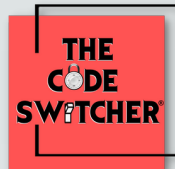


The Theory of Self-Concept and Code Switching



SELF-CONCEPT AND CODE-SWITCHING

This theory, developed by George Paasewe in 2022, attempts to explain how self-concept can be developed in people of all ages to learn how to code-switch on their terms and for the right reasons. Many theories and research on code-switching focus on why people code-switch, gender differences in code-switching, adverse effects, etc. Paasewe's 2015 research on code-switching and theory on Self-Concept focuses on how code-switching is learned and how people can develop their self-concept to utilize the tool on their terms, for the right reasons, and maintain their identity when utilizing the tool.

How Is Code-Switching Learned

Learning Through Instruction

Taught at a younger age by parents, guardians, or teachers

Learning Occurs Through Experience and Practice

Learning Through Observation

Implement an "Outside looking in" (i.e., objective and detached) perspective

Learning Through Interaction

Taking what you learned and put it into practice

Your self-concept is a collection of beliefs about your self-identity. Developing your self-concept of code-switching is crucial because it allows one to know and understand their self-identity when utilizing the tool. Moreover, it helps one conceptualize their thoughts, feelings, capabilities, and attitudes toward code-switching and how they incorporate the tool in their day-to-day interactions with people. The essential question for this theory is: How do you code-switch for the right reasons and maintain your identity?

Paasewe recognized that the adverse effects of code-switching (identity conflicts, mental exhaustion, microaggressions, etc.) could be mitigated by developing one's self-concept of utilizing the tool. Specifically, Paasewe identified that code-switching could prevent people from being their most authentic selves in certain spaces when their self-concept is not developed or sufficient.

This theory asserts that developing one's self-concept of code-switching permits a person to be their authentic selves and make deliberate choices when code-switching. When we make deliberate choices, we are granted the opportunity to choose what adjustments we want to make depending on the situation or context. This helps individuals conceptualize utilizing the tool out of choice rather than necessity and avoid identity conflicts.

Path to Developing Self-Concept of Code-Switching

Paasewe identified four phases to developing one's self-concept to influence individuals to make deliberate choices about what they adjust or alter when they code-switch. Paasewe asserts that a strong self-concept propels individuals to construct their non-negotiables, meaning what they are unwilling to compromise or adjust when code-switching, which is essential to maintaining one's identity when utilizing the tool.

The proposed phases of developing your self-concept of code-switching are:

01

Phase 1: Code-Switch on Your Terms - The first phase of developing your self-concept of code-switching is to code-switch on your terms. Code-switching on your term requires one to be in control of the tool. Being in control of code-switching requires self-control and the ability to manage your emotions and impulses while not allowing code-switching to control them. When utilizing the tool of code-switching, remember that the tool of code-switching does not control; instead, you are in control of the tool. As the master of the tool, you are in control of when, where, and how you utilize the tool. When you code-switch on your terms, you can conceptualize that you utilize the tool out of choice rather than necessity.

02

Phase 2: Develop Your Philosophy on Code-Switching -

The second phase of developing your code-switching self-concept is developing your philosophy of code-switching. Your philosophy on code-switching requires one to determine when, where, how, and why they want to code-switch. Determining your when, where, how, and why allows you to examine yourself and develop a deeper understanding of your self-concept. It also promotes reflecting on your past experiences utilizing the tool and exploring new ways to utilize it in the future. Furthermore, determining those reasons permits you to self-reflect and assess your thoughts, experiences, and beliefs on code-switching.

03

Phase 3: Code Switch for the Right Reasons -

The third phase of developing your code-switching self-concept is to code-switch for the right reasons. The right reasons will look different for everyone depending on why they are code-switching, the environment they are code-switching in, and the context. Below are several common reasons for individuals to utilize the tool of code-switching.

- **Advancing your professional goals:** People code-switch to advance their professional goals and endeavors. From research, we have found that during a job interview is when most people tend to code-switch.
- **Establish new connections and relationships:** People code-switch when meeting new people to find common ground with individuals outside of their race, ethnicity, gender, and culture.
- **To learn and understand a different culture:** People code-switch to learn and understand different cultures and ways of life. Code-switching in this light promotes cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competency. It also allows one to show a keen interest in the differences of others and value diversity.

- **To change the narrative:** People code-switch to debunk negative stereotypes and change a prevailing narrative.
- **To become a diverse communicator:** People code-switch to become diverse and effective communicators to meet people where they are at linguistically.
- **To identify with a particular social group:** People code-switch to identify with a particular social group because representation matters, influencing how people see themselves and interact with others. The social group could be race and ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc.

