Language Policy

Massimiliano Spotti
Jos Swanenberg
Jan Blommaert *Editors*

Language Policies and the Politics of Language Practices

Essays in Honour of Sjaak Kroon

Language Policy

Volume 28

Series Editors

Joseph Lo Bianco, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia
Terrence G. Wiley, Professor Emeritus, Arizona State University, Tempe, USA

Editorial Board
Claire Kramsch, University of California, Berkeley, USA
Georges Lüdi, University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland
Normand Labrie, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada
Anne Pakir, National University of Singapore, Singapore, Singapore
Guadalupe Valdes, Stanford University, California, USA

The last half century has witnessed an explosive shift in language diversity involving a rapid spread of global languages and an associated threat to small languages. The diffusion of global languages, the stampede towards English, the counter-pressures in the form of ethnic efforts to reverse or slow the process, the continued determination of nation-states to assert national identity through language, and, in an opposite direction, the greater tolerance shown to multilingualism and the increasing concern for language rights, all these are working to make the study of the nature and possibilities of language policy and planning a field of swift growth.

The series will publish empirical studies of general language policy or of language education policy, or monographs dealing with the theory and general nature of the field. We welcome detailed accounts of language policy-making - who is involved, what is done, how it develops, why it is attempted. We will publish research dealing with the development of policy under different conditions and the effect of implementation. We will be interested in accounts of policy development by governments and governmental agencies, by large international companies, foundations, and organizations, as well as the efforts of groups attempting to resist or modify governmental policies. We will also consider empirical studies that are relevant to policy of a general nature, e.g. the local effects of the developing European policy of starting language teaching earlier, the numbers of hours of instruction needed to achieve competence, selection and training of language teachers, the language effects of the Internet. Other possible topics include the legal basis for language policy, the role of social identity in policy development, the influence of political ideology on language policy, the role of economic factors, policy as a reflection of social change.

The series is intended for scholars in the field of language policy and others interested in the topic, including sociolinguists, educational and applied linguists, language planners, language educators, sociologists, political scientists, and comparative educationalists.

Book proposals for this series may be submitted to the Publishing Editor:

Natalie Rieborn, Publishing Editor, Springer, Van Godewijckstraat 30, 3300 AA Dordrecht, The Netherlands Email: Natalie.Rieborn@springer.com

All proposals and manuscripts submitted to the Series will undergo at least two rounds of external peer review.

This series is indexed in Scopus.

More information about this series at https://link.springer.com/bookseries/6209

Massimiliano Spotti • Jos Swanenberg
Jan Blommaert
Editors

Language Policies and the Politics of Language Practices

Essays in Honour of Sjaak Kroon

Editors
Massimiliano Spotti
Department of Culture Studies
Tilburg University
Tilburg, The Netherlands

Jos Swanenberg
Department of Culture Studies
Tilburg University
Tilburg, The Netherlands

Jan Blommaert†
Tilburg, The Netherlands

ISSN 1571-5361 ISSN 2452-1027 (electronic)
Language Policy
ISBN 978-3-030-88722-3 ISBN 978-3-030-88723-0 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-88723-0

© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2021
This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.
The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.
The publisher, the authors, and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Series Editors’ Foreword

Language Policy Book Series: Our Aims and Approach

Recent decades have witnessed a rapid expansion of interest in language policy studies as transcultural connections deepen and expand all across the globe. Whether it is to facilitate more democratic forms of participation, or to respond to demands for increased educational opportunity from marginalised communities, or to better understand the technologisation of communication, language policy and planning has come to the fore as a practice and a field of study. In all parts of the world, the push for language policy is a reflection of such rapid and deep globalisation, undertaken by governments to facilitate or diversify trade, to design and deliver multilingual public services, to teach less-commonly taught languages, and to revitalise endangered languages. There is also interest in forms of language policy to bolster new and more inclusive kinds of language based and literate citizenship.

Real-world language developments have pushed scholars to generate new theory on language policy and to explore new empirical accounts of language policy processes. At the heart of these endeavours is the search for the resolution of communication problems between ethnic groups, nations, individuals, authorities and citizens, and educators and learners. Key research concerns have been the rapid spread of global languages, especially English and more recently Chinese, and the economic, social and identity repercussions that follow, linked to concerns about the accelerating threat to the vitality of small languages across the world. Other topics that have attracted research attention have been persisting communication inequalities, the changing language situation in different parts of the world, and how language and literacy abilities affect social opportunity, employment and identity.

In the very recent past, language diversity itself has been a popular field of study, to explore particular ways to classify and understand multilingualism, the

fate of particular groups of languages or individual languages, and questions of literacy, script and orthography. In this complex landscape of language change, efforts of sub-national and national groups to reverse or slow language shift have dominated concerns of policy makers as well as scholars. While there is a discernible trend towards greater openness to multilingualism and increasing concern for language rights, we can also note the continued determination of nation-states to assert a singular identity through language, sometimes through repressive measures.

For all these reasons, systematic, careful and critical study of the nature and possibilities of language policy and planning is a topic of growing global significance.

In response to this dynamic environment of change and complexity, this series publishes empirical research of general language policy in diverse domains, such as education, or monographs dealing with the theory and general nature of the field. We welcome detailed accounts of language policymaking which explore the key actors, their modes of conceiving their activity and the perspective of scholars reflecting on the processes and outcomes of policy.

Our series aims to understand how language policy develops, why it is attempted, and how it is critiqued, defended and elaborated or changed. We are interested in publishing research dealing with the development of policy under different conditions and the effect of its implementation.

We are interested in accounts of policy undertaken by governments but also by non- governmental bodies, by international corporations, foundations, and the like, as well as the efforts of groups attempting to resist or modify governmental policies.

We will also consider empirical studies that are relevant to policy of a general nature, e.g. the local effects of transnational policy influence, such as the United Nations, the European Union or regional bodies in Africa, Asia and the Americas. We encourage proposals dealing with practical questions of when to commence language teaching, the number of hours of instruction needed to achieve set levels of competence, selection and training of language teachers, the language effects of the Internet, issues of program design, and innovation.

Other possible topics include non-education domains such as legal and health interpreting, community- and family-based language planning, and language policy from bottom-up advocacy, and language change that arises from traditional forms of power alongside influence and modelling of alternatives to established forms of communication.

Contemporary language policy studies can examine the legal basis for language policy, the role of social identity in policy development, the influence of political ideology on language policy formulation, the role of economic factors in success or failure of language plans or studies of policy as a reflection of social change.

We do not wish to limit or define the limits of what language policy research can encompass, and our primary interest is to solicit serious book-length examinations, whether the format is for a single authored or multi-authored volume or a coherent edited work with multiple contributors.

The series is intended for scholars in the field of language policy and others interested in the topic, including sociolinguists, educational and applied linguists, language planners, language educators, sociologists, political scientists, and comparative educationalists. We welcome your submissions or an enquiry from you about ideas for work in our series that opens new directions for the field of language policy.

Series Editors
Professor Joseph Lo Bianco, AM, University of Melbourne, Australia
Professor Terrence G Wiley, Arizona State University, USA

Contents

Introduction to *Language Policies and the Politics of Language Practices* 1
Jos Swanenberg, Massimiliano Spotti, and Jan Blommaert

Sociolinguistic Restratification in the Online-Offline Nexus: Trump's Viral Errors 7
Jan Blommaert

L2 Learning While Doing Togetherness on YouTube: Exploring the Role of a Socio-technological Platform in an Asylum-Seeking Center 25
Massimiliano Spotti

Colonial and Missionary Contributions in Tigrinya Reading Instruction in Eritrea 39
Yonas Mesfun Asfaha and Jeanne Kurvers

The Cuban Literacy Programme in Timor-Leste; 'Magic' on the Blackboard 57
Danielle Boon and Jeanne Kurvers

Assessing Multilingualism at School 77
Guus Extra and Ton Vallen

Creating Quarter for Doing Things with Language 85
Koen Jaspaert

Teachers-in-Training and the Policing of Language Variation 107
Jos Swanenberg, Anne Kerkhoff, and Petra Poelmans

Preach or Practise? Preach and Practice! 127
Johan Van Hoorde

The Kroonian Paradigm: Sjaak Kroon's Distinctive Style of Language Work. 145
Joseph Lo Bianco

Introduction to *Language Policies and the Politics of Language Practices*

Jos Swanenberg, Massimiliano Spotti, and Jan Blommaert

This edited Volume entitled *Language policies and the politics of language practices* consists of contributions stemming from the field of ethnography of education, minority language teaching and language politics more in general. Starting from past contributions hunched in a more Fishmanian 'sociolinguistics of spread' where the driving question has been who speaks which language to whom, where and why, the Volume shows how the study of language in society has moved toward a post-Fishmanian 'sociolinguistics of mobility' (Blommaert, 2010; Spotti, 2011; De Fina, 2020). At its core, there is an attempt to show and further grasp how globalization driven sociolinguistics phenomena across the globe have had an effect not only on language policy processes but also on how these policy processes and their politics are often confronted by the practices of language users in their micro-fabrics of daily interactions within the socio-cultural spaces they inhabit.

The understanding of 'language diversity' that is sketched on the European continent as present before the end of the cold war was, more often than not, a survey-informed understanding. While celebrating internationality, dry lists of languages present in city X and neatly operating next to one another, they became the ideal rhetoric of public and political discourses that had to shine the presence of languages in their municipalities in the same way a general would do with his/her glorious war medals at a parade. Consequently, language diversity had come to be perceived as something belonging to minorities alone and these minorities were then addressed as relatively stable and organized units identifiable in ethno-linguistic discernible language communities. These communities, in turn, came also across to the eye of the statistics reader as orderly in their pattern of arrival. First, they were the result of post-colonial flows. These were then followed by a response to an

J. Swanenberg (✉) · M. Spotti · J. Blommaert (Deceased)
Department of Culture Studies, Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands
e-mail: a.p.c.swanenberg@tilburguniversity.edu

© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2021

M. Spotti et al. (eds.), *Language Policies and the Politics of Language Practices*, Language Policy 28, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-88723-0_1

official state-issued call for manual labour. Last, though not always mentioned, they were the result of elitist (often temporary) migration. In the unfortunate case that these clearly defined ethno-linguistic groups were not numerous enough to be statistically relevant then, they would be glossed over as 'others' (see for instance Meissner, 2015) with the mere result of being included in some obscure academic Volume interested in the statistically uninteresting ones.

The above fairy-tale understanding of language diversity once confronted with post-Cold War patterns of migration though appears to erode. These new patterns of migration, in fact, have brought in far less clear-cut characteristics for language *and* society as well as for the use of language *in* societal arenas. These less clear-cut characteristics, were these ever been so, have then led to a considerable awareness of contemporary societies being confronted with a diversified diversity (see Arnaut & Spotti, 2015) where linguistic diversity could not be addressed anymore through policy responses that were homogeneously meant and that, because of their group based homogeneity, had become anachronistic. Rather, the post-Cold War status quo that has been unfolding around diversity has made clear that with globalization-led movement, there would also be a richer interconnectedness of large parts of the globe. While this emergent diversity and its implications still had to be defined and conceptually dissected, this movement led diversity should also be considered to embody changing variables in the migration patterns at hand, more than just more groups next to pre-settled ones. This interconnectedness, following Appadurai's predictions of ethnoscapes dating back to 1990, further developed at a later stage by Wallerstein (2004), gave rise to systems of political, economic, cultural and communicative flows supported by technology turning thus classical groups and communities into networks can be temporal, dynamic, ubiquitous, multiple and overlapping. This is so notwithstanding the current stop encountered during present day pandemic, drastically limiting one of the core elements of globalisation, i.e., movement. These patterns of cultural and social behaviour trigger new dynamics of global and local culture as local cultures affect and are affected by global formats, and local diversities and inequalities increase (Kroon & Swanenberg, 2019). Consequences of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and other forms of diversity and inequality are for authorities, the labour market and the domain of education a bottom-line societal reality and social problem with not yet any clear solutions. However, across and beyond Europe, we perceive a trend that education and its professionals still largely gloss over diversity in societies through a form of 'trained blindness'. This allows them to bypass the obstacles and the challenges brought by the discrepancies emerging between top-down policies and bottom-up sociolinguistic classroom practices, even when they are mostly aware and respectful of diversity and its complexities.

Against the above, rooted within the epistemological tradition of interpretive ethnography (Kroon & Sturm, 2007) and supported by the conceptual lens offered by the sociolinguistics of globalization (Blommaert, 2010), *Language policies and the politics of language practices* wishes to tackle the glossy mindset that characterizes discourses and practices of and around language diversity in education. Precisely in that domain, in fact, monolingual and monocultural expectations and

policies are confronted with teachers' and students' meta-pragmatic judgements informing their attitudes and actual practices. Online infrastructures and new technologies are crucial in education as teaching and learning tools but at the same time there still is and always will be the direct interaction between teachers and their students in classrooms. In times of globalisation led mobility and technologically supported transnationalisms, education is even more than before elected as the standard repository arena of normativity as a basis for teaching-learning processes. A very important aspect thereof is language. The national standard language still has a monopoly position in education. It is a target language and a medium of instruction at the same time, it is a means for inclusion and, next to that, the lack of mastering it may lead to a position of exclusion in a limbo of permanent guest hood (see Vigouroux, 2019 for a nice treaty of language and (in)hospitality).

Language policies and the politics of language practices consists of papers on the use of minority languages in education and the development of policies at all levels of policing in this sometimes over-policed field (with examples coming from various educational environments from Europe to Eritrea, all the way to Timor Leste and back again to Europe). It particularly focuses on language policy analysis in which both the top-down institutional and the bottom-up ethnographic dimensions are blended, and in which globalization is the main macro-perspective. The papers describe sensitive tools for investigating, unravelling, and understanding the grey area connecting formal language policies and informal politics and practices of language usage on the ground.

The chapters in this book collectively engage with language diversity. In his chapter, which by now serves as a tribute to his ethnographic and conceptual richness and legacy, Jan Blommaert explains how sociolinguistic stratification – the fact that language diversity is turned into inequality through processes of normative judgment – has been central in the development of modern sociolinguistics and has kept researchers' attention for many decades. The online-offline nexus in which we have learned to live and organize our social lives in online as well as offline spaces, each carrying different normative standards, has become a lab for manifest sociolinguistic re-stratification. An analysis of Donald Trump's orthographic errors on Twitter, and how such errors went viral, shows how multiple audiences apply very different indexical vectors to the errors, each of them iconicizing a more general set of perceived social and political divisions.

Two chapters address education policies in global peripheries (cf. Wallerstein, 2004). They both address the education of literacy, an important gateway towards equality and prosperity. The chapter by Yonas Mesfun Asfaha and Jeanne Kurvers deals with classroom literacy instruction in the multilingual educational context in Eritrea. It describes the early reading instruction principles laid down by colonial and missionary educators in teaching reading in Tigrinya which uses the Ethiopic script letters of its predecessor, the Ge'ez language, now restricted to liturgical use in the Orthodox Church in the region. The chapter provides an overview of the current Tigrinya curriculum and teaching materials in use in schools in the country. In addition, a discussion of literature traces the development of literacy instruction globally or, more specifically, in the alphabetic traditions. The chapter by Danielle

Boon and Jeanne Kurvers is about adult literacy education in Timor-Leste (East Timor), a multilingual developing country in South-East Asia, in the period after independence in 2002. The focus is on one of the literacy programmes in use in Timor-Leste during the years of the study: the Cuban adult literacy programme "Yo Sí Puedo!". Boon and Kurvers compare the method of this programme, that associates numbers and letters, with other programmes and present results of a broad study on literacy abilities. Although this method has been in use in many countries and received a Unesco Literacy Prize, the data presented in this chapter demonstrates less reason for optimism.

Massimiliano Spotti's chapter is concerned with a volunteer teacher of Dutch as a second language to refugees in an asylum seeking centre. In there, Spotti investigates identity construction of newly arrived migrants in a non-regular classroom aimed at the teaching of Dutch as a second language and the teacher's own language ideologies, glossing over the sociolinguistic repertoires of these multilingual migrants as subjects whose languages do not qualify as actual language. Further, Guus Extra and Ton Vallen describe how one may assess the quality wherein proficiency of more than one language is completely natural as well as useful in present day societies. Due to globalization, and especially migration and mobility as one of the most influential parts of the process, both home-language as well as school-language repertoires of multilingual school populations must be put at the center of our attention in this context of increasing cultural and linguistic diversity of schools and societies.

The chapter by Koen Jaspaert deals with language policy as it is aimed at changing the language practice of certain people within a group, more specifically language policy aimed at emancipation. Through his account of successes and failures of language policy, he then points at the problem of two concepts instead of one concept of language deployed in policy work. The consequences of these two perspectives on language determine the effectiveness of language policy.

Jos Swanenberg, Anne Kerkhoff and Petra Poelmans address stereotyping and prejudice toward people from peripheral areas and marginalized groups when assessed on competences and capacities in the domains of education and labor. One of the important factors in this is their language. They observe a segregation by accent as a cause of unequal treatment of various minorities, and it matters what type of accent is used.

Johan van Hoorde describes the connection between language policy work as done by authorities and meant to lead to a formal framework of regulations, and the realism of sociolinguistic research and its shifting paradigms. In this chapter we follow Sjaak Kroon in his work with the Taalunie (Dutch Language Union) to witness a shift from the monopoly position of the standard language (as opposed to substandard varieties) to the acceptance of multilingualism as default, the diversity of language registers as point of departure and language ideology as an element of language phenomenology.

Finally, Joseph Lo Bianco reflects upon the chapters in his afterword. In his reflections upon the various case studies, he manages to simultaneously pinpoint the

cohesion of the volume. Lo Bianco's chapter starts with a very concise and most appropriate description of the work of our appraised colleague Sjaak Kroon.

Ultimately, this Volume wishes to do one thing. It wishes, above all, to celebrate the work of Sjaak Kroon whose oeuvre addressed, over a period of four decades, one of sociolinguistics' core issues across the globe: the many ways in which linguistic differences can be turned into social inequalities, and do so in structured, i.e., non-random, ways.

References

Appadurai, A. (1990). Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy. *Theory, Culture & Society, 7*, 295–310. https://doi.org/10.1177/026327690007002017

Arnaut, K., & Spotti, M. (2015). Superdiversity discourse. In C. Ilie & K. Tracy (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of language and social interaction*. Wiley-Blackwell. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118611463

Blommaert, J. (2010). *The sociolinguistics of globalization*. Cambridge University Press.

De Fina, A. (2020). Insights and challenges of Chronotopic analysis for sociolinguistics. In S. Kroon & J. Swanenberg (Eds.), *Chronotopic identity work: Sociolinguistic analyses of cultural and linguistic phenomena in time and space*. Multilingual Matters.

Kroon, S., & Sturm, J. (2007). International comparative case study research in education: Key incident analysis and international triangulation. In W. Herrlitz, S. Ongstad, & P. H. van de Ven (Eds.), *Research on MTE in a comparative international perspective – Theoretical and methodological issues* (pp. 99–118). Rodopi.

Kroon, S., & Swanenberg, J. (Eds.). (2019). *Language and culture on the margins. Global/local interactions*. Routledge Critical Studies in Multilingualism.

Meissner, F. (2015). Migration in migration-related diversity? The nexus between superdiversity and migration studies. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 38*(4), 556–567. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2015.970209

Spotti, M. (2011). Modernist language ideologies, indexicalities and identities: Looking at the multilingual classroom through a post-Fishmanian lens. *Applied Linguistics Review, 2*(2), 29–50.

Vigouroux, C. (2019). Language and (in)hospitality: The micropolitics of hosting and guesting. *Language, Culture and Society, 1*(1), 31–58.

Wallerstein, I. (2004). *World-systems analysis: An introduction*. Duke University Press.

Sociolinguistic Restratification in the Online-Offline Nexus: Trump's Viral Errors

Jan Blommaert

Abstract Sociolinguistic stratification – the fact that language diversity is turned into inequality through processes of normative judgment – has been central in the development of modern sociolinguistics and has kept researchers' attention for many decades. The online-offline nexus in which we have learned to live and organize our social lives in online as well as offline spaces, each carrying different normative standards, has become a lab for manifest sociolinguistic restratification. An analysis of Donald Trump's orthographic errors on Twitter, and how such errors went viral, shows how multiple audiences apply very different indexical vectors to the errors, each of them iconicizing a more general set of perceived social and political divisions. The outcome is a complex, polycentric sociolinguistic system, far less stable than that imagined in earlier sociolinguistics. This system requires renewed attention.

Keywords Online-offline nexus · Trump · Stratification · Indexicality · Orthographic errors

1 Introduction: A Perennial Agenda

The discipline we now call sociolinguistics has throughout the twentieth century systematically maintained and elaborated two connected issues.[1] Note that 'sociolinguistics' as it is now called is an innovation of the 1960s, when scholars (mainly in the US) started using the label to distinguish themselves and their work from that

[1] I am dedicating this essay to my friend and colleague Sjaak Kroon, with whom I collaborated intensely for over a decade and with whom I discussed almost any idea that came into being during that time. I tailored the essay in such a way that it addresses several of Sjaak's interests, overlapping with mine. I am grateful to Ico Maly for critical comments and suggestions on an earlier version of the paper.

J. Blommaert (Deceased) (✉)
Tilburg, The Netherlands

© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2021

M. Spotti et al. (eds.), *Language Policies and the Politics of Language Practices*, Language Policy 28, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-88723-0_2

of the Chomskyan paradigm in linguistics, and to emphasize continuity with an older paradigm incorporated in anthropology and exemplified in the tradition started by Franz Boas (Darnell, 1998; Hymes, 1992, 1996; Bauman & Briggs, 2003). It is in this longer tradition that the two connected issues were given a definitive shape. The issues are:

(i) the principled equality of all languages and
(ii) their factual inequality.

Taken together, these issues define sociolinguistics as a discipline concerned with *diversity*, but in a particular way.

The first issue, unpacked, has to do with the observation that every language, when seen in its concrete social context, is 'perfect': its resources enable members of the community of usage to express all possible meanings and fulfill every social-communicative function. In Benjamin Lee Whorf's (1956) famous view, every language incorporates, expresses and shapes the worldview of those who use it, and those so in its very structure (cf. also Silverstein, 1979). The issue was clearly articulated in Boas' seminal Introduction to the *Handbook of American Indian Languages* (1911, also Boas, 1928) as well as in Sapir's groundbreaking *Language* (1921). It became the epistemological, moral and political point of departure as well as the battle cry of generations of sociolinguists, and it defined the *linguistic* scope of the new discipline.

The second issue defined the battlefield of sociolinguistics. Given the in-principle equality of all languages, how come so many languages are factually considered inferior to others? Why are speakers of so many languages oppressed and marginalized, why do we make distinctions between 'standard' and '*sub*standard' varieties, why do we consider dialects features of backwardness and remnants of a pre-modern past? Why do we attach stigma to some accents in a language and prestige to others – when both are *linguistically* equivalent? And why are such distinctions codified in language policies and cast in even more robustly policed language ideologies enabling and sanctioning discriminations in which linguistic differences are turned into sociolinguistic inequalities?

This second issue, certainly from the 1960s onwards, defined the *social* scope of sociolinguistics, and it can be summarized in one word: stratification. And there were precursors: 'salvage linguistics' – the study of languages threatened with extinction – emerged out of an awareness that such languages would disappear not because of their intrinsic inferiority compared to, say, English or Spanish, but because of the fact that increasing marginalization of the users of such languages would ultimately eliminate the languages. And such forms of marginalization often included a strong stigma – a perceived, ideological inferiority – for the languages and language varieties as well. They were not qualified as 'languages' but as 'dialects', 'speech', 'jargons', 'sabirs' or simply 'barbarian' and 'primitive' (cf. Fabian 1986a, b). Certainly when these languages were not accompanied by an identifiable writing system, they were considered to be expressions of the innate and therefore general inferiority of their users.

As soon as a branch of scholarship emerged carrying the label of sociolinguistics, both issues merged into an agenda, expressed and developed in the work of the leading scholars of the first generation of sociolinguists. Forms of sociolinguistic diversity, ranging from AAVE in the US (Labov, 1970), native-American stories (Hymes, 1983), 'nonnative' Englishes in the US and the UK (Gumperz, 1982) or working class accents in the UK (Bernstein, 1971) and minority-majority multilingualism (Fishman, 1971) were shown to be the object of intense discrimination, notably in education (the focus of e.g. Labov, 1970; Bernstein, 1971; Hymes, 1980). Such forms of discrimination had *social*, not linguistic causes, and their analysis as linguistic phenomena needed to be set in a *context* that was at once structurally formed as well as synchronically enacted, often with predictable outcomes due to the pervasive and enduring influence of policies and language ideologies rationalizing (and rendering 'natural') the stratification of sociolinguistic regimes (cf. Kroskrity, 2000; also Bourdieu, 1991). Increasing diversity, for instance due to globalization processes, appeared to merely increase and complicate sociolinguistic inequalities (cf. Blommaert, 2005, 2008, 2010; Arnaut et al., 2016).

This very quick run through a century of sociolinguistic history takes me to the point of departure for this contribution. While we must take stratification as the basic engine behind the dynamics of sociolinguistic systems, the actual forms of stratification have become somewhat less predictable due to what we call the online-offline nexus: the fact that large parts of the world's population now organize and live their social lives online as well as offline, with both zones of social life, so to speak, being mutually influencing (cf. Blommaert, 2018). Offline practices are profoundly influenced and altered by online infrastructures and vice versa, creating different sociolinguistic economies – patterns of resource distribution, general formats for conducting communicative actions and forming communities – and repertoires adjusted to such changed economies.

A simple example can suffice to illustrate the changes: emojis have become part of the everyday repertoires of visual design of many millions of language users across the world and (while not 'belonging' to any language in particular) have rapidly acquired specific, conventionalized communicative functions and effects. Philip Seargeant (2019) perceived this development as nothing short of an 'emoji revolution'. Now, emojis are not part of most language learning curricula – their usage is often explicitly proscribed in language classes – and their usage is 'chronotopic', confined to particular and situated timespace arrangements such as scripted online interaction, advertisements and popular culture (Kroon & Swanenberg, 2019; cf. also Blommaert, 2015). But within such chronotopes, they are, if you wish, features of 'standard' language with a tremendous, transnational and translinguistic scope of usage and variant productivity (e.g., when the fully-formed smiley emoji '☺' is not available, it can be realized by means of other typographic signs such as ':-)').

Similar things can be observed with respect to hashtags – the '#' sign – as well as with the global spread of the '@' sign to denote time and place as well as addressees in a wide range of scripted messages. Both are widely used in complex functions, and such usages display strong degrees of normativity (Blommaert, 2020).

Observe that such signs do not remain online but can be transported to offline chronotopes as well. Hashtags, notably, are widely used in demonstration banners, posters and flyers as well as on clothing. Hashtags have become a near-global sign indexing 'message' in general. At a higher-scale level of communicative economies, we see how online social genres such as tweets or Instagram updates have become incorporated into domains of power and prestige – they have become firmly integrated into political campaigns, for instance, and now compete for prominence with older genres such as the politician's public rally speech or the newspaper editor's op-ed article.

2 Restratification in the Online-Offline Nexus

All of this means that the normative world in which sociolinguistic resources get their place and value allocated needs to be reconsidered. The expansion of the infrastructures for communication have inevitably gone hand in hand with an expansion of the 'centering institutions' described by Michael Silverstein (1998: 404; also 1996) as the real or imagined sources of normative authority for social-communicative conduct to which people orient while communicating, and through which their conduct is appraised and ratified (cf. also Agha, 2007). The result is a *complex polycentric sociolinguistic system,* i.e. an unstable, dynamic and open one in which gaps and overlaps, conflicts, contradictions and nonlinear outcomes are the rule rather than the exception (cf. Blommaert, 2016).

Of course, this statement, as soon as it is formulated, appears pedestrian, almost truistic. Perhaps sociolinguistic systems were always complex ones (as prefigured by e.g. Bakhtin and Voloshinov when they emphasized dialogism and heteroglossia), and perhaps the only virtue of the online-offline nexus is that it takes this simple given into the spotlight and makes it inevitable. But even so there is a moment to be captured, for this insight forces us towards another imagination of the major vectors and patterns of stratification and restratification – away from simple top-down models of imposed and carefully engineered hegemony (as in early studies on language policy and language planning, e.g. Eastman, 1983), from stable binaries of majority and minority languages at societal level with linear effects of linguicide looming (e.g. Phillipson, 1992) and from studies of forms of language mixing as aberrations of a supposedly homogeneously monoglot norm (e.g. Myers-Scotton, 1993). Theoretically as well as empirically, we need to see the normative valuation of sociolinguistic resources and of the modes of communication they shape, as well as the stratifying outcomes of such valuations, as *sets of different effects* spread over and caused by *a range of actors* and involving *several very different types of activities*, some of them involving high degrees of agency and others low degrees, some of them obviously revolving around human decision-making while others involve algorithmic technologies in crucial aspects of the process. Simply calling all of this 'power' may be comforting shorthand, but does not do justice to what actually goes

on. The question is really: *which specific forms of power* generate stratifications and restratifications in online-offline situations.

