

## **Language, migration and identity – some introductory notes**

### **1 Introduction: Migration, Diaspora and Transnationalism in Europe – new linguistic challenges and perspectives**

- key words and concepts: ‘transnationalism’, ‘multiple identities’
- fluid boundaries between ‘mobility’ and ‘migration’, between ‘diaspora’ and ‘transnationalism’
- general tendency in late modern society: shift from *static, permanent, constant* categories of social interaction to *dynamic, emergent, constantly changing* ones (globalization) → ‘multiple identities’
- different perspectives on the linguistic challenges associated with these settings: questions relating to *the individual speaker, the speech community, the languages*

### **2 Language and Identity – a simple model**

- individuals can be characterized by sets of properties or predicates (attributes/categories), which determine their social life (categorization, identification, comparison)
- the different properties can give rise to specific dispositions and modes of categorization (cf. Bourdieu’s ‘habitus’)
- various relations between properties (according to social/legal norms): *linear/hierarchical ordering, inclusion, overlap, complementarity* etc.
- dimensions typically relevant to social interaction (determinants of loyalties, group membership, and the communities themselves):
  - *nationality* (legal status)
  - *ethnicity* (ancestry...)
  - *religion*
  - *language* (mother tongue, other languages...)
  - *culture(s)* (literature, music...)
  - *politics* (democratic constitution guaranteeing human rights, political convictions...)
  - *social class* (occupation, income, education...)
  - *supra-national affiliations* (EU etc.)
  - *origin/place of birth*
  - *sex/gender*
  - *age*
  - *etc.*

- notes of caution:
  - different degrees of accessibility/visibility of the various properties
  - different degrees of objectivity/categoriality of properties
  - internal vs. external attribution of properties (self-perception vs. perception by others; *personal* vs. *social identity*)
  - group membership as a matter of *identification* (psychological process) or *practice* ('communities of solidarity' vs. 'community of practice')
  - 'possession' of properties (danger of essentialism) vs. discursive construction through acts of identity
  - homogeneity (one-valued dimensions) vs. multiple belonging and hybrid/multivalent identities (*repertoire* of properties/attributes)
  - hierarchies for values within each dimension (e.g. importance of the different languages used in a speech community for the curriculum)
  - dynamics of historical developments, fluid nature of identity
  - hierarchical ordering of the properties is *context-dependent*

issues that can be addressed in terms of this simple model:

- implicational relationships between properties/attributes (unilateral, bilateral), according to social or legal norms, ideology etc.:
  - ancestry → nationality (legal, *ius sanguis*)
  - origin/place of birth → nationality (legal, *ius solis*)
  - nationality ↔ national language (ideology, political aim)
  - language ↔ culture/cultural values built into a language
  - religion → language
  - religion → habitus (the headscarf lawsuit in Germany)
  - etc.
- absence of implicational relationships
  - religion, age
  - nationality, residence
  - political conviction, nationality
  - origin, gender
  - etc.
- ordering and reordering of properties within the hierarchy
  - spontaneous reordering according to perspective, level of social process, goals etc.
  - large-scale historical processes (e.g. the situation in Greece)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Trudgill, P. (2000). 'Greece and European Turkey: From religious to linguistic identity', in Barbour & Carmichael (eds.), *Language and Nationalism in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- position of language on the hierarchy
  - language as the primary medium of communication
    - high degree of accessibility/objectivity
    - key attribute for social interaction
    - most important issue for integration
  - close interaction between language and many other properties/attributes
  - language acquisition, symbolic appropriation and identity (Lacan)
    - language as a ‘filter’ of categorization (relativity, Sapir-Whorf); fundamental role of the first language?
  - change by learning, identity as choice; new or multiple identities with additional languages?
  - institutional level/public policy: choice of official languages, language in education, bilingual education, (struggle against) discrimination, deficit views, towards intercultural communication

### 3 Bilingualism, multilingualism

#### 3.1 The bilingual speaker

- three aspects: *cognitive, emotional, social*
  - a) *cognitive aspects*: mastering two or more languages under specific (often sub-optimal) input conditions
  - b) *emotional aspect*: attitude towards the different languages (language preference)
  - c) *social implications* of a) and b) for the bilingual speaker
- Cognitive aspects of bilingualism:
  - *proficiency*: a key ability for social interaction and social success (education)
  - *heterogeneous input* situation (sometimes idiolectal linguistic development, but also added linguistic competence in some cases)
- Emotional aspects of bilingualism:
  - the (role of the) *mother tongue*
  - matters of *pride, self-esteem* derived from the languages etc.
- Social implications of bilingualism for immigrants:
  - *level of education* determines social life
  - formation of separate immigrant communities etc.

#### 3.2 The bilingual speech community (societal bilingualism, diglossia)

- face-to-face interaction, institutional level
- language policy: towards equality of opportunity, towards national unity?
- education programmes: submersion, segregation, transitional education, separatist etc.

## 4 (Im)migration, language contact and language change

- language contact results from bilingualism
- classifying situations of language contact: three dimensions
  1. *innovation vs. propagation*
  2. type of innovation: *interference vs. borrowing*
  3. direction of transfer (at the level of the speech community):  
 $L_1 ? L_H, L_H ? L_1$

### 4.1 Innovation vs. propagation

- analogy to evolutionary processes: mutation/variation vs. selection
- *innovation*: spontaneous transfer, code-switching; governed by *cognitive principles*

#### (1) Spanish-German

Pasa me la *butter*, por favor!<sup>2</sup>

- languages change only if innovations are accepted by (a considerable part of) the speech community (frequency of reproduction)
- propagation: spread of an innovation through the speech community, then conventionalization (e.g. Germ. *weil* with V2-order)
- propagation is governed by *principles of social interaction* (prestige etc.)

