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Reviews

Language selection and switching in Strasbourg. Penelope Gardner-Chloros. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991. Pp. 218.

Reviewed by Jörg Roche, University of British Columbia.

Code-switching has not always received the attention it deserves. Like many other linguistic characteristics, it seems to be so entrenched in our speech automaticity that few people notice it (most of them working in sociolinguistics and pragmatics). Despite the fact that code-switching is a common phenomenon of everyday conversations wherever different cultures meet, natural production conditions are hard to observe without interference from the observer. In this respect, everyone who attempts to shed some more light on this – ironically – wide open area of communication is to be congratulated.

This is also one of the major focuses of Gardner-Chloros' study on language selection and switching in the Alsace, a partly bilingual region of France located between the mountain-line of the Vosges in the West, Luxemburg in the Northwest, Switzerland in the South and the Rhine in the East. Until 1945, Alsace had been a bone of contention between the French and the Germans for 300 years. Gardner-Chloros' study is concerned with the center of this historically complex area, Strasbourg. Its particular nature is also reflected in the fact that for many years it has been one of the most prominent centers of European unification and the seat of the European Parliament.

The first part of the book provides very useful insights into the historical, societal and sociolinguistic situation of the Alsace and its language, which is part of the West Germanic

dialect continuum. This is followed by an overview of major approaches to the study of code selection and switching, and the methodological problems involved. These two introductory chapters are followed by the main body of the work consisting of a survey of the occurrence/frequency of code-switches in different settings, a conversational analysis and a "quantification" of results. In particular, the conversational analysis with its collection of six case studies contains many very interesting observations. The methodology used for data collection clearly proves to be very productive, authentic and most reliable under the given constraints of natural language production.

The many strengths of the book include the following: the description of the linguistic situation in the Alsace is an excellent introduction to an understanding of the issues. The quantitative overview of the frequency of code-switching in today's Alsatian, and the analysis of the social factors involved are models for sociolinguistic research and therefore could very well serve as material for any seminar on sociolinguistics. The overview of major approaches to language selection and code-switching is an excellent introduction to this very prominent area of research in sociolinguistics and could also very well be used in teaching sociolinguistics. However, recent pragmatic approaches to inter- as well as intralingual code-switching (in bilingual communication and related areas like second language acquisition, xenolects and dialects) are underrepresented. Instead, the study's focus is on more formal and mechanical aspects of language use like the grammatical categories affected by switching and the situational parameters determining it.

In particular, Peter Auer's framework on the pragmatics of code-switching was largely overlooked in this study. For instance, Auer's distinction between "transfers" and "switches" offers greater clarity about the *processes* involved in code-switching and much more elegant explanations for what the study under review describes as one-word-"switches".

This is a serious shortcoming of the study since functional and pragmatic approaches to language use could provide some explanations for a dilemma which the author herself recognizes but does not solve: "Such different interpretations of various switches are not contradictory but complementary; their simultaneous validity only underlines the poverty of a grammatical analysis such as this faced with the complexity of actual discourse" (175). The "poverty" of an analysis that looks mainly at categories instead of functions and processes becomes apparent throughout the "Quantification" chapter. Under the entry "Adverbs" – just to give one example – the reader gets some information about the location of possible switches: "The majority of adverbs or adverbial expressions switched in these conversations are placed at the beginning or end of clauses and some are separated by a short pause (comma) from the rest (...)" (169) but finds little help in the interpretation of what these observations could actually *mean*. An example given like "Il y a des mouettes dans les maisons, *üewweral*" ('There are gulls in the houses, *everywhere*') does not make the reader's task easier. In a pragmatic framework one would try to investigate the textual function of the element switched. Obviously, this could not be done in this review as the full conversation is not available. However, the available text segment suggests that "*üewweral*" has an emphasizing function in that it condenses in just one summarizing element all that has been said before. In grammatical terms, one might be faced with a complex utterance (sentence) reduced to a single element. The marked (final) sentence position of the adverb as well as the pause before it support this hypothesis. In this respect the grammatical category "adverb" might more likely be a coincidence than an explanation.

In order to demonstrate the limitations of mechanical criteria – for instance specifics of certain interlocutors – one may look at the first of the conversational case studies, the Beck family. The reader is led to believe that the changes in interlocutors are the main source of code-switching in conver-

sations between parents, grandfather and daughters (113-115): "Mr and Mrs Beck generally speak Alsatian with the grandfather and French with their daughters, which leads to switching languages in accordance with changes in interlocutor, typical of many Alsatian families. (...) When speaking to each other, they usually use Alsatian, sometimes French, and very often a mixture (...)". In the short extract following this introduction Mr and Mrs Beck as well as the grandfather do not act in accordance with the stated principle a number of times. Yet, the only explanation offered refers to the "flow of French conversation". It has been shown many times that triggering, flow of conversation and the like do play a significant part in code-switching. However, in the extract given, the switches to French appear to be triggered by the parents (since they are embedded in clearly Alsatian conversation) and the "flow of conversation" in French is also often interrupted by Alsatian elements. This suggests that other factors play an important role in this kind of code-switching. Interestingly, these switches occur between the two major topics addressed during this part of the conversation, dealing with the code temperatures (A) and the dinner (B). From the extract it is not clear how far the daughters were involved in (A), which is realized in Alsatian only. However, whenever (B) and related subtopics are addressed, French only is used, regardless of the interlocutor (that is, in the conversation with the children as well as among the older generations). Numerous clear code-switches appear where the flow-of-conversation principle is apparently not working. It seems more likely that the topics of the conversation and their situational context – in which the interlocutors also play an important role – offer the key to those switches.

Code-switching is a complex interplay of many mechanical and functional factors. This is stated a number of times on the concluding pages of the book and supported by comparisons with Gumperz' (1982), Saville-Troike's (1982) and Valdes-Fallis' (1977) studies. However, the relationship between the findings of these studies in the area of functional and prag-

matic switching and the Alsace-study is not sufficiently explained. The opportunities offered by functional and pragmatic approaches are not always used.

The strengths of the book are in the description of the state of Alsatian, the research summary, the collection of authentic data and the analysis of the "mechanics" of code-switching. In this respect, Gardner-Chloros goes beyond her cautiously formulated goal of contributing "to sociolinguistic studies in Alsace, without pretending to broader applicability" (4).

Neue Fragen der Linguistik. Akten des 25. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Paderborn 1990. Eds. Elisabeth Feldbusch, Reiner Pogarell and Cornelia Weiß. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1991. Vol 1: pp. xvi + 557; Vol. 2: pp. xiv + 528.

Reviewed by Gerald F. Carr, California State University, Sacramento.

Number 270 in the respected Max Niemeyer series "Linguistische Arbeiten," this two-volume work represents the sixteenth proceedings of the Linguistisches Kolloquium to be published by the time-honored mainstay outlet for linguistic publication in Germany. *Neue Fragen der Linguistik (NFL)* bears witness to the evolution of the Linguistisches Kolloquium over twenty-five years, both in scope of substantive thematic approaches and to transcontinental participation, in particular to emerging East European scholars as a result of the geopolitical developments of 1989-90 in Germany and the east bloc.

The editors celebrate the diversity and openness of the Kolloquium, both historically and in its 25th anniversary gathering:

Innovationskraft und Themenvielfalt machten vor allem in der Vergangenheit den Reiz und die