I shall try to answer this question by means of an extended case analysis. I can offer a spoiler at this point. We shall see that the online language of the powerless can be appropriated by the powerful precisely because it is transgressive and evokes strong moral condemnation from powerful groups, and that such curious reversals of conventional sociolinguistic stratifications can algorithmically be turned into a partisan 'majority' norm in a fragmented public sphere. The case I have chosen involves the most powerful person on earth: the President of the United States of America. It involves English, the world's most stratified language because it is the most globally distributed one. And it involves the sociolinguistic object most sensitive to normative judgment: orthography.

3 Trump on Twitter

There is a very strong cultural assumption in societies such as ours, in which the most powerful people are also the sociolinguistic elites: they are expected to command the most advanced and highly valued communicative resources. When they talk, they are fluent and eloquent in 'standard' varieties of the most prestigious languages; when they write they write elegant and elaborated texts in accordance to the strictest rules of grammar, genre and orthography. And in all of this we expect these people to be coherent, make sense and preferably sound intelligent. This assumption rests on robust sociological grounds, as the oeuvre of Pierre Bourdieu demonstrated: dominant groups in society are the guardians of norms in the field of culture as well as in the field of language, and when a variety of language is called 'accentless', we are actually facing the most prestigious accent – that of the elites (cf. Bourdieu, 1987, 1991; Agha, 2007). It is further undergirded by an army of professionals supporting the powerful in their communicative work – from speech writers to communication advisors and social media staff – and ensuring the best possible discursive products whenever one needs to talk or write.

There is no doubt that Donald Trump can draw on the services of an exceptionally large and exquisitely equipped army of such communication specialists. He could already do so before his election to the US presidency in 2016, and it is safe to assume that he could benefit from the services of the most outstanding members of the profession after he moved into the White House. Yet, since the very beginning of his electoral campaign, Trump's discursive idiosyncrasies became the object of intense public discussion.

Of course, he had big shoes to fill as a communicator, being the successor to one of modern history's most accomplished public orators, Barack Obama. But then, Trump was not the first US president to be targeted for public communication flaws. Obama succeeded George W. Bush, a president whose incoherence and inarticulateness in public speech had become the stuff of legends (see Silverstein, 2003; Lempert & Silverstein, 2012). Bush, with a Texas drawl, would fail to get the

pronunciation of relatively simple words and names (such as ‘Europe’) right, he would produce incoherent ramblings in answers to reporters, would deliver contradictions in terms and so forth. Such communicative flaws were widely perceived to be deeply embarrassing for almost anyone associated with Bush, and as a sign of a character flaw called ‘questionable intelligence’ for Bush himself. But there still was the army of communication professionals, able to prevent the unfiltered and unedited presidential ramblings from becoming US policy, and able to turn incoherent statements into coherent (or coherently explained) ones, to rationalize the president’s inarticulateness as part of his ‘message’ as an ‘average American’ talking in a ‘demotic’ way. Trump was a lot worse.

Trump’s general tenor of communication was, to put it mildly, strange. In public debates, he was offensive bordering on obscene, bluntly insulting opponents (‘Crooked Hilary’, ‘the failing New York Times’) while using extravagant hyperboles in self-description and self-qualification – ‘great’, ‘the greatest’, ‘absolutely fabulous’, ‘beautiful’, ‘the best’, ‘the only one’ and so forth – while displaying a cavalier attitude towards facts as well as some of the defects earlier identified with George W. Bush (see Fig. 1).

Trump’s public speech performances quickly became a favorite topic for late night show hosts such as Trevor Noah and Steven Colbert, and Trump imitators make a decent amount of money dissecting his usage of self-coined terms such as ‘bigly’, ‘stable genius’ and so forth and by poking fun at his obvious but stubbornly repeated gaffes (e.g. claiming that hurricane Dorian would strike Alabama, or announcing a border wall between Mexico and Colorado).

But Trump did not just talk: he also wrote *a lot*, and did so on Twitter. Trump’s campaign, as we know, was the first major algorithmic campaign in US history (Maly, 2016), and Jordan Hollinger (2018) calls his victory the ‘first Twitter-based presidency’. His usage of Twitter is what makes his presidency entirely exceptional: he systematically used his private Twitter account as the channel for his messages, even after becoming president. The official Twitter account of the US president (@ POTUS) often merely retweets messages launched by Trump on @realDonaldTrump. These tweets, consequently, fully maintain the character of ‘normal’, ‘authentic’, undoctored and unfltered tweets produced by an ‘ordinary’ Twitter user. Tweetbinder, an online repository on Trump’s tweets, claims that the president sent out about 10 tweets per day since his election, amounting to many thousands of tweets throughout his term in office. The same source also asserts that Trump writes

Fig. 1 Comment on Trump’s mispronunciation

and sends his tweets himself without the assistance (or censorship) of a communications team.[2]

The most amazing aspect of Trump's usage of Twitter is the tension between his tenor as an 'ordinary' user of social media on the one hand, and the nature and content of his messages. Trump doesn't just lambaste his opponents or showcase his public success on Twitter, he also uses the medium to announce major (and often not otherwise announced or anticipated) policy decisions and initiatives – often causing confusion and *déconfiture* among his collaborators and political allies as well as drawing fierce criticism from his opponents. Twitter really is Trump's most prominent channel of communication.

I need to pause here and turn to the general structure of communication on Twitter. And I shall start from something which all of us have absorbed during our first year of language studies: Saussure's sender-receiver model of communication (de Saussure, 1960: 27). (See Fig. 2)

We see two (male) humans, A and B; A produces an utterance originating in his brain and transmits it through his mouth to the ears of B, who processes it in his brain and responds to it. All of this is very well-known, but we should remind ourselves that this simply dyadic sender-receiver model is, to a large extent, still the default model for imagining communication at large, and thus serves as the backdrop for communication theorizing. With this in mind, let us turn to the main structure of communication on Twitter. (See Fig. 3)

We see a very different and much more complex structure of communication here. The tweet, produced by someone like Trump, is sent to an algorithm – a nonhuman 'receiver', if you wish – through which artificial intelligence operations forward it to numerous specific audiences (A 1, 2, …n in Fig. 3), whose responses are fed back, as data, to the algorithm and thence to the sender of the tweet in nonstop sequences of interaction. Parts of these audiences can relay their own uptake of

Fig. 2 Saussure's model of communication

[2] See https://www.tweetbinder.com/blog/trump-twitter/. On the Trump Twitter Archive, an almost comprehensive collection of Trump's tweets can be found. See http://www.trumptwitterarchive.com/. As for Tweetbinder's claim that Trump is the sole author of his tweets: I afford myself some doubt. Surely, he is the author of a huge number of tweets, but there are stylistic differences between his tweets (a full analysis of which is reserved for another paper) that point towards more hands touching his Twitter keyboard.

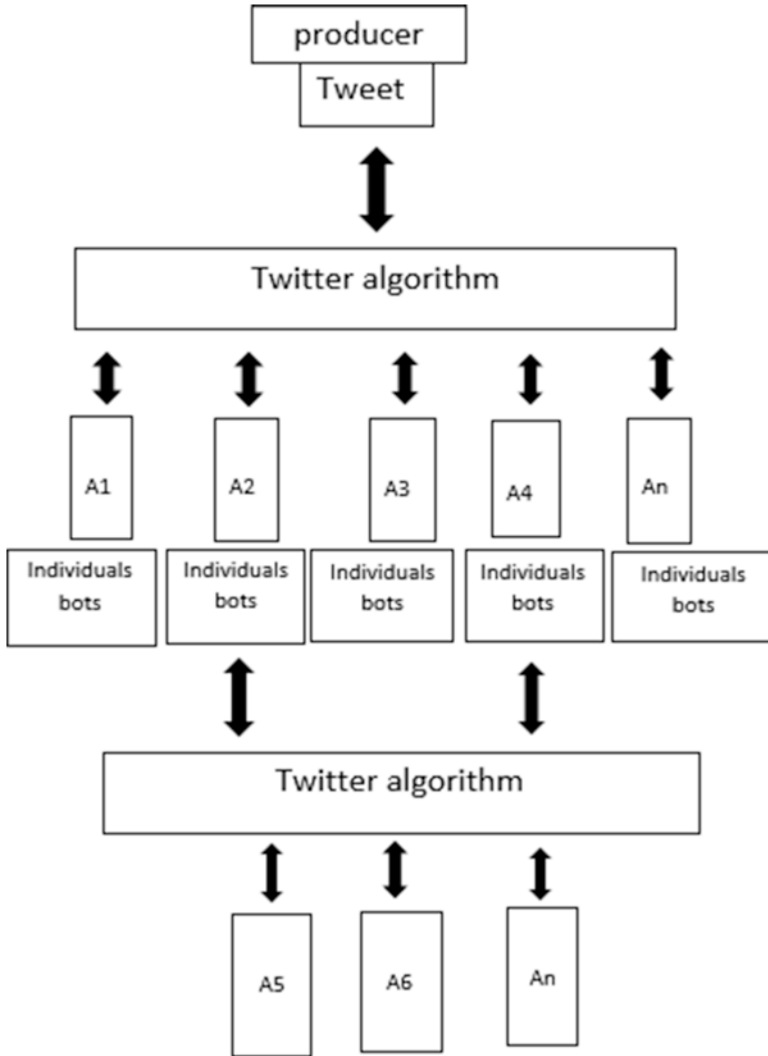

Fig. 3 Communication structure on Twitter

the tweet (via the Twitter algorithm) to secondary audiences (A 5, 6 … n in the scheme), who can do the same – and so on, enabling a tweet to reach audiences not initially accessible. The audiences (also often called 'bubbles') are constructed out of users' data yielding profiles, and they are selected on the basis of topic keywords, hashtags and histories of prior interactions.[3] They consist of individuals, sure; but in the case of Trump and many other high-profile accounts also of bots – computer programs behaving like 'normal' Twitter users and generating specific forms of response such as liking and retweeting and sometimes dramatically increasing the volume of traffic for tweets.[4]

What we need to take along here is this:

(a) There is no linear sender-response structure on Twitter, because the platform itself provides an algorithmic mediator for all and any interaction;
(b) the participants are, consequently, not all human, as very crucial parts of the communication structure are controlled by automated AI technologies;
(c) as an effect of these algorithmic mediations, there is not a single 'audience' (or 'public') in the structure of communication, but a fragmented complex of 'niched' audiences often with incompatible interests or political orientations;[5]
(d) the entire system is permanently in motion, with constant interactional conversions of actions performed by (human and nonhuman) participants into data further shaping and regulating the effects of the actions (cf. Maly 2018).

We can now turn to Donald Trump's tweets again.

---

[3] Hogan (2018) provides some insights into the traction profile of Trump's Twitter account. We should remember that there is another, human filter on what is being shown on social media such as Facebook and Twitter: the platform guidelines and restrictions on content, prohibiting, for instance, explicit sexual content, hate speech or violent images to be publicly visible, and policed by (often subcontracted) individuals. The criteria applied, along with the practices, outcomes and labor conditions in this domain are the object of constant controversy. See Varis (2018) for a discussion.

[4] In late October 2019, Donald Trump's Twitter account boasted over 66 million followers. But the @realDonaldTrump account has been shown to contain an unusually large number of bots among its followers. See https://sparktoro.com/blog/we-analyzed-every-twitter-account-following-donald-trump-61-are-bots-spam-inactive-or-propaganda/. For the effects of bots on the intensity of Trump's Twitter traffic, see https://www.axios.com/most-shared-links-debate-pro-trump-tweets-bots-e9dcd5e1-0356-4fc8-9408-f1d474aac2d7.html

[5] To clarify the heterogeneity of Trump's audiences: given the sheer importance of his tweets as political statements and announcements, his Twitter community is not necessarily made up of 'followers' in the sense of people who agree with or support Mr. Trump. Reporters and opponents are also compelled to follow his account in order to stay abreast of what the president has in mind.

Fig. 4 unwarranted capitals

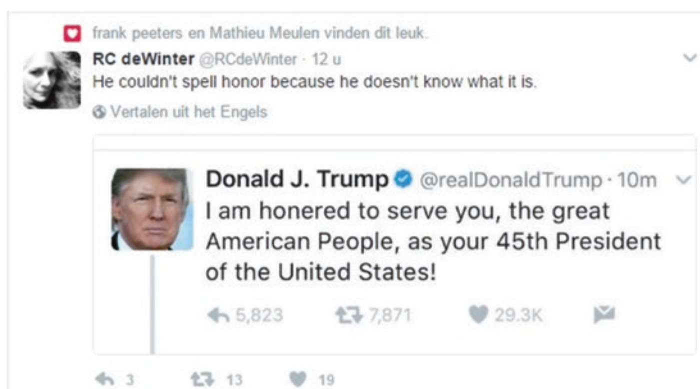

Fig. 5 'honored'

4 Trump's Viral Errors and Sociolinguistic Restratification

We saw how Trump's speech idiosyncrasies were targeted by critics; his tweets have been an even more outspoken object of language-normative criticism. Given the 'authentic' nature of Trump's tweets, peculiarities of writing habits can be noticed. One remarkable peculiarity is his unwarranted use of capitals – see 'Endless Wars' and 'Walls' in Fig. 4.

The same 'authentic' nature of Trump's tweets causes rather frequent typographic errors, and these are instantly singled out for condemnation. (See Fig. 5)

We see indexicality in its purest form here: a typographic error leads to a *judgment of the entire person*: Trump doesn't know what 'honor' is, hence he cannot

Fig. 6 'passed, not past'

write the word correctly. This form of sarcastic indexical interpretation is very frequent on Twitter. (See Fig. 6).

Those are moral condemnations of the person Donald Trump. But they are informed by something bigger: the strong cultural assumption mentioned earlier, in which we expect our social, cultural, intellectual and political elites to communicate in accordance with the most elevated standards of language – and in particular, of *literate* language (cf. Lillis, 2013; Turner, 2018). Thus, orthographic errors on Twitter are converted into judgments of *Trump as president* – since the president of the US is supposed to write correctly. (See Fig. 7)

It is because Trump is president that the indexical correctness issue is applied to his writing with such vigor and intensity. Interestingly, in such exposures, Trump's Twitter literacy is generalized to include *all* of his literacy. Thus, when Trump wrote a widely publicized official letter to Turkey's president Erdogan in October 2019, the awkward wording of the letter was caricatured by online artist El Elegante as a sequence of emojis (Fig. 8).

Twitter is the main forum for such critical exposure of Trump's typographical errors, but it is not the only one. Mainstream media comment on them, newspapers devote articles to them, and a wide range of analysts examine them. Blogger-analyst Ginny Hogan (2018) provides a short, sarcastic summary of the problem:

> "Unfortunately, the data set doesn't include all deleted tweets, although I would be honered to learn how some of Trump's interesting spelling choices affect tweet popularity. To bad there's not a lot of press covfefe on that — it's really an unpresidented phenomenon #Denmakr."

The reference to 'covfeve' here is interesting, because it's probably Trump's most iconic Twitter error. Trump posted it in May 2017, and the nonsense word is probably a botched attempt to write the term 'coverage' (see Fig. 9).

The word became an instant hit among critics on Twitter and beyond, the more since the White House Press Secretary tried to explain it as meaningful: "I think the president and a small group of people know exactly what he meant", Sean Spicer

Fig. 7 'unpresidented'

Fig. 8 El Elegante's caricature of Trump's letter

announced.[6] 'Covfeve' became the stuff of memes and went viral in a wild stampede of (often hilarious) critical uptake.

[6]For a retrospective report, see https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/onpolitics/2018/05/31/covfefe-one-year-anniverary-donald-trumps-confusing-tweet/659414002/

Fig. 9 'covfeve'

Fig. 10 Meryl Streep is over-rated

So far so good: we see how orthographic errors by Donald Trump lead to relatively predictable – standard – indexical interpretations as transgressive and inadmissible features of communicative conduct displayed by the president of the United States. We can observe the dominant sociolinguistic stratification at work here: such errors in writing are wrong, certainly when performed by members of the elites, and they index moral disqualification of the person and question his membership of those elites. Someone who commits such errors should never be president of the US, is the line of interpretation we have observed so far. And this would be the end of the story in Saussure's communication model: B (the audience) has disqualified what A (Trump) tried to communicate. But as we have seen, communication on Twitter is different.

Let us have a look at the people who posted the critical comments on Trump's errors. All of them are public figures: Noga Tarnopolsky is a journalist, RC de Winter is a poet and digital artist, El Elegante is a digital artist, Randy Mayem Singer is a successful movie and TV series screenwriter, and J.K. Rowling is of course the author of the *Harry Potter* blockbusters. All of them are intellectuals and artists working with language, and in the worldview of Donald Trump and his supporters, they belong to the ('liberal') cultural 'elites'. Within those 'elites' they form a subgroup notoriously critical of Trump and his politics, and Trump himself takes

Fig. 11 pro-Trump Twitter account

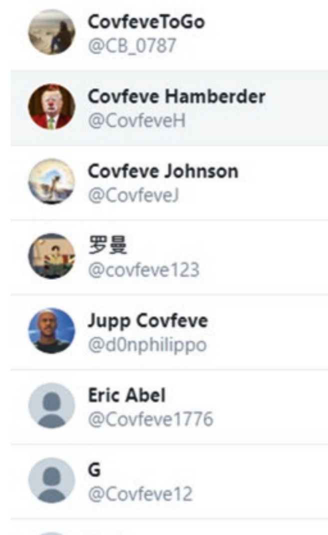

Fig. 12 'covfeve' accounts

shots at such liberal intellectual and artist elite figures quite often on his Twitter account. (See Fig. 10)

These intellectual and artistic elites clearly form one (or several) of the niche audiences on Trump's Twitter account – a hostile one. And they can be described, by the Trump camp, as the elites whom Trump wants to defy and defeat, for they are in opposition to 'the people'. Many actors in Trump's universe are 'a threat/enemy to the people' – mainstream media are, for instance, quite systematically qualified

as such.[7] Ridiculing Trump's orthographic errors (or speech habits) can thus be represented as a predictable and stale anti-Trump reaction coming from one of the elite social groups he targets as opposed to the interests of 'ordinary Americans'.

This is the point where we get sociolinguistic restratification. Trump's orthographic errors are (very much like George W. Bushes discursive inarticulateness) indexically upgraded from 'bad in the eyes of the elites' to 'good in the eyes of the people' – they become indexically restratified as the *demotic code* that iconicizes the down-to-earthness of ordinary Americans. And this restratified sign goes viral among the other and more supportive audiences of his Twitter account. In Fig. 11, we see how a Trump supporter uses #covfeve (followed by two positive emojis) as an emblem of pride used against Trump critics. The meaning attributed to the word here is grounded in the interpretation of Trump's initial 'covfeve' tweet, which attacked mainstream media. This intertext provides the function of the word here: covfeve has become (like 'MAGA') a term that can be used to talk back to Trump's detractors.

The term 'covfeve' was also adopted by a score of Twitter users in their user names. (see Fig. 12)

Some of these accounts are obviously held by people who are critical of Trump, while others are held by Trump supporters. The indexical vectors of the term are opposites: for pro-Trump people, 'covfeve' indexes support for Trump and hostility towards his elite critics; for anti-Trump people, it indexes the fact that Trump is unfit for the presidency. And both indexical vectors are attached to an orthographic error made on a public forum such as Twitter. 'Covfeve' became a viral error, circulated within very different audiences and with very different meanings.

5 A Lab of Restratification

Let me summarize the case. Trump's orthographic errors on Twitter got immense traction on Twitter (and beyond) and did so within very different audiences, some of whom applied the 'standard' sociolinguistic stratification in which orthographic correctness is mandatory for people at the top of the social ladder. Other audiences used an entirely different, 'demotic' understanding of these errors, presented there as emblematic of someone intent on defending the interests of 'ordinary' Americans. The virality of errors such as 'covfeve' implies at least two entirely opposite indexical vectors, one of which restratifies the conventions of the sociolinguistic domain of writing from elite-dominant to demotic-dominant.

There is, of course, irony in the fact that Donald Trump (like George W. Bush before him) can be presented at all as a non-elite, 'ordinary' person. He is a scion of a very wealthy family and proudly proclaims his wealth to all who want to listen, he was a mass media superstar, a bestselling author and an alumnus of the University

[7] For a recent critical review of Trump's 'enemy of the people' argument, see https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/sep/07/donald-trump-war-on-the-media-oppo-research

of Pennsylvania's prestigious Wharton School, and he is of course the president of the United States. From what is publicly known about his lifestyle, he really doesn't live like 'ordinary' Americans.

His communication styles, however, offer the potential to turn this obvious misfit into a perfect fit: sarcasm about his speaking and writing errors can be presented as 'elitist' and magnified – generalized – as part of a pattern of elite domination of 'ordinary' Americans, the kind of elite domination Trump promised to abolish as president. In the process, the sociolinguistic norms of different audiences are played off against each other in Twitter discussions. It is on Twitter that the fragmented nature of audiences affords us a glimpse of the fragmentation of sociolinguistic stratification, with 'standard' (i.e. 'elite') norms competing with demotic ones. Within the latter, errors are not just normal or acceptable, they are *prestigious* and emblematic, as we could see in Fig. 11. The errors are there for a good reason: they iconicize the perceived 'big' divisions in US society and the perceived exclusion of 'ordinary' people from major public debates. Trump's errors are icons of the *voice* of such 'ordinary people.

We see a complex, polycentric sociolinguistic system here, in which specific norms can dominate specific segments of the public domain while they are being fundamentally challenged in other segments. Social media such as Twitter make this polycentricity and its restratifying features abundantly clear: they are a veritable lab for examining sociolinguistic normativity, debates and contests about normativity, and innovations in that field (cf. Blommaert, 2018; Seargeant, 2019).

For sociolinguistics as a science, this means that the supposed stability of stratified sociolinguistic systems – with minorities and majorities clearly demarcated by lines of objective power – needs to be critically revisited, empirically as well as theoretically. In the online-offline nexus, heteronormativity is not an exception, but a rule among segments of the users' communities. These segments now have acquired public channels of communication, making previously invisible and disqualified demotic forms of language and literacy available for uptake, and turning them into prestige-carrying varieties demanding respect and public recognition. This new politics of language is expertly used by politicians such as Trump as well as by other powerful political and economic actors: the play of stratification and restratification is at the heart of several very large processes of social change, and requires a sociolinguistic analysis that does justice to its complexity.

References

Agha, A. (2007). *Language and social relations*. Cambridge University Press.

Arnaut, K., Blommaert, J., Rampton, B., & Spotti, M. (Eds.). (2016). *Language and superdiversity*. Routledge.

Bauman, R., & Briggs, C. (2003). *Language and modernity: Language ideologies and the politics of inequality*. Cambridge University Press.

Bernstein, B. (1971). *Class, codes and control* (Vol 1: Theoretical studies towards a sociology of language). Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Blommaert, J. (2005). *Discourse: A critical introduction*. Cambridge University Press.
Blommaert, J. (2008). *Grassroots literacy: Writing, identity and voice in Central Africa*. Routledge.
Blommaert, J. (2010). *The sociolinguistics of globalization*. Cambridge University Press.
Blommaert, J. (2015). Chronotopes, scales and complexity in the study of language in society. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 44*, 105–116.
Blommaert, J. (2016). From mobility to complexity in sociolinguistic theory and method. In N. Coupland (Ed.), *Sociolinguistics: Theoretical debates* (pp. 242–259). Cambridge University Press.
Blommaert, J. (2018). *Durkheim and the internet: On sociolinguistics and the sociological imagination*. Bloomsbury.
Blommaert, J. (2020). Formatting online actions: #justsaying on Twitter. In J. W. Lee & S. Dovchin (Eds.), *Translinguistics: Negotiating innovation and ordinariness* (pp. 75–89). Routledge.
Boas, F. (1911). Introduction. In *Handbook of American Indian languages* (Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 40) (Vol. 1, pp. 1–83). Government Print Office (Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology).
Boas, F. (1928). *Anthropology and modern life*. W.W. Norton & Company.
Bourdieu, P. (1987). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste*. Harvard University Press.
Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Polity.
Darnell, R. (1998). *And along came boas: Continuity and revolution in American anthropology*. John Benjamins.
de Saussure, F. (1960). *Cours de Linguistique Générale* (C. Bally & A. Sechehaye, Eds.). Payot.
Eastman, C. (1983). *Language planning: An introduction*. Chandler & Sharp.
Fabian, J. (1986a). *Language on the road: Notes on Swahili in two nineteenth-century travelogues*. Buske Verlag.
Fabian, J. (1986b). *Language and colonial power: The appropriation of Swahili in the former Belgian Congo 1880–1938*. University of California Press.
Fishman, J. (1971). *Bilingualism in the Barrio*. Indiana University Press.
Gumperz, J. (1982). *Discourse strategies*. Cambridge University Press.
Hogan, G. (2018). *Twitter advice for president trump: A statistical adventure*. Blogpost, https://medium.com/little-old-lady-comedy/twitter-advice-for-president-trump-a-statistical-adventure-38fc23dd5d38
Hollinger, J. (2018). Trump, social media, and the first Twitter-based presidency. *Diggit Magazine* 7 May 2018. https://www.diggitmagazine.com/articles/Trump-Twitter-Based-Presidency
Hymes, D. (1980). *Language in education: Ethnolinguistic essays*. Center for Applied Linguistics.
Hymes, D. (1983). *In vain I tried to tell you: Essays in native American ethnopoetics*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
Hymes, D. (1992). The concept of communicative competence revisited. In M. Pütz (Ed.), *Thirty years of linguistic evolution* (pp. 31–57). John Benjamins.
Hymes, D. (1996). *Ethnography, linguistics, narrative inequality: Toward an understanding of voice*. Taylor and Francis.
Kroon, S., & Swanenberg, J. (Eds.). (2019). *Chronotopic identity work: Sociolinguistic analyses of cultural and linguistic phenomena in time and space*. Multilingual Matters.
Kroskrity, P. (Ed.). (2000). *Regimes of language*. SAR Press.
Labov, W. (1970). The logic of nonstandard English. In F. Williams (Ed.), *Language and poverty: Perspectives on a theme* (pp. 153–189). Academic.
Lempert, M., & Silverstein, M. (2012). *Creatures of politics: Media, message, and the American presidency*. Indiana University Press.
Lillis, T. (2013). *The sociolinguistics of writing*. Edinburgh University Press.
Maly, I. (2016). How did trump get this far? *Diggit Magazine*, (17 October 2016) https://www.diggitmagazine.com/articles/how-did-trump-get-far
Maly, I. (2018). Algorithmic populism and algorithmic activism. *Diggit Magazine*, (8 November 2018) https://www.diggitmagazine.com/articles/algorithmic-populism-activism
Myers-Scotton, C. (1993). *Social motivations for codeswitching: Evidence from Africa*. Clarendon Press.

Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford University Press.
Sapir, E. (1921). *Language*. Harcourt Brace & Company.
Seargeant, P. (2019). *The emoji revolution: How technology is shaping the future of communication*. Cambridge University Press.
Silverstein, M. (1979). Language structure and linguistic ideology. In P. Clyne, W. Hanks, & C. Hofbauer (Eds.), *The elements: A parasession on linguistic units and levels* (pp. 193–247). Chicago Linguistic Society.
Silverstein, M. (1996). Monoglot 'standard' in America: Standardization and metaphors of linguistic hegemony. In D. Brenneis & R. Macaulay (Eds.), *The matrix of language: Contemporary linguistic anthropology* (pp. 284–306). Westview Press.
Silverstein, M. (1998). Contemporary transformations of local linguistic communities. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 27*, 401–426.
Silverstein, M. (2003). *Talking politics: The substance of style from Abe to 'W'*. Prickly Paradigm Press.
Turner, J. (2018). *On writtenness: The cultural politics of academic writing*. Bloomsbury.
Varis, P. (2018). Labouring in the digital economy: The people making content (in)visible online. *Diggit Magazine*, (1 November 2018) https://www.diggitmagazine.com/column/labouring-digital-economy
Whorf, B. L. (1956). *Language, thought and reality: Selected writings by Benjamin Lee Whorf* (J. B. Carroll, Ed.). MIT Press.

