

Esma Gregor, *Russian-English Code-switching in New York City*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2003

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1. Introduction

(a) This doctoral thesis focuses on Russian-English bilingualism and code-switching in New York City on an empirical basis. It discusses the main functional models in code-switching research and applies them to the data gathered in a field-study the author conducted between 1998 and 2000. The data are quantified, and an attempt is made to correlate the linguistic competence of the speakers with their code-switching behavior.

2. Content

(b) The paper is structured in a chronological way. It consists of 7 chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the history and recent developments in code-switching research. Code-switching as the most visible feature of bilingualism became of interest for linguists and sociologists in the second half of the 20th century. Sociolinguistics that emerged in the early 60s was not only interested in the structure but how language is used and what its functions are. It focussed on the study of the meaning of language choice in different situations. "Code-switching" (CS) as the alternation of languages in conversation was first coined by Haugen (1956), but already Weinreich (1953) had written about a "switch" in language depending on the situation. "Interference" on the other hand describes the influence two languages have on each other. CS-research is to be differentiated in a structural approach that analyses the grammatical features and a functional approach. The latter one is taken on by Blom/Gumperz (1972) who described the contextualization of additional information as the function of CS, like a change of addressee or a shift in topic, to the interlocutor. This approach is described as followed by Auer's (1984, 1995) sequential and Myers-Scotton's (1999) Marked/Unmarked Model. Since the late 80s CS has been established as independent field of study with its own publications and the founding of the European Science Foundation on Code-switching and Language Contact.

In Chapter 2 the field study that provided the empirical basis is introduced. After first contacts and questionnaires 50 half-structured and 50 unstructured interviews were made. The problem that people perceive interviews as formal events, which requires a formal type of speech was according to Labov (1981) to overcome: When speakers speak for an extended time and talk about events that stem from personal experience they eventually shift towards the vernacular. But for the CS-research two obstacles became obvious: it was realised that code-switching is an in-group form of communication and it is only used in an informal speech mode people use with persons they are close to. Thus a network-study was essential, followed by informal "kitchen sessions". The author observed three networks: the first net-