04

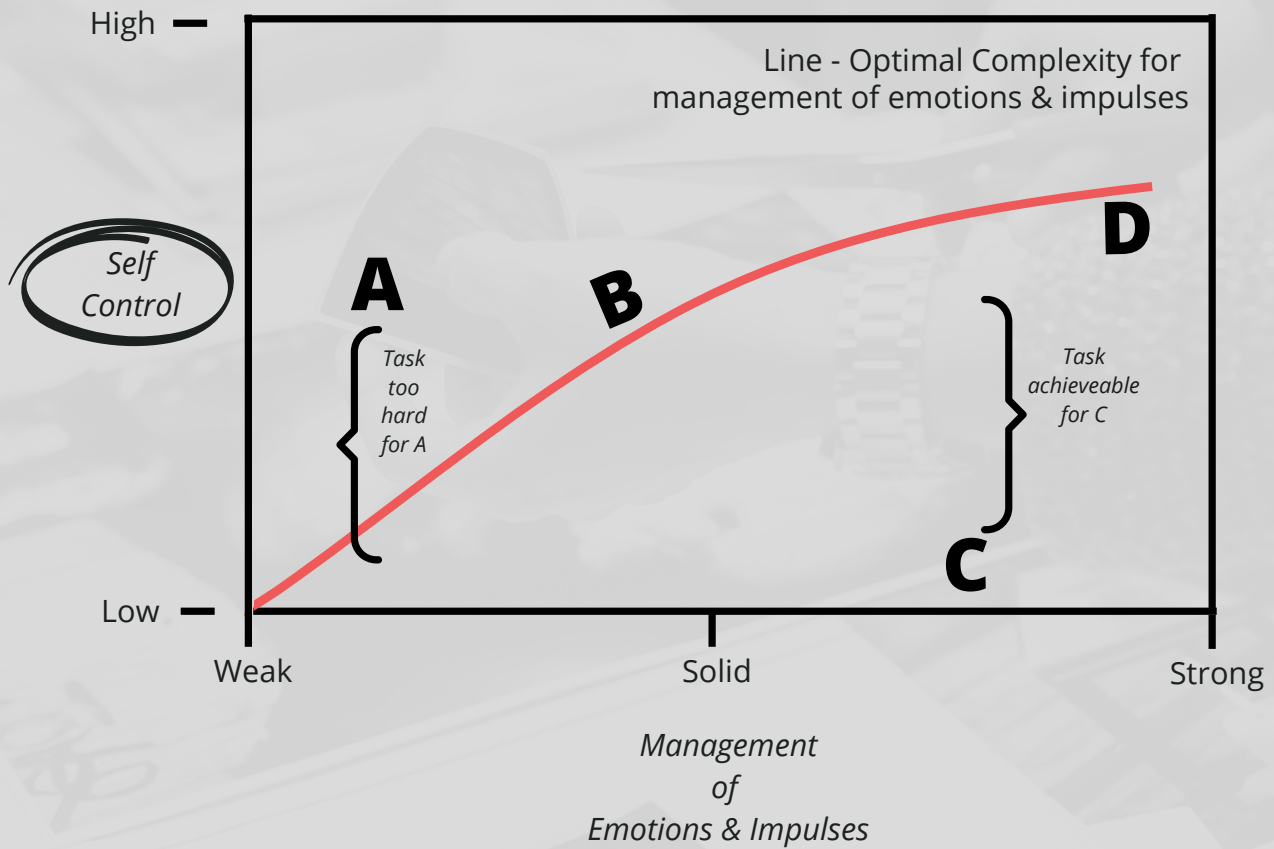
Phase 3: Always Stay True to Your Identity - The fourth phase of developing your code-switching self-concept is staying true to your identity. To stay true to your identity while utilizing the tool of code-switching, you should never code-switch to hide or suppress your identity, religion, or intersectionality. Instead, it would help if you employed the tool to celebrate your multilingual or multicultural identity. You can achieve this by code-switching to showcase the cultural capital that you possess. When we code-switch, we adjust or alter things; this approach is different. It encourages people to celebrate and showcase their cultural identity to be their true authentic selves.

Paasewe proposes that taking an intentional approach prevents us from using code-switching as a reactive mechanism but instead finding ways to explore its place and utilization in our identity while setting boundaries that do not align with our self-concept and philosophy.



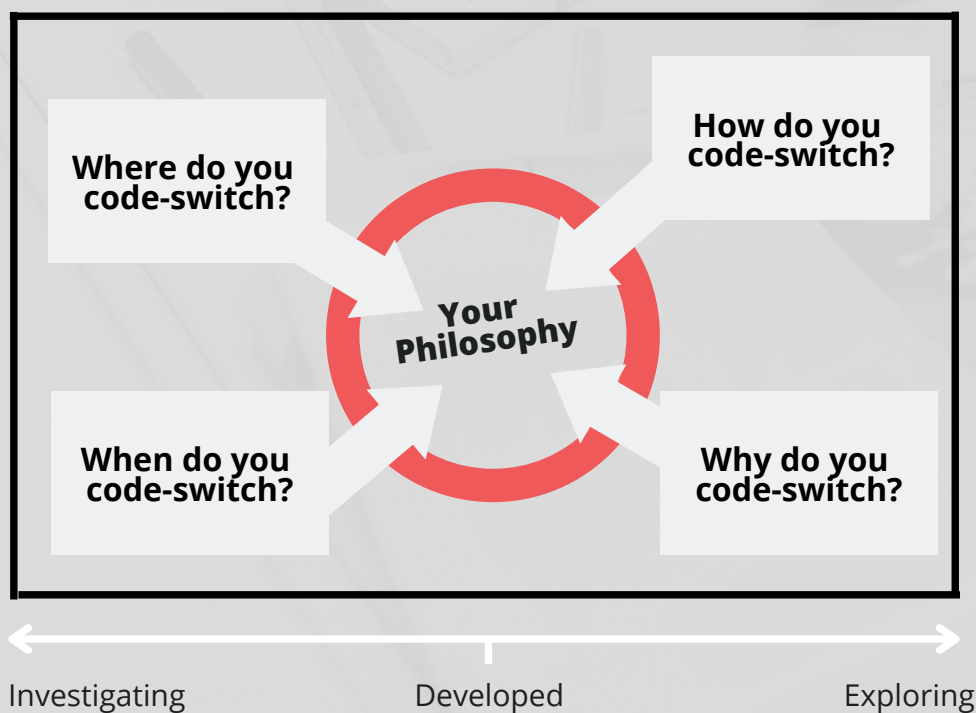
Component 1: Code-Switch on Your Own Terms