L2 Learning While Doing Togetherness on YouTube: Exploring the Role of a Socio-technological Platform in an Asylum-Seeking Center

Massimiliano Spotti

Abstract Taking the sociolinguistics of superdiversity as its point of departure, the present contribution investigates the sociolinguistic regimes present in the spaces of an asylum-seeking center located in Flanders, the Dutch speaking part of Belgium. In so doing, it looks at the spaces present in the center as loci where 'the guests' who inhabit them are confronted with normative regimes of sociolinguistic behavior. This snippet of entrenched normativity emerging from the center's daily sociolinguistic life, though, results to be in sharp opposition with the use that is being made of these very same spaces by the 'guests' once they have access to the web. There, in fact, these spaces become loci in which the intangible infrastructures of globalization – like the web, YouTube, and its videos – allow for the construction of convivial fleeting encounters based on the use of pop culture as the binding element that transcends ethnic, sociolinguistic, and religious differences. The contribution concludes with some considerations on the validity of the concept of integration for asylum seekers in mainstream society dealing with whether and how conviviality through the resources that socio-technological platforms have to offer could work as a possible alternative to State-imposed sociolinguistic and sociocultural regimes of integration.

Keywords L2 learning · YouTube · Togetherness · Language ideologies · Asylum seekers

1 Introduction

Globalization has brought about an intensification of the worldwide mobility of goods and information, but also of human beings. Asylum seeking is one of the by-products of this mobility and it links local happenings to (political) events occurring

M. Spotti (✉)
Department of Culture Studies, Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands
e-mail: m.spotti@tilburguniversity.edu

© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2021

M. Spotti et al. (eds.), *Language Policies and the Politics of Language Practices*, Language Policy 28, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-88723-0_3

many miles away. The EU and the "floods of asylum seekers" that try to reach its soil are no exception to this. Yet, those who knock at the EU's doors pose a problem to border control authorities. Migrants, drawing to Stuart Hall insightful views cannot anymore be conceptualized as people engaged in a linear move "from de margins to de centre" (Hall, 1996). Rather, these globalized migratory flows are at present one of the most tangible testimonies of superdiversity. That is, they embody what Vertovec terms a process in which diversity moves beyond ethnic minority group membership and boundaries and gives way to "an increased number of new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants" (Vertovec, 2007, p. 124). It follows that present day globalization induced mobility and the consequent new flow of diversity calls for all sorts of urgent interventions that Europe, its member states, and their institutions are trying to come to terms with. There is the question of border control at both European as well as nation-state level. Further, there is the question of nation-states confronted with obligations to their citizens in their asylum seeking policies and practices. Last, there is the question of securitization of borders that brings up issues of institutional framing of the identities of the newly arrived migrants within a regime of suspicion. In reaction to the above, the EU engages in deploying strenuous efforts and large sums of money to safeguard its maritime shores and territorial borders. Typical of these efforts are those measures that set up – to borrow Bigo's terminology (2008) – a "ban-opticon", that is, a means for channeling mobilities, modulating their intensities, speed, mode of movement, and coagulation through measures of surveillance. From the above, two things appear to stand out clearly. An asylum seeking center becomes the waiting room of globalization (see also Spotti, 2018), that is, a place whose guests are the by-product of events happening many miles away and who are waiting for an institutional decision to take place. Furthermore, an asylum seeking center becomes also a place made of (polycentric) spaces where institutional regimes of integration are present (cf. Spotti, 2011). That is, these spaces are loci where the micro-fabrics of State, hence top-down, sociolinguistic regimes come to mingle with bottom-up negotiations of these regimes from the people who live in them. With this backdrop in mind, the present contribution focuses first on the current debates that characterize studies of L2 learning. From there, the contribution moves to subscribe to an understanding of space that is polycentric and thus other than a socio-cultural vacuum awaiting to be filled in by the agentive forces of its guests and institutionalized, semi-institutionalized, and non-institutionalized personnel. Drawing then on linguistic ethnographic vignettes collected at the center, the very same spaces become *loci* in which – at specific times of the day – intangible infrastructures of globalization, i.e., the internet and its socio-technological platforms, allow for negotiation and resistance of the above-mentioned regimes.

2 Engaging with L2 Research: Sociolinguistic Norms and Polycentric Spaces of Normativity

L2 research has typically drawn – and still does – on notions like learning, development, error and interference, focusing thus on the degree of fit – or lack thereof – between (taught) standard language norms and the mastering level of competence and performance of a given individual. Linguistic ethnography, instead, and with that the body of work that avails itself of a linguistic ethnographic methodology centered on L2 learning (cf. Rampton, 2011, 2013) deal with social differentiation, identity projection, code-switching across socio-lectal forms of speech production and the use of non-standard conventions. In short, these studies focus on 'languaging' where the gerundive form of this verb shows the *in fieri* nature of language and the use human beings make of it in communicative interactions. Although I do not wish to step into teasing apart the products of the pop-up store like terminology that characterizes much of the present-day sociolinguistics debate (see Spotti & Blommaert, 2017), I am inclined to say that there still is a good dose of possible dialogue between SLA research on the one hand and linguistic ethnographic work on the other. To this end, we have witnessed the emergence of studies whose epistemological shifting has gone to focus on speakers and how they navigate through the complex nature of *being a user of language X* deploying linguistic resources in dynamic social relationships. As Kramsch's (2009, p. 5) work dealing with the *Multilingual Subject* has it, "imagined identities, projected selves, idealization or stereotypes of the other […] seem to be central to the language learning experience".

The above shows how every stylistic move someone makes, whether it takes place in an L1 or L2, is the result of an interpretation of the social world that language users come to face and of the meanings attached to the linguistic elements within it. Elements that, in turn, contribute to the positioning of the language user with respect to the immediate world that surrounds his/her sociolinguistic doings and to the larger political and public debate on his/her need of civic integration through language. This social turn in studies of the sociolinguistic lives and doings of L2 leaners has, more recently, been corroborated by the work of Pujolar and Gonzàlez (2013). These scholars armored with the concept of the *new speaker* have dealt with the exploration of the linguistic constitution of the L2 learner as a subject who, while learning a language other than his/her own, is going through a change of *muda* – a term derived from the Spanish reflexive verb *mudar-se*. There, they stress the fact that in specific biographical life junctures of L2 learners, there are being enacted significant changes in learners' sociolinguistic repertoires according to the ideologies that inhabit the socio-cultural spaces where language forms and language functions are used. Ultimately, though these studies tend to stress that L2 learning should be examined through the eye of the total linguistic fact, i.e., an understanding of the ultimate sociolinguistic datum that looks at language as product of four elements, these being form, usage, ideology, and domain (Wortham, 2008). It is on this last element, i.e., domain, that can give us a further conceptual lens through which to explore sociolinguistics regimes within the space at hand, that of an

asylum seeking center. Henry Lefebvre, in his incredible voyage, moves away from a Cartesian understanding of space and of its ideological ends. Rather, he views space as a social product that masks the contradictions of its own production and deconstructs the illusion of transparency. Further, in an effort to link human agents and spatial domination, Bourdieu (1977) focuses on the spatialization of everyday behavior and how the socio-spatial order of behavior is translated into bodily experience and practices (at times) of repression (see also Blommaert & Huang, 2010). Bourdieu proposes the concept of *habitus*, a generative and structuring principle of collective strategies and social practices that makes new history while being a product of history itself. Michael Foucault, in his seminal work on the prison (1977) and in a series of interviews and lectures on space (in Faubion, 1984), examines the relationship of power and space by positing architecture and the use of space as a technology of the government that tries to regulate the bodies of those who are under detention. The aim of such a technology is to create "a docile body" (Foucault, 1977, p. 136), that is, an almost subjugated body due to enclosure and the organization of individuals in space. On the other hand, De Certeau (1984) sets out to show how people's way of doing things makes up for the means by which users re-appropriate space organized by techniques of socio-cultural production. These practices are articulated in the fine-grained details of everyday life and used by groups or individuals already caught in the nets of discipline. Building again on De Certeau (1984), power in space is embedded through territory delimitation and boundaries in which the weapons of *the strong* are classification, delineation, and division – the so called strategies of spatial domination – while *the weak* use furtive movements' shortcuts and routes – also addressed as *tactics*. The latter are used to contest, negotiate or even subvert spatial domination and all that comes along with it that is the normativity of doing things as prescribed by the one in power. Understanding multilingualism and the deployment of sociolinguistic repertoires through space and more precisely, through the spaces of an asylum-seeking center, requires therefore an understanding of the connections between the spaces at play, the bodies who populate them, and the sociolinguistic and socio-cognitive practices they undertake within an established set of orders of practices and normativities. As we will see, in the ethnographic vignettes that follow, what counts as a perfectly sound and widely accepted display of someone's sociolinguistic repertoire gained through his/her trajectory of migration as an asylum seeker may either seem odd or a *non-language* at a time when there are other discursive and sociolinguistic regimes at play. What is performed as *successfully acquired* at a given time in a given space may thus be elected as disqualifying someone's identity at another time of the day in the same place. Assessment of sociolinguistic practices and the outcomes of this assessment – whether formal or else – for those who are involved and thus for their identities is the stake that has been bet on here.

3 The Center and Its Guests

This study, part of a larger ethnographic interpretive inquiry entitled *Asylum 2.0* aimed at unravelling the implications of socio-technological platforms in the lives of asylum seekers, builds on data collected through three rounds of fieldwork between 2012 and 2014 at a Red Cross asylum-seeking center in Flanders, the Dutch speaking part of Belgium. The project, ethnographic in nature, combines insights, methods, and epistemological as well as ontological stances stemming from linguistic ethnography (Creese & Copland, 2014) and socio-culturally rooted discourse analysis (Gee, 1999). In both frameworks, there is the underlying assumption that the way individuals speak as well as speak about things reflects their culturally embedded understanding of human beings and their perception of the world. The data from which the ethnographic vignettes of the present contribution are drawn were collected in October 2013, during my first long term stay at the center. My position there was that of a buffer zone between the assistants, i.e., staff members regularly employed by the Red Cross, voluntary workers, i.e., professionals on a pension who dedicate their spare time to the center, and the guests, i.e., the asylum seekers who had filed an application for refugee status. When asked by the guests who I was and what I was doing there, I candidly explained to them that I was engaged in writing a book about what it means to be an asylum seeker and what asylum seeking implies, and that I was there to document about their daily lives. All the participants embraced my interest in them and, although they were given the opportunity to opt out, none of them did so. Rather, they reacted enthusiastically as they were made feel that their lives mattered and that there was somebody interested in them and their experiences: living along with them, having breakfast with them, talking to them while drinking endless cups of sweetened Afghani tea, following their daily doings that ranged from Dutch language lessons to knitting lessons, to gym activities to simply hanging around on a center bench kicking a ball about in the evenings. In other words, what I did there was deep hanging out in the cultural ecology of this institutional space.

The center, located in a formal catholic cloister, has big rooms assigned to families and smaller rooms assigned either to pairs of male or female residents, on a first come first served basis. Rather than using a nationality based criterion or an ethnic grouping criterion, the director of the center had opted – where he and his team members felt it not to be a risk – to put together people of different ethnic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds. During this round of ethnographic fieldwork, the center catered for 61 guests. Following the information gathered at the center during intake talks, guests were from the following (often pre-supposed) national backgrounds: 13 from Afghanistan, 12 from the Russian Federation – mostly from Armenia and Chechnya – 9 from Guinea Conakry, 9 from Bangladesh, and 7 from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Following the unofficial statistics kept at the center, the remaining 11 guests originated from what had been categorized as “other” (*anders*). These were respectively 2 from Senegal, 1 from Somalia, 1 from Togo, 3 from China, 1 from Albania, and 1 from Ukraine. Forty of these guests were male, 21 were female.

11 of them fell under the category of unaccompanied minors, though 3 of them still needed to give proof of age through bone scans. Only 1 guest had entered the center in 2010 while the rest had entered in 2011 or 2012. Only 2 guests had passed their 50s, confirming the trend – pointed out by the center director – that seeking for asylum is mostly a practice for either unaccompanied minors or young (often male) applicants ranging from their early 20s to their late 30s. All names given in this case study are pseudonyms so to grant participants protection and privacy. Although video recording was not possible at times due to the resistance of some of the volunteers at the center, audio recording always happened. If that had not been possible, I would have gone back to my informants when I felt that the talk I just had was particularly interesting and asked them whether they would have had any objections to being taped, otherwise I would have relied on my field notes. As every Red Cross center, the obligations toward the guests and their well-being were rather basic. The center, in fact, had only the institutional obligation of providing them with a roof, a bed, and food for their daily sustainment. Activities like those aimed at introducing the guests to the norms and values of mainstream Flemish society do not fall under the basic provision system offered by the center. Notwithstanding this, the center's director and its personnel all saw the center as the first opportunity for the guests to mingle within the local community. As a result, a number of activities had been set up, such as the possibility to get sawing lessons, the chance to grow someone's own vegetables and exchange them at the local market, as well as the chance to learn Dutch as L2 once a week for 1 and a half hours.

No explicit notice at the center mentioned that Dutch had to be used as the only language of interaction among guests and assistants. Although the sociolinguistic landscape present on the center's walls displayed an array of languages and scripts mastered, or at least familiar to the guests, it was a recurrent sociolinguistic practice to hear the sentence *in het Nederlands, alsjeblieft* ('in Dutch please': MS). This sentence happened to be uttered mostly by the assistants when guests went to the office asking for something that could have ranged from information about their lawyer appointment to asking for food they had bought and that had been stored in the common fridge the center had. Should the interaction to be too hard for the guests, then English first, French second, and where possible Russian and Farsi would be deployed during the verbal exchange.

4 The Center, Its *guests* and Its Spaces

The two episodes that follow focus on two spaces I have singled out during my fieldwork which are relevant for understanding how people that fell under the straight omnipresent category "migrant in need of integration" came to be challenged. The first space is the activity room, a large space in which several voluntary based activities would take place, among which we find the non-regular Dutch as L2 classroom that is key to the first part of our story. The second place, instead, is what I have termed in my fieldwork notes as "the three steps", i.e., three steps at the end

of a blind corridor on the ground floor of the center. It is exactly by sitting on those three steps, in fact, that guests often could get access to the best Wi-Fi connection in the building.

4.1 Waarom naam voor vrouw mitz zu [uh] klein leter?

The teaching of Dutch as L2 at the center was carried out by an elderly lady on a pension with a background in teaching who we will call Frida, it being a pseudonym to protect her privacy. Her commitment to the center had been in place for more than 12 years by then and she claims to enjoy what she does, given that at her age “there are people who like to drink coffee while I like people, so that’s why I do it” (Interview Frida 10102013:1). Once a week, Miss Frida teaches Dutch as L2 for one hour using the didactic resources that she sees most fitting to the needs of her students, these ranging from high to low literate and having varying degrees of mastering Dutch. The room in which she teaches has a number of desks and a whiteboard where guests used to write up their thoughts or poems. The guests entering Miss Frida’s class are not compelled to attend. Rather, they can walk in and out freely at any time during class, making sure though that they are no bother to those who have been attending class from its start. In what follows, we focus on a classroom episode that deals with Frida teaching Dutch vocabulary. We then move onto Frida’s metapragmatic judgments about her students’ sociolinguistic repertoires and literacy skills. It is October 10th, 2013 and class should start at 13:00 sharp. At 13:03, the lesson opens as follows:

Armenian guy: if you find yourself […] from my room an’

Frida: Niet, vandaag geen engelse les hè, vandaag nederlandse les hey? Oké, dus we starten op bladzijde zes. Iedereen heeft een kopie?

[No, today no English lesson, right? Today is Dutch lesson, right? Okay so we start on page six, has everyone got a copy?]

After wiping off what had been written on the whiteboard and preparing her worksheets for the day, at 13:06 Miss Frida starts reading each word from the worksheet that she is holding while standing on the right-hand side of the whiteboard facing the whole class. The lesson unfolds with a reading of a string of words that Frida’s students have – as drawings – on their worksheets. As Frida starts, she reads these words slowly and loudly. While she does so, she is pointing at these words on the worksheet. She then comes to read out loud the following line:

Frida: Haan […] Jan […] lam […] tak […] een boom […]

[Hen […] Jan […] lamb […] branch […] one tree […]]

Frida: Oké […] hier is Nel, hier, hier, hier, hi[ii]er, hier is Nel. Nel is naam, naam voor vrouw, Fatima, Nel, Leen, naam voor vrouw.

[Okay, here we have Nel, here, here, here, h[ee]re is Nel. Nel is name, name for woman, Fatima, Nel, Leen, name for woman]

Armenian guy: Waarom naam voor vrouw mitz zu [uh] klein leter?

[*Why is name for woman with small cap?*]

Frida: Dat is basis Nederlands, BASIS [Frida onderstreept dit met een hardere toon: MS]. Eerst starten wij met de basis, wij lopen niet! Wij stappen […] na stappen, wij stappen vlug, daarna gaan wij lopen, dus nu stappen wij [...] maar dat is juist.

[*That is basic Dutch, BASIC [Frida stresses this with a higher tone of voice*: MS]. *First, we start with the basics, we don't walk, we make steps, after making steps, we step faster, and then we get walking, so now we make steps* […] *though, that is right.*]

Miss Frida, whose aim was to increase the vocabulary breadth and – later on – the vocabulary depth of her Dutch as L2 students, is reading aloud clusters of monosyllabic words for them to combine a word to a picture as the one reported on the worksheet. Interesting is the way in which Frida states that in this class there is no English lesson going on that day, de-legitimizing the use of English and stressing this boundary through the use of the tag 'hey' (01). In line (04), Frida further stimulates other learning channels to make her students understand what the locative pronoun 'here' (*hier*) means. She repeats the word, stressing the [r] at the end and the length of the word. She also points her finger right to place on the ground where she is standing. Interestingly enough, though the lesson snapshot above sees one of her students (who is from Armenia) asking a question that, although posed with the intent to mock the teacher's authority, it is also meant to show that he holds literacy skills. Frida's reply is further very telling for two reasons. She first reiterates firmly how she sees the learning of Dutch through the metaphor of "we do not walk, we make steps, after making steps, we step faster, and then we get walking so now we make steps". Further, through the adversative clause that ends her sentence in line (06) – "but that is correct" – she has to give up her native speaker authority admitting that the student's observation was actually valid. In the retrospective interview carried out with her to gather information on her professional life as well as in order to understand what she thought she was doing while she was teaching, Frida asserted:

'Ja, als je gaat naar die landen eh, dat is alles met handen en voeten eh daar en hier is ook zo een beetje'.

[*Yes, if you go to those places, right, it is all hands and feet, right, and here is also a little bit like that*: MS].

She then added:

'Kijk, deze mensen hebben verschillende talen, echt mooie talen hoor, maar ze zijn eigenlijk geen talen, snap je wat ik bedoel?'

[*Look these people have languages, really beautiful languages, but they are not languages really, if you know what I mean?* MS].

In her answers, there is a conceptualization of her L2 students through the lens of the homogeneous *other* coming – through the use of the distancing pronoun 'those places' – from somewhere far away like the places that she admitted to have visited once she went on holiday. Second, she translates the communication impediments that she has encountered there 'by the other' where she had to communicate through the use of both hands and feet to the situation that she experiences in her class, although many of her students have reported to hold – to different degrees of proficiency – an array of languages. Further, we encounter in her discourse practices the disqualification of the languages of her students. To her, as she states, 'these

people', i.e., her students, do have languages, entities that she qualifies as 'really beautiful languages'. Though, she adds through an adversative clause 'but they are not languages' followed by the adverb 'really'. This sentence allows us to take a peek into Frida's own sociolinguistic awareness. The languages her students own, in fact, do not match the, albeit unvoiced, understanding of what a language is that she holds. This meta-pragmatic judgement on the languages of her students can have different explanations. Although speculative in that Frida did not go deeper into her rationale about 'what a language is' during the retrospective interview, it may be that Frida does not address the languages of her students as actual languages as these languages are no European languages. This though comes across as peculiar in that the vast majority of her students reported to be proficient in both English, German, Russian, and French, these being either reminiscences of the colonial past that has characterized their countries of origin or languages that they have encountered during their migration trajectory to Flanders (cf. Spotti, 2017). Another reason for her judgement could be a disqualification move of their sociolinguistic repertoires, in that the languages that are present in her class are everything but Dutch.

4.2 Doing Togetherness Through YouTube

In this second ethnographic vignette, instead, we encounter two young men called respectively Urgesh and Wassif. While Urgesh is of Bengali origin and – as he reports – he is proficient in Bengali, Panjabi, some Urdu as well as English and "beetje beetje Nederlands" ('a bit bit Dutch': MS), Wassif reports to be of Afghani origin. As he had worked for the Red Cross in Afghanistan, he is proficient in English, though he also reported to know and use Farsi, Arabic (in its classical variety) as well as some Dutch. The two of them had grown fond of me, during my residence at the center. They had understood that I was not an institutional figure either interested in their application for permanent residency or could scold them if they did not behave accordingly to the rules. Rather, in the evening, they would always insist to talk to me about their reasons for coming to Belgium, as well as for their expectations for their future lives there in Flanders. After having listened to their stories, one night during my fieldwork, they wished to show me the power of the steps, i.e., three steps on the ground floor of the asylum-seeking center that were so willed by everybody in that there was the best possible internet connection in the whole building. As it was a quiet night, once we had moved there, they asked me whether I liked music. While telling them that I did like jazz, they wished to show me their favorite genre, heavy metal. The dialogue unfolded as follows:

Urgesh: Look at this Sir, look at this.
Wassif: These are cool bruv, these are cool.
Urgesh: I have seen them on a gig.
Wassif: Yeah, yeah, look at that, power, broer Max, puur power.
(Asylum 2.0 fieldnotes 102013)

In the excerpt, these young men are convivially commenting on the video using their own varieties of English as the Bengali band broadcasted on their phone screen via YouTube – called Sultana Bibiana – plays a cover from the American world-famous band Metallica. In the above quote, several issues are at play. First, as exemplified by the absence of Dutch in the exchange, except for the use of the colloquial expression *broer* 'bruv' and *puur* 'pure', we do not see any trace of center implemented language policies being taken on board by the two language users. Second, as it emerged from their sociolinguistic repertoires, we see that the interaction at hand implies that the interlocutors are rather proficient language users of English. Last, we can also observe that they are proficient techno-literates in that they use the internet as a means for accessing pop culture content (Spotti & Kurvers, 2015). Although for space reasons I can only provide a glimpse of evidence leading to the construction of conviviality taking place at the center, I believe that the vignette is worth some further considerations. Online streamed video music, and more precisely its heavy metal genre, is in fact the matter of the present conversation with me but, together with streamed online porn, it also had been a matter of many of the conversations I had overheard taking place through whichever language resource among the boys at the center. Encounters around online sources of masculine popular culture taking place on the three steps had always one common characteristic. They did not have as their pivotal point *big* discourses taking place around the *heavy things* that characterize the lives of the guests at the center. These being for instance, societal barriers encountered with native Flemish people or with the juridical system, their future in Flanders, the pressure to learn Dutch, or – as it had often been reason for confrontation – their differing ethno-religious backgrounds. Rather they were *light* moment of laddish aggregation. Although these insights should be taken with a pinch of linguistic ethnographic salt – as Rampton (2014) warns us – due to the risk of being blinded by addressing encounters like these as *a priori* convivial encounters, someone could advance that what these guests are doing gives way to a 'coagulation' around a socio-technological platform. This process – as Goebel (2015) points out in his work on knowledge-ing and television representations – leads to moments of *doing togetherness*. More specifically, these two men are engaged in a moment in which the deep tangible differences among the two of them are shaded in the background and where the coagulating center of their encounter is a mobile phone, its screen, the YouTube channel being used, and the music it plays (Arnaut et al., 2017).

5 Discussion and Conclusions

A quick glance to the news feeding the public and political debate across Europe makes someone realize that European nation-states face a deep egoic crisis. In reaction to this crisis, nation-states come across as spastically engaged in authoring and

authorizing discourses of integration and measures for implementing the learning of the official language and of the official norms and values belonging to a given national culture. They do so selling these two items as inseparable and as a unique entry ticket for newly arrived migrants to integration. Yet again, building on the fuzzy notion of integration into a nation-state that functions as receiving country, there is no escape to the fact that human beings – whether engaged in migratory movement like the guests at this center – are and always have been mobile subjects. There is also no way to escape the fact that group dynamics and the actual understanding of what a group means have both gone through deep changes since the advent of the Internet and of globally networked transnational migratory flows (Blommaert, 2014; Castells, 2010; Rigoni & Saitt, 2012), giving way to the concept of 'light communities' when dealing with people's own sociation dynamics. The situation presented in the two vignettes here raises quite some issues worth considering with a view of shedding new light on whether individuals in conditions of migration, like those who were part of these vignettes, should fall into straightforward categories of belonging such as that of *guests*, of *other* or when referring to the official discourse authored and authorized by governmental bodies as "migrants in need of civic integration".

First, as showed in the excerpt coming from the non-regular classroom held in the activity room by Miss Frida, Dutch language is offered through a catechistic approach that sees the guests as blank slates to be filled in by the authority of the class teacher. In there, such authority does not only reiterate a much larger dichotomy between native versus non-native speaker of the official language. Second, it looks at the learner of Dutch as a second language through a homogenous image of *the other*, whose languages although many and beautiful become disqualified as not being actual *languages*. Instead, the study documents how other spaces within the center become coagulated centers of interest that grant these very same guests the possibility to avoid officially imposed sociolinguistics regimes, when all this is done through the use of socio-technological platforms that trigger togetherness and through that conviviality. In the emergent literature on digital literacies, online socio-technological platforms, and the construction of identities therein, there appears to be a need for re-conceptualizing the concept of group and for the present case for re-conceptualizing the category 'L2 learner'. As Baym (2015) points out for either studies of particular websites or socio-technological platforms like the one presented here, the situation pictured in the second episode confronts us with a question: is it still tenable to construct the identities of these 'guests' as L2 learners in need of integration? A possible answer here could be that if these people can do conviviality and manage to integrate with one another around a digitally mediated content thanks to a socio-technological platform, then we should wonder about a new meaning to be assigned to integration, ultimately addressing the question of whether there is any room left for institutional top-down language and culture measures aimed at integration in contexts that are characterized by globalization led mobility and technology.

References

Arnaut, K., Sif-Karrebaek, M., Spotti, M., & Blommaert, J. (Eds.). (2017). *Engaging superdiversity: Recombining spaces, times and language practices*. Multilingual Matters.

Baym, N. K. (2015). *Personal connections in the digital age*. Polity Press.

Bigo, D. (2008). Globalised (in)security: The field and the Ban-Opticon. In D. Bigo & A. Tsoukala (Eds.), *Terror, insecurity and liberty. Illiberal practices of liberal regimes after 9/1* (pp. 10–48). Routledge.

Blommaert, J. (2014). Infrastructures of superdiversity: Conviviality and language in an Antwerp neighborhood. *European Journal of Cultural Studies, 17*(4), 431–451.

Blommaert, J., & Huang, A.. (2010). Semiotic and spatial scope: Towards a materialist semiotics. *Working Papers in Urban Language and Literacies*, 62. https://kcl.academia.edu/WorkingPapersinUrbanLanguageLiteracies. Accessed 30 June 2021.

Bourdieu, P. F. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Castells, M. (2010). *The rise of the network society*. Wiley.

Creese, A., & Copland, F. (2014). Linguistic ethnography. In K. King, Y.-J. Lai, & S. May (Eds.), *Research methods in language and education* (pp. 339–351). Springer.

De Certeau, M. (1984). *The practice of everyday life*. University of California Press.

Faubion, J. (Ed.). (1984). *Michel Foucault: Power* (pp. 349–364). The New Press.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. Vintage Books.

Gee, J. P. (1999). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory & practice*. Routledge.

Goebel, Z. (2015). *Language and superdiversity: Indonesians knowledging at home and abroad*. Oxford University Press.

Hall, S. (1996). The margins and the centre. In D. Morley & K.-H. Chen (Eds.), *Stuart Hall: Critical dialogue in cultural studies* (pp. 450–464). Routledge.

Kramsch, C. (2009). *The multilingual subject*. Oxford University Press.

Pujolar, J., & Gonzàlez, I. (2013). Linguistic 'Mudes' and the de-ethnicizication of language choice in Catalonia. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 16*(2), 138–152.

Rampton, B. (2011). From multi-ethnic adolescent heteroglossia' to 'contemporary urban vernaculars'. *Language & Communication, 31*, 276–294.

Rampton, B. (2014). Dissecting Heteroglossia: Interaction ritual or performance in crossing and stylization? In A. Blackledge & A. Creese (Eds.), *Heteroglossia as practice and pedagogy* (pp. 275–300). Springer.

