

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47912-7 - One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Code-Switching

Edited by Lesley Milroy and Pieter Muysken

Excerpt

[More information](#)

1 INTRODUCTION: CODE-SWITCHING AND BILINGUALISM RESEARCH

Lesley Milroy and Pieter Muysken

1 The contemporary setting of bilingualism studies

In the last forty years or so, developments such as the expansion of educational provision to many more levels of society, massive population shifts through migration, and technological advances in mass communication have served to accentuate our sense of a visibly and audibly multilingual modern world. Other large-scale social changes have combined to lead to a considerable increase in bilingualism, not only as a European but as a world-wide phenomenon.

First, modernisation and globalisation have stimulated the expansion in numbers of people speaking national languages located within relatively limited boundaries alongside international languages such as English, French and Spanish. As a consequence of centuries of colonisation, these have spread far beyond their original territories, and there is every sign that their spread as second or auxiliary languages for large numbers of speakers is continuing. Indeed, they are being joined by other languages of economically powerful nations, such as Japanese and Arabic. Furthermore, new multilingual nations have emerged in the years since the Second World War, where linguistic minorities are increasingly becoming bilingual, not only in the language of their own social group and the national language, but often additionally in one of these international languages.

A second development leading to increasing bilingualism is the relatively recent phenomenon of large-scale language revival. There are many nation states in Europe – Switzerland and Belgium are well-known examples – where bilingualism is institutionalised and historically deep-rooted. In addition to this stable type of bilingualism, there has been a resurgence throughout this century, accelerated in recent years, of regional and ethnic movements. This has often led to the preservation, resuscitation and expansion in the use of minority languages which policy makers had already declared moribund and relegated to the scrapheap of history. This language revival phenomenon, in conjunction with the considerable expansion in use of ethnic, national and international languages

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47912-7 - One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Code-Switching

Edited by Lesley Milroy and Pieter Muysken

Excerpt

[More information](#)

2 Lesley Milroy and Pieter Muysken

already noted, leads to many more instances of bilingualism at the level both of the community and the individual. While regional languages and languages of small nations often survive, they are spoken side by side with politically legitimised national languages.

The migration of people from poor countries to the rich industrial West leads to yet further multiplication of bilingual communities; in Auckland, Toronto, Los Angeles and Melbourne any number of languages may be heard. In Europe also we find many bilingual communities of migrant origin; Arabic is spoken alongside Dutch in Holland and alongside French in France; Panjabi and Cantonese are spoken alongside English in England, and Turkish and Italian are spoken alongside German in Germany. The kind of bilingualism which emerges from economically motivated migration is often socially submerged and difficult to study. Frequently there is pressure on immigrants, both direct and indirect, to assimilate culturally and linguistically as rapidly as possible, and countries vary in the quality and kind of provision offered to migrant workers and their families. Migrant communities themselves vary in their attitude to their two languages. Nearly all make some attempt to maintain their original language and culture and their contact with relatives left behind in the homeland. Their dilemma is to balance this human need against a conflicting desire to assimilate to the host language and culture. Bilingualism in migrant communities differs from the more stable and (to some extent) institutionally legitimised types of bilingualism already outlined above. Characteristically, it spans three generations, the oldest speakers sometimes being monolingual in the community language, the economically active generation being to varying degrees bilingual but with greatly differing levels of competence in the host language, while children born in the host community may sometimes be virtually monolingual in the host language.

2 Linguistics and bilingualism

Taken together, the developments set out above lead to a widespread bilingualism as a pervasive phenomenon in the modern world, which seems set to increase in the future. European linguistics (and indeed Western linguistics generally) has been slow to catch up with this contemporary situation. The historical roots of European linguistics can be located in the Romanticism of von Humboldt and Grimm, and the discipline flourished with particular vigour in officially monolingual nation states with powerful standard languages (such as Britain, France and Germany, and later the United States). The assumption dominating linguistics continues to be one which views as the normal or unmarked case the mono-

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47912-7 - One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Code-Switching

