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SUMMARY

‘Multilingual practices in language history: English and beyond’, edited by Päivi Pahta, Janne Skaffari and Laura Wright, is a collection of studies arguing for the importance of taking a multilingual perspective when dealing with the history of languages. In particular, the work focuses on language contact in the history of English and, to a much lesser extent, other languages spoken in the British Isles. The volume is divided into four parts: i) introduction; ii) borderlands; iii) patterns; iv) contexts.

The first part includes two chapters. Chapter 1, entitled ‘From historical code-switching to multilingual practices in the past’, is jointly authored by the editors of the book. The authors state that the aim of the volume is exploring multilingual practices (i.e. social practice, individual identities, linguistic repertoires, use of distinct languages in texts and intersentential code-switching) from a historical perspective, adopting a holistic approach to language history, which focuses on the non-monolingual background of the writer as well as the social context. The chapter also briefly overviews the topics which will be dealt with in the rest of the book: the definition of code-switching and the mainstream approach to its study, literal and metaphorical ‘borderlands’, quantitative patterns identified through the investigation of corpora and contexts of multilingual language use.

In Chapter 2, entitled “Historical and modern studies of code-switching: A tale of mutual enrichment”, Penelope Gardner-Chloros argues that, despite their differences, historical linguistics and mainstream sociolinguistics (i.e., sociolinguistics studying contemporary material) share a common interest in the study of language variation and change. Furthermore, Gardner-Chloros takes issue with the widespread model which posits the existence of a “matrix” language and one or more “embedded” languages. The author argues that this model supposes reality to be tidier than it actually is, positing that speakers’ linguistic repertoires are not likely to coincide with the externally defined notion of separate languages. The also author underlines that code-switching is not a unitary phenomenon either in the spoken or the written mode, and it varies on the basis of text and context; moreover,

code-switching may be a means of individual expression rather than a property characterizing the linguistic habits of a community. Finally, she proposes the adoption of conversation analysis as a method in historical sociolinguistics, as code-switching, in a bilingual context, can represent a contextualization cue.

The second part of the book includes five chapters. Chapter 3, written by Herbert Schendl, is entitled 'Code-switching in Anglo-Saxon England: A corpus-based approach'. This contribution provides an overview of the alternation between Latin and Old English in the Anglo-Saxon text production. The author carried out an investigation of homilies and scientific treatises supplemented by the use of the electronic 'Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus', to reveal the features of code-switching in these text types and the status of single Latin word forms syntactically integrated in vernacular co-texts. This topic is tightly interconnected with the thorny issue of distinguishing code-switching from borrowing. An analysis of the two text-types shows that Latin phrases (e.g., 'lunaris annus') and clauses and sentences (e.g., 'post mille annos soluetur Satanas') in vernacular contexts can be classified as code-switching, but single Latin word-forms which are syntactically integrated into Old English co-texts (e.g., 'punctos/puncti') are more safely subsumed under the term 'loanwords'. Subsequently, the author applies five criteria for the classification of single Latin word-forms in bilingual texts as possible code-switches, based on Matras (2009). Finally, Schendl applied them to the analysis of all occurrences of five Latin lexical items, concluding that this approach may enable the analysts to account for less clear cases of switching.

In Chapter 4, 'Twentieth-century Romance loans: Code-switching in the Oxford English Dictionary?', Rita Queiroz de Barros investigates the admission and treatment of loanwords in the Oxford English Dictionary, calling into question dictionary attestation as a criterion of distinguishing single-word switches from lexical borrowings. The author argues that the widespread idea of the Oxford English Dictionary as a "Britocentric repository of the English vocabulary" (p. 68) does not find support in her study, which instead witnesses a tendency to admit a large number of loanwords (e.g., 'squadra', 'feijoada'). Next, Queiroz de Barros focuses on 'foreignisms' (i.e. non-nativized words, e.g. 'problématique', 'numéro') originating from modern Romance languages and first attested in English in the 20th century, observing that code-switches can constitute dictionary entries. Therefore, she concludes that dictionary attestation is not a fully reliable tool to distinguish switches from borrowings and the role of the lexicon in the identification of code-switching is necessary.

