Organic multilingualism and its significance for language documentation and descriptive linguistics

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Approaching organic multilingualism

Fishman’s famous typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bilingualism</th>
<th>Diglossia</th>
<th>Neither bilingualism nor diglossia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>Both diglossia and bilingualism</td>
<td>Bilingualism without diglossia</td>
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<tr>
<td>-</td>
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**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” (Fishman 1967: 87)
- “prone to be unstable and transitional” (1967: 87)

Many new interactional approaches focus on Western societies or urban contexts

**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 forthcoming, Good forthcoming)
- Northwestern Arnhem Land (Singer & Harris forthcoming)
- Casamance (Lüpke 2010, Cobbina 2010, Lüpke & Storch 2013, Lüpke forthcoming a, b and c, Cobbina, Hantgan, Lüpke & Watson forthcoming, etc.)
- Suriname and French Guyana (Migge & Léglise 2013)

**Meaningful geographic settings for organic multilingualism**

- 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)
- Rural multilingualism (Di Carlo 2015)
- Organic multilingualism
- Small-scale multilingualism (Singer & Harris forthcoming, Lüpke forthcoming a, b and c)
- Indigenous multilingualism (Aikhenvald 2007)
- Traditional multilingualism (Di Carlo forthcoming)
- Egalitarian multilingualism (François 2012)
- Endogenous multilingualism (Di Carlo in prep.)
The role of organic multilingualism
• Frontier contexts require multiple and flexible alliances between groups conceptualised as distinct.
• Social exchange (of women, children, captives, labourers...) creates intensely multilingual societies.
• Different languages index sameness or difference according to context to enable these exchanges and their adaptivity.

Organic multilingualism is motivated by changing social needs and not regulated by top-down processes.

A snapshot on the Vaupès basin

Invisible but necessary multilingualism

Linguistic exogyny
• “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
Monolingual ideologies of multilingualism

**Practices**
- Adults are expected to speak their patrilect
- Children initially grow up speaking their matrilect but are discouraged from speaking it as they grow older
- Strong constraints on code-mixing and little lexical borrowing
- Code alternation and speaking of the matrilect (for women) or of the wife's patrilect (for men) does occur in practice

**Ideologies**
- Distinguish between patrilect, matrilect and alterlect
- Patrilect is identity language and only 1g counted as one's language
- Keeping languages distinct is paramount for marriability

Tariana speakers have a more accommodating habitus, which ultimately resulted in language shift.

A snapshot of the Upper Xingu area

A multilingual society with monolingual groups

Shared pragmatic principles among different monolingual groups

**Practices**
- Groups are endogamous without widespread multilingualism
- No lingua franca before the spread of Portuguese
- Three levels of ethnolinguistic organization
- A common calendar of cultural events and exchange
- Communication based on shared principles of complaint and respect

**Ideologies**
- Languages emblematizes identity
- Language ideology emphasises monolingualism
- Dualism between witchcraft and shamanism is integral to functioning of the system
Three levels of societal organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language family</th>
<th>Karib</th>
<th>Arawak</th>
<th>Tupi</th>
<th>Isolate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kuikuru</td>
<td>Yawalapiti</td>
<td>Kamayurá</td>
<td>Trumai</td>
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<td>Kalapalo</td>
<td>Wauja</td>
<td>Aweti</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nahaukowa</td>
<td>Mehinaku</td>
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Level of language family

Level of individual language

Multiple languages, multiple identities

- 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 on father’s and mother’s father’s identity
- Identity reflected in names and linguistic competence
- Affinities to the village also expressed through indexical language choice
- Multiple alliances seen as necessary to gain protection against invisible threats, notably witchcraft

A snapshot of the Lower Fungom area

A snapshot of northern Vanuatu
Egalitarian and reciprocal multilingualism

- Languages nominally associated with villages, but many individuals speak four or more languages
- Widespread exogamy widespread for both sexes (30% of unions)
- Reciprocal multilingualism, mainly depending on the location of the household
- In about 60% of unions, women relocate to their husbands’ villages, in about 40% it’s the reverse
- Children of bilingual unions raised bilingually
- Practices rapidly changing, as Bislama gains more ground

Owning vs. speaking languages

Warruwi community is a multilingual community on South Goulburn Island

Pre-contact language-land association

Languages spoken at Warruwi community are underlined
Multilingual individuals with less multilingual ideologies

**Practices**
- Widespread multilingualism in 4+ Indigenous languages, very little use of English
- Great individual variation
- Widespread receptive multilingualism pre-empts massive code-mixing and results in low levels of lexical borrowing

**Ideologies**
- Ideologies based on language ownership
- Each language associated with land
- This association gives indirectly rise to language ownership
- Three languages commonly cited as languages of Warruwi; Yolŋu-matha languages are erased for older speakers
- This reflects older settlement patterns, but also the influence of the one tribe-one nation ideology of outsiders

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.

