

Edith Esch & Martin Solly (eds)

The Sociolinguistics of Language Education in International Contexts

Peter Lang

In many parts of the world the language education scenario is increasingly dynamic, as demographic, economic and social changes powerfully influence socio-political agendas in the sphere of language education. These in turn impact on complex issues such as linguistic pluralism, multiculturalism, and marginalization. This is especially so in the sphere of second language education where local, national and regional concerns often dominate the objectives underpinning policy choice and prioritisation.

This volume brings together scholars and researchers from a wide range of different educational contexts and turns a sociolinguistic lens on some of the key areas of concern for researchers in language education: critical awareness of power and identity issues; competence in dealing with new sociolinguistic repertoires, modalities and literacies; ethical concerns for all who are involved. The 'case study' approach enables the reader to reflect on and critically engage with these issues in a rich variety of contextual situations, and the volume as a whole provides a useful overview of (second) language education in the world today.

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The Sociolinguistics of Language Education in International Contexts



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Introduction

1. Rationale

In many parts of the world the language education scenario is increasingly dynamic, as the globalizing process gathers momentum. Indeed, demographic, economic and social changes powerfully influence socio-political agendas in the sphere of language education. These in turn impact on complex issues such as linguistic pluralism, multiculturalism, and marginalization. This is especially so in the sphere of second language education where local, national and regional concerns often dominate the objectives underpinning policy choice and prioritisation.

This volume brings together scholars and researchers from a wide range of different educational contexts, with the aim of turning a sociolinguistic lens on some of the key issues in contemporary language education. The chapters highlight the problems of the reproduction and segmentation of language markets which may disadvantage learners lacking the resources to access education, both in former colonies, as well as in emerging economies. They draw attention to key areas of concern for sociolinguistic researchers: critical awareness of power and identity issues; competence in dealing with new sociolinguistic repertoires, modalities and literacies; ethical concerns for all who are involved. The 'case study' approach of sections two and three enables the reader to reflect on and critically engage with these issues in a variety of contextual situations, with each chapter providing micro level insights. As a whole, however, the volume also provides the

reader with what can be considered a macro overview of (second) language¹ education in the world today.

2. Sociolinguistic issues and ambiguities

2.1. Language policy and planning

Although policy-making² is not dealt with specifically in this volume, the aims and ideologies underlying policy-making in language education, whether *de jure* or *de facto*,³ dominate its implementation and repercussions. Language education policy-making is driven and motivated by a variety of geographical, historical and political factors; it can for example be an essential component of highly charged constructs such as heritage, nationhood, security and economic success. These in turn can vary enormously in different contexts. Language education policy-making, especially when it involves the more loaded concept of language planning,⁴ also often touches on extremely sensitive issues. Indeed, since it is closely linked to the exercise of power it can sometimes be a highly controversial area where it is hard not to be

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- 1 The distinction between first and second language is sometimes neither obvious nor useful. Indeed, as discussed here in section 2.2, it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish clearly between first and second language in many contexts, including those in some of the case studies in the volume.
 - 2 Policy-making in education and (second) language learning has been dealt with extensively in the literature (see for example Schiffman 1996, Kaplan/Baldauf 1997, Spolsky 2004 and 2009, Ferguson 2006, Reagan 2009, Edwards 2009, Hornberger/McKay (eds) 2010), also in the broader sociolinguistic context at both a global (Pennycook 2007, Blommaert 2010) and a local level (Canagarajah 2005, Pennycook 2010).
 - 3 Schiffman (1996: 2) underscores the difference between the policy as stated (the official, *de jure* or overt policy) and the policy as it actually works at the practical level (the covert, *de facto* or grass-roots policy).
 - 4 Language planning and language policy are closely related and partly overlapping concepts. Sometimes language planning is used to describe the systematic top down imposition of language policy (Edwards 2009: 228).

judgmental, and sometimes difficult to maintain objectivity. As Edwards observes:

