novel can be considered in this light.

The higher social strata characters, although their dialogue should be interpreted as taking place in Malayalam like that of the rest of the characters, they only on rare occasions make statements which explicitly contain Malayalam. Instead, the characters are usually presented as code-switching into English, mainly through explicit attribution, in which the characters are noted to be speaking in English. This is not to say that they are simply presented as speaking in English, but that the code-switching instances of this group highlights their English proficiency. The characters within this stratum are preoccupied with appearing to other members of society as well-educated and abiding by middle- and upper-class Indian etiquette norms, which is undoubtedly emphasized by the way they use language.

High social stratum characters, although rarely explicitly presented as speaking in Malayalam, can be seen doing so in a few instances. These instances occur only when a higher social stratum character speaks with a character that belongs to a lower social stratum.

Most often these instances of explicit discourse in Malayalam occur when talking to monolingual speakers of Malayalam, as in example (12).

(12) p. 178–179

“*Kando*, Kochu Mariye?” Mammachi said. “Can you see our Sophie Mol?” “*Kandoo*, Kochamma,” Kochu Maria said extra loud.

When the high social stratum characters are presented as speaking in English, it often seems as though they are trying to show off their English skills to others, as in example (13). In this example, Baby Kochamma switches to a distinct British accent, to present herself as an excellent English speaker to the foreign visitors Margaret Kochamma and Sophie Mol.

(13) p. 144

“He’s doing it deliberately,” Baby Kochamma said in a strange new British accent.

The default of discourse taking place in Malayalam must be reconsidered when the Ipe family receives their foreign guests Margaret Kochamma and Sophie Mol. In order to include and be understood by their foreign visitors, the discourse likely occurs in English. Our assumption of the switch to English dialogue is supported by the fact that the high social stratum characters are suddenly represented with, although only very few, instances of code-switching into Malayalam. The code-switching into Malayalam in these cases seems to stem from the characters’ notion for discretion, as in example (14).

(14) p. 145

Chacko said to Ammu in Malayalam, “Please. Later. Not now.”

Moving from the high social stratum to the mid social stratum, there is a significant shift in the discourse, which includes more instances of code-switching. Code-switching instances occur in both Malayalam and English, regardless of whom the characters talk to.

Interestingly, it is one of the less prominent characters of the middle social stratum, Comrade Pillai, who is most frequently found code-switching to Malayalam. This is a characteristic of his position within the marxist party. He wishes to convey to his members,

mostly the lower-class or untouchables, that he identifies with them, respects them and looks after their interests, something which is best done in the native language, Malayalam. His use of code-switching into Malayalam thus signals his common heritage and background, and in dialogue with party members, he uses his Malayalam code-switching to signify a “we-code” (Gumperz, 1982, p. 66) which helps him form and maintain this relationship. His political side is clearly visible when he deliberately code-switches from English to Malayalam. Comrade Pillai’s switching between English and Malayalam is usually marked by the strategy of Explicit attribution, as can be seen below in example 15., and 16.

However, the politician and business man in him also feels that it is better, especially when speaking to individuals of a higher social rank, to come across as educated and intellectual. In such instances, he frequently code-switches into English. This is especially perceivable when Comrade Pillai speaks with Chacko, whom he feels the need to impress, as seen in example 15. The distinction Comrade Pillai makes using language is very much in line with the diglossic relationship that English and Malayalam have within the society of Kerala.

(15) p. 273

“What is the news? How is your daughter adjusting?” He insisted on speaking to Chacko in English.

(16) p. 280

When Comrade Pillai spoke next, he spoke in Malayalam and made sure it was loud enough for his audience outside.

Other mid social strata characters who use code-switching that corresponds to strategies of Meir Sternberg’s model are Rahel and her twin brother Estha. The children’s frequent and various forms of code-switching are a well deliberated use of language to underline the fact that children have not yet acquired the grammatical competence of adults. Especially prominent is the frequent use of verbal transposition, the form of so-called “backwards-speech,” as in example 17. One might say that this play with language and backwards forming of words and sentences is a normal process for many children. Their childish demeanor, supported by the way in which they use language according to their own

rules, accentuates their misunderstood conception of reality. As children often do, Rahel and Estha seem to be living in their own reality in which consequences and actions are not considered as they are in the adult world. This is shown in one instance of verbal transposition through backwards reading. The children consider it a feat when they manage to read a book backwards, while the adults find this bizarre as it goes against realistic and natural use of language. Another type of verbal transposition presented is lexical deviance, in which Rahel simply assumes the meaning of a word and uses it in a sentence without considering its actual meaning, in example 18. From these examples, it seems that the children have limited knowledge of how language is to be used. Their limited cognition might underline their inability to understand the implications of their actions and the consequences for the people around them. Instead of shying away from the childish usage of language, Roy seems to be using it deliberately to support the naivety and innocence of Rahel and Estha.