Organic multilingualism in the Casamance area of Senegal
Languages at the field sites

- Wolof (Senegal)
- Vodoun (Ivory Coast, Liberia, Guinea)
- TENES (Mauritania, Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau)
- FULA-SEEREER (Faloula, Falakla, Falako, Jola, Serer)
- GANEF (Kolok, Njor, Nalu, Llala, Taffa)
- NASU (Nalu, Njor, Taffa, front)
- BAX (Kanana, Kalanga, Gagixo, Guina, Kompa, Kataba)
- ATLAUT (Kebbe, Kanto, Kumba, Foula, Jola, Serer)
- BAK (Kebbe, Kanto, Kumba, Foula, Jola, Serer)

French (Romance)
Kriolu (Portuguese-based)
Mandinka (Mande)
Bambara (Mande)

Pozdniakov & Segerer (forthcoming)

Multilingual and mobile individuals

- Between 3 and 10 named languages spoken
- Repertoires are dynamic because of:
  - Fostering
  - Marrying in/out
  - Economic, religious and ritual mobility
- Old and new mobility patterns co-exist

The Christian « Bainounk »
Hélène Coly turned into the Muslim « Mandinka »
Teye Suko as part of the gubos ritual.

Shared cultural practices

- Initiation rites
- Masked dances
- Fertility rituals (kanyalen/gubos)
- Exogyny
- Wet rice cultivation
- Religion (« path of the forebears », Christianity and Islam)
- Many rituals are timed across the area and involve all groups, although they have ethnic labels

Places as ideological home bases for patrimonial languages

Bainounk-Jóola
Gu-bééher
Bainounk

Gubééher
Ji-bééher

U-/Ñan-bééher

Sacred grove & mask dance performance in Niamone.

Important: patrimonial deixis
Patrimonial identity and language based on dualism (Brooks 1993)

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

Patrimonial identity and language based on selective ideologies

(Male) descendants of founders

In-married women

Fostered children

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

Language and languaging at the Crossroads

The descriptive challenge: condensing ‘a language’ from variable discourse

Jóola Gubanjalay  ‘to hit’  Bainounk Gubëeher

Bu-deg  gu-saw

ja-saw  gu-saw

e-tex  ga-saw

ka-saw  e-teh

data from Abbie Hantgan

Jóola Kujireray  JS giving forms in Jóola Banjal
The solution: language prototypes as reference points

Overlaps between prototypes and degree of reification

Boundaries evoked by standard language culture close to imaginary prototypes

Language-independent literacies are practiced
Reification as “strategic essentialism” for representing and creating intangible heritage

Different planes of identity creation

- Polyglottic multilingualism & ethnic federalism
- Symbolic and strategic essentialism governs ideologies

Nationally

Locally

Small-scale Frontier setting

Dualism between insiders/first-comers and outsiders/strangers governs ideologies

The symbolic power of writing

- Wolof and French dominate the national linguistic market place.
- Speakers of other languages symbolically fight for the recognition of their languages as discrete codes in this polyglottic arena.

... that can’t reify the language itself

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Extract from the statutes of the Baïnounk lobby organisation BOREPAB
This participation in the polyglossic market place remains symbolic.

Symbolic ideologies and language practices don’t match

- While non-ethnic Wolof invoke the “Wolofisation” of the country and symbolically react to it, this has no actual influence on their linguistic behaviour.
- Wolof is integrated into the multilingual repertoires according to adaptive situational needs.

Lived multilingualism following the egalitarian organic multilingualism patterns

Symbolic reaction to polyglossic setting at the national level

Different planes of heritage creation

The Kankurang

The Bainounk languages

The symbolic power of fixing mask performances

- Claimed for and by Mandinka
- Regulated by notables of all official ethnic stakeholders of Ziguinchor
- Attested throughout Casamance and Guinea Bissau in various guises and with different roles all related to social control
The symbolic power of folklore

A Kankurang “cultural dance” in the Gambia

Two regimes

Regime of revelation
Regime of recognition

Requires invisibility
Requires visibility

Patrimonial identity based on contrast

Dualism defines domain in which the contrast is evoked.

In other domains, this identity remains invisible and inaudible.

Loss of spirituality in carnivalesque performances
Language and cultural heritage are imaginary reference points. Languaging and heritaging happen in practice.

Performers at a Kankurang festival playing journalists (de Jong 2007: 180)

Ideological misunderstandings
Insistence on code-based literacies for actual use

Outlook

Reciprocal multilingualism
No ideological separation of codes
No monolingualism practiced
Pervasive code-mixing
Multilingual ideologies
A universal (7) backdrop of processing demands resulting in convergence

Parameters

Most patterns of organic multilingualism and language contact worldwide remain unstudied.

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

Concepts of language in its different modalities differ according to the multilingual setting.

Organic 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.

The relationships between language ideologies and language practice remain largely unknown.
Tomorrow

• Differentiated look at code interaction in different situational settings
• Microvariation and its role for documenting change in process
• Morphological complexity in multilingual settings