Language planning, especially selection and implementation, is a heavily value-laden experience. Any disinterested theorizing becomes compromised in practice, and language planning is usually concerned with applications in highly controversial settings. The maintenance or revival of ‘small’ or endangered languages, the establishment of a lingua franca, the navigation of acceptable channels among large areas of linguistic diversity and so on. Language planning is inevitably coloured by ideological imperatives and what appears to be progress to some may be persecution to others. (Edwards 2009: 227)

Language policies are often embedded in tensions between local speech communities and centralised power. They can also involve controversial issues as regards language choice⁵ and are closely linked to differing attitudes towards monolingualism, bilingualism, trilingualism, multilingualism, plurilingualism. Moreover, change in language policy can be very sudden. A recent current example from postcolonial Africa is the case of the new country of South Sudan⁶ which, as was reported by the BBC on 8 October 2011, has decided to opt for English as its official language. The motivation for the choice is given in an interview quoted by the article:

As the Ministry of Higher Education, Edward Mokole, told me: “English will make us different and modern. From now on all our laws, textbooks and official documents have to be written in that language. Schools, the police, retail and the media must all operate in English”. (Goldsmith 2011)

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- 5 A number of well-known language policy conundrums, whose controversial nature depends of course on viewpoint, are described in the literature. Spolsky (2009: 7-8) for example comments on the inclusion of Irish Gaelic in 2007 as one of the EU’s 23 official languages. It might by some be considered an extravagance at a time of financial hardship like the present, but for others it is due (or rather long overdue) recognition of the country’s linguistic heritage.
- 6 The sociolinguistic history and present language policy situation of the Sudan (including the newly independent Southern Sudan) is extremely complex. An excellent recent analysis of the colonial Nuba Policy in the Nuba Mountains and its postcolonial and current repercussions can be found in Abdelhay (2010).

Nevertheless, a distinction needs to be drawn between policy-making and the actual implementation of that policy. Policy-makers work to different agendas and timetables to academics, school administrators and teachers. Moreover the time scales are also very different: legislation can be enacted quite rapidly but its implementation can take a long time, especially in the field of education and even more so when major curricula change is involved.

2.2. Language education and language learning

The volume focuses on both (second) language education and language learning. The latter is often divided into the learning of a second language or that of a (modern) foreign language. However, although these can be convenient categories from an administrative point of view, they are also notoriously imprecise and fuzzy. Phillipson (1999), for example, highlighted the difficulty of identifying first and second language divisions in postcolonial contexts and the situation today seems no less complex in many other contexts, including those of the countries which launched the colonial process. This problem of categorization is also reflected in the long ongoing debate as regards native and nonnative speakers (see for example Kramsch 1998), which is becoming increasingly multifaceted as migrant communities extend into second, third and fourth generation. Here, therefore, language learning is used in its broad sense, with the aim of including both foreign language learning and second language learning.⁷

Language learning can be an arduous, lengthy and sometimes very expensive process, whose success can be dependent on a variety of factors, such as context, motivation, methodology, exposure, assessment and so on. Moreover language learning can also be a highly

7 A further distinction exists between second language acquisition and learning. Granger discusses the debate in a useful overview (2004: 12-13), noting that there are considerable divergences in the literature but that for her purposes "[...] the distinction between the two terms, learning and acquisition, is not pivotal", and takes the decision "[...] to use them interchangeably". Here too language learning is used in its broad sense, encompassing acquisition.

personal endeavour, a strongly autobiographical and occasionally a lonely one with possible undertones of dispossession, as observed here in the chapter by Michael Evans with regard to Derrida's *Monolingualism of the Other or The Prosthesis of Origin*.

