Multilingualism and Language Diversity in Urban Areas. Acquisition, identities, space, education

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By way of introduction

During the last few decades, the intensity of migration has converted it from an exceptional social phenomenon into a norm (O'Reilly 2007). As a multidimensional process, migration leads to considerable shifts in social life, economy, politics and, of course, language involving contact and use. One of the most noticeable macro-effects of modern migration is the confluence of linguistic diversities and the formation of new multilingualisms all around the world. In this sense, urban areas create perfect enabling environments for the coincidence of language and cultural varieties, resulting from and in urban mobility (Britain and Cheshire 2003) and heterogeneity (Miller 2007). New urban multilingualisms, coinciding with the intensification of ethnic and cultural diversity, intersect with changes in social stratification and, as Clark (2009) suggests, affect identity construction.

Such changes resulting from new forms of migration have culminated in an important redirection in the scientific approach to urban linguistic diversity since the pioneer studies on urban dialectology and variation. New trends in urban sociolinguistics suggest considering new interdisciplinary or even multidisciplinary perspectives for studying current urban linguistic phenomena. In this respect, the collective volume *Multilingualism and language diversity in urban areas. Acquisition, identities, space, education*, edited by Peter Siemund, Ingrid Gogolin, Monika Edith Schulz and Julia Davydova, provides an opportunity for becoming familiar with the application of multidisciplinary perspectives in fourteen case studies in different cities around the world.

Most European state organizations offer a 'restricted' perspective on new linguistic and cultural diversities, with extrapolation data that is limited and unreliable in regard to diversity. Trying to close the gap between the existing data and the existing reality, Siemund, Gogolin, Schulz and Davydova put together contributions from different disciplines in the framework of linguistic super-diversity. Based on these, the editors organize the contributions in four thematic blocks primarily focused on (1) language acquisition, contact, and change; (2) multilingual identities; (3) urban space, and (4) education. Each block thus addresses

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a specific area of reflection on the management and negotiation of new urban linguistic diversities involving regional majority and minority languages, migrant languages, foreign languages studied and/or English as lingua franca. Taken as a whole, however, they provide a deep and multidimensional insight into current trends in language acquisition and use, identity construction and attitudes in multilingual urban settings.

Language acquisition, contact, and change

The four contributions comprising the block concerned with language acquisition, contact, and change deal with the structural changes induced in different language pairs. These structural changes have different understandings as language categories, considered either unsound/ inaccurate or correct/accepted under the social association with new language varieties.

A study on sociolinguistic variation at prosodic level is introduced by *Naomi Nagy* and *Alexei Kochetov* in "Voice onset time across the generations. A cross-linguistic study of contact-induced change". Nagy and Kochetov focus on the Voice Onset Time (VOT) in transitional bilingual contexts, through a contrastive analysis of Canadians with Russian, Ukrainian and Italian as heritage languages (HL). By a study of VOT variation in different generations of bilinguals speaking both a short lag VOT language (either Italian, Russian or Ukrainian) and a long lag VOT language (English), the authors conclude that the cross-generational conduct of VOT has divergent values for each language pair in different generations of speakers. They then conclude that there is no uniform pattern of change in the conduct of VOT either across or within languages, and, surprisingly, no stable correlation between the variable of time of living in Toronto and VOT. They do, however, find a correlation between VOT and the scores bilinguals have obtained for the endpoint of ethnic orientation (EOQ), that is, the speakers' language use, attitudes and cultural orientation. From there on, Nagy and Kochetov infer a positive association between the VOT approximation and the variables of HL use and EOQ scores in bilingual speakers.