### 4.2 The mechanisms of transfer: interference vs. borrowing

#### 4.2.1 Interference: transfer of features from $L_1$ to $L_2$

- typically structural elements (phonology, syntax, morphology)
- phonology: unrounding of front vowels by native speakers of Spanish in German

#### (2) Spanish-German

Es gibt nur einen Rudi *Veller* (Völler). ('There is only one Rudi Völler')

- syntax: word order changes

#### (3) Spanish-German

...als er kam nach Hause... ('...when he came home', '...als er nach Hause kam')

- morphology: gender, case etc.

#### (4) Spanish-German

Diese Haus gefällt mir. ('I like this house', cf. Span. *la casa*)

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<sup>2</sup> All examples without an indication of the source have been recorded by one of the authors.

#### 4.2.2 Borrowing: transfer of features from L<sub>2</sub> to L<sub>1</sub>

- typically vocabulary, but not structure

##### (5) Spanish-German

- (a) Ich esse gerne *chicharron*. ('I like to eat crackle')
- (b) Mir gefällt *chicharron* essen. (lit. 'Me pleases eat *chicharron*', cf. Span. *Me gusta comer chicharron*)

#### 4.3 Direction of change: from L<sub>I</sub> to L<sub>H</sub> and vice versa

##### 4.3.1 From L<sub>H</sub> to L<sub>I</sub>

- typically borrowing, since the number of L<sub>H</sub>-dominant speakers that shift to L<sub>I</sub> is extremely low
- (6) German-Turkish<sup>3</sup>
- (a) *banof-a gittim* (,station-to I.went', cf. germ. *Bahnhof*)
- (b) *ameldn yap-* (,register', cf. Germ. *anmelden*)
- (c) *an yap-* (cf. (6b))
- (d) *böz man* (,evil man', cf. Germ. *böser Mann*)
- interference has been reported for bilingual (German-Turkish) children, but the degree of propagation seems to be low

##### 4.4 From L<sub>I</sub> to L<sub>H</sub>

- extremely high interference rate, but low degree of propagation
- borrowing: high rate in bilingual (German-Turkish) children, but low degree of propagation
- basically cultural vocabulary: *Döner*, *Kebab*
- jargon: *lan* 'all right', *abo* (expresses surprise), *çüs* (expresses anxiety)

#### 4.5 Summary

	innovation	propagation
L <sub>H</sub> ? L <sub>I</sub>	moderate (German-Turkish children)	weak
L <sub>I</sub> ? L <sub>H</sub>	very strong (Turkish-German children & adults)	weak

Table 1: Interference in L<sub>H</sub> and L<sub>I</sub>

	innovation	propagation
L <sub>H</sub> ? L <sub>I</sub>	strong (Turkish-German children & adults)	<b>strong</b>
L <sub>I</sub> ? L <sub>H</sub>	weak (German children & adults)	weak

Table 2: Borrowing in L<sub>H</sub> and L<sub>I</sub>

<sup>3</sup> Examples are from Johanson, L. (1992). 'Code-copying in immigrant Turkish'. In Extra & Verhoeven (eds.), *Immigrant Languages in Europe*, 197-221. Clevedon/Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters.

## 4.6 Emergence of new vernaculars

### 4.6.1 Kanaksprak<sup>4</sup>

- German-based jargon used by immigrant teenagers in Germany, but also by German adolescents
- clearly a sociological phenomenon (i.e., not a consequence of the speaker's inability to speak Standard German)
- German vocabulary, partly modified semantically (e.g. *krass*, lit. 'extreme', used for anything remarkable)
- phonology
  - shortening of long vowels, neutralization of [æ] and [ø]
  - substitution of certain consonants ([ç] > [ʃ])
  - sometimes voicing of voiceless fricatives ([s] > [z])
- syntax
  - abundant use of sentence-final tags (*weisstu* 'you know', *alder* 'old guy', *ischwör* 'I swear', *oder was* 'or what' ...)
  - loss of articles and prepositions ([iʃ ge 'banof 'aldə] 'I am going to the station, man')
- morphology
  - neutralization of gender and case distinctions
  - overgeneralization of dative case etc.

## 4.7 Anglo-Romani

- English grammar, Romani vocabulary
- symbolic value of Romani items; also creation of a secret code

Jesus pukkered them this parable: "Suppose tutti's got a hundred bokros and yek of them's nasherdi. Is there a mush among the lot of you as would not muk the waver ninety-nine in the bokro-puv and jel after the nasherdi bokro till he latches it? Karna he's latched it he riggers it on his dummer, well-pleased he is. Karna he jels home he pukkers his friends and all the foki around: "Be happy with mandi, because I've found my nasherdi bokro." (bible text from Luke 15.3-6)<sup>5</sup>

pukkered - told; tutti - you; bokro - sheep; nasherdi - lost (run away?); bokro-puv - wilderness; jel - go; latcher - find; riggers - lays; dummer - shoulder; karna - when; foki - neighbours; mandi - me

- similar: Caló (Ibero-Romani)

<sup>4</sup> Some information has been taken from a presentation given by B. Siebert & B. Sen at the University of Duisburg/Essen, 28/01/2003 (<http://www.uni-essen.de/linguistik.buenting/Kanaksprak.ppt>).

<sup>5</sup> Source: <http://www2.arnes.si/~eusmith/Romany/samples.html>.

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