Perspectives on small-scale multilingualism

Friederike Lüpke, SOAS, University of London
(Where) does small-scale multilingualism exist?
# Fishman’s famous typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bilingualism</th>
<th>Diglossia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both diglossia and bilingualism</td>
<td>Bilingualism without diglossia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diglossia without bilingualism</td>
<td>Neither bilingualism nor diglossia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bilingualism without diglossia

• In situations of “rapid social change, of great social unrest, of widespread abandonment of prior norms before the consolidation of new ones” (Fisman 1967: 87)

• “prone to be unstable and transitional” (1967: 87)

Many new interactional approaches Focus on Western societies or urban contexts
But: non-polyglossic multilingualism is little known outside regional fields

• “Some authors believe to have found evidence for prolonged reciprocal bilingualism among neighbouring communities. This appears to have been the case among some of the languages of Arnhem Land [...] as well as among pairs or groups of languages in the Amazon basin.” (Matras 2009: 48)

• “A type that is rapidly vanishing from today’s world is multilingualism among neighbouring tribal communities in pre-urban, pre-industrialised societies.” (2009: 48)
Areas of bi- or multilingualism without di- or polyglossia

Upper Xingu (Franchetto 2011, Ball 2011)
Northern Vanuatu (François 2012)
Grassfields (Di Carlo 2012, Good & Di Carlo 2014, Di Carlo forthcoming, Good forthcoming)
Nortwestern Arnhem land (Singer & Harris forthcoming)
Casamance (Lüpke 2010, Cobbinah 2010, Lüpke & Storch 2013, Lüpke forthcoming)

Suriname and French Guyana (Migge & Léglise 2013)
Papua New Guinea (Döhler p.c, Aikhenvald 2008, Evans in prep., Schokkin in prep.)
Meaningful geographic settings (Good forthcoming)

- Frontier societies (Kopytoff 1987)
- Areas without centralised polities or state formations
- Refuge zones at the fringes of states (marshlands, hills, mountains...)
- Areas not massively exposed to Western monolingual language ideologies and settlement colonisation
The non-diglossic bilingualism name game

- Non-polyglossic multilingualism (Aikhenvald 2007)
- Traditional multilingualism (Di Carlo ?)
- Rural multilingualism (Di Carlo ?)
- Egalitarian multilingualism (François 2012)
- Small-scale multilingualism (Singer & Harris forthcoming), Lüpke forthcoming a, b and c)
What drives small-scale multilingualism?
Languages associated with places

- **Its affiliation with an (ethnic) group and/or a code**: Baïnounk-Jóola
- **Its language**: Gu-bëeher
- **A place**: Ji-bëeher
- **Baïnounk**: U-/Ñan-bëeher
- **Important: patrimonial deixis: Casamance**
Patrimonial identity and language based on contrast

Landlords: descendants of the (remembered) founding clan

Landlords have land rights and can receive strangers

Patrimonial language associated with landlords; strangers don’t claim this language, even if they speak it

Casamance
Patrimonial identity and language often based on selective ideologies

Many inhabitants of a place are ideologically erased from representing it.

Casamance
Pre-contact language-land association and languages spoken

Languages spoken at Warruwi community) are underlined. Northern Australia
“If we were all Tukano speakers, where would we get our women?” (Chernela 2013: 34)

The preferential crossed cousin marriage results in women marrying into villages where their matrilect is spoken.
Multiple languages for multiplied protection

- Villages nominally associated with one language
- Individuals speak 5-6 languages and 8 to 10 lects
- Exogamy is common, and children receive dual identity based father’s and mother’s father’s identity
- Identity is reflected in names and linguistic competence
- Affinities to the village are also expressed through indexical language choice
- Multiple alliances are seen as necessary to gain protection against invisible threats, notably witchcraft

Northwestern Cameroon
Where does small-scale multilingualism cease to exist?
Creolisation and pidginisation contexts

- New settlements: ‘street’ settlements in Casamance, regional cities not based on historical settlements
- Migration and urbanisation: in those instances where social networks are altered
- Massive influx of languages of wider communication: Cameroonian Pidgin English (Lower Fungom), Bislama (Vanuatu), Portuguese (Brazil)
- Forced resettlement under colonisation: all of Australia and North America.
Why do we need to study it?
Most patterns of multilingualism and language contact worldwide remain unstudied.

Research focusses on polyglossia in settings involving at least one Western language.

Small-scale multilingualism – “the primal human condition” (Evans 2012) – remains dramatically underresearched.

Small-scale multilingualism is predominantly characterised as language contact between neighbouring groups, although these groups are heterogeneous.

Multilingualism is often seen as endangering, but small-scale multilingualism is globally endangered.
A universal (?) backdrop of processing demands resulting in convergence.

Reciprocal multilingualism
No ideological separation of codes
No monolingualism practiced
Pervasive code-mixing
Multilingual ideologies

Receptive multilingualism
Ideological merger of some codes
Monolingualism practiced by many/some group members
Code-switching
Partly erasing ideologies

Passive multilingualism
Ideological separation of codes
Monolingualism practiced all most group members
No code-mixing
Monolingual ideologies

Ideological separation of codes
No ideological separation of codes
Ideological merger of some codes
Ideological separation of codes

Monolingualism practiced by many/some group members
Monolingualism practiced all most group members

Monolingual ideologies
Partly erasing ideologies
Monolingual ideologies

Parameters

Comprehension and production of codes
Construction of codes
Pervasiveness of multilingualism
Code interaction
Visibility of codes

Language intertwining

Language separation

Parameters