2.3. Myths and (mis)conceptions

There are a great many aspects regarding (second) language learning which are often taken for granted, but which deserve closer attention from both scholars and policy-makers. Some of these fall into the category of myths about language. Schiffman (1996: 20) uses the term 'myths' to comprise those attitudes and beliefs held within a speech community "about the language of the community as well as about languages and language in general [...] regardless of their truth value" (1959: 375). In her chapter here Jin He employs Bourdieu's (2001) concept of the accumulation and monopolisation of the different kinds of capital, to identify what she describes as the 'four myths' underpinning the current drive for language proficiency (thus linguistic capital) as regards English in China. In any case, it is clear that economic factors are currently privileging the learning of English. Indeed in various countries quality education and socio-economic mobility are increasingly linked to proficiency in English and this has also led to justified concern over its widening spread and the related issue of economic and social elitism. Indeed in many contexts failure to acquire competence in English is currently considered to be a deficit.⁸ The same phenomenon has also been identified with regard to French (see Rebecca A. Mitchell's chapter here) and Mandarin.⁹

8 For Candlin and Crichton deficit includes "[...] a loss of attributes or capacities which diminish in various ways the life chances of persons, as well as invoking understandings of how such attributes and capacities are 'normalised' against what is expected or required of persons in given circumstances" (2010: 4).

9 Li Wei in a recent talk on "Creativity, criticality and multilingual practices: code and mode-switching by British Chinese children in complimentary schools", delivered on 31 October 2011 at the Education Faculty of the University of Cambridge, noted that all the Cantonese schools studied in his sur-

Very often these myths about language are intertwined with issues of culture and identity (see for example Joseph 2004, Riley 2007), bearing in mind of course that identities can be multiple, hybrid, marginalised, unstable, shifting and so on, as has been discussed at length in the literature. The myths, especially when they are deeply rooted or perceived as popular within the community can also be used to underpin and bolster choices in language policy-making which are not necessarily in line with research findings. As Edwards points out:

If not at the beginning, then certainly at the point of application, language planning is subservient to the demands of non-academic interests with social and political agendas. (2009: 228)

Yet political/ideological choices in the name of cultural identity/linguistic preservation can lead to the marginalization and endangerment of other languages, while linguistic pluralism can also enhance the cultural fracture lines in already fragile societies.

The important issue of epistemic injustice is closely related. Epistemic injustice is widespread in educational practices and institutions and occurs routinely “[...] whenever individuals are labelled or pre-judged as being unable to participate in educational situations as learners because of our own inability to acknowledge or deal with their being different from us” (Esch 2010: 251). Its repercussions are particularly poignant in all those communities whose language is excluded from the educational domain.

2.4. Tensions and ambiguities

There are sometimes uncomfortable questions to face in the area of language education, and in a number of contexts raising these issues can lead to social, cultural and political tensions. There are, for example, the question of postcolonial contexts and the issue of prestige languages. As Blommaert points out, “International languages such as

vey offered at least one course in Mandarin, but that none of the Mandarin schools had even one course in Cantonese.

French or English allow insertion in large transnational networks as well as access to the elites” (2010: 46). Rebecca A. Mitchell’s research (see her chapter in this volume) suggests that this is the overarching motivation for the increasing use of French in Gabon as a medium of instruction, alongside the indigenous languages and cultures. And it is probably a decisive factor in the policy choice reported above to adopt English as the official language in South Sudan: “English will make us different and modern”.¹⁰ Nevertheless this kind of motivation needs in turn to be reconciled with the linguistic heritage and rights of the local language communities. For example, as Abdelhay shows, the language situation in “conflict-ridden areas such as the Sudan” (2010: 201) is in reality extremely complex, in part the result of questionable language planning experimentation in both the colonial and postcolonial periods.

Issues of prestige and status also play a significant role in language learning in western contexts. Drawing on data from a two-year study of modern foreign language learning by 11 to 14 year olds in the UK, Evans and Fisher (2010: 490) reveal the key role that the status of foreign languages and language learning play in the success of the subject on the curriculum.

