



**University of Pannonia
Faculty of Humanities**

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Report on

Ahmad Hijazi Tayel Awawdeh's PhD thesis

Title: Systematic analysis of codeswitching functions among Maghreb Arabic–French–English trilingual speakers.

General Assessment

The dissertation submitted by Ahmad Hijazi Tayel Awawdeh presents a high-quality, original, and methodologically sound investigation into the functions of codeswitching (CS) among Maghreb Arabic–French–English trilingual speakers. It contributes significantly to the field of multilingualism and codeswitching research by addressing an underexplored linguistic combination through a nuanced integration of Cognitive Linguistics, Cultural Linguistics, and mixed-methods analysis. The thesis is well-structured, theoretically grounded, and clearly written, demonstrating both scholarly maturity and methodological rigor. The revisions made in response to prior feedback have further clarified the study's scope, reinforced its argumentation, and improved analytical precision.

The introduction chapter presents effectively the research topic and contextualizes the study within broader trends in multilingualism, particularly in North Africa. It clearly articulates the research problem, aims, significance, and guiding questions. The candidate demonstrates good command of the literature and provides a compelling rationale for focusing on trilingual codeswitching, an area often overlooked in favor of bilingual contexts. The chapter's structure is logical, and the background section is rich in its detailed sociolinguistic insights into the Maghreb region. This chapter's strengths stand to a very well presented contextualization of the NA linguistic context, it provides a clear articulation of the research aims and novelty, and it is well grounded in academic scholarship and coherence.

The literature review is comprehensive and theoretically robust. It synthesizes perspectives on bilingualism, multilingualism, CS theory, and related terminology with clarity and depth. The

candidate demonstrates critical engagement with a wide range of sources, and the distinctions between CS, codemixing, and lexical borrowing are particularly well-presented. Moreover, the incorporation of psycholinguistic, structural, and sociocultural theories sets a solid foundation for the study's interdisciplinary approach. The strengths of this chapter are in its thoughtful integration of some relevant theoretical frameworks from multiple linguistic subfields, a good handling of complex terminological debates (albeit, not a clear positioning of your conceptualization of the phenomenon based on other theories), and a good justification for a trilingual focus and qualitative orientation (though you later claim for a mixed-method study). The structure of this section seems to be logical but I would have appreciated either an introduction or a summative section to this part of the dissertation, in which Ahmad explains and justifies the scope of the review as the foundation of his own ideas.

The methodology chapter presents a well-structured account of the research design, integrating qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the functions of codeswitching (CS) among trilingual speakers. The rationale for adopting a mixed-methods approach is compelling, and the candidate demonstrates careful planning in the recruitment of participants, the design of instruments, and the steps followed for data collection and analysis. Notably, the inclusion of triangulated sources—questionnaires, audio recordings, and metalinguistic interviews—adds considerable depth and credibility to the study. This section shows valuable contribution in terms of the use of both Cognitive Linguistics and Cultural Linguistics frameworks offers a novel analytic perspective; there is a strong use and understanding of multiple data sources and intercoder reliability (ICR) checks which reinforce the trustworthiness of the findings; as well as the ethical considerations and detailed participant profiles contribute to methodological transparency. Despite these strengths, there are still points that need attention so as to strengthen its replicability and analytic rigor. Note, that some of these points also have repercussions on the reporting of the results.

- a) Coefficient Calculations: The study references various coefficients (e.g., for language history, proficiency, language switching, and attitudes), yet there is no clear explanation of how these coefficients were calculated or what scales, formulas, or weighting methods were applied. A more transparent description of the computational procedures is needed, ideally with formulaic examples or references to validated scoring protocols;
- b) Data Illustrations: The chapter would be strengthened by including specific examples from the data to illustrate how individual or aggregated coefficient values are interpreted. Showing how particular participant data corresponds to coefficient values would improve the interpretability and practical application of these metrics;
- c) Graph Format and Clarity: The graphical representations in the methodology section are currently limited in their effectiveness due to: Unclear or missing x- and y-axis labels (i.e., Lack of scale or legend explanations, unspecified variable units or data ranges), and in some cases, the visual format which undermines

