

Torres Cacoullous, Rena and Catherine E. Travis. *Bilingualism in the Community: Code-switching and Grammars in Contact*, 2018. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Reviewed by Hanna Lantto, Foreign Languages and Translation Studies (University of Eastern Finland)**

I had always thought that the debate about the relationship of code-switching (CS) and convergence concerns the structures, such as word order, that are directly impacted in bilingual speech. The authors of this volume take a different approach: they examine if widespread CS in a community promotes general convergence of the systems, in this case concerning one linguistic variable, the Spanish subject pronoun expression. Torres Cacoullous and Travis follow Poplack and Meechan's (1998) definition of CS, which rules out a great number of bilingual speech phenomena that other scholars, particularly those working with agglutinating languages, would label as code-switching. That said, *Bilingualism in the Community* is a remarkably detailed description of a concrete linguistic phenomenon, and with its rich data and carefully constructed quantitative analysis, it truly sets a new standard for the study of language contact.

The book focuses on the oldest Spanish-speaking community of the United States, the Hispanic population in New Mexico. English influence on subject expression in the US varieties of Spanish has been widely assumed. In English, pronominal subject expression is nearly obligatory, whereas Spanish is considered a null-subject language. Based on earlier studies of language contact, two hypotheses regarding contact-induced language change can be formulated: 1) Bilinguals' Spanish shows overextension of pronominal subject expression. In most accounts, contact-induced language change is expected to happen via overextension of the less used variant in already existing variation, if it coincides with the patterns of the contact language. This means that the rates of pronominal subject expression in New Mexico Spanish are expected to increase. 2) Conversely, the contact-induced change takes a form of grammatical simplification with lower subject expression rates, as pragmatic constraints affecting pronoun use are lost.

Neither is the case, as Torres Cacoullous and Travis carefully show. Even though the community is characterised by widespread bilingualism and the bilinguals' speech by abundant code-switching –the number of Spanish and English clauses in the data is virtually even– the grammars stay separate, and no English-influenced changes in the contact variety can be detected. The

book questions the inevitability of contact-induced language change and points out that in situations of stable and widespread bilingualism, contrary to speculations, the grammars of the two systems might not converge. Unlike most studies in language contact, where convergence has been speculated, Cacoullos Torres and Travis use quantitative methods to back up their claims, and they do it with startling precision. The authors go carefully through all the constraints that characterise the use of pronominal subject expression in both Spanish and English, and then compare them to the bilingual data to observe if the constraints in bilingual speech follow English-like or Spanish-like patterns. The first chapter of the book examines language contact through variation and describes how the book is positioned in relation to earlier research. The second chapter describes the bilingual community in New Mexico, the contact variety, and the language ideologies present in the community. Torres Cacoullos and Travis explain their methods of choosing the speakers of their sample: the most important criterion was to find integrated members of the speech community. All informants are at least third-generation *nuevomexicanos* with a high proficiency and high rate of use in both languages. This chapter contains the first quantitative analysis of the book to determine the possible impact of macrosociolinguistic categories, such as gender, social class, and demographic locale, on pronominal subject expression. No impact is found.

The data collecting procedures are further discussed in Chapter 3. In the spoken data corpus, the basic unit to demarcate structural boundaries is prosodic. In the *bilingual* corpus, intonation units are of particular importance, as code-switching tends to occur at unit boundaries. The authors note that, in general, a bilingual corpus that can be analysed by quantitative methods is a prerequisite for proving systematic contact-induced language change. Besides the main information on speech patterns, the Labovian sociolinguistic interviews that constitute the corpus contain important information about attitudes and the bilingual speakers' life trajectories, which allows the authors to interpret the linguistic phenomena in their full context.

The corpus (NMSEB) is impressive, exactly what studies in language contact have needed for a long time. In many multilingual communities, there are no resources to produce such a corpus. In this case though, we are dealing with the contact between two widely known world languages with decades of previous literature on their language contact, and on each of the individual languages. The comparisons with monolingual varieties provided in this book are also not possible in many, if not most situations of language contact, as minority languages often do not have monolingual speakers, and the monolingual benchmarks simply do not exist. Therefore, it is even more

important to produce this type of studies about the communities where the circumstances are favourable to such comparisons.

The fourth chapter of the book is devoted to the characterisation of the bilingual speakers and their bilingualism. Proficiency-tests are a questionable method to determine the degree of bilingualism, as they are often based on monolingual models and correlate with formal education. Particularly in minority-language contexts, methods that question the linguistic proficiency of the informants should be handled with extraordinary caution, as minority language speakers are subject to denigrating claims of their variety. Therefore, the authors have chosen to use several different methods to determine bilingualism. These include self-reports in relation to a questionnaire, and content analysis of the recordings and the produced data. Torres Cacoullós and Travis deem many common dichotomies proposed in the literature on bilingualism as unreliable. Even the definition of L1 is far from clear, as the bilinguals may change their answer from one conversation to another. In the New Mexico corpus, the same speakers produce clauses in each of the languages. The code-switching style functions as a global speech mode. No “matrix language” is to be found, and the code-switches do not mark changes in the speech situation. The informants were asked about their stated language preference and about their language ability: neither of these measures correlates with Spanish subject expression.

