Multilingualism Doctoral School
Faculty of Humanities
University of Pannonia
Dissertation evaluation for the final defense

Hungarian-English Code-Switching:
A comparative analysis of code-switching frameworks on morphosyntactic integration

Attila Salamon

The dissertation addresses a complex and intriguing topic as it sets out to compare different theoretical frameworks of code-switching in terms of their perspective on morphosyntactic integration in the context of Hungarian-English code-switching in a sample of 24 Hungarian podcast videos. As formulated in the introduction of the dissertation, the author's aim with carrying out this research can be summarized in the following four points. First, it is the description of how English-origin material is integrated into a Hungarian morphosyntactic environment. Second, it is the evaluation of how applicable the Matrix Language Frame (MLF) Model is to the structure of the bilingual constructions that emerge in the sample, particularly with regard to the identification of the matrix language, morpheme order, system morphology, category assignment, and the treatment of complex English material. The third component of the highly multifaceted set of aims that the dissertation sets out to attain is the examination of the sample from a Poplackian perspective, concerning the classification of English-origin items as integrated lone items, borrowing, nonce borrowing, and multiword code-switches. Finally, the fourth aim is to compare the aforementioned two approaches (i.e. the MLF model and the Poplackian framework) in terms of their classification and description of the data.

The ultimate strength of the project lies in its robust engagement with the relevant theoretical background, as well as the constant conscious reflection on the significance of the findings in the context of the theoretical models in question. The candidate arrives at highly convincing results, which he presents in a coherent fashion, against a solid theoretical background. The methodological framework of the analysis is carefully thought out and presented with utmost academic rigor, as are the results and the discussion of the findings.

The dissertation is constructed in a highly logical way, with each structural unit being coherently linked to the aims of the study, the research questions, as well as the theoretical background. The paper consists of eight chapters, and it covers 112 pages excluding the bibliography and the appendices. The body of the text is accompanied by 18 tables, a reference list of 7 pages, as well as 4 appendices. The latter incorporate valuable additions to the main body of the paper, with Appendix A listing the glossing abbreviations applied throughout the paper, while Appendix B contains direct links to the sources of the podcasts that are freely available online. Similarly, Appendix C provides a link to the publicly available datasheet of the corpus, whereas Appendix D contains a list of the morphologically integrated multiword code-switching tokens from the sample. In terms of language and formatting, the paper is expertly written in appropriate academic English. The formatting of the paper is also absolutely straightforward and in line with the general academic conventions of the field, which ultimately makes the dissertation a pleasure to read.

The introduction is structured logically and presented in a concise and easy-to-follow fashion, convincingly embedding the project in its complex theoretical background, as well as establishing the theoretical problem, the aims of the study, and the research questions that the dissertation sets out to investigate. The four research questions follow logically from the four research aims that have been presented earlier, adding to the coherence of the dissertation both in terms of structure and research design. Furthermore, the candidate makes four major predictions based on the theoretical background, which he presents in a convincing and theoretically grounded manner, systematically revisiting them in the Discussion and Conclusion chapters. Next, the introduction addresses the significance of the project both from an empirical and from a theoretical point of view, shedding light on its complex and forward-pointing comparative approach. The candidate manages to synthesize different theoretical perspectives, thereby successfully reconciling two largely different conceptual frameworks. Last but not least, the final section of the introduction outlines the structure of the rest of the paper, making the reader's job easier in finding their way through the entirety of the dissertation and logically interpreting its structure.

Chapters 2 through 4 present the detailed theoretical background of the dissertation, broken down into a total of fifteen sections and 38 subsections, each addressing a different aspect of the subject under study. While Chapter 2 surveys the relevant theoretical literature on code-

switching and bilingual language production in 6 sections, Chapter 3 devotes 4 sections to the mechanisms of morphosyntactic integration, and, finally, Chapter 4 addresses competing accounts of bilingual morphosyntax in 5 sections, with a special focus on the comparison of the Matrix Language Frame Model and the Poplackian variationist approaches, which forms the most important theoretical focus of the dissertation in its entirety. As has been remarked before, the synthetic inclusivity of its comparative theoretical approach is certainly a major strength of the dissertation, complemented by a solid critical perspective on the sources cited in the theoretical chapters, which suggests convincing familiarity with the concepts in the field as well as deep involvement with and understanding of the subject from the part of the author. I especially applaud the inclusion of a new section on translanguaging in relation to code-switching, as I believe this ever so small addition has considerably refined the paper's theoretical approach, as do the critical remarks concerning Grosjean's (2001) framework of language mode (p. 13), based on van Hell and Tanner's (2012) insights on non-selective lexical access.

After constructing the theoretical background in Chapters 2 through 4, the candidate proceeds to present the methodology of his dissertation project in Chapter 5, titled Data and Methods. The collection and the analysis of the data, as well as the data itself is introduced in sufficient detail in 7 subsections, starting with the presentation of the research design (Section 5.1), followed by a description of the corpus as well as the podcast selection criteria in Sections 5.2 and 5.3, respectively. In Section 5.4, then, the principles of the identification of bilingual constructions and the units of analysis are explained with utmost academic rigor, as are the guidelines for transcription and glossing in Section 5.5, and the coding and analytical classification procedures in 5.6. Finally, the chapter on Methodology is concluded by a section on the specifics of the quantitative analysis procedures (Section 5.7).

The Results and Discussion chapters (Chapters 6 and 7) draw organically on the Methodology, and apply the same rigorous academic approach, with a convincing level of detail throughout. The candidate bases his observations on his own corpus of 407 bilingual utterances, with 419 occurrences of codes-witching. Throughout the analysis, the author's claims are sufficiently supported with appropriate evidence from the data, and the findings are satisfactorily embedded in the relevant theoretical frameworks.

I would like to mention as an important strength of the dissertation that each move that is made in the paper is critically reflected upon in a carefully thought-out and professional manner.

For example, when the author mentions the exclusion of dictionary-attested loanwords from the sample in the initial identification phase, he takes care to add that this does not mean that loanwords are necessarily entirely absent from the corpus. In a similar vein, the candidate also considers the theoretical as well as methodological consequences of his initial theory-neutral descriptive approach, which is a sign of deep familiarity with the field, and also of a highly conscious, critical approach to his own research. The same can be said about sections 7.9 through 7.11, in which, after a careful and detailed discussion of the findings in sections 7.1 through 7.8, the author reviews the theoretical and methodological implications of his research. The claims made in the Discussion are impeccably documented and hard to argue with, and the little nuances that were criticized as part of the pre-defense procedure have all been flawlessly addressed and fixed.

Finally, Chapter 8 arrives at a comprehensive synopsis of the theoretical background as well as the empirical and methodological contributions of the dissertation, revisits the research questions and predictions, and draws legitimate conclusions with respect to future research avenues, while remaining mindful of the limitations of the project.

On the basis of the considerations above, I conclude that this dissertation represents a robust body of scholarly work, and I wholeheartedly recommend acceptance of the dissertation for final defense and that the candidate be awarded the PhD degree.

References:

Grosjean, F. (2001). The bilingual's language modes. In J. L. Nicol (Ed.), *One mind, two languages: Bilingual language processing* (pp. 1–22). Oxford: Blackwell.

van Hell, J.G. and Tanner, D. (2012), Second Language Proficiency and Cross-Language Lexical Activation. *Language Learning*, 62: 148-171.



Dr. Máté Huber s.k.

senior assistant professor

Institute of English and American Studies

University of Szeged

November 03, 2026