Chapter 5, contributed by Louise Sylvester, is entitled 'A semantic field and text-type approach to late-medieval multilingualism'. This lexicologically-oriented study consists in the analysis of lexical items belonging to the semantic field of 'dress and textiles' in four text-types selected from Sylvester et al. (2014): wills, sumptuary laws, petitions, and romances. Some of these items are found in more than one text type ('kirtle', 'pelure', and 'fur' appear in all four of them, 'array' and 'garnementes' in petitions and romances), while many are only found in one text type. These terms have been classified into two subdomains: 'fur' (e.g., 'wylde catis') and 'textiles' (e.g., 'kerseys'). The results of this study show that much of the content-laden vocabulary was shared by French, Middle English, and medieval Latin, supporting Hunt's (2011) claim that, in medieval England, the distinctions of language identity were rather blurred.

In Chapter 6, entitled 'Code-switching and contact influence in Middle English manuscripts from the Welsh Penumbra', Simon Meecham-Jones addresses the often neglected topic of the

contact between Middle English and medieval Welsh in the Welsh Penumbra (i.e., medieval Wales and the Marcher Lordships). The author points out that linguists have often failed to seriously consider the possible influence of Welsh on English, in favor of other explanations, possibly due to a lack of familiarity with Welsh philology (see Tolkien 1983). The author discusses several examples, one of which is the adjective ‘gryndel’, glossed as ‘fierce, angry’ in the Oxford English Dictionary, which also suggests a comparison with the Old Norse ‘grimd’ (‘fierceness’). Instead, the author proposes the Welsh word ‘grym’ (‘force, vigor, power’) as an alternative origin. According to Meecham-Jones, the context of use in a text like *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* renders the Welsh option more plausible than the Old Norse alternative. The author argues that a rigorous study of Middle English manuscripts may reveal a more substantial influence of Welsh on English than is generally believed.

Chapter 7, contributed by Janne Skaffari, is entitled ‘Code-switching in the long twelfth century’, and addresses code-switching in the period immediately following the Norman Conquest. The aim of the chapter is to identify forms, functions, and patterns of code-switching, mostly between English and Latin, but French is also taken into consideration. The study is based on the author’s investigation of 54 manuscripts containing literary material from the period 1075-1250. Latin is the dominant language in most of the manuscripts, and its use persists within the vernacular English texts in the field of religion, while the presence of French is more limited. The author discusses four levels at which code-switching can be observed in the sources: manuscript, page, text, and clause, which basically correspond to intertextual, visually flagged, interclausal, and intraclausal switching, as well as the extra-sentential code-switching. However, as Skaffari remarks at the end of the chapter, the same manuscript may contain examples of code-switching at more than one of the previously mentioned levels. Finally, she points out the importance of visual aspects as a “reminder of the usefulness of consulting original manuscripts instead of simply relying on editions or catalogues.” (p. 137)

Part III includes five chapters. Chapter 8, contributed by Jukka Tuominen, is entitled “‘Trifling shews of learning’? Patterns of code-switching in English sermons 1640-1740”. Carried out within a variationist framework, the study aims to provide an empirical description of general structural and functional code-switching patterns in a sample of ten sermons from the Lampeter Corpus of Early Modern English Tracts. Code-switching is explicitly defined as “the use of more than one language in the course of a single communicative episode” (Heller 1988, p. 1). The author observes that code-switching in sermons published between 1640 and 1740 mostly comes in prefabricated chunks (e.g., *And as in Persons and Opinions, so in things too, ‘quo antiquius eò melius...’*), most typically Latin quotations from classical or patristic sources. Tuominen also underlines that the sermons with the most switching and the most varied functional types of switches seem to have been given before audiences including well-educated members of society.

