

**Key debates in code-switching research:
Theoretical and methodological considerations
15 – 19 January 2018 @ Snellius**

Science

In many bilingual communities, speakers engage in code-switching (the use of elements of various languages in a single conversation). The linguistic study of code-switching shows that it does not occur at random. Therefore, the study of this phenomenon can tell us much about the language faculty more generally. However, theoretical models can only partially account for the code-switching patterns observed in different communities. This may be because each model is derived from a single narrowly defined perspective rather than a multidisciplinary one.

The workshop addressed the following fundamental question: How does our mind allow us to combine the grammars of more than one language in the same sentence? The goal of the workshop was to instigate a thorough theoretical-methodological reflection about (a) the ways in which recent theoretical developments can be used in comparative research, and (b) the ways in which the analysis of data from various bilingual communities can contribute to the further refinement of linguistic theory. Specifically, we discussed different theories and methods for the study of code-switching, code-switching patterns in children and adults in different communities to characterize the typology, distribution and frequency of code-switching, ways to bridge the gap between psycholinguistics and linguistic theory, and the future of code-switching research.

By the end of the week, we had made the first steps moving towards (i) an integrated theoretical approach to the study of code-switching, (ii) the development of new experimental methods for the study of code-switching, and (iii) standardised ways to collect data so that the results can be easily compared.

A development that could be considered the beginning of a scientific breakthrough is that we agreed on the main questions and issues arising across the field, as well as what is needed to move forward. This workshop has thus paved the way for fruitful collaborations between the different scholars involved beyond pre-existing intentions. Several participants came to identify interests that they had in common with others, this generated new insights, and new ways to combine theoretical approaches and methods. To this end, we have already submitted a grant application to NWO *Internationalization in the Humanities* (March 1st) as well as a *Leiden University infrastructure grant- LUCL Language Diversity in the World* (March 15th). We are also planning on submitting several other grant applications (e.g. NSF, ERC, AHRC) and starting collaborative research projects.

Organisation / Format

The workshop consisted of a limited number of 20-minute lectures on (a) theories underpinning the study of code-switching, (b) methods for the study of code-switching, and (c) code-switching patterns in children and adults, in addition to discussion sessions and (grant) writing sessions. The format of the workshop and the structure of the program were highly conducive to in-depth

discussions. The lectures were a good starting point for the discussions. Regarding the discussion sessions, sometimes we randomly assigned people to groups, and sometimes we formed groups around a particular topic or question. The combination of these two types of discussion sessions generally worked well. We invited a grant officer from Leiden University to discuss funding opportunities. Her presentation and the discussion session on funding opportunities were very useful to think about the next steps. Unfortunately, there are very few funding opportunities for collaborative research, as the NWO focuses on personal grants.

In all, the organization/format of the workshop was very productive and genuinely appreciated by the participants. The workshop was small enough to have good group discussions and come to a consensus, and there was a good balance between lectures, discussions, and social events/breaks.

Organizers

Maria del Carmen Parafita Couto (Leiden University, the Netherlands)

Margaret Deuchar (University of Cambridge, United Kingdom)

Antje Muntendam (Florida State University, United States)

Pieter Muysken (Radboud University, the Netherlands)

Guillaume Thierry (Bangor University, United Kingdom)