

## **The role of the individual in a multi-level approach to code-switching**

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The study of bilingual code-switching (CS) lies at the interface between individual and group or community linguistic production. In the conclusions of my recent book, *Code-switching* (CUP 2009), I argue that the ongoing search for *patterns* in CS necessitates a multi-level approach. For example, in order to understand why particular grammatical patterns characterize a given set of data, we need to look outside grammar to the sociolinguistic factors which pertain in different contexts.

One question which is highly necessary to our understanding of CS but is rarely considered in the studies conducted so far is the role of intra- (and inter-) speaker variation. What are the implications for our understanding of CS if individuals *within* a group or community vary as much (or more) in their CS behaviour as different groups vary *between* one another? I will give examples from a few studies where intra-and inter-individual variation is described and discuss their implications for an overall picture of CS.