Rampton, B. (2013). Drilling down the grain in Superdiversity. In A. Karel, J. Blommaert, B. Rampton, & M. Spotti (Eds.), *Language and superdiversity* (pp. 88–107). Routledge.

Rigoni, I., & Saitt, E. (Eds.). (2012). *Mediating cultural diversity in a globalized public space*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Spotti, M. (2011). Ideologies of success for superdiverse citizens: The Dutch testing regime for integration and *the* online private sector. *Diversities, 13*(2), 39–52.

Spotti, M. (2017). "Crawlers, footer and runners": Language ideological attributions to adult language learner *in* a Dutch as L2 classroom. In J.C. Beacco, H. -J. Krumm, & D. Little (Eds.), *The linguistic integration of adult migrants* (pp. 379–385). Council of Europe: Mouton de Gruyter.

Spotti, M. (2018). "It's all about naming things right": The paradox of web truths in the Belgian asylum *seeking* procedure. In N. Gill & A. Good (Eds.), *Asylum determination in Europe: Ethnographic perspectives* (pp. 69–90). Palgrava Socio-Legal Studies.

Spotti, M., & Kurvers, J. (2015). ICT-based applications for civic integration in the Netherlands: Policy drivers and limits in practice. In J. Simpson & A. Whiteside (Eds.), *Adult language education and migration: Challenging agendas in policy and practice* (pp. 175–187). Taylor & Francis.

Spotti, M., & Blommaert, J. (2017). Bilingualism, multilingualism, globalization and superdiversity: Toward sociolinguistic repertoires. In O. Garcia, N. Flores, & M. Spotti (Eds.), *The oxford handbook of language and society* (pp. 161–178). Oxford University Press.

Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 30*(6), 1024–1054.

Wortham, S. (2008). Linguistic anthropology of education. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 37*, 37–51.

Colonial and Missionary Contributions in Tigrinya Reading Instruction in Eritrea

Yonas Mesfun Asfaha and Jeanne Kurvers

Abstract This chapter traces the historical roots of the current literacy instruction practices in Eritrea, a multilingual country in the horn of Africa that was for a long time occupied by Italy, and after a short period of British rule, by Ethiopia. After some geographical and historical background information on multilingual Eritrea, and a short overview of the current educational system and literacy instruction in Tigrinya, a language widely used in Eritrea, the focus in this chapter will be on the investigation of the influences of the previous colonial and missionary educational systems. The early reading instruction principles laid down by colonial and Protestant and Catholic missionary educators in teaching reading in Tigrinya which uses the Ge'ez (or Ethiopic) script letters is presented in the context of the historical development of literacy instruction in an alphabetic system (like Italian) globally.

The chapter concludes with some clear influences of previous colonial and missionary literacy instructions, such as the table of fidels with consonants in the rows and vowel diacritics in the columns, and the persistence of syllable based teaching in the Ge'ez script (an alphasyllabic system mainly based on representing syllables in symbols). This easy accessibility of the syllable, compared to the difficult to access phoneme in alphabetic scripts, together with the simple syllable structure of the language with only CV and CVC structures, might be one of the reasons that this system, although initially borrowed from Italian educational materials, remained deeply entrenched in literacy instruction in Tigrinya. These tentative conclusions have to be further deepened with additional research into the principles and approaches of teaching reading in Tigrinya over the last century.

Keywords Literacy instruction · Tigrinya reading instruction · Ge'ez script · Colonial and missionary education · Syllabic teaching

Y. M. Asfaha (✉)
Department of Language Education, Asmara College of Education, Asmara, Eritrea

J. Kurvers
Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands

© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2021

M. Spotti et al. (eds.), *Language Policies and the Politics of Language Practices*, Language Policy 28, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-88723-0_4

1 Introduction

Investigations of classroom literacy instruction in the multilingual educational context in Eritrea bear influences from global theoretical discussions and inputs from consultants and prominent educators. Rarely acknowledged are the contributions from the historical actors who laid the foundations of modern education in Eritrea. By looking at the first primers (literacy instruction textbooks) in Tigrinya, a language widely used in Eritrea, prepared by colonial (Italian) and Catholic and Protestant missionaries, the chapter will describe the early reading instruction principles laid down by colonial and missionary educators in teaching reading in Tigrinya which uses the Ge'ez (or Ethiopic) script letters of its better known predecessor, the Ge'ez language, now restricted to liturgical use in the Orthodox Church in the region. Before moving to descriptions of the early primers, the chapter provides an overview of the current Tigrinya curriculum and teaching materials in use in schools in the country. In addition, a brief discussion of literature will trace the development of literacy instruction globally or, more specifically, in the alphabetic traditions. The chapter will conclude with conclusions and recommendations.

2 Background

Eritrea is a country in the Horn of Africa, bordering with Sudan in the North and West, and Ethiopia and Djibouti in the South. The country has a long coastline along the Red Sea. Eritrea is home to nine ethnolinguistic groups, nine officially recognized languages, three scripts, and two major religions of Christianity and Islam. Although the coastal areas of the country experienced Ottoman Turkish and Egyptian rule from the fifteenth to mid-nineteenth century, Eritrea was formally defined in 1889 when Italy colonized the territory. During the Second World War, the British took over Eritrea, replacing the Italians in 1941. After ten years of British protectorate, Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia. After another decade, the federation fell apart in 1962, when Ethiopia declared Eritrea its fourteenth province. In 1961, an armed movement for independence of the country was started by the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF). This movement was later dominated by a splinter group, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). The 1980s saw the intensification of the conflict and in 1991 the war ended, with the EPLF forming a transitional government. In 1993, after a UN sponsored referendum where the majority of Eritreans chose independence from Ethiopia, the country was formally declared a sovereign state.

The successive Italian, British and Ethiopian rules in Eritrea had their own educational policy. During the Italian rule (1889–1941), education was conducted, mainly, in Italian and was limited in access to only four years of basic education allowed to native Eritreans; however limited, there were books designed for teaching reading in Tigrinya. The British rule of 1941–1952 was credited for a relatively

wider introduction of education in Tigrinya and Arabic in elementary schools. Tigrinya and Arabic were later proclaimed the official languages of the Eritrean government during the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia (1952–1962). The 1950s were the only time in Eritrea's turbulent history of colonial rule that Eritreans were in charge of the educational system in their country (Government of Eritrea, 2002). The federal arrangement was formally abolished in 1962 by the Ethiopian emperor who declared Eritrea as the fourteenth province under the monarchy's administration. Tigrinya and Arabic were replaced by Amharic in education and other public offices.

During the war for independence, both the major movements (EPLF and ELF) provided education in the areas that fell under their control. In particular, the EPLF provided education in multiple languages including Tigrinya, Tigre, and Arabic. These experiences gave rise to the multilingual education policy the EPLF pursued after controlling the whole country in 1991. The policy states that primary education will be provided in all nine languages in the country.

The school system in Eritrea consists of five years of primary education followed by two years of middle school and another four years of high school. Post-secondary education, at the level of certificate, diploma, bachelor's and master's degrees, is provided in technical and vocational schools, and a number of colleges. Preschooling is rare and unevenly distributed in rural and urban areas. However, traditional religious education in both the Christian and Muslim communities provides informal preparation for regular schooling at the age of 6 or 7.

A study on education in Eritrea has to acknowledge a convergence of traditions or influences. Primarily, the influences of traditional instruction, exemplified by the ubiquitous presence of teaching methods such as "chanting after the teacher" need to be fully understood (Wright, 2001). Secondly, the colonial and missionary influences, the main subject of discussion of this chapter, have to be recognized. Thirdly, one has to acknowledge that the current education system is based on the educational programs stemming from the independence movement whose main actors after the country became independent were responsible for the design and running of the curriculum in the country (Gottesman, 1998).

3 The Tigrinya Reading Curriculum

After the curriculum revisions introduced in 2004, students now have three books (an alphabet book, a work book, and a reading or story book) to help them begin reading in grade 1. The Ministry of Education insists that a mix of skills (teaching, mainly, letter-sound correspondences and syllable blending) and whole language (teaching meaningful texts such as stories) (Hurry, 2004) approaches guide the preparation of the books compared to skills oriented traditions that dominated curriculum and textbooks preparation before the curriculum revisions. According to the Ministry of Education (2004, p. 2), the alphabet book "is designed to teach children how to read and write by combining both phonics and whole language approaches".

The book introduces children to the letters or syllable symbols. Students are introduced to the most frequent letter first (and then the rest of the letters) through an association of the letter with the name of an animal or object in a picture. The pages present repeated examples of simple words containing the letter in focus, with very short (two or three simple word) sentences appearing at the end of the lesson before the next letter is introduced. The work book is meant to help students practice handling a pencil by drawing curves, circles, horizontal and vertical lines, and by coloring drawings in the first few pages. The reading book "is designed to help with reading and writing readiness using whole language approach" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 2). The book contains many stories intended as reading and writing readiness exercises.

In a separate book, the teacher guide, the teacher receives 'professional support'. The introduction of the guide outlines the curriculum policy, the reading approaches adopted, the reading outcomes expected, and gives an overview of the teaching methods. The second part deals with classroom management, specifically with maintaining discipline and using time efficiently. The next section enumerates ideas for reading games such as flash card reading, matching letters, alphabet songs, etc. An outline of teaching gives the specific lessons that have to be covered in the 36 weeks of the academic year. A substantial section (two thirds of the pages) provides a list of activities in reading/writing readiness, listening, speaking, and reading/writing exercises, including story listening and songs.

The main goal of teachers in Tigrinya language classrooms of beginning readers has long been to help students recite the whole table of *fidel*, or Ge'ez syllabary. The table has the CV *fidel* symbols ordered along seven columns of vowels. The vowel changes are indicated with a vowel diacritic or vowel marker (i.e., showing changes or additions to the basic CV *fidel*) to the 35 consonant entries. The current practice of introducing the most frequent and easy to write *fidel* symbol (e.g., በ < *be*>) in teaching deviates from the traditional style of beginning at the top of the row of the *fidel* table (see Appendix).

The use of the first order *fidel* symbol (like በ, < *be*>, ሰ, <*se*>, etc.) in formulating short words sometimes might appear difficult for students to understand. Although these basic letters are generally easier to write, the vowel that forms them is not that frequent. Therefore, words such as *selebe* (instead of the more frequent *seliba* 'she captured' or *selibu* 'he captured'), formed by strictly using first order *se*, *le*, and *be*, may sound unfamiliar to first readers. The *fidel* symbols are introduced accompanied by sketches of animals and objects with their names, which start with the same sounds, written at the side. More words containing the *fidel* symbol are then given in the next few pages. A typical lesson in the Tigrinya classroom usually constitutes the introduction of one *fidel* symbol accompanied with words that contain that particular *fidel* symbol (see Fig. 1).

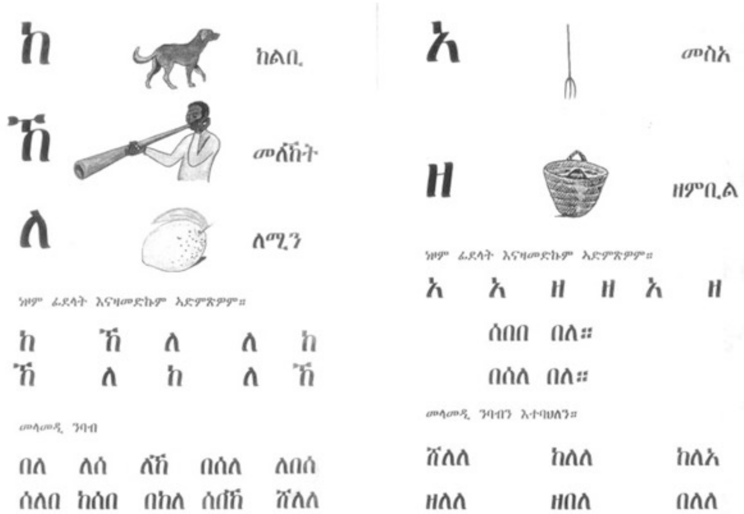

Fig. 1 Sample pages from the Tigrinya language primer

4 Teaching Reading and Writing: Global Historical Overview

Historical changes in the definition of literacy (or reading) already hint to the most important changes in teaching and learning to read: being able to recite orally familiar texts, to read aloud a simple text, to read and comprehend a written text, to use written language in and outside the classroom walls, and, in the last decades, to use digital and multimodal information critically. These historical changes in definition can best be explained and clarified by answering three questions on the why, what, and how of teaching reading and writing (Chartier, 2004). *Why* refers to the aims of teaching reading to novices, to the societal or communal reasons behind teaching reading, *what* refers to the content of primers or beginning reading materials and also to the target language of teaching (in Europe Latin or the vernacular, in other countries the colonial language or the home languages), and *how* refers to the approaches and methods used in teaching reading (Chartier, 2004), the organization of reading lessons (individual or groups), and the ordering of reading and writing. The answers to these questions are of course interrelated.

One question could be added: *for whom*? For some centuries, for example, teaching reading and writing was mainly aimed at boys. Another example of the latter question is Resnick's (1977) historical overview in which he revealed that two different norms have been used to assess the literacy level of a country: a quantitative criterion, the spread of literacy (the percentage of the population that can read and write), and a qualitative criterion (how well people are able to read and write). For a long time in history all over the world a high quality norm was only required for a

small elite of a country, while all other people could function very well without any literacy or with a very restricted literacy ability. The recent norm in most countries, a high level of literacy for everyone, is historically speaking a relative new societal requirement. This section will, after a short review of the why and what, focus in particular on the approaches used in teaching beginning reading (and writing).

4.1 Why and What

From the first encounters with written language during ancient history and the Middle Ages, learning to read was not intended to be an aim in itself (Chartier, 2010). For some centuries teaching reading was mainly aimed at religious education, becoming a faithful member of the religious community, becoming a good Christian or a good Muslim. The main content of beginning reading materials in the context of religious education were (next to the alphabet) the texts that were considered canonical for becoming a faithful member of a religious community. This meant parts of the Bible, the daily prayers like Our Father, hymns, the Ten Commandments and the Catechism in Christian education, or the Quran and the Sura's in Islamic education.

From the eighteenth century on, at least in Western Europe, these religious reasons were replaced by mainly patriotic/nationalistic reasons, i.e., becoming a good citizen, a good member of the nation-state. Sometimes, religious and patriotic philosophies behind teaching reading were combined, either within the material or within the community in combining religious education with citizenship education. Patriotic texts in the period after often were the National Hymn, parts of the Constitution, and several patriotic texts on, for example, the founder of the nation, texts on national history and geography, and all kinds of stories about the national heroes. In both these philosophies learning to read meant learning to recite the texts that were considered canonical in the religious or nationalist communities.

Since about the French Revolution, or better Rousseau, a pragmatic reason emerged, becoming a member of the community of readers that is able to learn and memorize important knowledge of the world, the country and the sciences. This more pragmatic functional philosophy behind teaching reading introduced a new perspective of what reading is. For the first time, it was not anymore reading texts already known from oral interaction, but acquiring new knowledge that was considered (although still mainly meant to be memorized). When the philosophy behind teaching reading changed from the narrow patriotic to the more universal knowledge aims, reading material (also for beginners) became more and more the encyclopaedic type of texts about, for example, flora and fauna, the earth and the planet, geography, history, and biology, and later on (when reading for entertainment came also into play) newspapers, magazines, and novels were added.

This all again changed remarkably in the nineteenth century, once learning to read was no longer associated with learning to memorize texts and information, but learning to read independently with the main aim being able to get access to written

texts by yourself. From that moment on, the texts that were introduced were much more tuned towards the needs and interests of young children. The McGuffey series *Dick and Jane* in the U.S became famous stories for young children.

4.2 How

As Chartier (2010) clearly pointed out, an historical view on teaching reading should reveal which literacy practices and opinions were the points of reference for educators and which means were available, instead of comparing it with contemporary standards. According to her, between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, the different teaching methods moved from teaching aimed at restricted reading (religious texts of different forms of worships) to generalized reading, from teaching reading in Latin to the vernacular, from teaching individuals to teaching groups, and from a focus on only reading to teaching reading and writing simultaneously (possibly because slates and pen nibs replaced the goose quills).

Chartier (2010) presents, showing this interrelatedness between the why, what, and how, three major changes in the conception of reading.

During the Middle Ages, learning to become a Christian and learning to read was the same thing. Referring to Johansson and Lindmark, she stressed that learning to read was not an aim in itself, the only reason was its usefulness in elementary religious knowledge, so which method to use was not an issue. The ABC-books, together with the prayers and catechism, were the tools for learning to read. ABC-books refer to the method that was used since Antiquity, the spelling method in which first the letters of the alphabet in different fonts were learned using letter names to form syllables, combined with the canonical liturgical texts. This old spelling method has been in use for centuries "in all countries, for all social groups, in individual teaching as well in collective schooling" (Chartier, 2010, p. 9). Reading meant reciting prayers and "in examinations children had to read from the Bible and repeat the Catechism, and the two tests revealed how literacy was perceived at that time: pupils never had to read a new text alone, or explain what it meant. Reading was always a collective practice." (Chartier, 2010, p. 10).

This spelling method that had been in use since Antiquity was used to read Latin as well as other languages. However, in the eighteenth century, during Enlightenment, this method began to be questioned and the first debates about what this meant for teaching reading started. Around 1850, in several places, syllabic methods came in use, and word methods and whole-word methods came soon after. Finally, the birth of modern methods, in which the good old spelling method was rejected at the end of the nineteenth century, and contemporary debates about analytical or synthetic, phonic or visual methods appeared.

This historical overview of Chartier nicely converges with the findings of William Gray's (1956, 1969) worldwide survey on methods and approaches used in teaching reading. His typological classification essentially also presents an historical overview of methods in teaching reading, each method being a reaction on the

weaknesses of previous ones. Gray and his team distinguished the *early specialized methods* that either focused on the written code with meaningless elements of words as a starting point or on *meaningful language* as a starting point.

He also concluded that the oldest, long-lasting, and worldwide used method was the alphabetical or spelling method based on the letter names and combination of letters to form syllables. It is interesting to see that this spelling method with those lists of syllables, that originated from learning to read in Latin, a language with a simple syllabic structure and a reasonable number of syllables, was simply copied in all other languages, for example in English in which the total number of possible syllables is endless.

The next synthetic methods were the phonic methods in which not the names but the sounds of the letters were the starting points (b-a ba) and (because a consonant could hardly be pronounced without adding a vowel) the syllabic method, in which the code no longer was broken up into phonemes, but into syllables (bo-la bola), a method with a rich history, in particular in countries with languages with a simple syllabic structure in which consonant clusters hardly existed.

The synthetic methods (that have been in use for centuries) were mainly criticized because of the endless and boring exercises that were not very helpful in motivating children. A range of methodologies that started with meaningful units as a point of departure came into play: the word methods (the most frequently used methods worldwide), the phrase, sentence, and story method, and all introduced meaningful wholes as a starting point. Depending on whether analysis became part of the methodology, these methods are called global methods or analytic methods.

The more recent trends in Gray's classification (see Fig. 2) refer to methods that combine the best of both synthetic and analytic methods (the eclectic methods, the most used methods in continental Europe since the 1950s) and the even more recent methods that take the experiences of the learner as a starting point, such as for example the Freinet way of teaching in primary schools based on children's experiences, the language experience approach, and the Freire methodology in adult education. For overviews of the debate between meaning based or code-based teaching, see also Adams (1990) and Snow and Juel (2005).

5 Colonial and Missionary Education in Eritrea (1890s–1930s)

5.1 The purpose (why) and spread (who) of colonial education

At the heart of Italian education for natives was the policy of educating Eritreans to submit to the rule and greatness of Italy. By instilling devotion to Italy and respect to its civilization, colonial education sought to pacify the colony and prolong the rule. This can be clearly gathered from an extract to the 'Preface' of one of the earliest books, *Metsihaf Melamedi Timhirti Tibeb* ([Reading] Practice Book of Education

Early specialized methods

Emphasis on code as a starting point (initial emphasis on **elements of words**)

- The alphabetic or spelling method: Names of letters in alphabetical sequence (bee-a, ba)
- The phonic method: Sounds of letters (/buh//a/, ba)
- The syllabic method: Syllables as key units in teaching (bo – la, bola)

Synthetic methods

Emphasis on meaning as a point of departure (meaningful language units)

- The word method (words as meaningful units)
- The phrase method (phrases)
- The sentence method (sentences)
- The story method (short stories)

Global methods or analytic methods

Recent trends

The **eclectic** trend:

- Eclectic methods that use combinations of analytic and synthetic strategies that are used simultaneously, while also focusing on comprehension

The **learner-centered** trend:

- Author prepared reading matter
- Learner-teacher prepared reading matter
- Integrated instructional materials

Fig. 2 Classification of early reading methods. (after Gray, 1969; Boon & Kurvers, 2012, p. 69)

in [Science], 1912), published by the Catholic mission, which stated the rationale for Italian presence in Eritrea as follows [translation of extracts from Tigrinya by first author]:

> The great and capable Italian government, one with authority from among European governments found to be superior in complete progress of civilization, when it took control of the Ethiopian province, now called Eritrea, as its colony it only had as its goal to implant what is the fruits of the best and highest civilization, 'civilita', - good behaviour, order, nobility, economy [thriftiness], and prosperity – in the hearts of the inhabitants and nothing else.

After finishing the four year education, Eritreans were expected to know basic Italian and the four arithmetic operations and "be a convinced propagandist of the principles of hygiene; and of history; he should know only the names of those who made Italy great (p.33)" (Trevaskis as cited by Teklehaimanot, 1996, p. 5). One of the first governors of the colony, Ferdinano Martini, in 1913, argued that "there is no use of talking about either compulsory instruction, or regular courses, but simply the necessity of opening schools where, beside the most elementary parts of instruction, one should aim chiefly at the teaching of Italian" (as cited by Smith-Simonen, 1997, p. 55).

At the time, the establishment of schools for Italians and locals was decreed by the colonial government. For example, the establishment of the Salvago Raggi

School for Muslims at Keren was decreed in July 1911 by the governor of the colony. The attendants at the school and the general purpose of establishing the school were stated as: “It contains only Muslim indigenous boys, under the purpose of: […] to bring a new spirit on the culture and civility of the indigenous population” (Article 1). Similar decrees were issued to establish schools for Catholics and Orthodox Christians.

By the end of 1930s, there were around 20 elementary schools in Eritrea (Teklehaimanot, 1996). As the colonial government faced financial constraints, the missionaries stepped in by opening mission schools in different parts of the country. However, the general goal of education by missionaries and the colonial government remained the same or similar (Uoldelul, 2003). Between 1923 and 1941, Eritrean education was in the hands of Catholic mission as the colonial government trusted the Church, “having carried out its patriotic obligations to the satisfaction of both the colonial government and the Italian state” (Negash, 1987, p. 79). The Swedish mission, on the other hand, was made to close its schools in 1932 by the colonial government.

The number of schools and student enrolment figures are not reliably available. Negash (1987) provides estimates based on some of the figures available: in the year 1910 there were 12 Swedish mission schools with 810 students and 7 Catholic mission schools with 350 students. By 1925, government schools had 360 students (Negash, 1987). Between 1921 and 1934, a total of 9962 students were enrolled in schools, out of which only 2000 could be assumed to have completed their schooling, putting enrolment at a miniscule 2 percent of the school age population in the colony (Negash, 1987, pp. 82–83).

5.2 The Content (What) of Colonial Education

Italian policy on native education was primarily concerned with maintaining obedience to colonial rule through propagating Italian greatness and civilization. Negash (1987, p. 84) argued that “[c]conscious of the impact of Western education upon the intellect of the colonized, the colonial administration adopted a policy of limiting education to lower elementary”. Therefore, the content of the schooling systems was tuned towards this goal. The main contents of the first manuals or comprehensive texts were on history, geography, sciences, personalities who made Italy great, information on the colony, etc. There were also materials specifically designed to teach reading, the reading primers. The main elementary education focused on more academic instruction with reading and writing being the focus. However, almost all the schools, especially at first, had a crafts (e.g., carpentry) component to them and military training was given in schools for students and others (Negash, 1987).

The main language of instruction was Italian, the language necessary for graduates of the schools to take up positions as clerks, interpreters, and skilled workers or even soldiers. As evident from the decrees of the establishment of the first schools, Tigrinya, Amharic, and Arabic were also offered as subjects (Asfaha, 2015).

However, Tigrinya increasingly was used together with Italian in the schools as there were many manuals and textbooks written in both languages. Out of the eight textbooks published by the Catholic mission between 1912 and 1930, Negash (1987) pointed out many were in Italian and Tigrinya, with translation from Italian into Tigrinya as the practice which sometimes lead to texts with little significance to the Eritreans. In his analysis, Negash pointed out to two volumes in Italian only, meant for teachers, with contents in grammar, arithmetic, and selected readings.

Regarding the reading primers, the main focus of this chapter, the contents could be divided into two: the spelling books (*Metsihaf fidel*) and reading books (*Mestihaf nibab*). It is difficult to find a complete set of these first school books in Tigrinya from the Italian colonial times. However, Voigt (2005) mentioned some of these Tigrinya textbooks: *Metsihaf Fidel Bzeraba Tigrinya* ("The Spelling Book in Tigrinya Language", Asmara, 1905; 1922); *Timhirti Qutsiri* ("Arthimetic", Asmara, 1923); *Quedamay Metsihaf Nibab* ("The Primer Reader", Asmara, 1928). Voigt (2005) noted these books' contribution to instruction and literature as follows:

> the didactic materials published by the Protestant Swedish mission in particular, but also by its Catholic counterpart, furthered the knowledge of writing, language normalization and arithmetic […] In this way the foundations for the creation of the Tégrénna literary language and the dissemination of literacy were laid. (Voigt, 2005, p. 906)

In addition to these, the colonial administration encouraged the publication of several Italian-Tigrinya handbooks on Eritrea, the Tigrinya language, hygiene, etc. (Voigt, 2005) by the Catholic mission for use in the schools.

6 The Teaching of Tigrinya Reading

Tigrinya reading instruction has evolved over the last century since its first introduction in schools by missionaries and colonial schools at the end of the nineteenth century. The early teaching of Tigrinya literacy will be described here using selected textbooks (identified as significant indicators of the early instruction) produced by the colonial government and missionary schools.

The early teaching of Tigrinya reading progressed from learning the letters of Tigrinya orthography into reading syllables (or bi-syllabic words and non-words) to reading longer (up to six syllable) words and reading full texts. For example, the 1896 "*Sillabario nella lingua Tigrinya*" from the Swedish mission listed the 33 letters of Tigrinya in a table of *fidel* with all the 7 vowel conjugations in the first two pages and then moved to a list of more than 250 two-syllable words. The assumption must have been that students will spend adequate time learning the letters before moving to reading syllables or simple words.

Subsequent primers have, of course, developed a more systematic scheme of studying the Tigrinya letters or *fidel* symbols. In the 1905 "*Sillabario Della Lingua Tigrigna*" there are 58 tables, each contained in a page of the book and with specific tips on how to tackle the teaching of Tigrinya *fidel* symbols. The Tigrinya *fidel* are

grouped into six with the first group of letters said to have the same origin while the second group is said to have different ‘images’ and the fifth group as having ‘no form’ (or uniformity), and thus the teacher was advised to work harder on the latter group. The teacher is given instructions to make sure students master the letters in one group before moving to the next group of *fidel* symbols (see Fig. 3).

The preface to the 1905 spelling book had clear messages to the teacher on teaching the letters. It also contained some explanations about the nature of reading, reading development, and reading instruction. The very beginning of the preface justified the list of tables of letters by comparing it to past practices of teaching. The preface stated:

> These tables have been invented so that the student does not engage, as in the past and as was customary, with studying the names of the letters orally without any thought. Soon the student will learn to identify the hands and legs of the letters and later on, wherever the letters are placed, the student will recognize them.