Chapter 9 is jointly written by Arja Nurmi, Jukka Tyrkkö, Anna Petäjaniemi, and Päivi Pahta. It is entitled ‘The social and textual embedding of multilingual practices in Late Modern English: A corpus-based analysis’, and presents an overview of the frequency and type of multilingual practices based on a systematic study of a sample of data drawn from the Corpus of Late Modern English Text 3.0. The authors point out that during the 18th century, a good command of educated English was one of the marks of a cultured person, along with a sufficient knowledge of foreign languages (in particular, Latin, Greek, and French). As a result, this multilingualism took place within the community of English speakers. The study shows that an author’s education plays a major role in the frequency of multilingual practices,

texts directly associated with foreign countries feature the highest frequencies of foreign content, while the scarcity of female writers and the uniformity of informants' social background do not allow for a reliable analysis of gender and social class.

In Chapter 10, entitled 'Mining macaronics', Šime Demo aims to build a foundation for a digitally supported linguistic study of the Neo-Latin macaronic tradition (humorous texts mixing vernacular stems and Latin endings by adopting a two-stage approach. First, the author set up an annotated sample corpus; second, he carried out two sample analyses of the corpus, observing how Latin words, hybrids, and embedded language words cluster, and running a test to check whether verse beginnings play an important role in achieving the macaronic effect. The study shows that Germanic, Romance, and Slavic embedded languages behave differently. Furthermore, the author points out that longer clusters of monolingual discourse occasionally appear, but the increase in their size corresponds with a decrease in their frequency. Finally, the verse beginnings are not more frequently macaronic than would be expected from the overall frequency of macaronic words in individual texts.

Chapter 11, co-authored by Tom ter Horst and Nike Stam, is entitled 'Visual diamorphs: The importance of language neutrality in code-switching in medieval Ireland'. This study addresses the interaction between Latin and Irish in a group of homilies from the 'An Leabhar Breac' manuscript (15th century) and a commentary written for the martyrology 'Féilire Óengusso' (8th century); in particular, the authors focus on 'visual diamorphs' (see Wright 2011), i.e. "words that by their form can be assigned to both languages involved in a bilingual situation." (p. 223). Ter Horst and Stam classified this phenomenon into four categories: names and borrowings (e.g., *na Iudei vero*, 'the Jews, however'), function words, (i. *uirgo de sil chonaire*, 'that is, a virgin from the Sil Chonaire'), abbreviations (e.g., *Athert vero eoin aps.*, 'Then John the Apostle said'), and emblems (e.g., *c7* for 'cet', 'hundred'). The authors' computer-assisted analysis shows many similarities between the types of diamorphs occurring in both corpora, with emblems representing the largest group in both manuscripts. As the majority of switches in the corpora are introduced by diamorphs (of different shapes and sizes), they argue that diamorphs play an important role in facilitating switches.

In Chapter 12, entitled "'Latin in recipes?' A corpus-based approach to scribal abbreviations in 15th-century medical manuscripts', Alpo Honkapohja contrasts the use of abbreviation in Latin (e.g., 'lb' for 'libra') and Middle English (e.g., 'ijjd' for 'third'), XML-encoding the relevant items in a sample of five manuscripts which are part of the Voigts-Sloane Sibling Group (see Voigts 1990). The main goal of the study is testing the applicability of his methodology to the study of abbreviations. By means of his corpus-based analysis, Honkapohja concludes that it is possible to observe a degree of interesting variation in the patterns of abbreviation in medical manuscripts, adding that there seems to be room for constructing scribal profiles using a diagnostic set of graphemes for scribal identification. Finally, the XML encoding used in this study allows the annotation of both the symbol and the extension, creating interesting possibilities for further corpus-based studies.

Part iv contains four chapters. In Chapter 13, 'Administrative multilingualism on the page in early modern Poland: In search of a framework for written code-switching', Joanna Kopaczyk approaches code-switching on the written page, focusing on the contact between Latin, Polish, and Scots in seventeenth-century Poland-Lithuania. After providing some historical background, Kopaczyk presents the results of her case-study on different types of code-switching on the page in manuscripts comprising municipal administrative and legal records pertaining to Scottish immigrants to early modern Poland-Lithuania, including

instances of reported speech (often flagged with terms like ‘vulgaritates’) and other discourse moves, morpheme boundaries (e.g. Latin roots with Polish inflections, e.g. the first person plural ‘specificuiemy’ from ‘specificare’, ‘to specify’), and personal names (e.g. ‘Jacobus’ as a latinization of ‘Jacob’). The author argues for the importance of considering code-switching in a written text in terms of structural linguistic levels and the visual aspects of the handwritten or printed page. In this way, the text is to be seen as a multimodal communicative event, which can be seen as including different levels, which can be addressed in order, from the most general (genre) to the most integrated with the matrix language (orthography).

