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## **A study on code-switching between Afaan Oromoo and English in an informal context**

Review of PhD dissertation

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Mihiretu Wakwoya's doctoral dissertation investigates Afaan Oromoo (Maccaa dialect)–English code-switching in informal spoken interaction, using the Matrix Language Frame (MLF) and 4-M models as its main analytical framework. The thesis focuses on identifying the Matrix Language in bilingual clauses, evaluating whether morpheme order and system-morpheme sourcing follow MLF predictions, and describing how English lexical material is incorporated into Afaan Oromoo morphosyntax. The study reports a relatively large dataset overall (approximately twenty-one hours of recordings with fifty-six participants), and it bases its quantitative results on a fully transcribed and clause-segmented subset of three recordings, yielding 879 analyzable clauses. The dissertation argues that Afaan Oromoo is overwhelmingly the Matrix Language in bilingual clauses, while English mainly supplies inserted lexical items that are accommodated within an Afaan Oromoo grammatical frame.

The dissertation's main strength lies in its empirical contribution. Afaan Oromoo–English code-switching remains much less researched than many better-known language pairs in the international code-switching literature, and the focus on informal, naturally occurring conversation is highly appropriate for testing structural predictions in a realistic communicative setting. The work also benefits from a good match between its theoretical framework and its research questions. The dissertation consistently connects the analysis to central MLF and 4-M predictions, such as the Morpheme Order Principle and the System Morpheme Principle, and uses many illustrative examples to show how English elements appear within Afaan Oromoo structures. In addition, the author's attention to typological context, particularly the



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implications of an agglutinative Matrix Language, adds interpretive value and strengthens the analysis.

Compared with the version submitted for the public defense, the revised dissertation shows clear improvement in several important respects. The framing of the study is now more precise, especially regarding the definition of informal conversation and the scope of the analysis. The final version also makes the treatment of sociolinguistic variables more explicit by clarifying that variables such as age, gender, education, proficiency, and interactional setting are documented and used descriptively to contextualize the data. This considerably strengthens the overall methodological positioning of the dissertation.

A further important improvement is that the dissertation now addresses more explicitly the distinction between code-switching and borrowing. This was one of the key issues raised in my earlier review, and in the revised version, the author devotes separate attention to it in the structure of the theoretical and methodological discussion. This makes the analytical procedure clearer and helps the reader understand how English-origin items are classified in the corpus.

The organization of the dissertation has also been improved. The revised version contains a more developed literature review and a more clearly structured methodological chapter, including a separate section on corpus design and the selection of the analyzed subset. These revisions make the dissertation more coherent and easier to follow. The reference work also appears to have been checked more carefully than in the earlier version, and the dissertation now gives a more polished impression.

The dissertation is strong in terms of its structural analysis. The findings concerning the dominant role of Afaan Oromoo as Matrix Language, the integration of English lexical items into an Afaan Oromoo morphosyntactic frame, and the applicability of the MLF and 4-M models are presented clearly and supported by relevant examples. The work is logically organized, the argumentation is coherent, and the writing is fluent and appropriately academic. Overall, the dissertation offers valuable insights into Afaan Oromoo–English code-switching and makes a meaningful contribution both empirically and analytically.

In conclusion, the dissertation is well-organized, logically structured, and compliant with the formal requirements. It is written in a competent and appropriately academic style, and it



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represents a valuable contribution to the study of code-switching. In view of the quality of the work, its original focus, its solid empirical basis, and the revisions made following the public defense, I recommend that the dissertation be accepted for the final defense.

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