Moreover there are also a number of tensions and ambiguities within languages, for example as regards the prestige varieties (Blommaert 2010: 12). One of these concerns the concept of what is known as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) which, whether understood as the language of effective (global) communication, for example between researchers working in the same discipline, or understood as the language enabling street market-level transactions and communication to take place between those who share the commonality of knowing ‘a little English’, is considered useful in helping to map the state of English in the globalized world and to predict how possible linguistic scenarios might develop in the future. As a repertoire, however, ELF has been suspected of popularising a new simplified variety

10 John Joseph in a talk ‘Sustaining myth: How languages get and lose their mojo’ delivered at the English Faculty of the University of Cambridge on 9 November 2011 argued that ‘modernity’ and ‘getting on’ are very powerful forces underpinning the success of languages.

with a widely perceived lack of prestige and some critics claim that many ELF studies fail to address important language education issues. These include gatekeeping issues, such as the question of access to language education in settings where the language of academic literacy and socio-economic power is that of the former colonial/current economic power, or the role of English as a lingua franca in a globalized postcolonial world. In India for example the kind of schooling received, whether English medium or vernacular medium has a major impact on the students' higher education and career prospects (see Esterino Adami in this volume).

As regards local forms of English, Schneider notes that:

Typically, an exonormative tradition upholding British English and Received Pronunciation, prevails in many postcolonial and Outer Circle countries, even if it usually clashes with internal realities, where local accents and language forms are predominant and RP is an unrealistic goal. (2011: 219)

Despite this, he suggests that “in the long run the forces of reality seem to be working in favor of changes towards endonormativity, the acceptance of local forms of English as correct” (2011: 219).

This longer term view of language change, taking into account the diachronic perspective, can also be useful in a discussion of ELF, alongside the synchronic and contextual aspects. As Canagarajah points out: “Lingua franca English does not exist as a system out there. It is constantly being brought into being in each context of communication” (2007: 91).

The local forms of language can also have a significant impact on the future achievements, economic or other, of those in education, as Androula Yiakoumetti shows in her chapter here, drawing attention to the sociological issues of bidialectal education in Australia.

2.5. A dynamic and complex scenario

The sociolinguistic scenario is rarely static and it is often hard to provide more than a snapshot of a given moment in the changing situation. Huge numbers of people move and continue to move, across

borders but also within nations, for example leaving the rural areas for the cities; a phenomenon which is well documented in the western world but which is also taking place on a vast scale in Asia, Africa and Latin America.¹¹

Both the United States¹² and the European Union countries have very large immigrant communities, now well beyond first generation but continually being renewed and modified, with a significant impact on the language (see for example Rampton 2006 and Li Wei 2011 for a discussion of multilingual communities in the UK, where the distinction between first and second language can often be extremely blurred, but also highly creative).

As time moves forward, so contexts change, and the usefulness of the classifications and terminology used to describe them can also change. It is now over sixty years since a great many countries achieved independence from Britain and France and the deployment of a postcolonial frame is increasingly being called into question. With regard to India, for example, Vaish criticizes the using of a postcolonial lens to analyze English language education “[...] because this lens tends to present a doom and gloom view of the divisive nature of English in India” (2010: 136).

It is also very important not to forget the great complexity of many educational contexts. In his seminal comparative study of primary education in the world, Alexander (2000) looks at five contexts (France, Russia, India, the United States, England) and draws attention to the similarities and differences between them (each with its own systems, policies and histories). He notes the complexity often existing within each of the contexts, and how it is apparent at various levels (in terms of aims, objectives, buildings, classrooms, teaching,

11 There is a higher education aspect to this too, for traditionally the universities are located in or near the cities. In a country like South Africa where university education is imparted in English this can place the rural students at a considerable disadvantage (see for example Banda 2008).

12 Spolsky (2009: 8) notes that a fifth of children in the United States have at least one foreign born parent.

pedagogies and so on).¹³ Some of the educational and language contexts described here are also extremely complex.

The concept of linguistic ecology, which sees language as a social practice inseparable from its environment,¹⁴ is employed by two of the authors here (Kizitus Mpoche and Androula Yiakoumetti). It is useful for various reasons, but especially because it underscores the complex dynamic nature of multilingual environments. As Kramsch and Whiteside point out:

An ecological analysis of multilingual interactions enables us to see interactions in multilingual environments as complex dynamic systems where the usual axes of space and time are reordered along the lines of various historicities and subjectivities among participants. (2008: 667)

Moreover, the notion of ecology also works at different levels, educational as well as linguistic. As Hélot and Ó Laiore observe: “[...] schools are also situated in different ecologies and the multilingual school is part of a larger multilingual ecology” (2011: xvi).