Prosodic issues are also dealt with in the paper by *Mary Gratham O'Brien*, "Investigating second language pronunciation", with interesting contributions for L2 pronunciation teaching and research. O'Brien provides an examination of the influence that 'a foreign accent' in L2 may have over attitudes, comprehensibility and intelligibility in multilingual urban areas. By comparing results from three experiments on pronunciation in language pair German/English, she reaches some valuable conclusions for L2 pronunciation acquisition and teaching. She observes how the regional variability of the speaker's L1 may influence acquisition and performance in L2; how non-native speakers in immersion are able to make use of cues to prosodic disambiguation

of syntactic ambiguities in the same way as native speakers, and how non-native speakers may have greater difficulties in acquiring similar L2 sounds rather than the totally new L2 sounds. On the basis of these findings, O'Brien suggests stressing individualized pronunciation training and greater exposure to native speech for the acquisition of more native-like L2 pronunciation. In multilingual urban areas, where speakers are already immersed in an L2 context, pronunciation training should be addressed within the framework of intelligibility and comprehensibility, rather than for the purpose of native-like pronunciation against deviations from the norm. O'Brien's findings are motivating with regard to L2 acquisition after reaching the critical age.

In line with Nagy and Kochetov's perspective on cross-generational variation, *Hilde Sollid* focuses on grammatical contact-induced changes in modern Norwegian in "Ethnolects in Northern Norway. From national negligence to local linguistic pride". Sollid merges the concept of 'ethnolects' with a sociolinguistic perspective on rural –not urban– multilingualism in Northern Norway, in order to provide a contrasting perspective on language contact management in a more transparent community. Ethnolects are varieties of major languages as spoken by definite ethnic groups with a different language of their own and, as well as being commonly treated as a purely urban phenomenon, may also define rural areas. Sollid exemplifies this assertion with Nordreisa, a small municipality in Northern Norway, where ethnolects emerged by the end of the 19th century as a result of Norwegianization in native speakers of Kven and Sami. Through a cross-generational analysis, the author observes how the uses and perceptions of ethnolect features, most of which are syntactic or morphosyntactic, differ from one age group to another. Sollid concludes that although attitudes to ethnolect features are age-dependant, they are commonly recognised as such by speakers of all ages. Rural ethnolect features are used in the same way as in urban areas for differentiation of 'us' from 'the others' and, consequently, interfere in the speakers' identity.

Following the language contact situation in Norway, *Yulia Rodina* and *Marit Westergaard* explore the acquisition of grammatical gender in bilingual children in their contribution "Two gender systems in one mind. The acquisition of grammatical gender in Norwegian-Russian bilinguals". In the context of increased migration of Russians to Norway, Rodina and Westergaard focus on how bilingual Norwegian and Russian children simultaneously acquire grammatical gender systems in the contact languages with different gender transparency (predictable in Russian though opaque in Norwegian). With due attention paid to the type of input children receive at home (one-parent Russian input versus two-parent Russian input), the authors carry out an elicited production experiment with both bilingual and monolingual children in order to establish a correlation between the input and the level of accuracy in

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gender assignation. Rodina and Westergaard observe that the higher the input children receive at home, the higher their ability to formulate abstract gender rules and to expose gender accuracy in Russian. At the same time, they record a parallel correlation of family input with the acquisition of gender system in Norwegian: the higher the input, the more delayed the acquisition of the Norwegian gender system in bilingual children.

In this way, a contact approach to multilingualism clearly shows how important the outcomes of individual language acquisition may be in the development of language competence and a further inducing of structural changes. These can be imperceptible, perceptible in the community only, or clearly perceptible by other native and even non-native speakers of the language. One of the valuable contributions of this thematic block lies in demonstrating in detail how bilingual minds respond to their social settings and language inputs in both language use and attitudes to their contact languages.

Multilingual identities

The subsequent thematic block introduces three studies on the construction of self in multilingual speakers. In modern urban settings, identities arise as *multilingual* as a result of migration, contact and identity re/construction. In this regard, the study of identity, which is closely linked to ethnic and cultural belonging, revolves around an inside look at how multilingual speakers perceive their membership and how such perceptions are reflected in language practices.

In the contribution "Selfing and othering through categories of race, place, and language among minority youths in Rotterdam, The Netherlands", *Leonie Cornips* and *Vincent A. de Rooij* explore the processes speakers of a non-dominant variety of Dutch resort to for identifying and distancing themselves from other members of a Dutch urban multiethnic community. They focus on how young Surinamese men make a distinction between 'us' and 'the others' through language mixing and ethno-racial and linguistic categories. Since Surinamese no longer fit in the binary Dutch social categorization in *autochthons* (the Dutch) and *allochthons* (newcoming migrants), their identity, under Cornips and de Rooij's proposal, is continuously being re-defined through four perspectives: (1) the use of *straattaal*, or street language; (2) race; (3) the category of Antillean and (4) the category place. These findings help to confirm the emergent nature of identity and to illustrate how different linguistic tools that disrupt the conventional association between language varieties and social and ethnic categories are used to produce new forms of multilingual immigrant identities.