In Chapter 14, ‘Approaching the functions of historical code-switching: The case of solidarity’, Aleksí Mäkilähde explores the function of solidarity in historical code-switching. On the basis of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, the author states that “An act has the function of establishing solidarity iff (i) it implies a low D-value between S[peaker] and H[earer] through shared membership in a social group, and (ii) at the same time enhances the positive face of both S and H” (p. 308). The author then proceeds to analyze some examples from the ‘Orationes’ manuscript, which contains drama and speech performed by the students of the King’s School in Canterbury between approximately 1665 and 1684, most of which contain switches between different languages (mostly English, Latin, and Greek). Mäkilähde observes that it would be better to consider code-switching in combination with other discourse strategies, such as quotations because it is often the combination, rather than code-switching alone, that establishes solidarity.

Chapter 15, contributed by Richard Ingham, is entitled ‘Medieval bilingualism in England: On the rarity of vernacular code-switching’. The author investigates code-switching in both religious and lay professional texts written in English and French in the Middle Ages. On the basis of his study, he argues that in medieval England, vernacular code-switching could be found in certain professional contexts, but evidence of it is scanty outside documentary record-keeping. The author also discusses a combination of French function words and English nouns in accounts and charters. According to Ingham, the avoidance of code-switching in written discourse may be due to a tendency to see it as too casual a practice to put it into writing. Moreover, the language choice factor may also have played a part: English was chosen by authors addressing an audience who could not be expected to know French; on the other hand, French could be useful to reach an audience who could not know Latin; furthermore, French was not subject to regional variation in England, unlike English.

In Chapter 16, ‘A multilingual approach to the history of Standard English’, Laura Wright argues that the century between the 1370s and the 1480s constitutes the period of transition from Medieval Latin to Proto-Standard English. Wright identifies three developmental stages which can be observed from a multilingual perspective. Prior to the fifteenth century, Britons kept accounts in either a Medieval Latin or French, with English employed for linguistic elements which resisted a representation in Latin or French (e.g., social ranks, titles, toponyms). Then, after 1380, the ‘pre-shift generation “show considerable toing and froing between mixed-language and monolingual English” (p. 343), before monolingual English eventually became established. Her multilingual perspective to the transition from Latin to monolingual English calls into question the established textbook view of the history of Standard English which, suffering from a monolingual bias, according to Wright provides a less than accurate (if not downright problematic) account of the origins of the standard language.

EVALUATION

Overall, “Multilingual practices and language history: English and beyond” represents a valuable collection of contributions to the study of language contact, addressing a range of topics which may appeal to a wide range of scholars extending well beyond the field of sociolinguistics, reaching out to English philologists, historical linguists and semioticians, and to some extent even medieval and modern historians and literary scholars. Indeed, the sixteen chapters which make up the book provide a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches which may be of some interest to specialists in the above-mentioned academic disciplines. Restricting my attention to the field of linguistics, the editor’s choice of dividing the book into four parts according to different – but frequently interrelated – hot topics in historical sociolinguistics is principled, and their selection of chapters succeeds in covering a range of issues related to the study of the history of English and/or languages with which it has sooner or later come into contact, either in the British Isles (as in the case of ter Horst and Stam’s study) or in mainland Europe (as in Kopyczka’s chapter). While each chapter of the book is able to stand as a self-contained contribution, each part of the volume strongly coheres, and so does the book as a whole. As a result, this book can be regarded as a valuable addition to the ‘Language Contact and Bilingualism’ de Gruyter series.

