Annotated bibliography

Sample from Chad’s own work

Gumperz reflects on his work since the 1970s, which he says started with his code-switching work. He describes both the insights of interactional sociolinguistics, and how he came to the theory.

He writes, “On the one hand are those who regard communicative practices as shaped by habitus… Others take a more constructivist approach…”(p. 218). This is similar to my 2006 division of code switching literature into identity versus interaction traditions (markedness was my third). Interactional sociolinguistics is his attempt to bring the two traditions together.

Gumperz’s work is fundamental and this is a good overview. His comments on the most recent stuff (since 1998) is less relevant.
A man’s refugee application was rejected by the UK Home office on the basis that he did not appear to be Rwandan. He spoke English but was not fluent in Kinyarwanda or French. His only schooling was in Kenya, where his mother worked. Blommaert argues that the Home Office embraces a monoglot-standard ideology (Silverstein 1996), and that it is not unusual that a boy who grew up in a civil war should have a linguistic repertoire that differs from normative nationalist expectations.

Blommaert challenges sociolinguists to deal with complicated political issues beyond theories of language and social structures. Work on code switching and face-to-face discourse is part of a tradition that pays attention to the place of language practice in social problems.

He divides globalization talk into two main metaphors: flows and spreads. Flows are the preferred metaphor of pro-globalization discourses (e.g., Appadurai, Hannerz); flows are discontinuous, filling a space, and can be engaged or avoided. Spreads are the metaphor of Marxist or critical discourses (e.g., Tsing, Abu-Lugod); spreads envelop, homogenize, and smother.

This strikes me as oddly reductive. He accuses others of "crude Manichaean terms," but he’s the one dividing the literature into two parts. It’s also weird that most of the spread work he cites by sociolinguists was published in the 1970s and 80s. He notes a huge swath of anthropology literature from the 1990s and 2000s [that uses the flow metaphor] as “some exceptions”.

Use a style appropriate to your field. Whichever style you use, be consistent.

My evaluation

Personal reflection on Young’s role as one of the few black instructors at a college in Chicago. Young questions why, despite his high education, his trouble getting and keeping a job mirrors economic struggles of many working-class African Americans. The paper apparently introduced the term “code meshing”, though the word only appears once and “code switching” is frequent.

“In his paper, Cam writes that ‘Your average nigga in the ghetto is given 5 words at birth’ that he is fated to recite for the rest of his life. ‘These 5 words’ constitute the ghetto newborn’s lifelong defense plan that is guaranteed to ‘get him or her through every problem they face. These five words are ‘I don’t give a fuck!’” Cam’s words recalled for me Kermit Campbell’s study of papers by male students who were natural code meshers, mixing ‘popular street slang’ with academic discourse in their essays. Campbell’s students’ language habits didn’t surprise him, nor did Cam’s trouble me.” (p. 701)
Why?

• Why make an annotated bibliography?
  • How might the process of making the bibliography help you?
  • How might you use the bibliography once you’ve made it?
  • Might the bibliography help others? Who? How?