Edited by Lesley Milroy and Pieter Muysken

Excerpt

[More information](#)

lingual speaker in a homogeneous speech community. Academic linguists trained in this tradition have sometimes assumed that speakers who mix languages know neither language adequately. Particularly well-known is Bloomfield's (1927) account of the inadequacy in both languages of English/Menomini bilinguals, some of whom he describes individually. A distinction between such speakers and supposedly 'ideal' bilinguals who are fully competent in both languages has been drawn quite frequently in academic linguistic discourse in the years since Bloomfield, and has sometimes been developed into fully fledged and often quite influential theories with profound consequences for educational policy and practice. The theory of semilingualism developed by educational psychologists in Canada and Sweden is a case in point. Semilingualism is a term used to describe a condition where bilingual children are said to know neither of their two languages well enough to sustain the advanced cognitive processes which enable them to benefit from mainstream education. As Martin-Jones and Romaine point out (1986), and as is evident from the material in several of the chapters of this book, such a deficit-based type of analysis cannot easily be sustained in the face of sociolinguistic evidence. This becomes clear if we examine Cummins's (1979) definition of bilingual competence in terms of some ideal bilingual speaker with perfect knowledge of both languages; in fact bilingual speakers characteristically use each of their languages in different social contexts and would not be expected to use either of them in all contexts.

Noam Chomsky's meta-theoretical focus on the ideal native speaker in the ideal speech community is perhaps the most famous modern embodiment of this monolingual and non-variationist focus. While generative grammar has flourished by focussing on simple cases and ignoring more complex situations such as bilingualism, generativists are not alone amongst modern linguists in reflecting such a traditional orientation. William Labov is renowned for his achievements in facing up to the challenges posed by variable and non-ideal everyday spoken language data. Yet even he excluded non-native speakers from consideration in his study of New York City, that city of non-English speaking immigrants *par excellence*. More recently, Horvath's (1985) comparable study of the social varieties of English spoken in Sydney, another great immigrant city, has included ethnic minority speakers within the sample, with interesting results.

Work such as Horvath's suggests some move to redress the balance in modern linguistics, and the chapters of this book, along with their references to a copious research literature, show that many other linguists are also beginning to do so. It is important that they should; for not only is it difficult for linguistics as a discipline to turn its back on the complex issues facing the world community, with their

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47912-7 - One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Code-Switching

Edited by Lesley Milroy and Pieter Muysken

Excerpt

[More information](#)

4 Lesley Milroy and Pieter Muysken

sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic and educational implications, but it is also arguable that mainstream monolingually oriented linguistics has a good deal to learn from research into bilingualism. For example, by observing how people from the same community selectively use several languages in their everyday lives we can learn a lot about language use and language variation in general; the act of switching between languages is much more visible than the style-shifting characteristic of the monolingual speaker. The complex interactions resulting from the storage and simultaneous processing of several languages in one human brain are revealing of general features of neurolinguistic and psycholinguistic processing. The mixing of sounds and of grammatical patterns of different languages in bilingual speech informs us about general features of language structure.

Let us now turn from these essential background issues to focus more specifically on the topic of bilingualism itself. Before turning to comment on the range of orientations to code-switching presented in the following chapters, and the linkages between them, we summarise briefly, with particular (but not exclusive) reference to the European context, a range of issues which have persisted historically as major concerns in bilingualism research. Such a summary can help us understand how the field came to be constituted in the way it is, and can tell us something of the concepts and models employed within it.

3 A selective history of bilingualism research

We cannot hope to do full justice to this topic in a short introduction such as this. We approach it here by mentioning briefly in very rough historical order a small number of individual scholars who have been particularly influential in defining many of the issues that are discussed further in this book. We are aware that not everyone will agree with our selection, and conscious that it is too early to evaluate this work fully and to expound the strands of research of the last fifty years and the interconnections between them. Many of the references provided in the following chapters will flesh out the outline presented here.

Apart from early studies such as that of Ronjat (1913), who described the early balanced French/German bilingual development of his son Louis in great detail, the classic study of child bilingualism remains Leopold (1939–49). In this diary study Leopold records how his daughter Hildegard grew up bilingually with both her father's language, German, and with English, the language of her mother and the wider environment. Many of the central themes of child bilingualism research are highlighted: the separation of the two languages; the influential role of the

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47912-7 - One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Code-Switching

Edited by Lesley Milroy and Pieter Muysken

Excerpt

[More information](#)

interlocutor; the asymmetrical character of bilingual competence; the influence of the dominant language on the weaker one.

