

A Book Review of Code-Switching: Unifying Contemporary and Historical Perspectives

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Abstract

Code-Switching: Unifying Contemporary and Historical Perspectives Book Review by Mareike L. Keller. ISBN-13: 9783030346676 Related ISBNs: 9783030346669

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Traditionally, the theoretical study of the different aspects of linguistic analysis including semantics, vocabulary, etc. constituted overall what linguistically termed later as the field of historical linguistics. The researchers' increasing interest in applied linguistics led to the exploration of many linguistic phenomena, especially those relating to language communication. One of these phenomena was code-switching (CS), which attracted the attention of researchers just a few decades ago as a phenomenon originates from language communication in multicultural or bilingual communities.

Keller's book provides an overview of theory and research related to CS and traces it since its inception to the current use. Basing on a post-doctoral research on CS in historical text, Keller managed to write this informative book. It discusses exclusively classic CS as created by bilinguals who have at their disposal two clearly separable grammatical systems. It is divided into four chapters.

Chapter one is devoted to an introduction, in which the author historically traces and introduces examples of CS as found in the speeches and letters of Martin Luther. It highlights literature review relevant to this subject like that written by Trotter 2000, Schendl and Wright 2011, Jefferson and Putter 2013 and Pahta et al. 2017 in particular.

Chapter two deals with the term code-switching, its origin, and development. It addresses the phenomenon of CS in a structural manner, in particular with regard to morphosyntactic characteristics, i.e. the grammar of bilingual speech and writing. Additionally, The Matrix Language Frame Model (MLF Model),

established by Myers-Scotton in 1993, is explained in the context of its development. The author tries to shed light on the *Constraint-Based Approaches*, i.e. the *Free Morpheme Constraint* and the *Equivalence Constraint*, presented by Poplack 1980. Furthermore, the author traces historically the history of bilingualism and compares it to the systemic approach to contemporary oral CS. In some degree of detail, the difficulties of dealing with historical texts are discussed later.

Unlike chapter two, chapter three deals with the MLF model and the related surrounding issues at length. Throughout this chapter, the author presents two examples which illustrate why close examination of the original manuscripts is necessary to obtain a reliable basis for testing or creating any hypothesis on historical written text. This chapter elaborates on these two examples of historical CS and illustrates what can be inferred from combining modern, data driven code-switching theory with historical data in a systematic way. These two examples (studies) are considered to be complementary. The first research explores mixing patterns within and around the noun phrase, while mixing patterns within the verb phrase are explored in the second.

After an introduction to current CS studies in chapter two, and an elaboration of its application to historical data in chapter three, chapter four addresses the results of its implications for CS theory as well as more general questions regarding language processing and language alternation. The questions explored in chapter four link the empirical results from chapter three to the theoretical problems raised in chapter two. In order to clarify the distinctions between current oral and historical written CS, the author has given specific attention to the prestigious status of Latin and its mode of acquisition in medieval times. Then an approach to historical CS theoretical modelling is introduced, based on the Matrix Language Frame model, which is designed to capture the observed volatility and consistency of language-mixing pattern. The chapter provides a perspective on possible future steps that could be taken to further analysis of historical bilingualism and cooperation in contemporary CS research with experts. It ends with an overview, posing a number of related concerns which can be addressed using the interdisciplinary approach outlined in this book.

Throughout the book, the author tries to explain to the readers that modern approaches to CS can help unlock the secrets of historical texts, and that historical bilingual documents provide a rich testing ground for current theories in return. It focuses on structural linguistics and the analysis builds on a morphosyntactically-based model, namely MLF Model. The goal of the book is to present an integrated approach to CS study showing what can be learned from a clear theoretical approach to both oral and historical data.

All in all, because of its theoretical and practical importance in exploring the phenomenon of CS historically, this book is a valuable guide for sociolinguists, scholars and language teachers alike.