2.6. *Gatekeeping and discrimination*

McNamara (2010) refers to data from tests of first language reading abilities run by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as part of its Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests to analyse the role of language testing as a means of establishing and supporting discourses of educational and linguistic deficit at national level.¹⁵ In McNamara’s view the interpretation of these tests can lead to discussion, for example

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- 13 Alexander also emphasizes the centrality and pervasiveness of language in education: “The power of language in shaping what is distinctive about teaching and learning in a particular country is readily evident” (2000: 5), and concludes the volume by emphasizing the empowering role of the pedagogy of spoken language (2000: 563-569).
 - 14 For van Lier it “[...] is the study of the relations between language use and the world within which language is used” (2004: 44).
 - 15 PISA tests enable comparative assessments of educational achievement at international level, with the creation of league tables.

[...] of the bilingual competence of immigrant children, which is interpreted as being deficient in relation to competence in the national language. This sense of deficit is then internalized by immigrant families themselves, and the resulting self-stigmatisation can lead to a rejection of use of the mother tongue in the family, and particularly with children, in favour of the national language. (2010: 311)

McNamara also returns to Jacques Derrida's engagement with the notion of the shibboleth¹⁶ which he sees as inherently ambiguous. On the one hand it protects, on the other it destroys. For Derrida, the shibboleth is potentially discriminatory: "The terrifying ambiguity of the shibboleth, sign of belonging and threat of discrimination [...]" (1986/2005: 27). The uses of measurement and testing are of course many, yet tests and examinations have a significant gatekeeping function whose ostensible meritocracy often hides an uneven playing field.

Jin He's analysis of Bourdieu's division of capital into economic, cultural, social and focus on 'linguistic capital' provides the backdrop for her chapter but also for many of the chapters in this volume. English, French and Chinese are all languages which furnish their speakers with economic, cultural and social capital. And the questions raised in this volume, for example that by Ife over the ability of ELF users to interact successfully with native speakers, or that by Buckledee as regards whether Cambridge ESOL exams are appropriate for ELF users, could also have repercussions for the French-speaking and Chinese-speaking communities. In the latter, for example, Seng and Lai (2010) comment on the current language situation in Hong Kong:

To date, English still enjoys a prestigious status and continues to function as the dominant administrative language of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region; Cantonese is the de-facto official dialect and remains the preferred tongue for daily communication for the vast majority of the people;

16 Failure to pronounce the Hebrew word *shibboleth* in the same way as the Gileadites meant instant death for the Ephraimites at the crossing of the river Jordan as reported in the Bible (Judges 12, 4-6). Here the term is used for the way language competence can be used to identify or distinguish membership of a group, to include and to exclude – it has a particular resonance for assessment and gatekeeping practices (McNamara 2005).

Mandarin, though gradually rising in terms of both number of users and social status, has yet to play any significant role in Hong Kong. (2010: 18)

Nevertheless the sharp global rise in the study of Mandarin¹⁷ is certainly closely linked to China's economic upturn (Seng/Lai 2010: 21) and therefore also to the notion (myth?) of the acquisition of linguistic capital in the world's new economic power.

3. Contributions

Referring to the great empires of the past, Coulmas observes that they have always been multilingual, but that inequality between languages was taken for granted:

The linguistic landscape of large empires invariably consisted of one written language, with a few ancillary ones perhaps, and a large number of vernaculars. (2005: 206)

This question of inequality has been faced by Hymes (1996: 27-28) who identifies four broad dimensions of language as sources of inequality: diversity of language, medium of language, structure of language, and functioning of language. In his notion of 'speech communities',¹⁸ and their diversity, Hymes emphasizes the "Different vantage points from which diversity may be viewed. One person's obstacle may be someone else's source of identity" (1996: 33). This sense of inequality is a constant theme in the chapters presented in this volume,

17 Seng and Lai in a helpful overview of the global spread of Mandarin today use Kachru's 1985 model of three concentric circles to describe "the Inner Circle of native users", the "steadily expanding Outer Circle of second language users" (among the Chinese diaspora), and the "proliferation of the Expanding Circle of non-native users" (2010: 17-21).