Another interesting approach to multilingual identities comes from *Hans-Jürgen Krumm*, who considers how new languages intervene

in the identity construction and social development of immigrants in "Multilingualism and identity. What linguistic biographies of migrants can tell us". Through the 'language portrait building' method, Krumm studies language biographies of migrants and analyses how languages can act as barriers or stimuli for accessing social roles and places in the host communities. Migrants integrate new languages in the construction of their complex identity, which makes a dynamic centre-periphery model that includes all of them. Uneven multilingual competences underlie new ways of linguistic identification consisting in what Krumm defines as linguistic hibridity or polylingual languaging, characterized by code-alloying and expression of specific migrant identities. The latter are a kind of response migrants give to the language policies of their receiving countries. These should take into account that migrant multilingualism is unstable, emotionally charged, embedded in particular social biography and decisive in the migrants' readiness to participate in the host society.

This conclusion drawn by Krumm is closely bound up with the results of a comparative case-study by *Pieter Muysken* and *Julian Rott*, as illustrated in "Ethnolect studies in the German and the Netherlandic area. An overview". Their research offers an innovative insight into the perception that host communities have about migration-induced language contacts in German and Dutch-speaking European areas. Muysken and Rott compare the management of ethnolect models throughout a wide geographical area in Europe, embracing Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Flanders (Belgium) from the perspective of *social constellations* (immigration) and *political debate* (public reaction to immigration). In view of certain socio-historical similarities in the immigration history of these areas, the authors analyse how the variability of the immigration community map intervenes in the construction of public perception of urban and age concentrated immigrants. Muysken and Rott focus their research on the formation of the ethnolect-related terminology and prove that connotations of terms depend on multiple factors correlating with the urban contexts they come from, thus referring to ethnicity markering, attitudes, age factor, urbanity or streetness, immigration properly, or even mixing. Surprisingly, Muysken and Rott observe that the perception of this ethnolect-related terminology from the public discourse in the different areas they compare is not uniform and depends on the ethnicity. They thus conclude that there is an urgent need for education in tolerant attitudes, which would project a less pejorative and more positive attitude towards ethnolects.

To conclude, the contributions to *Multilingual identities* provide enough evidence from different European cities to say that the construction of identity as a continuously emergent phenomenon goes further than the conventional association of a language with an ethnic group. New urban multilingualisms induce the participation of all

possible languages, both majority and minority, in the identity of the speaker, which furthermore relies on a complex of cultural and social circumstances and facts.

Urban spaces

The three contributions offered under the common caption of *Urban spaces* focus on the management of multilingual practices through a societal prism. Their authors take particular care with how the many languages flowing into each other within the complex network of urban social practices become visible, heard and used by their multilingual, multicultural and multiethnic citizens. They are therefore concerned with how new multilingualisms reorganize and change urban spaces with institutional monolingualism.

In "The delicate search for language in spaces. Multilingualism as a resource in urban development?", *Ingrid Breckner*, *Hagen Peukert* and *Alexander Pinto* reflect on the role of urban multilingualism as a potential for the development of modern cities with considerable migration inflows. In the example of the city of Hamburg, the authors develop a methodological framework incorporating the techniques of linguistic landscaping, usage structures and qualitative interviews, in order to explore links between space and languages within the phenomenological framework of urban multilingualism. Breckner, Peukert and Pinto show how the spatial distribution of migrants can be significant for developmental policies in a city. Considering urban space as social spaces with their own history, the authors propose a new methodological approach aimed at involving the aforementioned techniques for a global and comparative study of urban societal multilingualism. Brecknet, Peukert and Pinto prove the importance that the category of 'space' bears for the disentangling of the relationship between multilingualism and the city, and finally conclude with the relevance of qualitative interviews for the establishment of the casual relationship between the written representation of multilingualism and its spatial mooring.