(17) p. 58

A yellow hoarding said BE INDIAN, BUT INDIAN in red. "NAIDNI YUB, NAIDNI EB," Estha said.

(18) p. 54

Humbling was a nice word, Rahel thought. Humbling along without a care in the world.

Lower social strata characters, more frequently than not, utter sentences or clauses full of code-switching into Malayalam. This is regardless of whom they speak to, signifying their limited monolingual competence. This relates back to the paradox presented in section 4.1., where code-switching is not necessarily used to signal bilingualism, but monolingualism. The highlighting of the characters as monolingual speakers through code-switching helps solidify their position as less educated and lower in the social hierarchy compared to others in the novel. The additional misunderstandings concerning language, as seen in example 23., further diminish the characters' standing, presenting them as distinctly foreign to the reader.



Vehicular matching is the usual approach to these passages, as in example 19., or selective reproduction as in example 20.

(19) p. 90  
 Kochu Maria – “Hup! Hup! *Poda Patti!*”  
**["Hup! Hup! *Get lost you dog!*"]**

(20) p. 170  
 “*Aiyyo kashtam,*” Velutha said. “Would I do that? *You* tell me, would Velutha *ever* do that? It must’ve been my Long-lost Twin brother.”

One specific code-switching characteristic appears in both the high and mid social strata: the instances of English literary canon quotations. Several works are quoted throughout the text, including Kipling’s *Jungle Book*, Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, Dicken’s *A Tale of Two Cities*, Orczy’s *Scarlet Pimpernel*, Scott’s *Lochinvar*, the Bible and several of Shakespeare’s works, including *The Tempest*, *Rome and Juliet* and *Julius Caesar*.

All though it is the high social stratum characters that are described as well educated, they only occasionally quote literature, whereas the mid social stratum characters Ammu, Rahel and Estha are featured with several instances of quotations. Perhaps it is important to know that these characters would have belonged to the high social stratum with the rest of the Ipe family if not for Ammu’s unfortunate marriage and eventual divorce. It is evident in the novel that Rahel and Estha are receiving a thorough education in the English literary canon through their mother Ammu, who reads to them from the *Jungle Book*, as in example (21), and *Julius Caesar*.

(21) p. 59  
 At night Ammu read to them from Kipling’s *Jungle Book*. *Now Chil the Kite brings home the night/ That Man the Bat sets free.*

Apart from the characters in the Ipe family, it is only Comrade Pillai and his niece and son who quote literature. However, these quotations are full of inaccurate pronunciations and pacing (such as words being run together). Verbal transposition is the code-switching feature of these quotations. It gives the impression of the quotations being rehearsed and unnatural, recited with intent to impress the listener, as in example (22).

(22) p. 275

Lenin (Comrade Pillai's son) – "*I cometoberry Ceasar, not to praise him. Theevil that mendoo lives after them, The goodisoft interred with their bones.*"

Finally, the characters belonging to the low social stratum never quote literature of any kind. In fact, Kochu Maria is even presented as misunderstanding Estha's quotation of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* in example (23).

(23) p. 83

Kochu Maria was sure that *Et tu* was an obscenity in English and was waiting for a suitable opportunity to complain about Estha to Mammachi.

Rahel's and Estha's use of canonical quotations is related to their thorough English education and interest in the English literary canon: they seem to read the literary works for enjoyment as much as for education. Comrade Pillai and his family's quotations, however, serve a different purpose. They rehearse their literary quotations so as to appear as high-functioning members of society, especially in the presence of characters of a higher social standing. In this case, the quotations do not so much indicate the value of education itself for the speaker, but the importance of appearing educated. Examples such as (23) show that this family's focus on being able to cite literary works, regardless of pronunciation and other formal aspects, contrast with the citations made by the Ipe family, which are spontaneous and accurate. The ill-formed citations of literature versus the accurate quotations demonstrate a clear difference between desiring to appear well-versed and educated, as opposed to actually being formally educated.