18 Hymes argues that speech communities should be understood as actual communities of speakers: "The essential thing seems to me to be to assess a speech community in terms of the relation between its abilities and its opportunities" (1996: 58).

which is divided into three sections: the contributions in the first focus on theoretical aspects, the second section contains case studies, and the third looks at practices.

3.1. Section One. Theoretical aspects

The chapters in this section look at different theoretical aspects of how language choice impacts on issues of identity, community and equality.

MICHAEL EVANS focuses on the issue of the Other related to language. In particular he looks at schooling and other language in school through Derrida's perspective as put forward in the *Monolingualism of the Other*, providing analysis from interviews of how schoolchildren rationalize their foreign language learning and how they view its usefulness in their experiencing of language diversity as an encounter with the language of the other. In a world where language policy, planning and management are constantly in discussion, Evans underscores Derrida's observation that language is also and pre-eminently an individual and autobiographical experience, where the concept of Other takes on a central role. Indeed in most of the contexts looked at in this volume, there are thorny unresolved issues regarding the Other.

In her chapter JIN HE examines four interconnected myths of English proficiency in China: of English as a practical tool/skill, as superiority, as distinction, as upward social mobility. These myths, which underpin contemporary Chinese English policy, are analysed through ethnographic exploration of contributions to three social networks. He's findings reveal that the situation is far more complex and diversified than it might appear at surface level and could well have significant implications in other countries and contexts as regards crucial questions, such as equity of access to English. The chapter sheds important light on the ideologies underpinning the study of second languages and what can be described as the 'normalisation' of the notion of bilingualism in discourse.

ANNE IFE examines the use of English as the language of interaction among a group of students (including both native speakers and nonnative speakers) attending a Master's programme in the UK. The

nonnative speakers use English as a *lingua franca* (ELF), understood here as a contact language enabling communication to take place (Firth 1996), but with different levels of proficiency. Ife uses the tools of conversation analysis to show very convincingly that when *well-educated* individuals (in this case postgraduate students) who speak different languages are engaging in L2 interaction and *want* to communicate, they are able to overcome considerable disparities in language proficiency and to co-operate quite successfully, ensuring that even the weakest voices linguistically can be heard. The chapter demonstrates that the constraints are not linked to the members' linguistic limitations, but rather to their willingness to participate socially and their ability to engage; in other words, what is usually referred to as language deficit is not necessarily the cause of social inequality (Hymes 1996).

3.2. Section Two. Contexts

This section of the volume consists of case studies from four national contexts, two of which were colonized by the British (India and Australia), one by the French (Gabon) and one by both the French and the British (Cameroon).¹⁹

KIZITUS MPOCHE uses the notion of linguistic ecology to examine the context within which language policy and language education are evolving in the multilingual postcolonial context of Cameroon. After delineating the historical background to the current language practices of education in the country, he looks at the relationship between local languages and government policy as regards official languages and medium of education. There seems to be a disjunction between the aims of the official bilingual policy and the actual situation. For Mpoche the government's *de jure* language policies aiming at national integration are not reflected in the *de facto* outcomes of practices in education. He provides empirical data from both

19 The 2005 census gives Cameroon an overall population of 17,463,836 and the two anglophone regions a population of 3,045,032, thus comprising about a fifth of the total.

the Anglophone and the Francophone systems supporting the view that attitudes favourable to teaching in French and English are gaining in strength over time, thus showing the apparent success of the government's policy of integration. But a critical discussion of the findings and stance reveals that, in reality, the whole education system is underfunded and isolated (particularly the primary sector) and that the government's discourse appears to be a thin gloss. Mpoche argues that positive orientations towards French and English as media of education may well exist, but not as a result of the policies of integration (confirming the teacher data gathered by Esch *in press*). Rather it reflects the instrumental and individualistic motivation of those who want to 'get on' and, above all, want their children to 'get on'.