Another example of multilingualism spatial mooring comes from *Jakob R.E. Leimgruber*, who explores the evolution of multilingualism in Singapore in his contribution "The management of multilingualism in a city-state. Language policy in Singapore". Leimgruber reviews how multiple languages, ethnicities and religions get along within this Asian city-state with one national (Malay) and four official languages (Malay, Mandarin, Tamil and English), and where English prevails in most public contexts. The CMIO –Chinese, Malay, Indian and Other– model is framed in light of the current politics of ethnic integration, the 'cultureless' of English as an ethnically neutral language, and the cultural value of Mandarin, Malay and Tamil –three tools for the unification of

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dialect speakers. Dialects, however, appear to be at a disadvantage in the context of certain political trends, which cause meaningful shifts in the language practices in Singapore. Campaigns like the *Speak Mandarin Campaign* or the *Speak Good English Movement* lead to a restricted or even detrimental use of dialects and varieties in a Singapore where most people are bilingual in English and their mother tongue.

Societal multilingualism in the city is once again addressed in the contribution of *Angelika Redder* in "Multilingual communication in Hamburg. A pragmatic approach". Redder applies an interactional approach based on functional pragmatics and the receptive perspective in her study of the urban area of Hamburg as a trans-national space of multilingual communication. The pragmatic viewpoint of Redder assesses the perceptibility of multilingualism and the development of its receptive dimension, as well as the correlation of multilingual communication with space, institutional settings and either teleological or communitarian purposes. Considering 'language' as a complex of 'form-functional-nexus' acting as a social practice, the author applies a methodological complex involving landscaping, soundscaping, speech-focused soundwalks and ethnographic methods in order to obtain data on language-related urban semiotics and to outline a discursive topography of multilingual communication. Redder proposes to study communicative forms as language constellations of speaker/hearer-space of action-purpose language use. She looks at three languages functions –the teleological, the gnoseological and the communitarian– to draw conclusions as to the multilingual nature of the exponent space, to which both monolingual and multilingual residents become exposed and are receptive.

Taken as a whole, this section offers an important insight into societal multilingualism, which currently differs from how societal multilingualism was conceived of in traditional sociolinguistics. The new form of societal multilingualism, induced by migration and social space-dependent conversion of unexpected languages, leads to a continuous perception of a multilingual setting even in highly monolingual urban spaces. This complex requires new methods for the spacing, timing and functional localization of multilingual practices in the city.

Education

The role of education is central to the development and management of multilingualism. This is what this last thematic block of the book focuses on in order to understand the multiple relations existing between language development in multilingual settings and the educational process. Four contributions to the section are looking forward in attempt to figure out how multilingualism may have either a positive or negative effect on both individual speakers and the community. In line

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with the previous studies, the authors look at current educational issues in multilingual cities against the historically admitted educational policy of 'monolingual habitus'. Addressing India and Canada, the papers shed light on the effects of urban multilingualism on the language question in education.

The contribution of *Jim Cummins*, "Current research on language transfer. Implications for language teaching policy and practice", deals with the controversial viewpoint on the effects of bilingual education and home minority languages on the development of language competence. He resorts to the concept of *language transfer* to demonstrate how important the positive transfer may be in the development of successful educational language policies. The 'interdependence hypothesis' proves that there are no adverse consequences of minority language maintenance in the development of language proficiency in L2, while the cross-linguistic interdependence is highly positive for the development of the underlying language proficiency. Cummins suggests that educational policies consider the feasibility of cross-linguistic interdependence for language education of migrants. Moving forward, the author discusses how the inclusion of L2-s might be positive for the development of the pupils' learning strategies. He concludes with an encouragement to teach for cross-linguistic transfer and to promote language awareness in order to increase academic engagement and achievement in L2.