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to study code-switching and its significance regarding Arundhati Roy's multilingual universe in *The God of Small Things*. Meir Sternberg's model in *Polylingualism as Reality and Translation as Mimesis* (1981) has been used to interpret strategies of code-switching in the novel. These strategies represent according to Sternberg different types of code-switching in literature.

Several strategies of code-switching presented by Sternberg (1981), are found in the novel: selective reproduction, conceptual reflection, vehicular matching, verbal transposition, and explicit attribution. The strategies of homogenizing convention and referential restriction, were not found to apply to the multilingual universe of the novel. Even though some of strategies can be readily interpreted based on their distinct nature, it is difficult to state that longer passages belong specifically to one strategy of code-switching. Although the model serves as a decent tool for looking at code-switching in literature, it is difficult, if at all possible to use only these strategies to discuss the multilingual universe of the novel. This difficulty is highlighted by the model's exclusion of instances that should be deemed as code-switching, such as quotations of the English literary canon. However, since it is difficult to find any model which can account for code-switching in written literary works, Sternberg's model is perhaps the most applicable, as long as there is critical consideration of how it is used. Some of the critical points to take into consideration when apply Sternberg's model are:

- Ambiguity in classification of code-switching strategies.
- The model only describes artistic effects created by code-switching, and does not focus on sociolinguistic factors that can account for code-switching.
- Thus, the model does not provide sufficient grounds for discussing the multilingual universe of the novel.
- The model does not address differences between literary works and connotations.

As mentioned before several strategies of code-switching, as presented in Sternberg's model are found in Arundhati Roy's novel. They appear as visual linguistic differences between Malayalam and English and are presented through highlighting the foreign Malayalam words using italicization. This type of visualization helps mark the instances of code-switching as "otherness", which helps situate the novel's universe as decidedly multilingual. Furthermore, different strategies appear in Roy's novel in settings which are perceived as more formal, and have to do with business or education, generally featuring discourse in English, while other more informal discourse such as in and around the Ipe family home, takes place in what is presented as Malayalam. This relates to the concept of diglossia, as discussed by Ferguson, and shows a clear contrast between the use of the two languages in the novel. Thus, also emphasizing the multilingualism of the novel's universe.

The role of the characters in the novel is interesting not only because of their contribution to the story as a whole, but also for their use of code-switching. The different social strata of the characters are not only based on the characters' actions and narrative description, but accentuated by their use of language and code-switching through the novel. The variety in which language is used by the different characters creates an indexicality between the characters' identity and the use way in which they use language. The characters' role within the novel, and the identities they enact are supported by their language use, situating them within different social strata.

The deliberate juxtaposition of languages using code-switching, also juxtaposes the different social strata, in a way making the characters themselves into a representation of language. Using the characters to distinguish the multilingual aspects of text, creates a novel in which language itself takes on characteristic features, highlighting the importance of language as something not only to be used for communication but as a valuable element crucial to life itself.

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### **Thesis' Relevance for the Teaching Profession**

Although the immediate importance of this thesis and its significance for my profession as a teacher might not be obvious, I will still argue that it has considerable relevance. Working with an assignment of this size has taught me valuable skills that I will take with me into the teaching profession. I have had to work efficiently and systematically, as well as being structured and disciplined. Skills I consider to be very important within the teaching profession.

Writing a thesis about code-switching in literature is relevant to the teacher profession for several reasons. The concept of code-switching is interesting in today's increasingly multilingual society. Most Norwegian students are, on some level, bilingual speakers of both Norwegian and English. In addition, the increased amount of immigration in the last few years implies that many students are in fact multilingual speakers of one or more language, in addition to Norwegian and English. Many students code-switch regularly, without considering their use of English words within Norwegian sentences as bizarre or as a breach in language rules. Although much of the code-switching occurs in spontaneous oral speech, some students' written texts also reflect features that we often relate to code-switching. Many students form English sentences using a predominantly Norwegian syntax, which can lead to a comic interpretation or sentences that are very hard to make sense of. Some students even go as far as using Norwegian words within their writing when they cannot locate the correct English translation.