The choice to illustrate the application of a multilingual (and, more loosely, multicultural) perspective on different aspects of language history is felicitous, as it provides the reader with a comprehensive overview of such an approach at work. First, and perhaps foremost, the adoption of such a perspective enables scholars to challenge longstanding assumptions, pointing out that although they have long been taken for granted, their accuracy is often less than perfect. In a field like historical linguistics, which basically relies on primary sources from a distant past, it seems appropriate to request that all plausible hypotheses should be taken into consideration. The different multilingual approaches adopted by contributions included in the volume have the merit of shedding new light on issues which were often considered as settled, bringing in new theoretical and methodological insights which seem to have the potential to significantly enrich the academic debate on language practices as addressed from a historical angle. Without detracting anything from the value of other contributions, Meecham-Jones’s study (Chapter 6) on the possible influence of Medieval Welsh on Middle English is a particularly interesting case in point, especially against the background of the recently reignited debate on the Celtic hypothesis (e.g., Flippula and Klemola 2009).

On a different note, many of the chapters included in the volume concern computer-assisted analyses, in some cases proposing improvements on the existing corpus-based techniques tailored to the specific needs of the historical sociolinguist working with a particular type of text. A case in point is Honkapohja’s XML encoding of abbreviations in Latin and Middle English manuscripts (Chapter 12), but valuable proposals were also contributed by e.g., ter Schendl (Chapter 3), Queiroz de Barros (Chapter 4), Demo (Chapter 10), and Horst and Stam (Chapter 11), and Kopyczka (Chapter 13). At the same time, valuable insights are also contributed from a more theoretical perspective by scholars approaching their object of study from new angles. Wright’s multilingual approach to the transition from language alternation to the establishment of monolingual English (Chapter 16) represents a particularly deft, serious challenge to the mainstream views of the history of Standard English, but interesting theoretical proposals are also put forward by e.g., Sylvester (Chapter 5), Tuominen (Chapter 8) and Mäkilähde (Chapter 14).

With regard to more formal matters, all chapters are easy to read and understand, striking a nice balance between the need to be as informative as possible and the necessity to be concise. Each study avoids over-relying on examples, which are instead employed only when necessary to provide instances of phenomena or clarify a point. Whenever quantitative evidence is provided, tables and graphs are supplied to facilitate the reader's understanding. All chapters are uniform in terms of length and structure, contributing to the general elegance and readability of the volume.

While my overall evaluation of 'Multilingual practices in language history' is clearly very positive, I will now point out a couple of minor shortcomings of the book. First of all, the absence of a concluding chapter is, to some extent, disappointing. While it is understandable that the editors had a limited amount of space and thus awarded priority to the case-studies, I still believe that the book would have benefitted from including a brief concluding chapter, tying in with Chapter 1 and restating the goals of the book and – in particular – the directions for future developments. Indeed, the previous sixteen chapters provided a lot of information to the reader on many aspects of the history of English, and a short concluding chapter could effectively and elegantly wrap up the contents of the book. While this is no fundamental flaw, the absence of a concluding chapter may leave the reader with a sense of incompleteness.

A further less than ideal property of the book involves a certain ambiguity in the use of some key terms, with particular reference to 'code-switching', 'borrowing', and 'loanword', which are used in virtually all chapters. While the editors may have a point in refusing to force a common definition on the authors, it could have helped if each of them had a definition of these phenomena provided at the onset. Overall, this is not a major issue and the present reviewer does not believe it can cause a major disruption in the reader's understanding of the studies; however, more clarity at the terminological level could help the audience into a smoother reading of the book.

Despite the two minor liabilities listed above, I believe 'Multilingual practices in language history' represents a valuable contribution to the field; it seems to have the potential to significantly contribute to the spread of the multilingual perspective in the field of both historical and mainstream sociolinguistics, as well as English linguistics and philology. This may eventually enhance a more comprehensive appreciation of the limitations of the monolingual approach, which should not necessarily be abandoned altogether but should be complemented by a multilingual perspective. Indeed, the importance of language contact in explaining language development and change can hardly be overstated.

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