At the end of the preface, the teacher was advised about the nature of reading. After mastering letters, students have developed the ability to read words they have not come across before. The preface stated this process as follows:

> In the latter three pages is included what children have not learned [practiced] before, meaning to join one word with another to create one full thought [sentence]. … The teacher carefully follows students as they read in the last three pages in the same way they speak and clearly hear the thoughts [meaning in the sentences] and pause in four points [Tigrinya

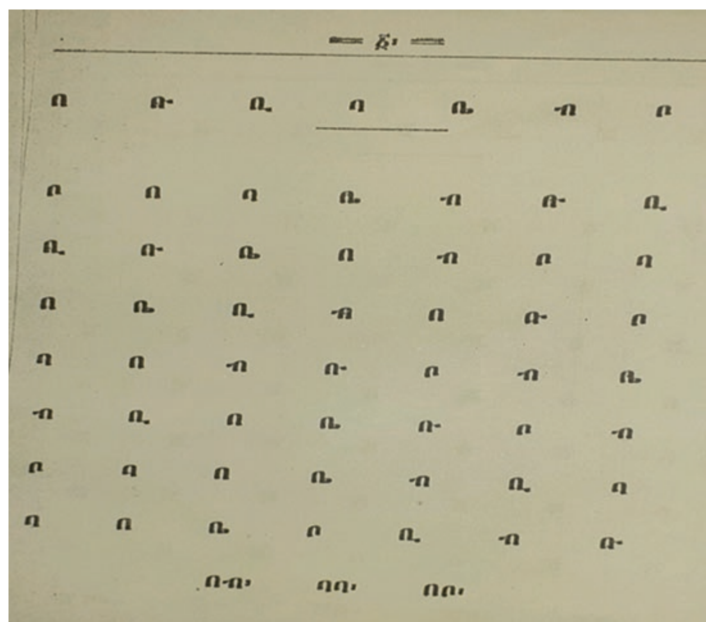

Fig. 3 A *fidel* symbol and syllables from a page of *Sillabario Della Lingua Tigrigna* (1905)

> for a period]. If they are read like this, just like they are thought of, they will serve as a bridge to reading in other books.

The second edition of the "*Sillabario Della Lingua Tigrigna*" came out in 1922. Most of the material was the same as the first edition. The editor, Olle Eriksson, stated that additional new material was added by "inserting small drawings and, using simpler language for children, I added few tales and stories.".

The main focus in the second edition remained the same: the teaching of the *fidel* symbols (about 40) using the same grouping discussed above. A single page is dedicated to introducing a single *fidel* symbol after which two letter or syllable words are introduced. The next page tackles another symbol in the same way before listing two or three letter or syllable words containing the letter already taught in the previous pages. This continues with increasing number of syllables being used in the practice words, before finally presenting long (or six letter) words after which there are short sentences (e.g., *Haqqi tiray tezarreb*. <speak only the truth>). Then short passages, around 50 words, are provided to be read by students who by now are expected to have mastered the *fidel* symbols. The passages are mainly concerned with Biblical content, educational passages on a variety of topics such as human body parts, mechanical objects (e.g., watch), and moralistic stories or tales. The book ends with Tigrinya proverbs and a table of multiplications.

In addition to the spelling books, there were also reading books available for teaching students reading. One of these reading books is *Qeddamay Metsihaf Nibaba* (Prime Letture Tigrigna) published by the Swedish mission in 1928. The contents of this book are short passages intended to deepen the reading skills of students who have mastered the letters and progressed to word and short sentence reading. This rationale is clearly stated in the preface to the book:

> First of all, I read '*fidel ha, hu*'. After I have studied this, I learned the book of *fidel*. This year, I am starting the first reading book: I can read very well. To be able to read is a very good thing.
>
> There is no teacher. In this book there is good stories, drawings and song.

The passages in the pages of the book are on a wide range of topics. The titles include: my school; school materials; one parent's advice to his son; which is faster (from among a number of animals and natural events like lightening); stressed and unstressed words in Tigrinya; tales; proverbs, etc. The book ends with prayers and a multiplication table. Some of new material that probably was included to educate Eritreans with new ways of doing things or new concepts are titles such as "what is your debt?" and uses new terms such as '*Wereqqet iida*' (debt paper) or 'fattura'.

One passage, 'one parent's advice to his son', provides advice on how learning to read may prove challenging. In a story of a father and a son, the son tells his father about his frustration and inability to read the books ("I am lost about this issue of books" <I am unable to handle or read books>) for which the father replies:

> You could read well if you avoid laziness. You could also write well by drawing letters one by one. Little by little you join [letters] and carefully add; you will reach at a good [level] of counting letters. By repeating and remembering you will reach [start to understand] the

> books with those heavy ideas. A good student could add everyday to that he has learned through patience and calmness. (p.15)

7 Conclusions

As Voigt (2005) has noted, some foundations have been laid down on Tigrinya instruction by the early twentieth century publication by colonial and missionary educators. Some of the innovations in teaching Tigrinya *fidel* symbols of the time have persisted long after the missionaries and colonial rulers have left. Tigrinya literacy instruction clearly bears some of the traces from that era.

The innovations designed in 1905 by putting the more than 40 *fidel* symbols or letters in tables of six groups has been an idea that still practiced today. The recognition that a systematic way of introducing the *fidel* symbols by first starting with those graphically easier to recognize and write has been a constant concern in the teaching of Tigrinya literacy. The current Tigrinya literacy curriculum has created another innovation by teaching first reading of words using the easy to recognize first order (basic) *fidel* symbol form from the table of *fidel*. Perhaps one of the main reasons behind this continuous need for new ways of teaching Tigrinya literacy is the concern that the language has too many letters to learn or teach (about 250). However, this concern rarely acknowledges the systematic changes in the rows of the *fidel* table by using diacritics to indicate vowel change. Another important advantage of learning to read in Ge'ez script (an alphasyllabic system mainly based on representing syllables in symbols) is the availability or easier accessibility of syllable-based writing systems to beginning readers when compared to reading in alphabetic systems.

The persistence of the syllable based teaching of reading (i.e., the spelling method based on the letter names and combination of letters to form syllables) is yet again prominent in the case of Tigrinya literacy instruction. The nature of the Tigrinya Ge'ez orthography has correspondences at the level of syllables and not sounds. The syllable structure of the language is simple with only CV and CVC structures allowed. This has to be considered with the introduction of early literacy instruction through Italian didactics and textbooks translated from Italian, another language with a simple syllable structure. The confluence of language structures, syllable-based writing system, and the global popularity of the spelling method have probably helped the spelling method in teaching of early reading in Tigrinya to remain entrenched for almost a century.

Another similar confluence of influences can be observed in the persistence of a combined spelling (or skills or sound based) and story reading (or reading of meaningful texts) introduction to reading instruction. This is reflected in using *Metsihaf fidel* (spelling book) and *Metsihaf nibab* (reading book) in the past and the alphabet book and story book currently in use. During the colonial and missionary time, it was probably the case that the teaching progressed from isolated letters and then moved to combining them to form syllables, with reading of the reading book

conducted independently by the student. Again, these principles might have made their way into current Tigrinya instruction after being borrowed from Italian educational materials and curriculum which in turn reflected the prevailing global views at the time. This can only be part of the influence as current methods are said to be responsive to contemporary global debates on phonics versus whole language approaches.

Despite these contributions (still requiring further research to establish their depth) to the teaching of reading, the colonial experience cannot be viewed outside the ultimate purpose of Italian education. The colonial and missionary objectives were synonymous to control and subjugation and literacy education was an instrument to achieving that end. The Eritrean independence movement has rejected the end goals of colonial education. This has led to educational policies (e.g., multilingual education) that aimed to reverse the damage colonialism incurred on Eritrean society (Asfaha, 2015). Whatever legacies from colonial period are evident in contemporary literacy instruction in Eritrea could also be considered as Eritrean educators appropriating the colonial masters' methods and material design strategies for the benefit of the Eritrean struggle and to further education.

These tentative conclusions have to be further deepened with additional research into the principles and approaches of teaching reading in Tigrinya over the last century. A more complete list and content of the teaching materials developed and used in schools by colonial and missionary educators is needed to paint a more holistic picture. These would allow a more meaningful mapping of literacy instruction in Eritrea and a more fruitful comparison with the historical and current trends in global development of literacy instruction.

Acknowledgements The research for this chapter was supported by a fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation granted to the first author.

Appendix

Traditional ordering of the *fidel* symbols in a table of *fidel.* (Source: *Sillabario Italiano-tigrino*, Catholic Mission, Asmara, 1960)

References

Adams, M. A. (1990). *Beginning to read. Thinking and learning about print*. The MIT Press.

Asfaha, Y. M. (2015). Origin and development of multilingual education in Eritrea. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 36*(2), 136–150.

Boon, D., & Kurvers, J. (2012). Ways of teaching reading and writing: Instructional practices in adult literacy classes in East Timor. In P. Vinogradow & M. Bigelow (Eds.), *Low educated second language and literacy acquisition. Proceedings of the 7th symposium* (pp. 67–91). University of Minnesota Printing Services.

Chartier, A. M. (2004). The teaching of reading and writing: A historical approach. In P. T. Nunes & P. Bryant (Eds.), *Handbook of children's literacy* (pp. 511–538). Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Chartier, A. M. (2010). The teaching of literacy skills in Western Europe: An historical perspective. In D. R. Olson & N. Torrance (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of literacy* (pp. 451–467). Cambridge University Press.

Gottesman, L. (1998). *To fight and learn: The praxis and promise of literacy in Eritrea's Independence War*. Red Sea Press.

Government of Eritrea. (2002). Concept paper for a rapid transformation of the Eritrean educational system. Asmara: Government of Eritrea. (mimeo).

Gray, W. S. (1956). *The teaching of reading and writing*. Scott, Foresman.

Gray, W. S. (1969). *The teaching of reading and writing: An international survey* (Monographs on fundamental education, no. 10). Unesco.

Hurry, J. (2004). Comparative studies of instructional methods. In T. Nunes & P. Bryant (Eds.), *Handbook of children's literacy* (pp. 557–574). Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Ministry of Education. (2004). *Eritrean languages teacher's guide* (grade one). Ministry of Education (English version of the guide for the Eritrean languages). (mimeo).

Negash, T. (1987). *Italian colonialism in Eritrea, 1882–1941: Policies, praxis and impact*. Almqvist and Wiksell International.

Resnick, D. P., & Resnick, L. B. (1977). The nature of literacy: An historical exploration. *Harvard Educational Review, 47*(3), 370–385.

Smith-Simonen, C. (1997). *A study on Italian educational activities in Colonial Eritrea: 1890–1941*. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Tromsø.

Snow, C., & Juel, C. (2005). Teaching children to read: What do we know about how to do it? In M. J. Snowling & C. Hulme (Eds.), *The science of reading: A handbook* (pp. 501–520). Blackwell Publishing.

Teklehaimanot, B. (1996). Education in Eritrea during the European colonial period. *Eritrean Studies Review, 1*(1), 1–22.

Uoldelul, D. (2003). Church-state relations in colonial Eritrea: Missionaries and the development of colonial strategies (1869–1911). *Journal of Modern Italian Studies, 8*, 391–410. https://doi.org/10.1080/1354571032000113752

Voigt, R. (2005). Tégréñña literature. In S. Uhlig (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, Vol. II, 905–908.

Wright, M. W. (2001). More than chanting: Multilingual literacies, ideologies and teaching methodologies in rural Eritrea. In B. Street (Ed.), *Literacy and development: Ethnographic perspectives* (pp. 61–77). Routledge.

The Cuban Literacy Programme in Timor-Leste; 'Magic' on the Blackboard

Danielle Boon and Jeanne Kurvers

Abstract Although the *Yo Sí Puedo!* method for adult literacy education has been in use in many countries and received a Unesco Literacy Prize, this article highlights the need to question one of its crucial elements. *Yo Sí Puedo!* was developed in Cuba and later on implemented in mass literacy campaigns in many other, mainly developing, countries. One of them is Timor-Leste (East Timor), a multilingual country in South-East Asia that became independent in 2002. Here, *Yo Sí Puedo!* was in use in adult literacy education in 2007–2012, next to other literacy programmes.

After an introduction to the historical changes in language policy in multilingual Timor-Leste and how they affected literacy education, we will present a study on adult literacy acquisition that was conducted in Timor-Leste between 2009 and 2014 (Boon, 2014). In a broad study the results of several adult literacy programmes and the factors that impacted the adults' literacy skills were investigated and evaluated. An in-depth study with classroom observations and interviews with students and teachers shed further light on the literacy teaching practices, the uses and values of literacy and the ideas that guided teachers' practices.

The paper will focus on the adult literacy programme that was introduced by Cuban educators, first in Portuguese and subsequently in Tetum. We will compare the method of this programme, that associates numbers and letters, with other programmes and present some results of the broad study on literacy abilities. Classroom observations show how the *Yo Sí Puedo!* method was applied in some adult literacy classes, and whether it helped adults to acquire the alphabetic principle, which is crucial to build further reading and writing ability. Although this method was awarded for being innovative and successful, our data demonstrate less reason for optimism.

Keywords Adult literacy education · East Timor · Cuban method · Literacy teaching methods · Tetum

D. Boon (✉) · J. Kurvers
Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands
e-mail: d.a.b.boon@tilburguniversity.edu

© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2021

M. Spotti et al. (eds.), *Language Policies and the Politics of Language Practices*, Language Policy 28, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-88723-0_5

1 Introduction

Most research on literacy teaching and acquisition has been done with children in highly literate, western societies in the context of formal education and in bureaucratic environments (Kurvers, 2002; Morais & Kolinsky, 1995; Purcell-Gates, 1999). Research on adults learning to read and write in a second language has mostly been done with immigrants in the literate environment of their new country (Van de Craats et al., 2006). This only partially covers the contexts in which many adults become readers and writers (Wagner, 2004). In many countries, adults acquire literacy in a second language in multilingual contexts and outside compulsory formal education. This is the case in Timor-Leste where, since 2002, many adults have been building initial reading and writing skills in a second language (often Tetum).

The Democratic Republic Timor-Leste, a young nation in Southeast Asia, has a history of multilingualism, which is reflected in its consecutive language policies. A large number of indigenous languages are spoken in different regions of the country; estimates of the number range from 20 (Ethnologue, 2019) to 32 (CIA, 2019), depending on the defining criteria about what counts as a distinct language. These indigenous languages are often the first languages learned by the people born in those regions. From the sixteenth century until late 1975, the eastern part of the island of Timor had been a colony of Portugal. Portuguese was imposed as a colonial language and the only language of education and in governmental institutions. On the 28th of November 1975, Timor-Leste declared itself independent from Portugal, but was invaded by Indonesia 9 days later, which incorporated it as a province. The occupation by Indonesia lasted until 1999. The Indonesian language was imposed as the sole medium of instruction in schools (Cabral, 2013), although the use of Tetum spread widely, as a lingua franca and as the language used by the Roman Catholic Church. In the resistance, Tetum and Portuguese were used as languages of literacy education. In 1999 an overwhelming majority voted for independence in a UN-supervised popular referendum. In May 2002, Timor-Leste restored its independence. Timor-Leste's 2002 Constitution declared Tetum and Portuguese as official languages, recognized a number of 'national languages' to be further developed by the state, and accepted Indonesian and English as 'working languages' (RDTL, 2002).

Language-in-education policies since 2002 show several changes regarding the proportion of time devoted to Tetum and Portuguese as languages of instruction. Quinn (2013) noted that in the 2004 Education Policy Portuguese was given precedence and Tetum was referred to as 'pedagogic aide', while in later policies, the use of Tetum was given greater emphasis. In the National Education Strategic Plan 2011–2030 (Ministry of Education, 2011a), the two official languages were presented as equal. In addition, in 2011 the Ministry of Education launched new policy guidelines on the use of children's mother tongues as languages of teaching and learning in the 2 years of pre-primary education and as languages for initial literacy in grade 1 of primary education (Ministry of Education, 2011b).

Our research project, conducted between 2009 and 2014, investigated adult literacy education in the context of multilingualism and language in education policies in Timor-Leste. Estimations on adult literacy rates vary in different sources: UNDP's, 2018 Human Development Index reported an adult literacy rate of 58.3% (ages 15 years and older) in 2006–2016. In the age group 15–24 years, the literacy rates were 78.6% among females and 80,5% among males. CIA's World Factbook (2019) reported that, of the population of age 15 and over, 67.5% could read and write: 71.5% of the males and 63.4% of the females (2015 est.).

2 Approaches in Adult Literacy Teaching: An Overview

In this overview we focus on early reading and writing instruction to adults who never went to school and are learning to read and write for the first time in their life. A few principles are guiding in historical overviews of methods in teaching reading in general, and adult literacy in particular: emphasis on the code or on the meaning, on the material or the learner, and on the existence of different stages in the learning process.

William Gray (1969) conducted one of the first studies on beginning reading instruction. He and his colleagues investigated hundreds of materials that were used in teaching reading to beginning readers (children and adults). Their analysis revealed a classification of methods in two broad groups, the early specialized methods and the later more eclectic or learner-centered approaches.

The most important early specialized methods are the *alphabetic* or *spelling* methods, the *phonic* methods, and the *syllabic* methods. The spelling methods have been used all over the world for centuries. The basic idea is that learners start with learning the names of the letters in alphabetical order and then learn to combine these letter names into syllables and words. The *phonic* method used the sounds of the letters (not the letter names) as a starting point, the main advantage being the development of the ability to sound out the letters and to recognize the word by blending them. The *syllabic* method used the syllable as the key unit because pronouncing consonants accurately without adding a vowel was thought to be hardly possible. In teaching reading with this method, beginning readers start with learning the vowels and after that practice learning all syllables of the language in syllable strings. These three methods often are called ***synthetic*** methods, since they start from the meaningless linguistic units gradually building the larger whole of meaningful words and sentences, later often combined with mnemonic devices to help beginners memorize the letters and sounds, for example vivid illustrations of the shape of the letters (a snake for 's' or a hoop for 'o') or the sounds (like the cry of an owl: 'u').

Methods that emphasize meaning consider meaningful language units as the starting point in early reading instruction, either words, phrases, sentences, or short stories. These units have to be learned by heart. In ***analytic*** methods, the meaningful units are then broken down into smaller, meaningless units (i.e., words into letters

or syllables, phrases into words). This 'breaking down' is not done in ***global*** or look-say methods. To this latter category one could add the whole language approach (Goodman, 1986) that encourages readers to memorize meaningful words and then use context-cues to identify or 'guess' new words.

The early specialized methods differed in the language units in the first reading lessons and the basic mental processes involved (analysis, synthesis, or rote learning). Changes made over time were meant to overcome weaknesses in each of the approaches, leading to more and more diversification. The later *eclectic* methods combined the best of the analytic and synthetic methods, in taking carefully selected meaningful units which are subsequently analysed and synthesized right from the beginning. Often, they also pay more attention to reading comprehension.

The *'learner-centered* trend' assumed that the interests, needs and previous experiences of the learner should be taken into account, both in content and in instructional method. Adult literacy classes often start with group discussions, awareness raising and developing reading matter that is based on the experiences of the adults. The late Paolo Freire[1] (Freire, 1970) became one of the most famous proponents of this approach, although Freire carefully investigated and developed key concepts (codifications) that both guided the cultural and political awareness of the learners, and their introduction to the written code. In some of these approaches the teaching of reading and writing is integrated into other parts of the curriculum, like in Celestin Freinet's 'centres of interest', in which learning is based on real experiences and enquiry. Learner-centered methods, in which the reading materials are developed in cooperation with the learners, have since long been favourite in adult literacy education in many countries.

Liberman and Liberman (1990) and Chall (1999) also present overviews of teaching principles in beginning reading and writing, mainly focusing on children. Liberman and Liberman distinguish between methods that emphasize *meaning* and methods that emphasize the *code*, arguing that methods that emphasize meaning only (like the whole language approach) assume that learning to read and write is as natural as learning to speak and that the beginning reader only needs opportunities to engage with written language and a print-rich environment. The code emphasis methods (which Liberman and Liberman support) on the contrary assume that learning to read and write is not natural at all, because pre-readers do not have conscious access to the phonological make-up of the language they can already use. Beginning readers therefore need to be made aware of this phonological make-up (the alphabetic script is based on it) and need explicit instruction in the alphabetic principle (see also Kurvers, 2007).

Similar to Liberman and Liberman's summary, Jeanne Chall (1999) based her models on how reading is first learned and how it develops. She distinguishes two major types of beginning reading instructions. One model views beginning reading as "one single process of getting meaning from print", another views it as a

[1] Freire is not mentioned in Gray's 1969 classification (Freire's *Pedagogy of the oppressed* was published in English in 1970).

two-stage process "concerned first with letters and sounds and then with meaning" (Chall, 1999:163). She notes that during the twentieth century reading instruction changed from following the two-stage model to reading as a one-stage process, directly from print to meaning. Since then, heated debates between proponents of the two approaches continued. Like Liberman and Liberman she observes that the one-stage model tends to see learning to read as a natural process, that does not require explicit attention to letters and sounds. The two-stage model assumes that learning to read is not natural, that it needs explicit instruction, particularly in the relationship between letters and sounds. Her studies revealed that learning to read needs explicit attention for the code, however not without attention for meaning making. In many methods for adults, the importance of relevance for daily life is stressed and research shows the impact of contextualization of teaching (Condelli & Wrigley, 2006; Kurvers & Stockmann, 2009).

3 Adult Literacy Education in Timor-Leste: Programmes and Results

3.1 Programmes

The study described in this paper was part of a larger research project on adult literacy in Timor-Leste that started in 2009 supported by NWO/WOTRO:[2] 'Becoming a nation of readers in Timor-Leste: Language policy and adult literacy development in a multilingual context' (see De Araújo e Corte-Real & Kroon, 2012). The project comprised three studies on adult literacy education in Timor-Leste. The first study investigated adult literacy education in the past, focusing on the years 1974–2002 (Cabral & Martin-Jones, 2012). The second study, reported on in this article, investigated learning to read and write in more recent adult literacy programmes that were implemented in the years after Independence (Boon, 2014). The third study investigated the position in adult literacy education of the regional language Fataluku (Da Conceição Savio et al., 2012).

The second study investigated how teachers and learners were working on different literacy goals in different programmes, the factors that impacted literacy acquisition by adults in the different programmes and the use of linguistic resources available to teachers and students (Blommaert, 2013) for communication in the classrooms while trying to reach those goals.

Two different programmes were in use. The first programme, *Los Hau Bele*, was the Tetum version of the Cuban programme *Yo, Sí Puedo!*, an audio-visual adult literacy programme that was developed in Cuba in the late 1990s and has been used in mass literacy campaigns in a range of countries in support of movements for

[2] The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, Science for Global Development (file number W 01.65.315.00).

social and political change (Boughton, 2010, 2012). The Cuban program aimed at self-actualisation, agency, critical thinking, acknowledging diversity and empowering people (Bancroft, 2008; Relys Díaz, 2013). The programme was adapted to be used in Timor-Leste, resulting first in the *Sim Eu Posso* version in Portuguese and later, when the use/implementation of the Portuguese version turned out to be too difficult, in the *Los Hau Bele* version in Tetum. Timorese facilitators were trained by Cuban advisors to deliver the programme to adult learners in Timor-Leste. *Los Hau Bele* became available in autumn 2008 and was used in all municipalities by mid-2009. The campaign finished late 2012. Different from all other adult literacy programmes we know of, literacy teaching in the *Los Hau Bele* programme is based on associating letters with numerals. The idea behind this method is the assumption that numbers are already familiar to adult literacy learners (Boughton, 2010), and that combining something familiar (a number) to something new (a letter) makes learning the letters easier (Relys Díaz, 2013; Bancroft, 2008; Filho, 2011). The programme consists of 65 video-lessons on DVDs, a 16-page learner workbook and a 20-page teacher manual (Boon, 2011; Boon & Kurvers, 2012). The teacher manual provides information about the programme and general guidelines on teaching and structuring lessons of about 5 h a week (for more details on the *Los Hau Bele* programme, see Sect. 4.1).

The second programme, *Hakat ba Oin*, applies an analytic-synthetic approach in which, starting with locally relevant and familiar themes and keywords (i.e., related to food, transport, tools), learners gradually learn the alphabetic principle by segmenting words into syllables and sounds, associating letters with sounds and blending the sounds again. When they have grasped the alphabetic principle, they can practice further reading and writing of simple phrases and very short texts. *Hakat ba Oin* consists of four books of 100 pages each, plus a 46-page teacher manual. The follow up *Iha Dalan* programme provides longer texts and exercises on relevant themes like ‘health’, ‘agriculture’, or ‘human rights’. The *Hakat ba Oin* and *Iha Dalan* programmes were developed in 2004–2005 Timor-Leste’s Ministry of Education, in collaboration with local and international NGOs and multilateral organisations (UNDP, Unicef, Unesco). The first materials were piloted in 2006–2007 and revised versions were implemented nationwide in 2007 (*Hakat ba Oin*) and 2008 (*Iha Dalan*), each programme to be used for around 6 months.[3]

The *Hakat ba Oin* and *Iha Dalan* programmes were later compressed into one three-month course for young people in the Youth Employment Promotion (*YEP*) programme that was carried out by the Secretary of State for Professional Training and Employment in 2009–2011 and coordinated by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and with local NGOs.

[3] D. Boon, one of the authors of this paper, was involved in the development, piloting, and implementation of the *Hakat ba Oin* and *Iha Dalan* programmes when she was working as an advisor on adult literacy for UNDP Timor-Leste at Timor-Leste’s Ministry of Education from 11/2003 until 12/2008.

3.2 Research Methods

Different research lenses were used in a broad study with a large number of people in eight of the country's 13 districts and an in-depth study to obtain more detailed information on a smaller number of people. The **broad study** investigated the results after a first period of literacy teaching and the factors influencing growth in initial reading and writing ability, the classroom-based teaching practices and the uses and values of literacy of the learners in social domains such as work, leisure time, church, and home. Participants in the broad study were 100 teachers and 756 learners in 73 literacy groups. Of the 100 teachers, 54% were women. The teachers' mean age was 33.80 years (SD 10.74), ranging from 19 to 66 years, and they averaged 10.65 years (SD 2.33) of education. Most lacked teaching experience; only 25% had more than one year's experience as an adult literacy teacher. Of the 756 learners, 436 never had had any previous education (see 3.3 for more information).

Instruments used in the broad study included a teacher questionnaire and four reading and writing tasks for learners, all in Tetum. The written questionnaire for the teachers comprised 34 questions to elicit information on their educational and linguistic background, work experience, language use in the classroom and teaching circumstances like classroom conditions and availability of materials.

The reading and writing tasks for the learners focused on grapheme recognition, word reading, word writing and filling out a basic form on personal data like name and date of birth. The scores of the tasks were the number of graphemes identified correctly, the number of words decoded correctly within 3 min, the number of words correctly written after dictation and the number of correctly filled in blanks. The main focus in the comparisons of the different learners and groups was the influence of learner characteristics (like age or previous education), knowledge of the language of instruction (Tetum) and teaching characteristics (like the programme used, the number of contact hours or the experience of the teacher).

The **in-depth study** was carried out in 12 literacy groups in seven districts. Twenty lessons were observed and learners, teachers and (sub) district coordinators were interviewed. During the class observations, instructional practices and classroom interaction were audio recorded, field notes were taken and still photography was used to capture literacy events like texts written on the blackboard, and the layout of the class. An observation checklist was used to make sure all aspects of the classes visited would be described, such as teaching practices, languages used in classroom interaction, time allocated to different subjects, available resources and number of learners attending.

3.3 Results on Literacy Skills

In this section, we present the literacy skills the learners achieved and the impact of the programme (*HBO/YEP* and *LHB*) and familiarity with Tetum, the language of instruction.

The 756 adult learners who participated in the reading and writing tasks of the broad study included people with prior primary education or adult literacy courses. In this section, we focus on the group of learners without any previous literacy education (N = 436), for whom the literacy programs *Los Hau Bele* and *Hakat ba Oin/YEP* were intended. These learners ranged in age from 15 to 76 years, with an average age of 41 years. Their length of attendance in the course ranged from less than 1 month to 15 months or from a few hours to more than 700 hours and averaged about 3.5 months. The proportion of non-Tetum speakers in this group was 25 per cent. The proportion of Tetum speakers did not differ significantly for the literacy programs attended ($p = .28$), but the groups did differ in learners' average age, the average number of hours they had attended the course ($p < .01$) and the experience of the teachers ($p < .05$). In the statistical comparison we therefore control for these variables.

Table 1 presents the results of the reading and writing tasks of the group of 436 learners (428 without missing data), split up by literacy programme and proficiency in the language of instruction and literacy, Tetum.

