

Aiming to Feature Lectures: Diachronic Study of Code-switching and Borrowing in Scientific English.

Nuria Bello Piñón (Universidade da Coruña)

The complexity of defining what text-types are, together with the difficulty of differentiating them from another concepts such as register, genre or domain has been largely discussed by specialised scholars (Halliday, 1964; Trogsgborg, 1997; Lee, 2001). Although there is still no general consensus in providing ultimate conclusions, I will take into account Biber's considerations about text types and genre for the purpose of this study. Therefore, text-types would be taken as categories of texts that can be defined in terms of their internal features – lexical and grammatical (co)-occurrences- while genres are characterised by its external features; namely, intended audience or purpose amongst others.

The aim of the present paper is to feature English scientific lectures by analysing two lexical phenomena: borrowing and code-switching. Both processes have been regarded in most of the studies about the enlargement of English lexicon, although not always have researchers been able to distinguish between the two. Therefore, the purpose of this paper will be to ascertain whether the non English words found in our texts are borrowings, assimilated by the vernacular, or they were consciously chosen by the author to produce a change in the discourse. In this sense, as both code-switching and borrowing can be regarded as internal features – in Biber's sense – of the samples analysed, the present study will also intend to characterise lectures, as a text-type.

For this purpose I have selected samples of lectures in scientific English belonging to different disciplines; namely, Mathematics, Astronomy, Biology and Philosophy. All samples date from the nineteenth century. Then, our main aim is to demonstrate that linguistically similar texts from different disciplines may represent a single text type.

In addition, the results obtained from the analysis of the selected corpus of lectures will be held against some others found in samples of nineteenth-century treatises that belong to the same range of disciplines. As treatises are expected to represent a different text-type, the comparison of data may help us determine whether the occurrence of both phenomena can be taken as an internal feature – in Biber's sense – to establish lectures as a different text type from that of treatises.