Without doubt Uriel Weinreich's *Languages in contact* (1953) is the single most influential earlier study. Drawing on a wide range of sources, but with particular attention to the bilingual situation in Switzerland, Weinreich has managed to introduce from several perspectives – psycholinguistic, grammatical and sociolinguistic – every issue that is being researched today. Well known is his typology of bilinguals as co-ordinate (systems kept apart), compound (systems drawing on common mental representations), and subordinate (one system is represented in terms of the other). Though psycholinguistic research has not confirmed empirically anything like these distinctions, the notions inherent in them continue to play an important role. Weinreich was interested in the psycholinguistic basis for, and sociolinguistic conditions underlying, what he terms interference, i.e. interlingual influence. This notion also is now rejected by many researchers as being too broad (covering (nonce) borrowing, switching, mixing, and so on), but it is only fair to mention that Weinreich was keenly aware of many of the conceptual refinements required.

In the period between Ronjat and Weinreich we may briefly refer to a number of studies on the European continent, carried out from various viewpoints and ideological perspectives and linked with issues of nationalism, statehood, language minorities, language change, purism etc. A useful summary of this literature is given in Vildomec (1963).

Einar Haugen's *The Norwegian language in America*, which appeared in two volumes in 1953, but was based on research and fieldwork carried out during the late thirties and the forties, is still one of the most detailed studies of language contact and bilingualism in print. It is innovative in its focus on an immigrant community, and combines historical, dialectological and sociolinguistic perspectives and techniques. As stated in the title, Haugen particularly deals with the original native language of the immigrants, and takes as his point of departure phonological, grammatical and psycholinguistic dimensions of the process of borrowing. Haugen developed a particularly complex and subtle set of categories with respect to which borrowing phenomena can be classified and studied, and it is here that his most influential contribution is to be found.

Joshua Fishman studied the phenomenon of language loyalty among various immigrant groups in the United States and Spanish–English bilingualism among Puerto Ricans in New York, before turning to issues involving language policy in later work. In his well-known article from 1965 he presents his key concept, domain, defined as a 'cluster of social situations typically constrained by a

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47912-7 - One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Code-Switching

Edited by Lesley Milroy and Pieter Muysken

Excerpt

[More information](#)6 Lesley Milroy and Pieter Muysken

common set of behavioral rules', to account for patterns of language choice in bilingual communities. Fundamentally, domain analysis is a macro-level approach informed by a sociological analysis, which views the language behaviour of individuals as derived from, and constrained by, higher-order societal structures.

Much influential work focussing on a range of issues, from political to social-psychological and even neurolinguistic, has been carried out in French-speaking Canada. Mackey (1972, 1980) has systematically placed the issue of bilingualism in the political sphere and documented the diversity of bilingual situations around the world. In this volume, Heller explores new perspectives on language politics. Lambert (e.g. 1972) has introduced research techniques from social psychology to the study of bilingualism and explored the complex attitudes towards the different languages and their speakers in a bilingual community. Finally, Paradis (e.g. 1978), has linked the issue of bilingualism to the neurolinguistic study of language disorders. This perspective is further taken up in this book in the chapter by Hyltenstam.

A pioneer in Australia in the field of bilingualism and code-switching is Michael Clyne. In early studies on German and Dutch immigrants in Australia (1967, 1972) Clyne has explored key notions such as lexical triggering and language convergence in relation to bilingual usage, linking psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic aspects.

A very different perspective on the bilingualism of migrant communities is offered by the innovatory work of Klein and Dittmar (1979) who make reference to contemporary research on second language learning. They make use of relatively sophisticated grammatical frameworks to characterise the structural properties of the 'developing grammars' of migrant workers as their bilingualism develops from a very limited base to a much more advanced ability in German. As well as being linguistically sophisticated, their work is characterised by a sensitivity to the effects of social factors on language. For example, they note that duration of residence in Germany is a much poorer predictor of competence in German than is the proportion of social ties contracted by migrants with monolingual German speakers.