Gabon is the focus of the chapter by REBECCA A. MITCHELL which takes a close look at the relationship between language, education and identity in the country. As in Cameroon the situation in Gabon remains very much postcolonial even though 60 years have passed since independence, but obviously without the presence of an Anglophone area. Against the backdrop of the multilingual context (three ethnic languages are considered) Mitchell presents the results of a thorough and careful study (using interviews and self-assessment of levels of proficiency by a population sample of different ages and levels of education) to focus on the role of French in education and the distribution of languages in relation to functions. The relationships between the local languages and their varying degrees of influence, coupled with the fact that French is the sole official language in Gabon, means that its position is unrivalled and it seems to be a unifying language. In actual fact, however, Gabonese identities are constructed around various allegiances to ethnic, linguistic and African identities, while positive attitudes towards modernization and westernization are fast gaining ground. Indeed recent years have witnessed a large movement of population from the countryside to the cities, paralleled with a dramatic increase in the use of French. There is an evident disjunction between the official language of education, representing power, and the languages of the ethnic group, representing solidarity.

The English language has a special role in India, another post-colonial multilingual context, and ESTORINO ADAMI traces the historical background and current position of the language in the country,

before concentrating on the ways the English language is taught in different educational settings. He describes the multilingual nature of the country and the 'Three Language Formula' launched by the Indian Government in the 1950s, and its repercussions, leading to the divide between English Medium (EM) schools, which allow access to tertiary education and prestigious jobs and privilege the rising urbanized middle class, and Vernacular Medium (VM) schools, unable to fulfill the requirements imposed by societal and professional innovations. The chapter focuses on the social dynamics and democratization issues in relation to literacy at various levels, also comparing literacy with oral traditions. Practices, policies and identities are constantly being (re)negotiated, in the light of a clear ambivalence towards English, no longer the language of the colonial power but rather the tool for 'doing well' and 'getting on', hence the instrumental motivation for achieving competence in the language is very high.

ANDROULLA YIAKOUMETTI takes the view that for language education to be successful it needs to reflect the linguistic ecology of the community to which it pertains. Her study of teachers working in indigenous communities in Queensland (Australia) takes a close look at indigenous community education and sociolinguistic issues relating to the use of Aboriginal English dialects and Standard Australian English. After analyzing and discussing these, she notes that by and large the teachers seem to be left very much to their own devices and sense of judgment. It seems that, as in Africa, some communities are simply 'forgotten' and it is not at all clear what the way forward really is. There is a rift here between the larger community and the social island within which the community lives, as well as a disjunction between the official discourse and what is actually implemented. Yiakoumetti concludes by making some strong recommendations on how teacher training programmes could be improved, especially in terms of raising the teachers' awareness of linguistic diversity, the social context, bi-dialectism and biculturalism.

The overall picture is similar in the four case studies due to the fact that historically all the countries were colonized at about the same period and that the coloniser's educational system and language remain identified with modernity and progress. However, the chapters show that a different sociolinguistic and ecological scenario in terms

of language and educational development can lead to differing perceptions and aspirations, especially as regards the treatment of local languages and the relationship with prestige languages. Nevertheless there seems to be a shared and dominant perception that local languages and varieties are not prestige languages and do not provide access to the globalized world: they do not help their learners and speakers to achieve success and ‘get on’, and therefore represent further inequality.

3.3. *Section Three. Practices*

The chapters in this section share a concern with and focus on teaching and learning practices in second language education, although they look at it in different ways and from different angles. They show how language education continues to be the site of constant tension and struggle between the different participants: from the individual language learners/users to the powerful international organizations, national bodies and assessment agencies.