Making Deliberate Choices



Component 2: Develop Your Philosophy on Code-Switching

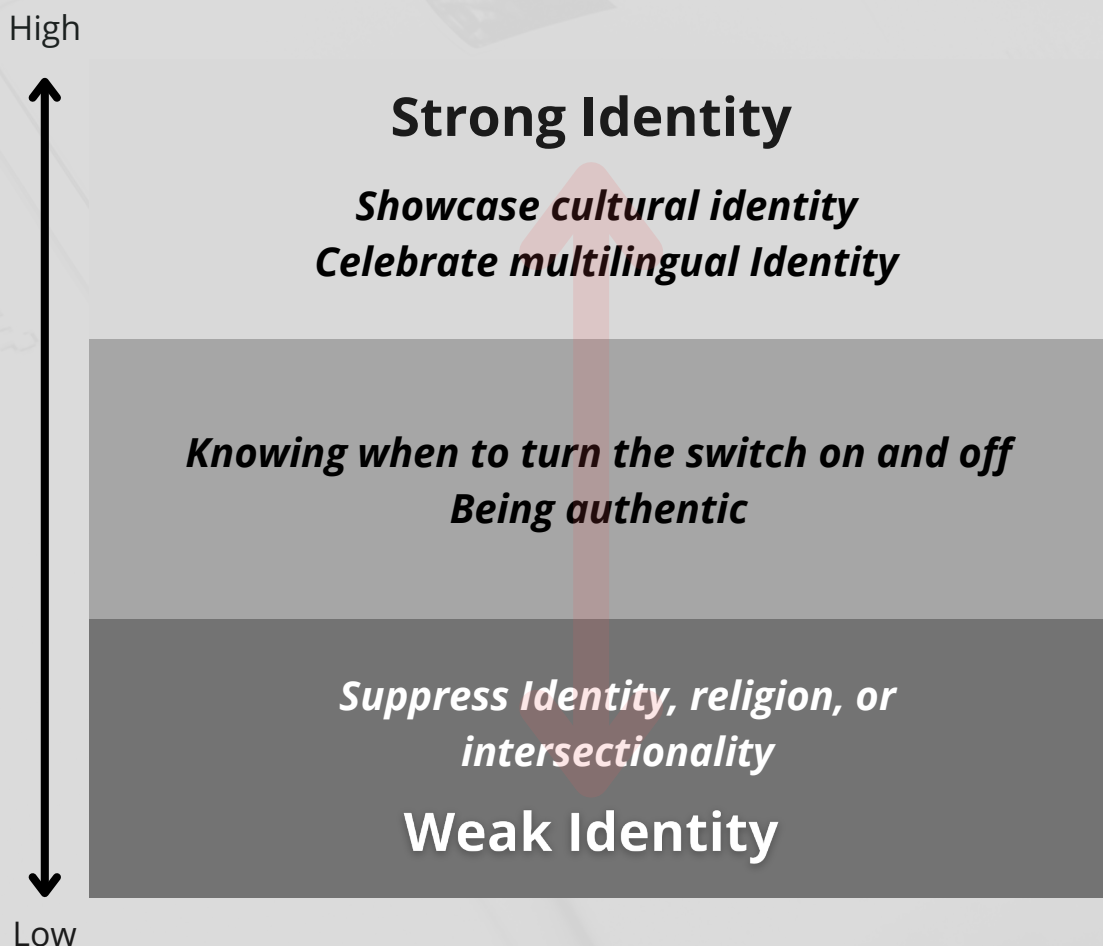
Investigating Your Purpose, Goals, and Reasons for Code-Switching



Component 3: Code Switching for the Right Reasons



Component 4: Always Stay True to Your Identity



QUESTIONS TO CONTEMPLATE

(for use with individuals or as group discussion stimulators)

- How do you plan to code-switch on your terms?
- What is your philosophy of code-switching?
- What are your reasons for code-switching?
- What are your thoughts on this intentional approach to code-switching?

Basic reading

Paasewe, G. (2022) *How Black College Students Learn Code-Switching Vol. 2.* Educare Publications.



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