We can conclude this short historical survey with a comment on the work of Le Page in multilingual situations in the Creole-speaking Caribbean and amongst West Indian communities in London. Following extensive fieldwork and analysis over many years, Le Page has adopted a fundamentally social-psychological perspective. To a considerable extent this aligns with the accommodation theories which Giles and his colleagues have developed to account for variation at the level of face-to-face interaction, in stylistic or dialect choice by monolinguals, or lan-

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47912-7 - One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Code-Switching

Edited by Lesley Milroy and Pieter Muysken

Excerpt

[More information](#)

guage choice by bilinguals (Giles and Coupland 1992). Le Page also sees particular choices as responses to other participants in the interaction, and as symbolising the kind of identity which a speaker at any given time wishes to communicate. He has referred to each utterance a speaker makes and the language choice which it embodies as an 'act of identity' associated with the different sources of influence (Spanish, English, Creole, for example) in his or her multilingual and multicultural community. Speakers use one or other of the choices available to them to express aspects of a fluid social identity as they move through a multidimensional sociolinguistic space, and the metalinguistic concept of a single language or a multilingual repertoire as consisting of a number of languages is seen as problematic and liable to obscure the nature of these communicative processes. A clear account of Le Page's orientation may be found in Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985).

One striking feature of much of the central and influential bilingualism research described here is how closely it is linked to important historical developments in this century. For example, Leopold and Haugen come to grips with the linguistic consequences of North European migration to North America; Vildomec deals with some linguistic consequences of the aftermath of the Second World War; the Canadian research can be situated in the complex and dynamic set of relations there, particularly in Quebec between French and English; Clyne's research emerged in response to the complex bilingual situation in post-war Australia, and Fishman analyses the influence of migration from the Third World on language practices in the industrial West; Le Page's work bears on rapid changes in the Caribbean in the sixties and seventies; Klein and Dittmar deal with the bilingualism of guest workers in the Germany of the seventies. All of this work reflects contemporary preoccupations (see also Bratt Paulston 1988; Mackey 1972).

4 Code-switching research

Perhaps the central issue in bilingualism research is code-switching, the alternative use by bilinguals of two or more languages in the same conversation. Under this general term, different forms of bilingual behaviour are subsumed. Sometimes switching occurs between the turns of different speakers in the conversation, sometimes between utterances within a single turn, and sometimes even within a single utterance. Readers will discover that the reasons proposed for, and the accounts given of, these switching behaviours are as various as the directions from which linguists approach code-switching.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47912-7 - One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Code-Switching

Edited by Lesley Milroy and Pieter Muysken

Excerpt

[More information](#)

At this point some terminology is useful; often the term ‘intra-sentential’ is used for switches within the sentence, in contrast with ‘inter-sentential’ used for switches between sentences. Sometimes the terms ‘tag-switching’, ‘emblematic switching’, or ‘extra-sentential switching’ are used to refer to a switching between an utterance and the tag or interjection attached to it.

In contrast with the research on bilingualism in general, and on borrowing and interference, the study of code-switching was slow in starting. Weinreich (1953) focusses mostly on lexical issues. Even cases from American Yiddish like:

er hot *gečéjndt* zajn *majnd*
he changed his mind

are treated as ‘transfer of analyzed compounds’ (1953: 50). A little later, listing reasons for borrowing, Weinreich writes:

Finally, a bilingual’s speech may suffer from the interference of another vocabulary through mere OVERSIGHT; that is, the limitations on the distribution of certain words to utterances belonging to one language are violated. In affective speech, when the speaker’s attention is almost completely diverted from the form of the message to its topic, the transfer of words is particularly common. (p. 60)

About the same time, Haugen writes:

Except in abnormal cases speakers have not been observed to draw freely from two languages at once. They may switch rapidly from one to the other, but at any given moment they are speaking only one, even when they resort to the other for assistance. The introduction of elements from one language into the other means merely an alteration of the second language, not a mixture of the two. (1950: 211)

It is not easy to understand the reasons for the relative invisibility of code-switching and particularly code-mixing to researchers such as Weinreich and Haugen. Four possible factors come to mind:

(a) a focus ultimately on ‘*langue*’, the bilingual language system, rather than on ‘*parole*’, bilingual language use, in spite of paying considerable attention to language use;

(b) a structuralist bent towards integrity of the grammatical system, for which code-switching and code-mixing were seen as a potential disturbance;