their potential to support the findings (i.e., improving the formatting and adding brief interpretive commentary alongside each figure would enhance their clarity and relevance; and

d) Quantitative Data Analysis Presentation: Although the study claims a mixed-method and claims to incorporate quantitative analysis (e.g., word counts, percentage distributions), the actual procedures of quantitative analysis are not elaborated. The tools, techniques, and statistical summaries used to process the numerical data are not adequately described. While the issues noted above regarding the lack of clarity in coefficient calculation, insufficient illustration of quantitative procedures, and the limited quality of graphical presentation represent areas for further refinement, they do not detract from the overall quality or coherence of the dissertation. These shortcomings are methodological in nature and do not undermine the validity of the research design or the credibility of the findings. Therefore, they do not preclude the dissertation from meeting the academic standards required for awarding the PhD degree.

The presentation of findings in the results and discussion chapter is systematic and occasionally illustrated with authentic data excerpts. The categorization of CS functions into pragmatic, semantic, linguistic, and sociocultural domains is both theoretically grounded and empirically convincing. The discussion is insightful and demonstrates deep understanding of multilingual discourse. The quantitative distributions effectively complement the qualitative interpretations, highlighting functional dominance and language-specific preferences. There are important contributions in terms of the sophisticated categorization and interpretation of CS functions, and the integration of participant reflections which strengthens the analytic validity. I refer back to two or three recommendations elaborated in reference to methodology but they carry their impact also into the results – namely, the graphic representation and the unbalanced and missing quantitative analysis. In as far as the interpretation of the results, this chapter offers a well-organized and detailed presentation of the study's findings. The systematic approach taken to organize the findings, coupled with descriptive precision, reflects a strong command of both the data and the theoretical frameworks.

The discussion thoughtfully integrates prior literature, situating the findings within established CS research and highlighting areas of alignment. The inclusion of participant voices and the use of qualitative analysis tools contribute to the credibility and contextual richness of the interpretations. Concomitantly, the discussion is praiseworthy in its clear and consistent categorization of CS functions with meaningful subtypes, effective use of participant excerpts to exemplify findings, and a solid engagement with existing literature across linguistic subfields. While the discussion chapter demonstrates competent synthesis and reliable analysis, it would benefit from deeper interpretation of the findings. Much of the discussion is oriented toward confirming patterns already reported in previous studies, rather than developing novel theoretical insights or drawing bolder implications from the data. The reader is left wanting a stronger sense of the candidate's own scholarly voice and theoretical positioning. Nevertheless, the chapter meets the expectations

for doctoral-level research, and the above suggestions are intended as enhancements rather than essential corrections.

The final chapter offers a coherent and well-organized summary of the study's main findings and revisits the research questions with clarity. The candidate provides a concise synthesis of the categorized functions of codeswitching and effectively highlights the alignment between the findings and the theoretical frameworks adopted. The section on implications points to the relevance of the study for future research, pedagogy, and multilingual discourse analysis. The chapter also includes a balanced reflection on the study's limitations and offers reasonable directions for future inquiry. While the chapter succeeds in summarizing the work and outlining potential implications, I would have liked to see a more assertive scholarly contribution which would go beyond the reflective and reiterative findings into a rather forward-leaning in terms of framing what new knowledge this dissertation adds to the field of codeswitching and multilingualism. In other words, I miss your voice as an upcoming scholar with stronger concluding statements that position the findings as a foundation for further scholarly dialogue or conceptual development. Overall, the conclusion chapter meets the formal requirements of doctoral-level research. The above suggestions are offered as a means to strengthen the visibility of the study's originality and consolidate its scholarly impact.

Concerning the formal aspects of the dissertation, I have found occasional lapses in academic style concerning the use of language, paragraphing and both in-text and after-text referencing. A final, careful proof-reading could have eliminated most of these minor problems.

On the basis of the above considerations, I can conclude that this thesis presents an original research on a timely and important topic, and, therefore, I think that it meets the requirements of a PhD degree. I am looking forward to Ahmad's comments at the dissertation public defence.



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