The following three chapters are detailed accounts of subject pronoun expression. The sheer amount of data sometimes feels overwhelming, even exhausting, but the conclusion sections at the end of each chapter are very helpful. Chapter 5 reviews the probabilistic constraints on Spanish subject pronoun expression. In earlier literature, the most common interpretation for an expressed pronominal subject has been its status as a marker of contrast. However, the discourse factors that have the most important general effects on subject expression are priming and subject continuity. Subject continuity is a cross-cultural tendency of coding a less accessible referent with more linguistic material, whereas priming refers to the tendency of repeating the same constructions, such as the expressed subject, in the course of the conversation. Also tense and verb type have an effect: dynamic verbs favour unexpressed subjects, whereas stative verbs favour expressed subjects. Cognition verbs favour 1sg pronouns. The most common expressed pronouns, 1sg and 3sg, have a different distribution: 1sg pronouns occur with a greater distance, whereas 3sg pronouns cluster together in a narration. All in all, Spanish subject expression seems to follow documented cross-linguistic tendencies.

Chapter 6 introduces a variationist typology and draws cross-language comparisons in the use of subject pronoun expression. Even though English is considered a language with obligatory subject marking and Spanish, in contrast, a null-subject language, the parallels of English variation patterns to those of Spanish are remarkable in regards to expressed and unexpressed subjects. The speakers of both languages strive for co-ordination. When the verb and the subject are prosodically and syntactically linked, the rates of unexpressed subjects are higher, whereas the absence of one or both of these types of linking lowers the rate of unexpression. The effect of accessibility seems to hold cross-linguistically. The hypothesis of contact-induced language change must then lie on specific quantitative patterns. English unexpressed subjects only appear in the beginning of an intonation unit, and structural linking is stronger in English. The constructions favouring and disfavouring subject expression are also language-particular. If contact-induced language change is actually happening, the quantitative patterns should show more similarity in subject expression taking into account these contextual features.

Chapter 7 compares the current bilingual data with an earlier stage of the same bilingual variety. The authors of the book have access to an older corpus of New Mexico Spanish, spoken by the parent generation of the speakers in the NMSEB corpus. In the older corpus, the patterns of bilingual speech are distinctly different from those of the NMSEB corpus. The older generations mainly use insertions of single English loanwords, whereas the code-switching in NMSEB is continuous and the intonation units are evenly distributed between Spanish and English. NMSEB is, thus, more bilingual than the earlier stage corpus, and the contact has lasted longer. If contact-induced change truly affects the subject expression rates, the patterns in the NMSEB corpus should have converged. Yet the rates of the subject pronoun expression seem to hold constant, reflecting continuity rather than change.

Language contact is ultimately located within the bilingual speaker, who is the theme of Chapter 8. Here the varieties of Spanish and English as used by the same speakers are juxtaposed. If the systems have truly converged in the bilinguals' cognition, their varieties should be more similar to each other than the monolingual varieties. Their Spanish should display sensitivity to prosodic-initial restriction, a stronger effect for structural linking, and to the translation counterparts of lexically-particular constructions in English. It comes no longer as a surprise that no such connection is found. The bilinguals' English shows no Spanish patterning, or vice versa. The bilinguals' languages retain the patterns of their respective monolingual varieties.

Next, the authors move to examine whether the bilinguals' use of code-switching in the proximity affects the variation. The conclusion is that the recent use of English does not affect the patterns of subject expression in Spanish. So far, the authors have debunked the hypotheses of possible contact-induced language change under different conditions one by one. In Chapter 10, however, the authors find that CS enables cross-language priming. Even though the pronoun priming effect is notably weaker from English to Spanish than the within-language effect, it is still found. CS has an impact on contextual distribution: when CS is present, within-language priming opportunities are reduced. As English has a far higher rate of subject pronoun expression, a cross-linguistic subject pronoun prime is more likely to occur. Torres Cacoullos and Travis call this the *hypothesis of contextual distribution via CS*: CS produces a shift in the contexts in which a variable linguistic structure occurs.

The priming effect is greater when the associations between constructions are stronger. The associations exist both within and across languages, yet they are stronger intralinguistically. The authors conclude, thus, that New Mexican bilinguals, even when code-switching, keep the grammars of their languages separate, and that cross-linguistic associations do not equate with cross-language convergence. The structures might be associated with each other, but they are not treated as one. This observation, thoroughly backed up by the data, is of major importance for all language contact studies. However, in the final Chapter 11, titled *Bilingualism in its Linguistic and Social Context*, the authors do not always make clear which of the claims they think apply to the context of the New Mexican community, and which they think are more universally applicable. The conclusions of the book, based on one definition of CS and on one community with two major world languages that are typologically relatively similar, yet not closely related, cannot necessarily be extended to cover all types of language contact situations. The contribution by Torres Cacoullos and Travis is a major step forward in the study of the relationship between language contact and structural change, yet many steps still remain to be taken.

## Reference

Poplack, Shana and Marjory Meechan. (1998). Introduction: How languages fit together in codemixing. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 2 (2), 127–138.