

Border Spaces and Hybridity: 'Linguistic Borderscape' - Language Contact in the German-Polish Border Region

Starting from the assumption that processes of syncretism and hybridity occur at borders, and that these processes may influence the coexistence of two languages, which may be manifested, for example, in mixed-language communication routines (cf. Gugenberger 2011: 14–16), the author proposes the concept of the 'linguistic borderscape' as an analytical category that applies, among other things, to the research of language contact in border areas. The analysis is focused on the emergence of hybridity in language contact on example of German-Polish border region. It revolves around code-switching, which is determined on the basis of Muysken's typology (2000). Code-switching reflects processes of spatial amalgamation and leads to syncretism in communication behavior.

For the purpose of investigating the linguistic borderscape in the German-Polish borderland, the following questions were formulated:

1. Can the existence of a linguistic borderscape on the German-Polish border be confirmed by language contact phenomena in this region?
2. What is the manifestation of the phenomenon of hybridization of language behavior of border inhabitants?
3. What communication strategies do Polish border inhabitants use while communicating with German border inhabitants?

The empirical research has clearly shown that the existence of a linguistic borderscape on the German-Polish border, manifested by hybridization of language contact, can be confirmed. It reflects processes of spatial amalgamation and leads to syncretism in communication behavior. The hybridity characteristic for the linguistic borderscape is revealed on the German-Polish border mainly through frequent code-switching (alternation, insertion, congruent lexicalization) or even in a mixed communication routine.

Code-switching ranks first among all interlingual communication strategies, in 45 % of utterances. It is interesting to note that code-switching is used by Polish border inhabitants regardless of their language skills. The switching frequency of border inhabitants was calculated using the number of code-switches relative to the total number of clauses or sentence equivalents in the respective utterance, and averaged 31 %. The most frequent type of code-switching is alternation, at 66 %. This type is the most frequent in all locations. Insertions occur nine times, so less frequently (7 % of cases), and are a marginal phenomenon in all study locations. Congruent lexicalization occurs frequently (22 % of cases) and together with

borderline cases that could not be definitely categorized to one of the switching types, accounts for as much as 27 % of all code-switching cases, suggesting an advanced level of hybridization.

Muysken, Pieter (2000): *Bilingual Speech: a typology of code-mixing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

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