

Clyne, Michael, 2003. *Dynamics of Language Contact*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ISBN 0 521 78648

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With this book, Michael Clyne, one of the leading experts in the field of language contact, has provided a comprehensive study of language contact and language shift phenomena in Australia. He has also succeeded in making it a fascinating and highly accessible read.

Clyne works on the basis of an impressively large corpus of language data which enables him to make (cautious) probabilistic statements about regularities and tendencies of language contact phenomena and language shift. Most of his data are from German and Dutch immigrants, bilinguals as well as trilinguals (German/Dutch - English, or German - Dutch - English speakers). These data are complemented by Hungarian - German - English and Italian - Spanish - English trilingual recordings. Observations from other language pairs (Croatian - English and Vietnamese - English) are also taken into account for comparative purposes.

First he gives an overview of general language demography factors, based on census data of first and second generation immigrants. The functions a particular language choice serves can be categorized according to

- 1) individual factors, which are: age, living in exogamous or endogamous situations, differences according to gender, socio-economic mobility, English proficiency
- 2) group factors: size and strength of the particular immigrant community, the distance of one's native culture to Australian culture, religion and experiences with the English / Australian language and culture one had before migration
- 3) general factors of time and place.

These factors are taken as an explanatory background for Clyne's detailed analyses of contact phenomena on all linguistic levels. The major concepts employed in analysis here are 'convergence', as a general term denoting the process by which languages are made more similar to each other, 'transference', which means the use of forms, features or structures from another language, and 'transversion', denoting the crossing over from one language to another. These categories are not entirely clear-cut as phenomena and influences overlap and interact.

Clyne provides a thorough discussion of established models of language maintenance and shift. However, he argues for more flexibility than any of the models can offer and proceeds to a highly eclectic choice of elements from them. What he deems neglected in the models are the highly variable, and often unpredictable influences the personal, cultural and time-factors have on each other. The multiple identities of the people involved in language contact situations add to the complexity of the phenomena. He demonstrates this throughout his studies, in particular in his extremely valuable longitudinal studies of German immigrants.

What follows, is an encompassing review and discussion of previous work on code-switching. On this basis, Clyne then offers many examples from his own corpora on convergence and transference phenomena at different linguistic levels. His own multilingual experience provides for insightful analyses and interpretations.

Some of the translations or evaluations of the German data on convergence and transference however could be debatable. In general, Clyne compares his data with Standard German; he is, however, also aware of dialectal variation which the immigrants might have imported to their Australian contexts. Although sometimes, possible dialectal features are evaluated as language contact phenomena, which they might not necessarily be. (For example, p. 126 "mit meine Kinder" (dative plural *-n* suffix deletion) is 'perfectly normal' in the Rhine-Ruhr area).

In a few other examples, his Standard German transcripts of the code-switching data are not adequately 'corrected', e.g. p. 117 "ich habe gestern zu meiner Mutter gesprochen", which would have to be "mit meiner Mutter", or p. 138 "so dick, daß Du es nicht mit einem Wagen durchfahren konntest" (referring to "Gestrüpp / Feld") which would rather have to be "so dicht, dass Du nicht mit dem Wagen durchfahren konntest".

Some of the most striking regularities Clyne describes in his data are, for example, that more basic variants in one language are overgeneralised if they overlap with the default variant in the other language. The closer the structural overlap between the languages in contact is, the higher is the likelihood of convergence. This in turn further increases the overlap and supports language drift. Clyne's findings corroborate several elements of the existing models. The data, however match no single model fully, which confirms Clyne's eclectic approach to contact-induced changes.

The ensuing analysis of transversion is led by a foregrounding of facilitating factors, instead of the conventionally discussed constraints. Transversion is partly explained here with recourse to the particular discourse, the sociolinguistic setting or the effort the speakers invest into keeping their languages separate. The detailed investigation, however, rests on the structural facilitation of transversion by overlap and convergence.

Clyne's discussion of code-switching documents categories of skilled code-switching in its indexical function of expressing different identities of the speaker, such as: "Manchmal wenn ich deutschsprachige Bekannte treffe, spreche ich deutsch, *otherwise I speak only English*" (p 160). Other examples indicate the opposite end of the continuum, where interlingual influence leads to almost unintelligible mixing, e.g.: "wir haben aus *for lunch* gegangen" (p. 178). Examples of this kind have sometimes been discussed in connection with principles of pidginisation, here relexification. In his discussion, Clyne gives a detailed account of the major structural elements facilitating switches. A clear finding corroborating previous research is that stable collocations and multi-word chunks are rarely separated in switching. They work as "embedded language islands". This indicates a psycholinguistic preference for storing and retrieving extended lexical items which occur frequently and are communicationally useful.

Clyne's treatment of pragmatic aspects is highly fascinating. He describes how pragmatic transference can lead to convergence between the languages, for example, through differences in the realization of politeness. Another striking example for transference is the address system, where most of the European languages work on a "T/V" basis, in contrast to English. Overgeneralisation of "T"-forms and loss of "V"-forms is an almost logical consequence. Modal particles, which are important pragmatic markers and highly frequent in German, on the other hand, are retained by the immigrants to a surprisingly high degree.

Although Clyne focuses largely on the linguistic factors in the processes of contact induced language change, he still gives thoughtful consideration to the sometimes even more predominant socio-cultural factors and tries to balance both influences.

Towards the end of the concluding chapter, Clyne provides a "summary comparison between language contact phenomena" of language pairs with either German, Dutch, Croatian or Vietnamese and English and further of the language triads German / Dutch, German / Hungarian or Italian / Spanish with English. This renders changes on the different typological levels immediately and easily visible and therefore serves as a very helpful overview.

The synthesis Clyne derives from the analyses of his data shows that established linear models cannot cover the dynamics of language contact. He is in the fortunate situation of being able to draw from a wealth of data which leads him to new insights and to re-evaluations of existing work. His book is not only a major contribution to the field but additionally offers most fascinating glimpses of a socio-cultural history of Australia. This, and the lively closeness to authentic experiences within communities makes it valuable reading not only for experts on language contact but also for advanced students of linguistics and cultural studies.