ROXANA HERESCU looks at Content and Integrated Learning (CLIL) and the current situation in Romania. After describing how CLIL has been developed and promoted in Europe as an educational methodology which can help equip European citizens in terms of multilingualism and multiculturalism, the chapter focuses on how CLIL is being implemented in Romania alongside what is known in the country as ‘bilingual education’. Using data from interviews with teachers, she shows how the successful integration of content and linguistic elements is a complex process systematically influenced by a variety of factors and one which requires careful planning. In fact in the Romanian context, the switch to CLIL pushed through by the new government and the EU immediately after the revolution of 1989 does not seem to have had much of an impact on the way programmes supposed to be CLIL are actually being taught, for a number of fairly basic reasons. These include a lack of teacher preparation, confused labels and a lack of coherent pedagogical thinking concerning content teaching and language teaching. In Romania the change to a ‘new’ way of doing things would seem to have been implemented too hastily

without due concern for the massive need to engage with teacher development and reflexive teaching before implementing programmes.

In his chapter BUCKLEDEE returns to the classic question of whether the largely British English language norms of the Cambridge ESOL examinations are still appropriate gatekeeping tools, given the vast rise in the number of ELF users who might find such norms increasingly irrelevant. Starting from the premise that English is no longer the preserve of native speakers, he suggests that the examinations board gatekeepers should take the developments going on in the English language more into consideration when preparing their tests, in particular the listening and oral tests at First Certificate level.

FORTANET-GÓMEZ focuses on policy-making in Spain, in particular on the possible introduction and implementation of trilingualism in the Valencian Community in the light of the debate on language rights in the EU. She sets the policy in its international and national context, paying particular attention to the various implications of language choice in education in terms of identity (local, national, international) and the close connection between language and culture. She uses the quantitative data provided by a questionnaire administered at the *Universitat Jaume I* to examine and discuss the students' opinions and expectations as regards the introduction of a trilingual language policy.

4. Conclusion

The themes that run through this volume are complex and controversial. Language choice in education, even if in the name of equality, opens the door to potential exclusions and injustices. In the final section above on practices the issue of inequality is again in the forefront, whether in the activation/implementation of bilingual or trilingual programmes, or in the use of a *lingua franca* such as ELF in assessing competence.

Hymes also focuses on the concept of competence:²⁰

The term *competence* [...] should not be a synonym for ideal grammatical knowledge [...] Rather, *competence* should retain its normal sense of actual ability. [...] only as a term for actual abilities, assessed in relation to contexts of use, can it help to overcome inequality practically. (1996: 58-59, original emphasis)

And yet the use of ELF implies a lower level of competence than that of a native speaker, with the related connotations of subordination and inequality. Block (2010) has shown, drawing on personal experience, how speakers of one or more Romance languages can communicate with each other using the different languages they speak, rather than the language of their interlocutor, terming the reciprocal bilingualism *Romance-esque*, and noting that its use “may be seen to confer on speakers of Romance languages the status of global communicators, that is, individuals who are able to communicate competently with others while engaging in activities on the global stage” (2010: 28). He compares the use of *Romance-esque* with the use of ELF, but observes that the former guarantees an equality denied by the latter:

[...] by protecting the individual’s right to speak in a language in which he/she feels competent, this type of conversation serves to validate all speakers equally, something which does not happen and indeed cannot happen when English as a *lingua franca* is used. (2010: 28)

Thus language learning is an essential, but also potentially conflictual, part of individual identity; at the same time language education is an essential part of the social cohesion of communities. Language choice (Romaine 2000, Coulmas 2005) underpins the aims, objectives and implementation of language education. But individual and communal aspirations do not always match agendas, and while the myth of language leading to modernity and ‘getting on’ would seem to be irresistible goals, access to educational resources remains a critical issue within the broader area of social choice (Sen 1999) throughout the world.

20 Hymes’s concept of ‘communicative competence’, has been usefully paraphrased by Riley (2007: 11) as “[...] the individual group member’s capacity to adapt to the exigencies of the situation”.

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