Of the 30 graphemes in the grapheme task, the learners on average (see column 'Total') recognized 13 graphemes, ranging from 0 (14% of the learners) to all graphemes (2%). Of the 80 words in the word reading task, the learners on average read correctly about 11 words within 3 min, ranging from no words (59% of the learners) to all words (1%). On the basic form, learners on average filled in correctly around 3 items (mostly including their name and signature), ranging from 0 (17%

Table 1 Average scores on beginning literacy skills (N = 428), split up by programme and proficiency in the language of instruction and literacy, Tetum

		Total (N = 428)	*LHB* (N = 206)	*HBO-YEP* (N = 222)	Non-Tetum sp. (N = 108)	Tetum sp. (N = 320)
Grapheme recognition	Mean	12.98	10.29	15.47	11.03	13.63
	SD	(9.49)	(8.86)	(9.39)	(10.11)	(9.19)
	Range	0–30	0–30	0–30	0–29	0–30
Word reading	Mean	10.59	6.04	14.82	11.07	10.43
	SD	(20.57)	(15.38)	(23.67)	(21.00)	(20.45)
	Range	0–80	0–80	0–79	0–80	0–80
Form filling	Mean	3.34	2.38	4.23	3.43	3.31
	SD	(3.02)	(2.50)	(3.20)	(3.29)	(2.93)
	Range	0–10	0–10	0–10	0–10	0–10
Word writing	Mean	2.84	1.78	3.82	2.50	2.95
	SD	(3.27)	(2.50)	(3.58)	(3.22)	(3.28)
	Range	0–10	0–10	0–10	0–10	0–10

of the learners) to the maximum of 10 (3%). The average number of words written correctly in the writing task for the whole group was around 3, ranging from no word written correctly at all (38% of the learners) to 10 (4%). The differences in the average scores of Tetum and non-Tetum speakers on beginning literacy skills were small. Proficiency in Tetum did not seem to provide an advantage at this basic literacy level of word reading and word writing.

To investigate the impact of learner and educational variables, a multivariate analysis of covariance in SPSS (Mancova) was conducted with grapheme recognition, word reading, form filling and word writing as dependent variables. Literacy program and Tetum proficiency were independent factors and learner's age, number of hours they had been taught, and years of experience of the teacher were covariates. This analysis revealed a significant main effect of learners' age on all literacy skills ($p < .001$), a significant main effect of number of hours learners had been taught for grapheme recognition and form filling ($p < .05$), but not for word reading ($p = .82$) and word writing ($p = .20$) and a trend for teacher experience on word reading, form filling and word writing ($p < .10$). Younger learners learned faster, the number of hours learners had received instruction mattered, and more experienced teachers were somewhat better than less experienced teachers at teaching their learners the alphabetic principle. Controlled for these variables, a significant main effect of program was found for all literacy skills ($p < .01$ for word reading and $p < .001$ for the other three skills); the main effect of speaking Tetum was not significant, except for grapheme knowledge ($p < .01$).

While the average scores on literacy skills were (very) low in general (on average 11 words read in 3 min), proficiency in Tetum turned out to be less important in building initial (word) reading and writing ability than expected. There was however a significant impact of programme, the eclectic analytic/synthetic *Hakat ba Oin/YEP* revealing significantly higher basic literacy skills than the letter/numeral based Cuban program *Los Hau Bele*.

Since all important learner-variables (that all mattered significantly) were controlled for, a closer look at the *LHB* program and the *LHB* classroom practices might shed more light on this.

4 The Cuban Literacy Programme

4.1 A Closer Look at Materials and Underlying Assumptions[4]

The teacher manual of *Los Hau Bele* explains the content and use of the student manual in which connections between letters and numbers should facilitate learning because the learner 'realises an association process between the known (the numbers) and the unknown (the letters)'. The numbers 1–5 are connected to the

[4] This section is partly based on Boon 2014, chapter 5, p. 71–75.

Tetum vowels, 6–20 to the consonants in the order that they are dealt with in the programme (see Fig. 1).

According to Gray's classification, *Los Hau Bele* could be called mainly synthetic, although in the instructions on DVD and in the teacher manual it is recommended to start with larger meaningful units. It contains an additional 'mnemonic aid' in connecting letters to numbers. In terms of Chall's (1999) two-stage model (from code to meaning), the *Los Hau Bele* method would be a three-stage method, or better; a two-stage method with a side-path (to numbers).

The teacher manual consists of a general introduction, an explanation on the use of the materials and the content of the 65 lessons, starting with the numbers 0–30 (phase 1), the consonants and the frequent letter-combinations (like bl, kr, pr or ai; phase 2), with the recommendation to combine each time letters with numbers and then with key words and a sentence, e.g., *Sira han ha'as tasak* (They eat ripe mangos) after which the key word (here: *sira*, they) is divided into syllables (si-ra), other possible syllables are practiced (*sa*, *se*, *si*, *so*, *su*, and *as*, *es*, *is*, *os*, *us*), and new words and sentences are added. The third phase is for consolidation, repetition, and some math operations like addition and subtraction. In lesson 65 the final test is taken.

The learner manual starts with four pages on which the 20 letters to be learned are presented: five letters per page, always in capital and lower case, each combined with a number, a key word and a drawing, some words divided in syllables and some used in phrases (see Fig. 2). Each of these pages is combined with a blank page to practise writing. The next page presents combinations of consonants (*bl*, *pr*, *kr*) with their syllables (*bla*, *ble*, *bli*, etc.), diphthongs (*ai*, *au*) or combinations of consonants and vowels (*je*, *se*, *ze*). After that, there are three blank pages to practise writing, one page with exercises for the numeracy operations, and one page with a statement in Tetum about being able to read and the importance of daily training. The last page presents the final test that learners have to do at the end of the programme, i.e., a form on which they can fill out their name, gender, country, a date, some phrases about themselves or their lives, and a signature.

The DVDs contain 65 video lessons. In most of the lessons a new letter or letter combination is introduced by a teacher, who explains the new lesson content and

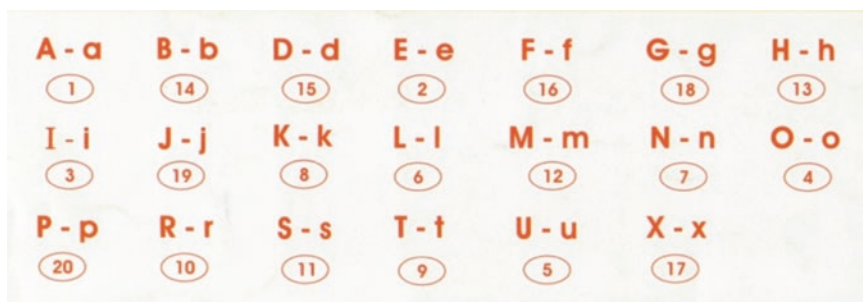

Fig. 1 The letters and numbers as printed on the back cover of the Los Hau Bele learner manual

Fig. 2 Los Hau Bele - learner book, p. 2 and p. 8

1	Phrase	*Sanan mo'os.* (The pan is clean)				
2	Key word	*sanan* (pan)				
3	Syllables	*sa-nan*				
4	Letter and number	*s S* and how to form *s* and *S* *11 11*				
5	Syllables	*s + a = sa*, etc. *sa, se, si, so, su.*				
6	Syllables and numbers	*a s* *1 11*	*e s* *2 11*	*i s* *3 11*	*o s* *4 11*	*u s* *5 11*
7	Phrase and numbers	*S a n a n* *11 17 1 7*	*m o ' o s* *12 4 4 11*			
8	Repetition syllables and numbers	*s + a = sa*, etc. *sa se si so su* *a s* *1 11*	*e s* *2 11*	*i s* *3 11*	*o s* *4 11*	*u s* *5 11*
9	Write letters	Write *s* and *S* on dotted lines				
10	More words with *s*	*sosa* (to buy), *sunu* (to burn), etc.				

Fig. 3 Summary of exercises in DVD-lesson 18 of Los Hau Bele

exercises to a group of adult learners. In each lesson the teacher follows more or less the same steps (slightly different from the recommendations in the teacher manual). Figure 3 presents a summary of the exercises in DVD-lesson 18.

Teachers were offered a one-day training session every 2 weeks during 3 months in which they learned about the didactic order in *Los Hau Bele*, the use of the DVDs and about a follow-up on the DVD lessons with their own explanations and exercises in their classes. Learners who passed the final test after 65 lessons received a

certificate. The Ministry of Education aimed at having *Los Hau Bele* classes in each of the 442 villages in the country and kept track of the number of learners who (successfully) finished *Los Hau Bele*: from 25,000 by July 2009,[5] to 204,463 by January 2013.[6] As mentioned, part of the campaign strategy was to declare regions 'free from illiteracy' after all participants in that region had finished the three-month programme. And, although the reading and writing scores of most learners in this study were extremely low (see Table 1), by December 2012 all 13 districts had completed the programme and were declared 'free from illiteracy.[7]

4.2 Los Hau Bele Classroom Practices: Connecting Letters and Numbers[8]

To find out how the teaching steps in *Los Hau Bele* classes are organised and how the connection of numbers to letters is embedded in the actual literacy teaching, one lesson of four teachers in different districts was observed. Focus was on the guidance of learners to acquire the alphabetic principle and whether and how the use of specific letter-number combinations contributed to that literacy acquisition process (see Boon, 2014 for further details). In the four lessons, the learners were seated on verandas on plastic chairs, their manuals, and notebooks on their laps. All four teachers used a blackboard in front of the group. In the lessons observed, none of them used the DVDs provided, due to either lack of electricity, gasoline for the generator or a vital cable. The teachers therefore taught using their own interpretation of what was supposed to be done, based on suggestions given in DVDs that they had watched earlier, the teacher manual and the training sessions attended.

The first teacher started the lesson with the letters R-r (the 17th lesson of the programme). On the blackboard she connected the *R* and *r* to the number 10, she repeated the five vowels connected to the numbers 1–5 and then explained the reading and writing of the syllables *ra*, *re*, *ri*, *ro*, *ru*, like in Fig. 4.

Learners were invited to the blackboard one by one, to each write and then read these syllables (*ra*, *re*, *ri*, *ro*, *ru*). Then the teacher wrote the key word for *r*, *railakan* (lightning) on the board, divided into syllables. She invited learners to add the numbers under each letter, like in Fig. 5, and then read the word, from letters to syllables (using the letter names *eri-a-i rai*, *eli-a la*, *ka-a-eni kan*) to the whole word (*rai-la-kan*, *railakan*).

[5] Presentation by Minister of Education J. Câncio Freitas on 06-07-2009 at the 'Transforming Timor-Leste Conference' in Dili.

[6] Information dd. 18-04-2013 from the Director of Recurrent Education, at the Ministry of Education.

[7] Information dd. 18-04-2013 from the Director of Recurrent Education, at the Ministry of Education.

[8] This section contains data as presented in Boon 2014, chapter 6, p. 154–159.

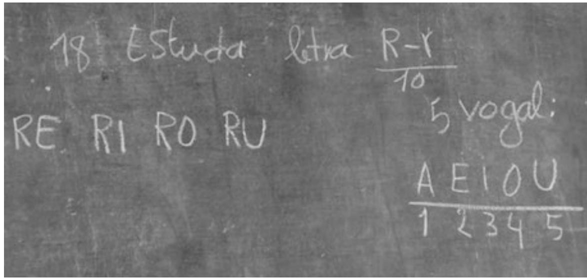

Fig. 4 *Letter* r *and five vowels connected to numbers, and syllables with* r

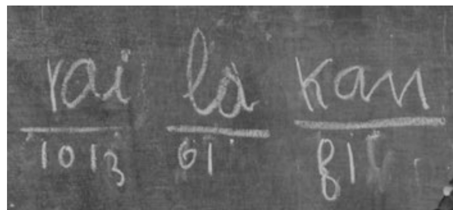

Fig. 5 *Numbers written under the key word* railakan *(lightning)*

After that, the learners practised writing their names, and if they were able to do so, wrote the corresponding number under each letter of their name (see Fig. 6).

The second teacher had started the (34th) lesson with writing a sample exercise on the blackboard as shown in Fig. 7. The letters *p* and *r* (referred to as *pe* and *eri*) were combined with the numbers 20 and 10, followed by a phrase containing the key word *prepara* (prepare), which was then divided into syllables. Next, all possible syllables with *pr* were practised: *pra*, *pre*, *pri*, *pro*, *pru*, and a few other words with *pr* and phrases containing words with *pr* were presented. Several times the learners repeated this complete text after the teacher and then they were asked to copy it in their notebooks. In the meantime, the teacher sat aside with an older learner with bad eyesight and helped him to memorize the 20 letter-number combinations of *Los Hau Bele:* A-1, B-14, D-15, etc.

The teacher then continued with two additional words with *pr*: *presidente* (president), *preto* (black, in Portuguese), and a phrase with a word with *br*: *branco* (white, in Portuguese). Next, the teacher invited learners to the blackboard to practise writing their names and the name of their village, subdistrict and district. He then sat aside again with the older learner to repeat the 20 letter-number combinations and practise the spelling of his name, and the other learners joined in repeating letters and numbers. The lesson ended with a repetition of the name of their village, subdistrict, and district.

The third teacher introduced the letter combination *tr* (the 42nd lesson), showed how to write both letters and how to form syllables, using the letter-names (*te-eri-a tra*, *te-eri-e tre*, etc.). She wrote the syllables *tra*, *tre*, *tri*, *tro*, *tru* on the blackboard and repeated their build up and pronunciation. The learners repeated the syllables several times after her and wrote them in their notebooks. The teacher also wrote a

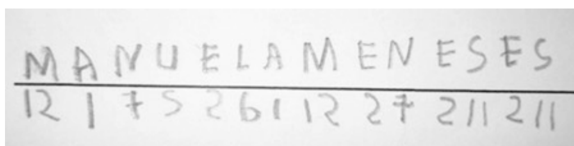

Fig. 6 Name written by one of the learners, with each letter combined to a number

P r P r
20 10 20 10
teacher prepares cakes
prepare
pre-pare
pra pre pri pro pru
pro pri pre pra pru
first
teacher
I prepare (the) lesson
You read first
Teacher goes to (the) town-square

Fig. 7 *Exercise on the blackboard about letter combination* pr

few words with *tr*, like: *trata* (treat/arrange), *trigu* (flour, wheat) and *troka* ((ex) change), which the learners copied in their notebooks as well. She then reminded the learners of the numbers 1–5 linked to each vowel, and they discussed which numbers had to be added under the consonants. Learners were invited to the blackboard and write the numbers under the letters of each syllable, as shown in Fig. 8. After this, learners wrote the syllables and numbers in their notebooks (see Fig. 9).

Next, the teacher explained about the build-up of the syllables by using her hand to cover letters ('If you take out *a* from *tra*, what is left? If you take out *tr* from *tru*, what do you have left?'). Then they practised the series *tra*, *tre*, *tri*, *tro*, *tru* again by reading them out loud several times. The next part of the lesson was spent on practising writing names and other personal data (gender, country, birth date).

The fourth teacher was teaching lesson number 48 and spent the first hour on numeracy and the second on literacy. In the literacy part, the teacher connected the five vowels to the numbers 1–5, and then explained about all 20 letters and numbers in *Los Hau Bele.* The learners had to say each letter (using letter names like /ʒi'gɛ/ for *g*, /'hɐgɐ/ for *h*) and corresponding number several times. Then the teacher explained that the complete Roman alphabet had six more letters, of which some are not used in Tetum but are frequently used in the other languages of Timor-Leste (like *c* and *q* in Portuguese and *y* in Indonesian). The 20 letters of *Los Hau Bele* and 26 of the Roman alphabet were read out loud several times by the learners. Next, the

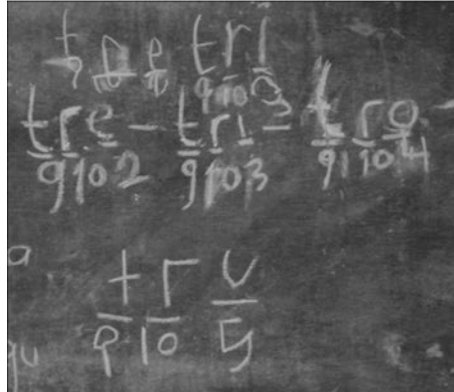

Fig. 8 The writing of syllables and numbers on the blackboard

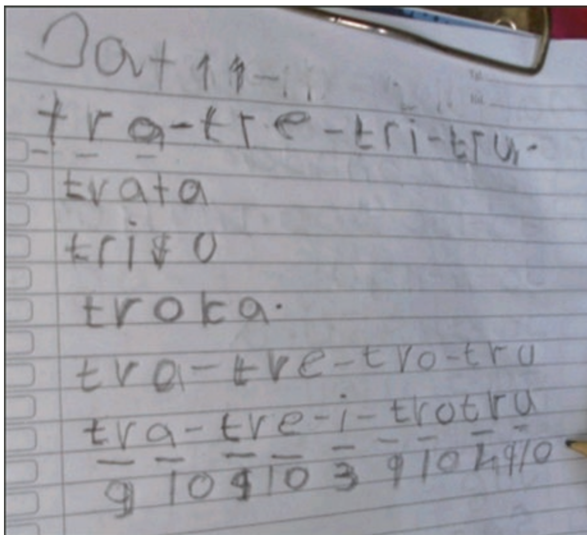

Fig. 9 The writing of syllables and numbers in a notebook

teacher listed syllables with consonant-vowel order, like *ba*, *be*, *bi*, *bo*, *bu,* and vowel-consonant order: *ab*, *eb*, *ib*, *ob*, *ub,* etc. (see Fig. 10).

The learners repeated syllables after the teacher, also in a top-to-bottom order (*ba*, *ca*, *da*; *be*, *ce*, *de*, etc.). After that, the teacher put words on the blackboard in which letters were missing. Of the missing letters, the numbers were given below a short horizontal line. Learners were invited to the blackboard to fill out the missing letter corresponding to that number to complete the words, like in Fig. 11, i.e., *uma*,[9] *dalan*, *manu*, *maluk*, *kalsa*, and *kama* (house, road, chicken, friend, trousers, and

[9] The teacher later changed the 1 (that can be seen in the picture before the letters *ma*) into a 5, when he realized that he had made a mistake.

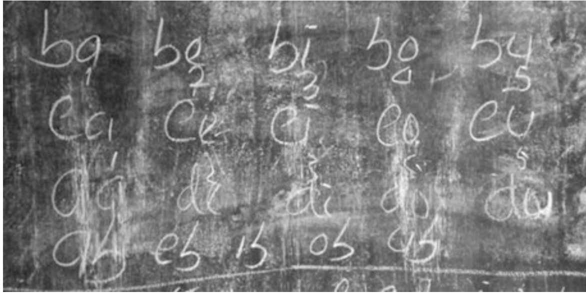

Fig. 10 *Syllables with* b, c, d *and the five vowels*

Fig. 11 Words with letters missing but numbers given

bed). Finally, the teacher showed how to read these words by blending letter names: '*u emi a* together *uma*', '*emi a eni u* together *manu*', etc.

Different from the series of steps as shown in the DVD's, all four teachers did not start with meaningful units, but with letters first, and from there to syllables and only then words and phrases. Regarding the teaching of the alphabetic principle, it can be concluded that all four teachers paid attention to phonics, not by using the sounds but the letter names (which makes synthesis more difficult).

In all *Los Hau Bele* classes observed, a significant part of lesson time was spent on connections of numbers and letters and rote association of these combinations, e.g., a-1, b-14, d-15, etc. The classes included a lot of repetition and reading aloud to practise the pronunciation of the alphabet, the combinations of letters and numbers (learning them by heart, even writing the numbers under the letters of their own name), different combinations of letters to make syllables (e.g., ba-be-bi,

pra-pre-pri) and whole words. Often numbers were written below the letters of those syllables and words.

5 Conclusion and Discussion

Research has shown that effective literacy education applies efficient methods aiming at an understanding of the alphabetic principle (Chall, 1999; Liberman & Liberman, 1990; Byrne, 1998) and builds reading and writing exercises around learner-relevant themes (Freire, 1970; Condelli & Wrigley, 2006). One can wonder whether the significant amount of lesson time spent on learning by heart associations of letters and numbers in the Cuban literacy programme *Yo sí puedo/Los Hau Bele* is time well spent in terms of reading and writing acquisition. Our study indicates it is not: it fails to help learners to build a deeper understanding of phoneme-grapheme correspondence and has no relation to literacy use in daily life. The teachers observed in this study in Timor-Leste tried to teach according to the letter-number principle often presented as the crucial element of this method, but they were clearly struggling to make it work for their learners. Learners were asked to write numbers under single letters and under (letters in) syllables, words or even phrases and names. Writing those numbers did not seem to help them grasp the alphabetic principle, needed for building initial reading and writing ability. On the contrary, they were put to an extra task which led to formula-like 'magic' on the blackboard and in their notebooks, irrelevant to any use of literacy in daily life. This distracted the learners' attention from the important work of writing and sounding out letters and blending those to words. The class observations show that while the learners mainly were struggling with (writing or copying) association of letters and numbers, the teachers were doing the main part of the decoding work that the learners were supposed to do: analysing syllables and words, and blending sounds and syllables. Although the idea behind this method is that using familiar numbers would make the learning of the letters easier (Bancroft, 2008; Boughton, 2010; Relys Díaz, 2013), class observations revealed that this activity rather made things more complicated, because different from the systematic relationship between graphemes and sounds that facilitates learning the alphabetic principle (Byrne, 1998; Liberman & Liberman, 1990), there is no systematic relationship between letters and numbers, nor between numbers and sounds. The results in Sect. 3 illustrate these findings: while the average scores on literacy ability were (very) low in general (on average 11 words read in 3 min), the results showed an impact of programme: the letter/numeral based Cuban programme *Los Hau Bele* revealing significantly lower basic literacy skills than the eclectic analytic/synthetic *Hakat ba Oin/YEP*.

Class observations and survey results throw light on discrepancies between rhetoric and programme intentions on the one hand, and realities of achieved reading and writing ability on the other. As mentioned earlier, districts where all learners had attended a three month *Los Hau Bele* course, and passed the final test by writing

their name and one short phrase about themselves, were declared 'free from illiteracy'. Our findings show that that does not mean at all that the learners have become independent readers and writers (which probably no programme can achieve within 3 months). Boughton (2013:309) claims that in Timor-Leste 'the adult literacy rate has nearly doubled' as a result of this 'popular-education-style national literacy campaign' with use of the Cuban programme. In fact, little empirical research has been done on this, either in Timor-Leste or in other countries where other locally adapted versions of the Cuban method *Yo, Sí Puedo!* are being used comparable to *Los Hau Bele*. Lind (2008:91) refers to a case study in Mozambique that found 'that the introduction of letters combined with numbers appeared to be too much at the same time and in too short a time for non-literate persons'. In Timor-Leste, Anis (2007:29) had noted that the letter-number combinations were found 'confusing'. The findings from this study clearly point in the same direction and add the urgent question why this seemingly waste of time of learning the letter-number combinations has been and still is rather popular in many mass education programmes.

Counting the number of learners who obtained *Los Hau Bele* certificates cannot be translated into increased literacy rates and districts declared 'free from illiteracy'. The fact that in districts declared 'free from illiteracy' no further literacy and post-literacy options were provided (because the resources were relocated to the districts not yet declared 'free from illiteracy'), seemed to hamper people in taking more steps on the road of becoming 'real' readers and writers.

While lack of time, limited teacher experience and bad classroom conditions in Timor-Leste might explain the low results and slow progress in all programmes evaluated, the specific feature of the Cuban programme to take as a starting point connecting numbers with letters (that lacks any literacy learning related rationale) might explain why the learners in the *Los Hau Bele* programme did significantly worse in acquiring literacy. Since the Cuban programme is used in several developing countries, flagging the letter-number combinations as its 'success factor', and was praised with a Unesco award "for innovative teaching methods with successful outcome", it is important to go beyond rhetoric and use empirical research to implement evidence-based literacy policies.

References

Anis, K. (2007). *Assessment of the effectiveness of literacy and numeracy programs in Timor-Leste; Timor-Leste Small Grants program*. USAID. Retrieved: http://www.literacyhub.org/documents/assessment_timor-leste.pdf

Bancroft, P. E. (2008). *Yo, sí puedo: A Cuban quest to eradicate global illiteracy*. Master thesis, University of California.

Blommaert, J. (2013). *Ethnography, superdiversity and linguistic landscapes. Chronicles of complexity*. Multilingual Matters.

Boon, D. (2011). Adult literacy teaching and learning in multilingual Timor-Leste. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education, 41*(2), 261–276.

Boon, D. (2014). *Adult literacy education in a multilingual context; teaching, learning and using written language in Timor-Leste*. PhD-thesis, Tilburg University.

Boon, D., & Kurvers, J. (2012). Ways of teaching reading and writing: Instructional practices in adult literacy classes in East Timor. In P. Vinogradov & M. Bigelow (Eds.), *Low educated second language and literacy acquisition, 7th symposium, September 2011* (pp. 67–91). University of Minnesota.

Boughton, B. (2010). Back to the future? Timor-Leste, Cuba and the return of the mass literacy campaign. *Literacy & Numeracy Studies, 18*(2), 58–74.

Boughton, B. (2012). Adult and popular education in Timor-Leste. In M. Leach, N. Canas Mendes, A. B. da Silva, B. Boughton, & A. da Costa Ximenes (Eds.), *New research on Timor-Leste* (pp. 315–319). Timor-Leste Studies Association.

Boughton, B. (2013). Timor-Leste: Education, decolonization and development. In L. Pe Symaco (Ed.), *Education in South-East Asia* (pp. 299–321). Bloomsbury Academic.

Byrne, B. (1998). *The foundation of literacy: The child’s acquisition of the alphabetic principle*. Psychology Press.

Cabral, E. (2013). The development of language policy in a global age: The case of East-Timor. In J. Arthur Shoba & F. Chimbutane (Eds.), *Bilingual education and language policy in the global south* (pp. 83–103). Routledge.

Cabral, E., & Martin-Jones, M. (2012). Discourses about adult literacy and about liberation interwoven: Recollections of the adult literacy campaign initiated in 1974/5. In M. Leach, N. Canas Medes, A. B. da Silva, B. Boughton, & A. da Costa Ximenes (Eds.), *New research on Timor-Leste* (pp. 342–348). Timor-Leste Studies Association.

Chall, J. S. (1999). Models of reading. In D. Wagner, R. Venezky, & B. Street (Eds.), *Literacy: An international handbook* (pp. 163–166). Westview Press.

CIA, The World Factbook. (2019). https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/tt.html. Retrieved July 9, 2019.

Condelli, L., & Wrigley, H. (2006). Instruction, language and literacy: What works study for adult ESL literacy students. In I. van de Craats, J. Kurvers, & M. Young-Scholten (Eds.), *Low-educated adult second language and literacy acquisition. Proceedings of the inaugural symposium, Tilburg 2005* (pp. 111–133). LOT, Netherlands Graduate School of Linguistics.

Da Conceição Savio, E., Kurvers, J., Van Engelenhoven, A., & Kroon, S. (2012). Fataluku language and literacy uses and attitudes in Timor-Leste. In M. Leach, N. Canas Mendes, A. B. da Silva, B. Boughton, & A. da Costa Ximenes (Eds.), *New research on Timor-Leste* (pp. 355–361). Timor-Leste Studies Association.

De Araujo e Corte-Real, B., & Kroon, S. (2012). Becoming a nation of readers in Timor-Leste. In M. Leach, N. Canas Mendes, A. B. da Silva, B. Boughton, & A. da Costa Ximenes (Eds.), *New research on Timor-Leste* (pp. 336–341). Timor-Leste Studies Association.

Ethnologue. https://www.ethnologue.com/country/TL. Retrieved July, 9, 2019.

Filho, A. Q. M. (2011). *O uso do método de alfabetização “Sim, eu posso” pelo MST no Ceará: o papel do monitor da turma*. Dissertação de Mestrado, Universidade Federal de São João Del-Rei.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Herder and Herder.

Goodman, K. S. (1986). *What’s whole in whole language? A parent-teacher guide to children’s learning*. Heinemann.

Gray, W.S. (1969). *The teaching of reading and writing: An international survey*, 2. Scott, Foresman and Co. / UNESCO.

Kurvers, J. (2002). *Met ongeletterde ogen: Kennis van taal en schrift van analfabeten*. Aksant.

Kurvers, J. (2007). Development of word recognition skills of adult L2 beginning readers. In N. Faux (Ed.), *Low educated second language and literacy acquisition: Research, policy and practice. Proceedings of the second annual forum* (pp. 23–43). The Literacy Institute, Virginia Commonwealth University.

Kurvers, J., & Stockmann, W. (2009). *Wat werkt in alfabetisering NT2? Een vooronderzoek naar succesfactoren alfabetisering NT2*. Tilburg University.