(c) lack of sophisticated recording equipment, which makes it possible for contemporary researchers to unobtrusively gather high-quality recordings of nat-

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47912-7 - One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Code-Switching

Edited by Lesley Milroy and Pieter Muysken

Excerpt

[More information](#)

uralistic bilingual conversations. This may have had two effects: first, more obtrusive recording techniques will yield bilingual language data that contain much less code-switching and code-mixing; second, when no recordings are made and the researcher has to rely afterwards on his or her recall of what was said, the principle of categorial perception will tend to filter out at least part of the language mixes;

(d) finally, the study of immigrant communities undergoing rapid language shift towards the dominant language may initially have been less propitious for discovering and analysing the phenomenon of switching than the much more stable bilingual communities that became the focus of research in the seventies. When Spanish–English and Hindi–English bilingualism were studied, code-switching soon came to the fore.

We have already mentioned above the research of Joshua Fishman in the Puerto Rican community in New York. While Fishman's work continues to be influential, many researchers have sought a supplementary framework which addresses in detail at a 'micro' level of analysis the interactional dynamics underlying code-switching and language choice.

Such an approach is provided by Gumperz's pioneering work on bilingual interactive strategies. Furthermore, his analyses directly contradict the view of code-switching as representing a deficient knowledge of language, a grammarless mixture of two codes. Language alternation is conceptualised not as a deficit to be stigmatised, but as an additional resource through which a range of social and rhetorical meanings are expressed (Gumperz 1982a, 1982b). Typically, he focusses not on details of constituent structure but on the discourse and interactional functions which code-switching performs for speakers. Gumperz examines this in terms of the influence of situational factors such as topic, participants and setting, and to this extent he is indebted to Fishman.

The oft-cited distinction between 'situational switching' (switching triggered by a change in the situation) and 'metaphorical switching' (switching that itself expresses a 'comment' on the situation) was made in a work by Blom and Gumperz (1972). This paper focusses on Norway, and introduces switching between related varieties. In this volume the chapter by Giacalone Ramat also focusses on switching involving dialects of the same language.

Since much switching occurs within a single conversation or utterance (conversational code-switching), Gumperz has also emphasised the strategic activities of speakers in varying their language choice within an agreed framework of social values and symbols. From this perspective, code-switching is an element in a socially agreed matrix of contextualisation cues and conventions used by

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47912-7 - One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Code-Switching

Edited by Lesley Milroy and Pieter Muysken

Excerpt

[More information](#)

speakers to alert addressees, in the course of ongoing interaction, to the social and situational context of the conversation (Gumperz, 1982: 132–52; 1984: 112). In recent years, Gumperz's approach has been developed by a number of scholars (particularly Peter Auer, whose work is represented in this volume).

A rather different perspective is taken in work by Georges Lüdi and colleagues (e.g. Lüdi 1987). In this work two intersecting but separate distinctions are drawn: (a) between 'exolingual interaction' ['interaction exolingue'], where speakers of different languages interact, and 'endolingual interaction' ['interaction endolingue'], involving speakers with the same language-background; (b) between 'unilingual' and 'bilingual' interaction. The combination of the two distinctions allows us to define four types of interaction:

exolingual bilingual (interactants with different languages)	exolingual unilingual (native and non-native speak- ers in one language)
endolingual bilingual (among bilinguals)	endolingual unilingual (among monolinguals)

A cover term 'marque transcodique' is used to refer to any phenomena indicative of the influence of one language upon the other, such as code-switches, borrowings and loan translations.

It is impossible to write about code-switching research entirely from a historical perspective. The authors of the pioneering studies in this field are often still actively contributing. While the earliest studies were often focussed on Spanish–English code-switching in the US or on the bilingual situation in the Indian subcontinent, now a wide variety of bilingual communities and language pairs is at present under study, using a variety of approaches and analytical techniques. Some of that variety is shown in the chapters of this book.

5 This volume: some comments on orientation and structure

There is a general lesson about co-operation to be learnt from this book as a whole and the chapters which comprise it, for these spring from a major research initiative supported by the European Science Foundation. The authors were all involved, to varying extents, in the activities of a European Science Foundation Research Network, which held a number of meetings between 1990 and 1993. At