The question of language inclusion in education is also broached in the contribution of *Ajit K. Mohanty*, "Multilingual education in India. Overcoming the language barrier and the burden of the double divide". Mohanty explores how Indian multilingualism –the 4th in the World in linguistic diversity– is being managed in the national educational system within the framework of the *linguistic double divide*. Structural inequalities in India's hierarchical multilingualism lead to the linguistic functional dichotomy of English/major regional languages and major regional languages/tribal minority languages, which cause the loss of linguistic vitality and endanger the minority languages of India. In this context, the Indian educational system is based on the general assumption about the socio-economic power of Indian languages, thus excluding most indigenous and tribal minority languages (ITM) from the school curricula towards marginalization. The invisibility of ITM leads to school failure and consequent poverty, thus causing a subtractive effect on the minority languages and the removal of ITM children from social and linguistic reality. On that basis, Mohanty refers to the project of multilingual education (MLE) already implemented in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, as a possible solution to the social and linguistic exclusion of ITM speakers.

An example of teaching practices relying on such a use of minority L1 in the educational process comes from the contribution of *Rahat Naqvi*, *Anne McKeough*, *Keoma J. Thorne*, and *Christina M. Pfitscher*,

under the heading "Fostering early literacy learning using dual language books". Considering recent demographic shifts in the linguistic composition of the USA and Canada, Naqvi, McKeough, Thorne and Pfitscher argue, in line with Jim Cummins, for using students' L1s in the development of L2 competences and language-related conceptual knowledge. The cultural capital of immigrant students works as a cultural amplifier in favour of the English learners' development, as it can help them in the development of cognitive functions and culturally based modes of learning. Both L1/L2 interdependence and the cultural amplifier concept are considered with the dual language book reading program (DLB), which has already proved to have highly positive learning outcomes in language-diverse classrooms. Naqvi, McKeough, Thorne and Pfitscher present a two-year study based on the application of the DLB program for showing how children speaking the DLB target languages improve in phonetic awareness and develope metalinguistic awareness through their linguistic capital from L1.

Eventually, *Thomas Ricento* discusses the influence of the monolingually-normed educational approaches on the academic achievements of migrant students. In "Measuring success when English isn't your native language", Ricento approaches the idea about the advantages that the immigrants' mother tongues may give in their general development in the continuously increasing English language learners (ELL) classroom. Based on a study carried out in Alberta, an English-speaking Canadian territory, Ricento finds evidence of important deficiencies in the Canadian educational system as regards facing incoming cultural and linguistic diversity and as regards preparing the English second language students (ESL). It is salient that a correlation has been found between being an ESL student and the academic achievement attained when studying ESL. In view of this, Ricento drafts some already demonstrated benefits of bilingual education, which prove the influence of formal L1 schooling on the length of ESL acquisition and the negative effect of English mainstream classes immersion on achieving academic English proficiency.

Ricento shows how pupils with important feedback from schooling in their L1 can have better academic outcomes than native speakers. In this line, the four contributions make it clear that the maintenance of L1 does not prejudice the acquisition of L2 proficiency and the general academic achievement of the L2 students in the host countries. Moreover, studies prove that schooling feedback in L1 may be quite positive for academic achievement in L2, and that language awareness emanating from the management of two languages may be the key to success in education.

By way of conclusion

In addition to launching a new publishing series under the heading *Hamburg Studies on Linguistic Diversity*, the editors of this volume offer the international scientific community a novel contribution in the field of multilingualism. Siemund, Gogolin, Schulz and Davydova have put together fourteen case-studies, providing a rigorous and deep response to many social, psychological and cultural questions regarding the new urban multilingualisms.

The intensification of migration has led to new language phenomena, which are addressed in *Multilingualism and Language Diversity in Urban Areas. Acquisition, identities, space, education* through multidimensional and multidisciplinary insight into specific areas of language contact, identity construction, urban sociology and education. How the structure of L1 influences the structure of L2 and vice versa; how identity is being constructed by multilingual immigrants and how it is perceived by the host community; how new urban multilingualisms affect the monolingual institutions and speakers; and how the feedback of L1 is reflected in the general academic achievements of the immigrants are the general lines of concern dealt with in this volume. This new book is definitely an important and innovative contribution to the scientific multidisciplinary understanding of 'the what and the how' of the linguistic diversity in our complex world.

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