Liberman, I., & Liberman, A. (1990). Whole language vs. code emphasis: Underlying assumptions and their implications for reading instruction. *Annals of Dyslexia, 40*, 51–76.
Lind, A. (2008). Literacy for all: Making a difference. *Fundamentals of educational planning, 89*. UNESCO.
Ministry of Education. (2011a). *National education strategic plan 2011–2030*, August 2011. . Retrieved: http://www.globalpartnership.org
Ministry of Education. (2011b). *Mother tongue-based multilingual education for Timor-Leste: National policy*. Komisaun Nasional Edukasaun.
Morais, J., & Kolinsky, R. (1995). The consequences of phonemic awareness. In B. De Gelder & J. Morais (Eds.), *Speech and reading. A comparative approach* (pp. 317–338). Erlbaum (UK) Taylor & Francis.
Purcell-Gates, V. (1999). Family literacy. In M. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, P. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. III, pp. 853–870). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
Quinn, M. (2013). Talking to learn in Timorese classrooms. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 26*(2), 179–196.
RDTL (República Democrática de Timor-Leste). (2002). *Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste*. RDTL.
Relys Díaz, L. I. (2013). *De America soy hijo…: Crónica de una década de alfabetización audiovisual*. La Guerilla Comunicacional.
UNDP. 2018. *Human Development Index 2018. Statistical annex,* Table 9.
Van de Craats, I., Kurvers, J., & Young-Scholten, M. (2006). Research on low-educated second language and literacy acquisition. In I. Van de Craats & J. Kurvers (Eds.), *Low-educated second language and literacy acquisition: Proceedings of the inaugural symposium, Tilburg 2005* (pp. 7–23). LOT, Netherlands Graduate School of Linguistics.
Wagner, D. A. (2004). Literacy in time and space: Issues, concepts and definitions. In T. Nunes & P. Bryant (Eds.), *Handbook of children's literacy* (pp. 499–510). Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Assessing Multilingualism at School

Guus Extra and Ton Vallen

Abstract This contribution has a focus on assessing both the home- and the school-language repertoires of multilingual school populations in a context of increasing cultural and linguistic diversity of societies and schools—due to processes of globalization and migration. Although an increasing number of school pupils make use of home languages that differ widely from the mainstream or "national" language, primary schools are rather reluctant to change their monolingual *habitus*. The status of community languages (a common concept in Australia and Canada) in mainstream education is very low, let alone the status of assessing community-language competences. Community languages are rarely part of mainstream education. If teaching takes place at all, this occurs commonly during out-of-school hours and on the initiative of concerned community members rather than educational authorities. Apart from English in non-English dominant countries, the mainstream language is commonly the only subject and medium of instruction. Educational responses and research focus on learning and teaching the mainstream language as a second language. Community languages are associated with language deficits and learning problems rather than with resources that could be exploited through education.

Keywords Home language · School language · Community language · Monolingualism · Multilingualism

In this entry, the focus is on assessing both the home- and the school-language repertoires of multilingual school populations in a context of increasing cultural and linguistic diversity of societies and schools—due to processes of globalization and migration.

This chapter is reprinted with permission from: Guus Extra & Ton Vallen, "Assessing Multilingualism at School"; in Carol A. Chapelle, The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics, Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2012, pp. 1–6.

G. Extra (✉) · T. Vallen (Deceased)
Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands

© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2021

M. Spotti et al. (eds.), *Language Policies and the Politics of Language Practices*, Language Policy 28, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-88723-0_6

1 Assessing the Home-Language Repertoires of Multilingual School Populations

Demographic changes in increasingly multicultural societies have been documented in various ways. Poulain (2008) makes a distinction between nationwide censuses, administrative registers, and statistical surveys. Censuses take place at fixed intervals and result in nationwide databases. Administrative registers are commonly built up at the municipal level, accumulated at the national level, and updated every year. Statistical surveys may be carried out at regular intervals among particular subsets of population groups. Most census data on language use have been collected and analyzed in non-European English dominant countries like Australia, Canada, and the USA. Most of the research is based on large-scale longitudinal analyses of (home) language use, maintenance, and shift toward English (Clyne, 2003). In Europe, such databases are less common, either because census practices are unfamiliar phenomena or because they do not include language questions (Extra, 2010). If available, non-mainstream language questions in European population research relate commonly to regional languages and rarely to immigrant languages. Finland is a European example with census practices on both types of languages. The UK for the first time has an inclusive question on languages other than English in its 2011 census.

Although an increasing number of school pupils make use of home languages that differ widely from the mainstream or "national" language, primary schools are rather reluctant to change their monolingual *habitus* (Gogolin, 1994). The status of community languages (a common concept in Australia and Canada) in mainstream education is very low, let alone the status of assessing community-language competences (Extra & Yağmur, 2004, pp. 379–92). Community languages are rarely part of mainstream education. If teaching takes place at all, this occurs commonly during out-of-school hours and on the initiative of concerned community members rather than educational authorities. Apart from English in non-English dominant countries, the mainstream language is commonly the only subject and medium of instruction. Educational responses and research focus on learning and teaching the mainstream language as a second language. Community languages are associated with language deficits and learning problems rather than with resources that could be exploited through education.

Against this background, the rationale for collecting, analyzing, and comparing home language data on multicultural school populations derives from at least four perspectives (Extra & Yağmur, 2004, p. 112):

- Home-language data play a crucial role in the definition and identification of multicultural school populations.
- Home-language data offer valuable insights into the distribution and vitality of home languages across different population groups, and thus raise public awareness of multilingualism.
- Home-language data are indispensable tools for educational planning and policies.
- Home-language data offer latent resources that can be built upon and developed in terms of economic opportunities.

Most of the research on assessing home-language repertoires of multicultural school populations has been carried out in urban/metropolitan areas. International migration and multilingualism are concentrated in such settings. The same holds for intergenerational processes of acculturation and language shift. Barni and Extra (2008) present case studies on mapping both regional and immigrant languages in Europe and abroad. In accordance with the distinction made earlier between census data, register data, and survey data, we will discuss prototypical examples of large-scale research on home-language repertoires derived from each of these three types of databases, reported by García and Fishman (1997/2002) for New York City, by Baker and Eversley (2000) for Greater London, and by Extra and Yağmur (2004) for six continental European cities.

García and Fishman (1997/2002) focus on how languages other than English (LOTE) have contributed to making New York City a culturally vibrant and linguistically diverse metropolis. Most research evidence is derived from census data on home-language use. The city's largest group of LOTE speakers is still Spanish-speaking. This holds also for NYC school populations, being, in decreasing order, of Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Mexican ancestry. According to census data from the year 2000, three out of five New Yorkers claim to use only English at home, and one out of five speak Spanish. Seven other home languages were reported by more than 50,000 New Yorkers: Chinese, Italian, French, Yiddish, Russian, Korean, and Greek. A total of 52 languages were reported by more than 1000 speakers. García and Fishman discuss and compare census data from 1990, 1980, and decades before, on reported home languages, reported degree of bilingualism in English and LOTE of different ethnolinguistic groups, and processes of language maintenance and shift to English. In 1993/1994, there were 131 NYC public schools with bilingual programs in 12 different languages; 85% of the students were in Spanish–English programs in which Spanish was commonly taught only temporarily in transitional bilingual programs.

Baker and Eversley (2000) made a reanalysis of the data on home-language repertoires of pupils from public primary and secondary schools collected by the 33 Local Educational Authorities (LEA) in each of their districts in Greater London in 1998/1999. The cumulative database consists of 850,000 pupils' responses and generated more than 350 different home languages. The top five were English, followed at a distance by Bengali, Punjabi, Gujarati, and Hindi/Urdu, all of them originating from the Indian subcontinent. Computerized maps of the spread of the top 30 home languages in Greater London were composed using Geographic Information Systems techniques. Baker and Eversley gave a detailed account of all languages traced, and dealt with methodological issues in analyzing large-scale home-language databases. For complementary in-depth stories of multilingual identities in London we refer to Block (2005).

Extra and Yağmur (2004) report on the Multilingual Cities Project, carried out in Göteborg, Hamburg, The Hague, Brussels, Lyon, and Madrid. Aims of the project were to gather, analyze, and compare multiple data on the status of immigrant minority languages at home and at school, taken from cross-national and crosslinguistic perspectives. The total sample consists of 160,000 pupils' responses for an

age range from 6 to 12 years. In analyzing the data, the regularly updated database of the *Ethnologue* (Lewis, 2009) on languages of the world proved to be very helpful. Apart from Madrid, the proportion of primary school children in whose homes other languages were used next to or instead of the mainstream language per city ranged from 30 to 50%. The total number of traced "other" languages per city ranged from 50 to 90%. The common pattern was that few languages were referred to frequently and many other languages only rarely. Children in all cities expressed a desire to learn a variety of languages not taught at school. Those children who took part in instruction in non-mainstream languages at school reported higher levels of literacy in these languages than children who did not take part in such instruction.

2 Assessing the School-Language Repertoire of Multilingual School Populations

Even though the last decades have shown an improvement in school results of second generation immigrant pupils, these pupils still lag behind their majority peers in school success. Socioeconomic status, home language, ethnocultural background, and school characteristics are important indications for these different results. Few studies have investigated whether differences in test scores, rather than being determined solely by pupils' efforts, might also partly be caused by the test instruments being used. If the mean scores of two subgroups of testees differ, such differences may be caused by differences in the skills to be measured or by specific characteristics of the measurement procedure (Gipps & Murphy, 1994).

If school-language proficiency and achievement tests are meant to differentiate between high- and low-achieving students, one must be sure that the scores of the two subgroups can be interpreted in a similar way. However, research has shown that many tests contain items that function differently for different subgroups, even when the students belonging to these subgroups have the same level of skills. This phenomenon is known as Differential Item Functioning (DIF). It occurs when students of different subgroups (e.g., native vs. non-native students of the mainstream language) do not have the same chances of answering a given test item correctly despite their equal skills in the construct to be measured and their comparable achievement level in a particular domain (Dorans & Holland, 1993). If answering a DIF item correctly requires skills or knowledge (e.g., specific school-language jargon) *other* than those intended to be measured (e.g., arithmetic), the result is unfair item bias (Camilli & Shepard, 1994).

Item-bias research is commonly carried out in three steps (Uiterwijk & Vallen, 2005). First, various statistical techniques are used to detect DIF items. Second, one needs to determine which element(s) in a DIF item may be the cause of DIF. Information has to be obtained from various relevant sources in different ways (e.g., not only by asking judgments from informants but also by conducting

experiments such as Think-Aloud procedures and Rewrite procedures), since it is rather difficult to precisely identify the element that causes DIF. Third, one has to decide whether the possible DIF source is relevant to the construct the test claims to measure. If not, the item is biased and should be adapted or removed from the test.

As yet, little research has been done on DIF and item bias in Europe compared to the USA and Australia (McNamara, 1998). Differentiation between groups appears to be caused usually by socioeconomic status, gender, language background, and ethnocultural group membership. In most cases, the focus is on the statistical detection of DIF items only. Some researchers add subjective content analyses in order to find item characteristics that might be responsible for DIF. Controlled experiments to confirm or reject possible DIF sources in relation to the construct measured are rare. All DIF items are commonly removed from the test, although only biased DIF items are unfair to the tested subgroup(s) of students.

A combination of statistical DIF analyses, researcher and expert judgments, and controlled experiments has been applied in a research project with 180 language items, 180 mathematics items, and 180 information-processing items found in several Cito Final Tests of Primary Education in the Netherlands, all set in Dutch. The results of three subgroups of 12-yearold pupils were investigated: pupils whose parents interact (1) in Dutch, (2) in Turkish or Kurdish (henceforth Turkish students), and (3) in Arabic or Berber (henceforth Moroccan students). The focus was on linguistic sources of DIF and item bias (Uiterwijk & Vallen, 2003, 2005). The following mathematics item may serve as an example where a decision has to be made as to whether or not the item can be considered as biased on the basis of school-language use.

Father buys a sewing machine. The machine costs €800, VAT not included. The VAT is 20%. How much does Father have to pay including VAT?

☐

A €160 **B** €640 **C** €820 **D** €960

Derived from statistical procedures, it turns out that the item shows DIF to the disadvantage of Turkish and Moroccan students. Expert judgments and controlled experiments provided strong evidence that the item would not have shown DIF if the question had been “What does Father have to pay with VAT?” Although language related, the phrase “including VAT” is not considered to be a central notion in mathematics teaching in primary education. Therefore, it is not part of the construct that the test aims to measure (knowledge of mathematics) and reduces the construct validity of the test: The item is biased and should therefore be adapted or removed.

In the different subtests of the Dutch Cito Final Test of Primary Education, the language subtests contain most DIF items. If linguistic elements that cause DIF belong to the language objectives of the education level, these items do what they should do and do not reduce the test's construct validity. Even so, language items with DIF might be adapted or removed from a language test. Sometimes, reviewers agree that an element most probably responsible for linguistic DIF is actually part of the objectives of secondary rather than primary education. These items thus measure more than they are supposed to at the time and level of test administration.

With respect to the language-proficiency and achievement tests, researchers have to decide which DIF items are biased and which ones are not. The descriptions of the domains the items claim to measure turn out to be very informative and helpful in reaching a decision. While in the above-mentioned study 17% of all items show DIF, only 4% of these items are biased: 1.5% to the advantage of Turkish and Moroccan minority students and 2.5% to their disadvantage (Uiterwijk & Vallen, 2005). The latter can contribute to a less accurate prediction of secondary-school success and lower chances for admission and results at this educational level for non-native minority students than for native majority students.

3 Conclusion

The data presented in this entry originate from case studies on the assessment of both the home- and school-language repertoires of multilingual school populations. First, the focus has been on prototypical cross-national examples of large-scale research on home-language repertoires derived from different types of databases. Next, item-bias research has been addressed as a crucial ingredient in assessing the school-language repertoire of multilingual non-native speakers of this repertoire. The data presented on item bias originate from case studies on the Netherlands; similar phenomena have been reported in the cross-national studies referred to.

See Also Assessment Across Languages; Bias in Language Assessment; Bilingual Education and Immigration; Fairness in Language Assessment; Language Planning and Multilingualism; Language Testing and Immigration; Multilingualism and Minority Languages

References

Baker, P., & Eversley, J. (Eds.). (2000). *Multilingual capital: The languages of London's schoolchildren and their relevance to economic, social and educational policies*. Battlebridge Publications.

Barni, M., & Extra, G. (Eds.). (2008). *Mapping linguistic diversity in multicultural contexts*. De Gruyter.

Block, D. (2005). *Multilingual identities in a global city: London stories*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Camilli, G., & Shepard, L. (1994). *Methods for identifying biased test items*. Sage.
Clyne, M. (2003). *Dynamics of language contact*. Cambridge University Press.
Dorans, N., & Holland, P. (1993). DIF detection and description: Matal-Haenszel and standardisation. In P. Holland & H. Wainer (Eds.), *Differential item functioning* (pp. 35–66). Erlbaum.
Extra, G. (2010). Mapping linguistic diversity in multicultural contexts: Demolinguistic perspectives. In J. Fishman & O. García (Eds.), *Handbook of language and ethnic identity* (2nd ed., pp. 107–122). Oxford University Press.
Extra, G., & Yağmur, K. (Eds.). (2004). *Urban multilingualism in Europe: Immigrant minority languages at home and school*. Multilingual Matters.
García, O., & Fishman, J. (Eds.). (1997/2002). *The multilingual apple: Languages in New York City* (1st and 2nd ed.). De Gruyter.
Gipps, C., & Murphy, P. (1994). *A fair test? Assessment, achievement and equity*. Open University Press.
Gogolin, I. (1994). *Der monolinguale Habitus der multilingualen Schule*. Waxmann.
Lewis, P. (Ed.). (2009). *Ethnologue: Languages of the world* (16th ed.). SIL International. Retrieved December 8, 2010 from www.ethnologue.com
McNamara, T. (1998). Policy and social consideration in language assessment. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 18*, 304–319.
Poulain, M. (2008). European migration statistics: Defi nitions, data and challenges. In M. Barni & G. Extra (Eds.), *Mapping linguistic diversity in multicultural contexts* (pp. 43–66). De Gruyter.
Uiterwijk, H., & Vallen, T. (2003). Test bias and differential item functioning: A study on the suitability of the CITO primary education final test for second generation immigrant students in the Netherlands. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 29*, 129–143.
Uiterwijk, H., & Vallen, T. (2005). Linguistic sources of item bias for second generation immigrants in Dutch tests. *Language Testing, 22*(2), 211–234.

Suggested Readings

Baker, C. (2006). *Foundations of bilingualism and bilingual education* (4th ed.). Multilingual Matters.
Extra, G., & Gorter, D. (Eds.). (2008). *Multilingual Europe: Facts and policies*. De Gruyter.
García, O., Skutnabb-Kangas, T., & Torres-Guzmán, M. (2006). *Imagining multilingual schools: Language in education and glocalization*. Multilingual Matters.
Kunnan, A. J. (Ed.). (2005). *Fairness and validation in language assessment*. Cambridge University Press.
Kunnan, A. J. (2007). Test fairness, test-bias, and DIF. *Language Assessment Quarterly, 4*(2), 109–112.
Taylor, L., & Weir, C. (Eds.). *Multilingualism and assessment. Studies in language testing* (Vol. 27). Cambridge University Press.

Creating Quarter for Doing Things with Language

Koen Jaspaert

Abstract In this article I deal with language policy as it is aimed at changing the language practice of certain people within a group (Spolsky, 2004). I will especially focus on instances of language policy that are meant to have an emancipatory function: policy is aimed at changing the language practice of some people in order for them to function in situations that are considered socially important. I start my account of successes and failures in language policy with an exploration of the concept of language. I will try to make clear that there are two concepts of language which are commonly used, and that these concepts differ from one another in the way the relation between variation and uniformity in language is seen. I will situate these concepts in Realist Social Theory (RST), and will go into the consequences of interpreting language from one of these angles for the effectiveness of language policy.

Keywords Language policy · Concepts of language · Emancipatory education · Effectiveness of policies

Samenvatting: In dit artikel ga ik in op taalbeleid als een middel om het taalgebruik te veranderen van bepaalde mensen die behoren tot een groep (Spolsky, 2004). Ik richt me vooral op die vormen van taalpolitiek die een emancipatorische functie hebben: het gaat daarbij om beleid dat erop gericht is het taalgebruik van mensen te veranderen zodat zij kunnen functioneren in situaties die sociaal belangrijk geacht worden. Ik start mijn verslag van de successen en het falen van taalbeleid met een verkenning van het concept 'taal'. Ik probeer duidelijk te maken dat er twee concepten zijn die allebei gebruikt worden, en dat die concepten van elkaar verschillen in de manier waarop met de relatie tussen variatie en uniformiteit in taal wordt

This chapter is reprinted with permission from: Koen Jaspaert, "Creating quarter for doing things with language"; in: European Journal of Applied Linguistics, 3/1, Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2015, pp. 21–45, fig. 1.

K. Jaspaert (Deceased) (✉)
KULeuven – Arts, Leuven, Belgium

© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2021

M. Spotti et al. (eds.), *Language Policies and the Politics of Language Practices*, Language Policy 28, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-88723-0_7

omgegaan. Ik situeer die concepten in Realist Social Theory (RST), en behandel daarna de gevolgen van een taalbeleid dat bij een van deze concepten aansluit.

Zusammenfassung: In diesem Artikel bespreche ich die Sprachpolitik als Mittel um den Sprachgebrauch zu ändern von bestimmten Menschen, die zu einer Gruppe gehören (Spolsky, 2004). Ich konzentriere mich vor allem auf diejenigen Formen der Sprachpolitik, die eine emanzipatorische Funktion haben: Dabei handelt es sich um Politik, die sich zum Ziel setzt, den Sprachgebrauch von Menschen zu ändern, sodass sie in als sozial wichtig betrachteten Situationen funktionieren könnten. Ich fange meinen Bericht über die Erfolge und das Versagen der Sprachpolitik mit einer Exploration des Konzepts 'Sprache' an. Ich versuche deutlich zu machen, dass es zwei Konzepte gibt, die beide verwendet werden, und dass die Konzepte sich voneinander unterscheiden in der Weise, auf die mit der Beziehung zwischen Variation und Uniformität in der Sprache umgegangen wird. Ich ordne diese Konzepte in die Realist Social Theory (RST) ein, und behandle danach die Folgen einer Sprachpolitik, die sich einem dieser Konzepte anschließt.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1515/eujal-2015-0004

1 Uniformity and Variation in Linguistic and Social Theory

The perspective on uniformity and variation in language is one of the most fundamental issues in linguistics. The most simple of linguistic observations indicate that language shows at the same time a remarkable tendency toward uniformity of patterns, and a great variety with which these patterns are realized. The debate about how this uniformity and variation are related, lies at the core of the major schools of thought in modern linguistics.

In structuralism, the issue was solved by positing a language system which is characterized by uniformity, and regarding variation as a phenomenon that occurs when that uniform language system is used. De Saussure talked about langue and parole, Chomsky of competence and performance.

> *L'étude du langage comporte donc deux parties: l'une, essentielle, a pour objet la langue, qui est sociale dans son essence et indépendante de l'individu; cette étude est uniquement psychique; l'autre, secondaire, a pour objet la parole individuelle du langage, c'est-à-dire la parole y compris la phonation: elle est psycho-physique.* [The study of language consists of two parts: the most essential one has as object language, which is in essence social and independent of the individual; this study is solely non-material; the other part, which is secondary, has as object individual speech, that is to say speech including pronunciation: this part is psycho-physical] (Bally & Séchehaye, 1916: 37)

In Chomsky's terms, performance is characterized by "grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors" (Chomsky, 1965: 3).

In a modern functionalist perspective, language is no longer seen as primarily a uniform system which is used in a variable way. Language is seen as an emergent product of human intersubjectivity, the product of joint activity aimed at achieving goals (Clark, 1996: 33). When people meet, they develop shared intentionality

(Tomasello, 2003), which leads them to joint action in which they need to coordinate their behavior with others (Clark, 1996). Solving more complicated coordination problems requires language, or rather, language greatly facilitates solving these problems. Language itself can be seen as the solution to coordination problems. In that sense, language emerges from the interaction between partners in joint actions (Jaspaert, 2014; Lee, 2009).

From such a functionalist perspective, language is a situated product, which turns out differently when the situation it occurs in, changes. In that sense variation is a fundamental and inherent characteristic of language, and what needs to be explained is where the uniformity comes from. It can be argued that the process through which coordination problems are solved, creates a form of uniformity in use. Ullmann-Margalit (1977) describes how social norms are created as an answer to frequent confrontation with a coordination problem. She distinguishes four steps in the norm creation process, from the confrontation with the coordination problem, over statistic expectations about which solution of the coordination problem will be chosen, and deontic expectations about the solution to be chosen, to the codification of that solution as an explicit norm. One could call this process a form of systematization of language use. As the social norms, or rules, that emerge from this systematization process are codified, they turn into a language system, an autonomous set of language rules that define a language as a uniform institutional fact (Searle, 2005). Unlike the way the relationship between uniformity and variation is viewed in a structuralist perspective, from a functional point of view, the concept of a language referring to an autonomous system is just as real as the language emerging from interaction. Both are occurrences of language that make conceptualization of language in society a constant dialectic choice.

In sociolinguistics, the issue of variation in language use has been studied from different angles. In a lot of instances, the fact that there is a uniform and a variable way of looking at language is used as a starting point by most sociolinguistists. The relation between these two conceptualizations of language is seldom overtly discussed, however. The variable side of language is usually associated with use, and a case is made against those who want to exclude the study of language use as uninteresting. Wardhaugh (2006), e.g., claims that “a recognition of variation implies that we must recognize that a language is not just some kind of abstract object of study. It is also something that people use” (Wardhaugh, 2006: 5).

He goes on to state that “meaningful insights into language can be gained only if such matters as use and variation are included as part of the data which must be explained in a comprehensive theory of language; such a theory of language must have something to say about the uses of language” (Wardhaugh, 2006: 5). As Labov (1972) pointed out, variation is part of language use, but is not random. It follows patterns that tell us a lot about the social position of the people using the language. By introducing variable rules, he created an opportunity to incorporate the description of variability into the uniform language. In this way, the importance of variation was raised without questioning the dominance of the concept referring to the uniform system. Recently a lot of work has been done studying the super-diversity (Vertovec, 2007) of language use (see, e.g. Blommaert & Rampton, 2012). In this line of research, the conceptualization of language in terms of uniformity is used as

a point of departure, documenting the wide variety of divisions made within that general language concept. In that sense, what is documented is not really the inherent variety that comes with an variational concept of language, but the way in which multiple uniform structures get mingled in actual use. Language is divided into innumerous subsystems, which by themselves are characterized by uniformity. In the same way, the term languaging is often used to refer to the practice of using different linguistic features that are at the disposal of the language user, regardless of the fact whether they belong to the same language system or not (Jørgensen, 2008). Here again, a lot of the work done consists of description of the features and the language systems they are borrowed from. A line of research that does pay attention to the two perspectives on language is the work being done on enregisterment (Agha, 2003; Johnstone et al., 2006). Specific aspects of dialect reification are documented and discussed.

The dialectic conceptualization of language in terms of an autonomous, uniform system on the one hand, and a emergent property of human interaction on the other, does not only have a basis in linguistics. Major sociologists, as Bourdieu (1977, 1982) have paid attention to this distinction. Bourdieu's concepts of linguistic market and linguistic habitus are closely related to the two concepts of language elaborated above (Jaspaert, 1986). In more general terms, the two conceptualizations can be linked to Popper's (1978) World 2 and World 3 perspectives on reality and they can be seen as the exponents of a structure versus an agency approach to language (Carter & Sealey, 2000).

2 Uniformity and Variation of Language in RST

From an RST point of view, the concept of language which attributes centrality to uniformity and sees variability as an effect of use could be seen as a concept that is part of the Cultural System. As such RST sees this perspective on language as an epistemic concept. For people within a certain cultural system, however, a language in this form is an institutional fact (Searle, 2005) and, as such, is as real as other material goods. Moreover, as this institutional fact is an objectification of social inequality (see below), in this way it is used to reinforce that inequality in disguise (as the 'proper' cultural way to use the language). For people within a certain culture, one could claim that the institution of language works as an element of structure. Since in this paper I am concerned with how people within a culture see language as a material object and the consequences this has for language policy, I will refer to this institutional fact as language as structure, although I realize that, in view of the fact that I claimed that this concept of language is a byproduct of language emerging out of interaction, in RST terms, it could not be part of structure. The concept that sees variability as a essential characteristic of language, with uniformity being the result of language use can be seen as part of agency.

As Carter and Sealey (this volume: European Journal of Applied Linguistics, 3/1) point out, in RST it is important to ask the question who is to benefit from a

change in behavior and who benefits from a status quo. At first sight it seems as if the use of the uniform concept of language is to the equal advantage of everybody. Typical for a coordination problem is that there are multiple solutions which are all equivalent at the onset of the problem. Through the process of norm formation, one solution acquires superior value because it gradually becomes to be regarded as the 'best' solution, first in statistic and later in deontic terms, for the problem. As the norm formation process results in a codified norm, that norm is entered in grammar books, dictionaries and other works describing the language. These books make the norm of 'a' language reside on the bookshelf, external of the language user. In non-historical terms, this language is socially sterile: there is not one social group which forces the use of a certain language on another group, it is the characteristics of the language which determine how it should be used correctly. In reality, however, different solutions do not have equal chance of becoming the norm. As it turns out, practices of those holding power have a far better chance of being accepted as norm than practices of the less powerful. In most cases coordination problems are in reality partiality problems: the language emerging from the language practice of the dominant class tends to serve as a basis for norm formation. In that sense, the language resulting from the agency of the dominant class forms the basis for the language as it becomes part of structure, and objectifies social inequality by making that social inequality a result of the dominant group being better in handling the socially sterile 'correct' form of language. Remark that what we are talking about here is not mere action, but situated action, as it takes place in settings that are clearly marked by our structural positions as language users. Which variants and varieties of language we are going to use, is determined by the structural conditions we are acting in. Let me give an example to clarify this point: when my mother, whom I had always spoken a local dialect of Dutch with, asked me to explain what I was doing as PhD research project, I heard myself drifting in my explanation to a standard form of Dutch. That made my mother angry, because she considered that as an indication of the fact that I considered her not smart enough to understand. As a matter of fact, what happened was that the situatedness of the topic of my PhD project placed it outside the realm of the things my mother and I could discuss using the language we used for all our discussions.

So from a historical perspective, the uniform concept of (a) language, as it resides on bookshelves, has become part of structure. As this process coincides with the objectification of social structure described above, not only the language system is reified as a structure, but at the same time, social structure is objectified and reproduced in 'a' language. Members of the dominant class in society acquire prestige through their language use, not because they managed to make their practice be accepted as the overall norm, but because there exists an ideal structure of language which they manage to use best. For this to work, it is necessary that there is general recognition (in both senses of the word) of the norm (of the autonomous value of the language system) within a society, but that the potential to behave normatively is unequally distributed (Bourdieu, 1982). The general recognition of the reified language system as the norm and its inclusion in the cultural system means that that concept of (a) language becomes part of the worldview of those living within that

culture (Heine et al., 2006). When a concept is part of the world view that is shared within a culture, it means that members of that cultural group will perceive the elements of the world pertaining to the phenomenon the concept is tied to, as coinciding with that conceptual description. So in the case of a language, people will see that language as an external uniform system that is part of the cultural system. Deviations from that system they will regard as errors made by people who are not able to produce language that conforms to the uniform norm all the time. At the same time the agency related concept is just as real: when in a given situation which requires a certain form of language use, people will produce that form and not worry too much about the fact that their language behavior diverts from that uniform norm structure. The two concepts actively determine how we look at language at the same time: The structure concept dominates our conscious thought on language, whereas the agency related concept is used whenever we are using language while being focused on something else. This double view can be observed when the concept of language as it is used in the press is examined. In her master thesis, Kerckhofs (2014) investigated which of both concepts journalists referred to when they wrote about language. She investigated articles written in two Flemish newspapers for the years 1999 and 2011. She found that journalists conceptualize language as a uniform system that is made variable through improper use, except when they are dealing with artists and their works. With artists they look for how well they used variability in language to capture the ideas and emotions they want to express.

In a lot of instances, the two concepts of language coexist. People meet and solve coordination problems that occur in a way that fits the situation and the intersubjectivity that characterizes it the best. As a result they often behave in a way that the conscious concept of language they have stored in their world view defines as corrupt. In a lot of instances, the discrepancy between language behavior and world view of language goes unnoticed. Whenever they clash, that clash is either drawn to the conscious level, or it is embedded in a situation where other forms of striving towards an equilibrium (Dreyfus, 1996) predominate. That is why my mother got angry with me for not using dialect, but at the same time worried that I made too many errors when speaking French. The way a conflict between the two concepts of language is resolved, is also heavily influenced by the power structure of society of which we have claimed earlier that it is objectified in the structure concept of language. So whenever we pay conscious attention to the so called imperfection of language use, the question of power enters in disguise. When it is pointed out to people that their behavior does not conform to the external language norms and rules, people in a dominant position most likely will react in a "So what?" manner. As they master the uniform language to some extent, they are able to let their behavior pass as an adaptation to the situation. People in a dominated position will probably accept the discrepancy as a sign of their own lack of cultural capital, which prevents them from realizing the ideal language system correctly. So, how a person judges his/her own language use, and how that language use is judged by others, depends to a large extent on the question whether the use and judgment emerge from a structure or agency perspective.

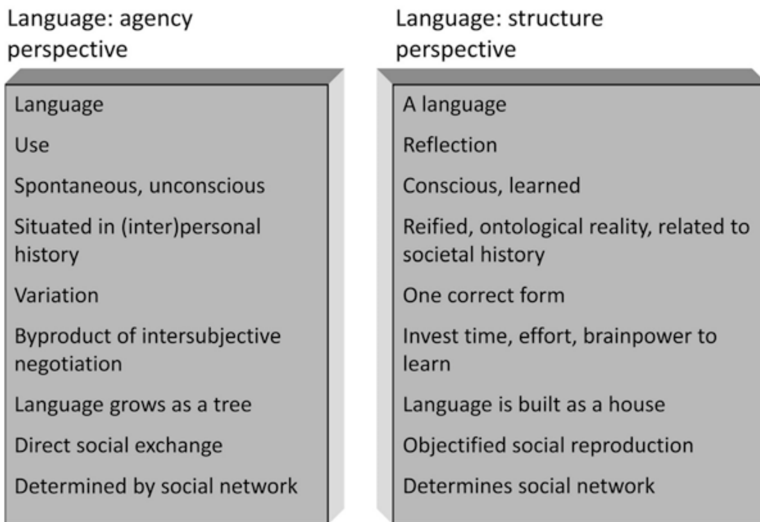

Fig. 1 Overview of differences between the two concepts of language

In what follows, I will refer to the double conceptualization of language with language as agency and language as structure. The main differences between the two concepts are listed in Fig. 1.

3 Effects of the Double Conceptualization on Language Policy

Let us now return to language policy. A policy is in itself a formalized way to solve a coordination problem. People have worked out a solution for the problem, and have turned the solution into a prescription on how people should act. In that sense, the prescription carries the objectified form of structural power relation within itself just as the structure concept of language does. Creating a policy for emancipation is, therefore, always a tricky business. In the more traditional forms of language policy, this does not matter much, since the policy was aimed at raising the status or developing the corpus of a given language further (Kloss, 1969). This form of language policy did not have an explicit emancipatory goal within one society; it tried to raise the status of the people using that language in the cultural competition between societies. The policy towards the status of Dutch in Belgium that started to emerge around 1850 and is still an important part of Belgian society, can serve as an example. The policy was started by people who did not manage to translate their

economic success into cultural capital (Jaspaert & Van Belle, 1987). The aim of the policy was not emancipation of the people in Flemish society who were not given chances for development, the policy was aimed at giving the dominant group in Flemish society a place within the Belgian establishment. It is clear that for such a policy, the structure concept of language comes in very handy. By choosing for the Dutch language (and not devising some form of Flemish), the patrons of the movement chose a language that was well established, had a large literature, was used in a country that had colonies. The idea was that the prestige of the language would radiate towards Flanders, not that everybody should start using the language in the way the Dutch did. Later, with a number of societal changes occurring, the idea of using policy to democratize society stepped in. In instances where that was the aim, language policy was aimed at altering the language practice of people. In order for emancipation to be successful, people had to use a certain language variety within certain situations. And that language variety is described in structure terms as an objectified, external entity which the people to be emancipated had to learn. The consequence of this action is that, when it is successful, not only the language variety these people use in other situations is devaluated, as it is now regarded as either a 'corrupt' form of the variety determined by the structure concept of language, or it is put aside as a form of a less valuable language, but also the situations these language varieties are used in, are devaluated as they are not important enough to require the 'correct' form of the language. So, policy creates variation in language use by promoting the use of the structure concept of language in certain situations, but at the same time devaluates other environments and the language varieties used as solutions to coordination problems that occur in these environments. That other solutions to coordination problems are devaluated puts the people that are targeted by the policy in a difficult position: they either accept the help to function in situations that are considered socially important, but when they do, they also accept the devaluation of much of their lifeworld and the language they use in it. Or they resist the pressure exerted by the policy, in that way protecting the way to act linguistically in their own lifeworld, but at the same time accepting that they will not be able to function adequately in those situations that are considered socially important. Emancipatory language policy that starts from a structure concept of language forces people targeted by the policy to sleep in a Procrustean bed, as it were. And as far as the effectiveness of the policy is concerned, by grafting the policy actions on a concept of language which propagates the autonomous value of one specific language variety, a lot of people are forced to choose the second option, rendering the policy only minimally effective.

In order to make some of the elements more concrete, let us look at policy aimed at creating language proficiency in education. When examining this field, it is important to note that, depending on the concept of language which is utilized, different forms of teaching are developed. In the case of a structure departure point of language education, where language is external to users and needs to be introduced in its correct form to them, an explicit approach to language teaching is very often selected. Language is built as a house (Fig. 1), in the sense that language elements are brought to the construction site as elements are with which a house is built. They

are already in their definitive form, ready to get their place in the house and keeping that definitive form for as long as the language learner uses language. From this perspective, it is a waste of time to acquire forms of language that the uniform system of language labels as incorrect. The success of this approach depends to a large extent on four characteristics of the teaching situation. First of all, what is important is the professional skill of the teacher. The teacher must know which elements to select at what time, and how these elements can best be transferred to the student. The second factor of importance is time. The more time one has, the more information about a language can be passed on from the teacher to the student. Thirdly, the cognitive abilities of the student play an important role. The smarter the student is, the more external knowledge about a language (s)he can process in a given period of time. The fourth factor is language proficiency. When passing on the information on language elements from the teacher to the student, the teacher packs that information in language and sends the message to the student. If the student is unable to unpack the information, chances are that (s)he will not learn. The last characteristic of effective explicit education already points towards some sort of Catch 22 situation: one has to be proficient in a language in order to acquire language proficiency. When one is proficient in language A and uses that proficiency to acquire language B, this might work to some extent, but for students for whom the language that is used in schools is the same language as the one they need to be made proficient in, there is a problem. At the same time, from a policy point of view, the characteristics 3 and 4 are not easily manipulatable with a policy that takes the structure concept of language as a starting point. One cannot increase the cognitive ability of a student by ordering the student to process more linguistic information in a given time. Nor can this form of language policy offer a way out of the Catch 22 situation. So what we see is that most policies aimed at improving the proficiency in a certain language are aimed at the first two characteristics of explicit education: Teacher training is changed, and teachers need to be trained more, by altering the initial teacher training or by providing additional in-service training, or the time spent on language teaching is increased in one way or the other. When these interventions do not work, policy makers and people in education come to the conclusion that the reason for the failure of the students has to be looked for in the two other characteristics of sound language education: either the student is not smart enough or his language proficiency is too low because his/her environment was not willing to substitute their own language use by the use of the dominant language, in that way buying more time for the dominant language. In other words, they start blaming the victim.

However, a case can be made for the fact that the language proficiency that is aimed at in most policy documents, is not an explicit knowledge of the language that can be defined from a structure perspective, but is related much more to an agency perspective: What policy makers aim at, is that people within Europe can accomplish tasks and use the language appropriate to the task accomplishment. The question that can be raised here is whether explicit transfer of information on a language as it is defined in structure terms, is the best way to help people develop this skill. From literature on language acquisition (Hulstijn, 2005; Paradis, 2004, 2009;

Lourdes Ortega, 2009), a case can be made for supporting implicit learning of language, by bringing people in a situation in which they need to function in a certain way, and at the same time, making sure that that situation is safe to experiment in. In a lot of educational instances, these two characteristics supporting implicit learning are not observed. Students do not get to perform meaningful tasks unless they have first worked through a considerable amount of explicit knowledge on the language. And the environment is seldom made safe. On the contrary, the unsafeness of the learning situation is often a consequence of effective explicit language learning. Explicit language learning thrives in homogeneous groups. When all of the students do not know any of the language elements that are being passed on, but all of the elements the new elements are supposed to be connected with, then the efforts of the teacher of passing on information on language will be most successful. In order to find out whether the group is homogeneous enough, language tests are used. These tests are called diagnostic, in the sense that they may point at the fact that a student needs more exposure time. In a lot of instances, however, they are used to test the homogeneity of the group. If that homogeneity is too low, some students may be forced to take a course over again, to leave the group they were functioning in, or to be sent home with a bad report card and facing the anger of the parents. From a structure perspective on language, the use of tests in this way looks as sound educational practice. From the point of view of students, however, it is an extremely threatening exercise. By introducing tests, that have serious consequences when one fails, the environment is made unsafe. Since that student has had as much time on task as his/her fellow students, and was taught by the same teacher, it must mean that the cognitive abilities of that students are too limited (or the student does not put in enough effort) to function in that class group. In this way, every test becomes a potential threat to the position of the student in the group. In a lot of schools teaching foreign languages all over Europe, test results for all subjects, including languages, determine whether the student may advance a year or not. The question that arises here is how this unsafe environment affects implicit language learning. Kaufman et al. (2010) relate implicit learning to the personality trait of openness to experience. As threatening situations do not promote openness to experience at all, it can be assumed that they diminish the chances of implicit language learning. Dreyfus (1996; Dreyfus and Dreyfus 2004), in applying Merleau-Ponty's (1962) phenomenology of embodiment to skill acquisition develops a five stage model, in which he allows for explicit rule and element transfer in the beginning stages of acquisition, but points at the fact that in the later stages, explicit goal orientation loses much of its initial appeal. He describes acquisition as an effort made to find equilibrium in a given situation, yielding the satisfaction of the equilibrium that is found. His ideas (about the superiority of explicit learning for beginners and of learning through meaningful tasks) are corroborated by the results of Dixon et al. (2012) who examined the results of L2-learning in the U.S in 71 different studies from four different fields (foreign language education, child language research, sociocultural studies, and psycholinguistics). Again, trying to ward off the threat experienced in a given situation puts the more experienced language student in a different position than a student trying to master language in order to do things with

it. The equilibrium that will be sought after in both situations will be different. Chances are that in the unsafe situation, the safety that is sought after does not stimulate implicit language learning.

4 A Few Examples

– First of all, let us establish the structure perspective on language in European language policies. Let me refer to the 'mother tongue + 2' policy aimed at stimulating the proficiency in foreign languages within the European Union. It is clear from the formulation of the policy that language is seen here as a countable entity and not as the faculty to use the appropriate language in diverse situations. In the same vein, it is interesting to see that the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), a system to measure language proficiency in multilingual Europe, starts from so called 'can do' scales, but proceeds to try and fit these scales into levels, indicating how far ahead someone is with the mastery of a certain language, more or less regardless of the situation it needs to be used in (see, e.g., North, 2000; Little, 2006). Hulstijn, among others, has indicated that the different levels that were identified cannot be seen as a mere unidimensional indication of language proficiency. He discusses the fact that the scales values for the higher levels of proficiency (B2, C1, C2) typically involve activities that educated people find themselves in and, as such, are hardly attainable for people not engaging in that type of activities (Hulstijn, 2007; Hulstijn, 2011; Hulstijn, 2014).

The efforts to improve language education by introducing new methods and looking for more time do not really seem to have a large effect. Let me give two examples of ineffective policy.

– First of all, there is the story of a master student of mine, who had to interview people of Turkish heritage in Flanders for her master thesis. At some point, she came into my office and asked the question whether it was normal that the people she interviewed and who were able to have an interesting conversation with her (on the education of their children) all spoke dialect, and that the people speaking a more standard variety of Dutch had to ask her a number of times to rephrase her questions, and were not able to elaborate on their opinions. The interesting point here is that most of the Flemish heritage people in the region she did her research in, speak dialect on a daily basis, but that there are no courses teaching dialect. All courses on offer teach standard Dutch. That implies that the Turkish heritage people speaking dialect, acquired that dialect interacting with Flemish heritage people in community life, whereas the people speaking a more standard form of the language, probably followed a course in which Dutch was taught from a structure perspective. However, observations of this nature do not necessarily lead to the creation of participatory environments in which people from minority groups can acquire Dutch in a safe environment. In the recent government formation agreement in Flanders (Vlaamse Regering, 2014) some intentions towards

enabling participation are mentioned, but the most concrete measures deal with offering more courses in Standard Dutch, and introducing a test that new arrivals have to pass in order to be accepted in society.

– Another interesting example is provided by the foreign language monitor of the European Commission (2012). This monitor compares the proficiency in the foreign languages taught in the member states of the EU. Much to the dismay of a lot of people in the Flemish educational world, who regard Flemish people as the World Champions in foreign language skills, Flanders is scoring extremely low when the first foreign language taught in schools in the EU is looked at. Of course, unlike in most other regions, that first foreign language in Flanders is French. When the scores on proficiency of English are compared among the different countries, Flanders scores second best in Europe. So although less time is spent on English than on French, the proficiency in English of the average student is much higher than the proficiency in French. The proficiency is also much higher than the proficiency of students in other European countries, even when these students in other countries spend more time on English than they do in Flanders. As a matter of fact, in primary education in Flanders, pupils get two years of French and no English. Nevertheless, when asked about their proficiency in both languages, almost all students rate their proficiency in English as higher than their proficiency in French (Sbarcea & Jaspaert, forthcoming).

It is clear from both examples that what determines the outcome in terms of language proficiency is not the four characteristics mentioned as the basis for explicit learning, but the role a language plays in the group one belongs to or wants to belong to. When that language is an important aspect of social life, and the language learner experiences that (s)he can be a valued member of the group involved in that social life, (s)he will acquire that language. When, however, language proficiency in the dominant language is treated as a sort of entrance ticket to that group, so that when one fails to acquire the language, one is not let in, the circumstances for implicit learning are not fulfilled, and language learning will be difficult, especially in the more expert stages of proficiency acquisition. That is exactly what happens when policy makers look for solutions using a structure concept of language when trying to solve problems of situated functioning. What this amounts to in terms of integration of immigrants and people from minority groups, is that the commonly held idea, which is translated into much policy, that knowledge of the language leads to integration, is not true. It is integration that leads to a better command of the language, not the other way around.

Now the problem with language policy is that it is developed by people who are consciously dealing with language and want to solve a problem that other people encounter in their situated behavior. In a lot of instances, solutions are proposed for a problem in people's agency from a concept that resides as structure in the cultural system. Variability is in a lot of cases seen as the enemy, whereas the solution for the problem lies in bringing about the variation in language use that the situation requires. Moreover, the structure concept of language which policy makers use as the basis of their actions, reinforces social inequality. So, as a lot of instances of

language policy are aimed at emancipation, in reality they offer a solution which looks socially neutral but which is not. And when the developers of the specific language policy do not make this mistake, chances are that the people who need to implement it translate the policy into structure terms, giving priority to uniformity and not to the emergence of variability. Here, too, a number of examples can clarify matters. The first one deals with the recognition of minority languages, the second one has to do with language policy in schools.

– The *European Charter for regional or minority languages* (Council of Europe, 1992) was launched by the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe on June 25th 1992. It provided a framework for the official recognition of languages other than the official language(s) of member states. The Charter also explicitly excluded dialects of the official languages from recognition. So it is clear here that the aim is to protect the linguistic diversity in Europe, but that the starting point of the policy is a structure concept of language, a concept which allows for recognition of ideal forms of languages.

– In the Netherlands it was clear very early on that the Charter was going to be ratified and used to officially recognize Frisian as a language in its own right. During the Parliamentary debates on the matter, however, the issue was raised that Nedersaksisch needed to be recognized also. In the end, not only Frisian and Nedersaksisch were recognized, but Limburgian as well. This recognition of Limburgian raised a number of interesting issues with regard to language policy, how it can be set up and implemented. One of these issues is how one decides what is a language and what is a dialect. From a linguistic point of view, the different linguistic codes used in Limburg have always been considered dialects of Dutch. One can observe, however, that when people step in who have enough symbolic power and who know which strings to pull, a dialect can suddenly be turned into a language. One of the characteristics of the situation of Limburgian is that there is not really a uniform variety of Limburgian that is used in certain domains throughout the whole region. As soon as Limburgian was recognized, the debate started on the necessity of such a variety and on the form that variety needed to have. This shows that uniformity really follows variation and not the other way around, and that questions of a correct form of 'a' language are raised as soon as a collection of ways of speaking are recognized from a structure concept of language. The debate has the potential of leading to the devaluation of the language some people use on a daily basis as corrupt forms of Limburgian. In that way the Charter for the recognition of regional and minority language might result in the opposite of what it was created to do.
– In Flanders, the influx of pupils with a mother tongue other than Dutch has given rise to numerous policy initiatives aimed at supporting the educational development of these children. The basic idea underlying these initiatives is that it is important for these children to acquire a good command of Dutch, especially Dutch as it is used as a language of instruction. At the same time, policy developers have realized that efforts to support the acquisition of Dutch of these children should go hand in hand with initiatives that value their mother tongue in the

educational context, the central idea being that a negative approach to linguistic diversity will have a backward effect on the further language development of these children. Policy makers have called on schools to develop their own 'languages policies' using the plural to make clear that those policies should not have an exclusive focus on Dutch. In this way schools are invited to become institutions developing and implementing policies aimed at the same time at the development of the dominant language and at the celebration of multilingualism.

– In their evaluation of the languages policies of the schools (Onderwijsinspectie, 2010), the Flemish Education Inspection shows that only a minority of schools (24% of primary schools, 4% of secondary schools) have a well developed languages policy. Moreover, these policies are almost exclusively aimed at supporting the development of Dutch. Some schools have added some initiatives dealing with modern foreign languages (in the Flemish context, French, English and German). There seems to be little or no structural attempt to boost the value of the languages other than Dutch that pupils bring to school.

– A recent large scale study on the educational success of minority students in secondary schools (Clycq et al., 2014) gives some more insight into what these languages policies really are about. Teachers in a large number of schools in Ghent, Antwerp and Genk are interviewed on the nature and the effects of the languages policy in their schools. Iconic for what goes on in schools is the story of one teacher who tells the interviewer that when pupils are caught speaking their own mother tongue, they have to pay € 0.20. In order not to discriminate, children with Dutch as a mother tongue have to pay € 0.20 as well when they are overheard making racist remarks. This money is kept in an envelope, and when there is enough money there, it is used to treat all children to something to eat. The Turkish children are offered kebab, and the Flemish children French fries (the traditional Flemish dish) because, in the words of the teacher 'it is, of course, important to acknowledge the identity of the children.'

In stable societies, the fact that solutions for coordination problems in language use are structured in policies and consequently use a structure perspective on language, may go relatively unnoticed. In these societies, the coordination problems that occur remain more or less the same. When the policy developers did a good job, they will have developed a policy that can provide answers to those coordination problems, and, in that way, remain functional. The main objection to these structure oriented approaches to coordination problems in language is that by making use of a structure concept of language, which is itself an objectification and reproduction of social structure, they tend to reproduce social inequality in society.

With societies in rapid change, however, the problem with this kind of solutions becomes considerably larger. As society changes, the nature of the coordination problems that arise, changes also. The solutions that have been thought of, and that have been reified as autonomous, valuable systems, lose much of their relevance in terms of solutions for the new coordination problems. At that moment, the use of the system, and the adherence to the structure that has been set up by the policy, is

defended in its own right, disregarding the fact whether that system and structure adequately solve the coordination problem. What is left is social reproduction without the benefit of coordination problems being solved.

5 Towards a more Effective Language Policy

The problem I have outlined above is that a policy which starts from a concept of language which determines a uniform language as ideal, will subsequently result in dividing the language people produce in separate entities (languages or language varieties) which become each others' competitors. That kind of policy is used in a lot of instances to support the emancipation of people. For those people, the language form which is propagated will always divert from their present use of language, and in that sense create a situation of variability. As either the policy makers themselves or the people implementing the policy see that external, uniform language as an ideal, they devaluate other forms of language and the situations that presented the coordination problems these forms of language were an answer to (cfr Nussbaum, 2012). From an educational point of view, making people acquire that ideal form of language needs skilled teachers and time. As teachers are the ones that need to implement the policy, they are not inclined to see themselves as not skilled enough. So that leaves time as a main factor. Since the ideal uniform language system is not situated, in the sense that it is made socially sterile through objectification (cfr supra), that time can be sought after in any situation. So the situations in which other forms of language are used become the enemy of the emancipation efforts, since all the time spent using those 'incorrect' or 'inappropriate' forms is not spent dealing with the ideal language. In this way, the language policy becomes prescriptive. It was aimed at introducing variation in the language use of people by helping them use a different variety of language in certain situations because using that variety would offer them chances for emancipation, but now it turns against the people that it wanted to help in the first place. They are considered not willing or able to spend the time necessary for the language policy to succeed. That spending that time would imply using a form of language which does not offer adequate solutions for the coordination problems specific for that particular situation, is blocked from view by the concept of language that is used.

In most cases it would be better not to have a policy at all than having a form of prescriptive policy as described above. Imagine a Turkish heritage student learning Physics in a Flemish school. The physics problems the student needs to understand are written up in Dutch in the textbook the student uses, and are explained, again in Dutch, by the teacher. Suppose the proficiency in Dutch of the student is not high enough to understand what is being explained. A good teacher will let the student use all skills (s)he has to come to an understanding of the physics problem, including all skills in other languages or language varieties than Standard Dutch. Chances are that when this student manages to find a solution to the coordination problem (s) he finds him/herself in, using whatever language that is useful under the

circumstances, (s)he will also understand what has been explained in Dutch and learn from it. For this to happen, no language policy is needed. All that is necessary is a good teacher, a teacher who does not tie the hand of the student to his/her back, but who stimulates him/her to use all of the skills that are available to him/her to manage the learning situation.

If a policy is developed, what is needed is not a prescriptive policy but policy that is facilitating, a policy that helps teachers help students. Language policy should aim at creating quarter for language use. I know that with the label quarter, I am using an somewhat archaic word which, if it is at all used nowadays, is very often used in a context where the word 'no' occurs (no quarter asked, no quarter given). In my mind this 'quarter' should not be refused, nor should it only be given when asked. As the word refers to a safehaven, a place where it is safe to try things one is not sure he/she can accomplish yet, this 'quarter' should be created for those we want to emancipate. In that sense the word catches the exact meaning I want to convey here.

This kind of policy requires an agency concept of language. What is important is that people mobilize all of their language skills to get a certain job in a given situation done. Creating quarter through language policy might be counterproductive when a structure concept of language lies at the core of that policy. Let us return to the example of what happens when the government decides to make room for minority languages in education to illustrate this observation. Back in 1988, I was involved in a project that aimed at introducing minority languages in the secondary school context. As the project was a success, the Flemish government decided to include the introduction of minority languages into the educational priority policy that was started in 1990. Much to our surprise we noticed that, although support for this action was high at the onset of the policy, after a couple of years, it started to fade away. When we inquired in the schools why this was the case, what we found out was this: The school management saw the advantages of being more positive about an important background element of their students, and decided to introduce these languages. But the first thing the persons that were brought into the schools to support these languages noticed, was that the kids did not use the 'proper' form of that language. So in a lot of cases, they set out to teach these children the proper form, in this way putting these children for the Procrustean choice of being alienated from their own language or turning their backs on the language offer the school had presented them with in an attempt to help them function better. A lot of school principals could not understand why a lot of pupils made the second choice.

Instead, creating quarter for language use refers to a policy that facilitates people to accomplish tasks using the full scope of their linguistic abilities. In order to do so people should be offered the opportunity to function in a situation for which they do not master the necessary language skills, where they are helped when the lack of language skills threatens the successful accomplishment of the task, and which is made safe for them to experiment in. When in that kind of situation language is used in a way the situation requires, chances are that implicit learning will steer these people to the acquisition and use of that language. For some this move towards implicit learning may go fast, other may take some more time.

This idea about creating quarter does not mean that there is no more room for explicit instruction. As Dreyfus and Dreyfus (2004) point out and Dixon et al. (2012) confirm, persons without knowledge of a language used in a given situation will benefit more from explicit teaching than from implicit learning. And, of course, some aspects of language are more easily dealt with explicitly than implicitly (orthography, technical terminology, e.g.). The fact that explicit attention is paid to certain language aspects is not a problem, the problem starts when people see the learning of this explicitly provided information as the goal of the learning activity, and not the fact that the knowledge provided can be used during the accomplishment of a certain task.

Let me again give an example, starting from the policy at one particular school and moving towards more general aspects of policy.

– A secondary school in Flanders is famous for the plays they stage. Students are screened at the beginning of the year, only the best are enrolled in the activity. The play is supervised by teachers who have a clear concept of what theatre should be like. They direct the students in the most literal sense of the word. With the commemoration of World War I, however, some students went up to the management of the school and asked whether they could stage a performance dedicated to the remembrance of the civilians of the town who were victims in that war. The school agreed and facilitated the students as much as possible. The teachers involved acted as resource persons: they helped the students make up their minds when they ran into something they could not solve. The result was that much more students got involved, and the play became a project which all of these students invested more time and energy in than when it would have been a traditional school assignment. At a certain point, a quarrel emerged between two of the leading students in the project. Other students chose sides. The school management did not step in and solve the problem in one or the other direction, but again facilitated the opportunities for the students to work out their differences. In the end the theatrical performance was, by traditional standards, not as good as it would have been, had it been directed by the teachers from beginning to end, but a lot more students had learned a lot more about how to use language in a situation of cooperation on a project. They had learned to disagree and sort out their disagreements in language, they had learned to convince fellow students of their approach, they had learned the difference between saying something which their friends found funny, and staging the same fact for an audience that was very heterogeneous.
– When we look at policy issued by the government, the problem of minority children underachieving in Western education is a question that draws a lot of attention from policy makers. It is a problem many Western countries face, but I will concentrate on what goes on in Flanders. In Flanders the issue has been regarded as a problem related to the poor command of the Dutch that is used in education. Since the beginning of the 1990s, a lot of policy effort has gone into the matter. Some results can be claimed, but the problem remains unsolved to a large extent. It is hard to establish what caused the progress, but with regard to this paper, it is

interesting to note that the positive evolution coincided with the introduction of task based language learning (Van den Branden, 2006) in a large number of schools hosting minority pupils. As task based language teaching provides interesting tasks to students, and offers meaningful language input, not as an objective of study, but as a way of making meaning and supporting the pupils in attaining the goals set in the task, the language acquisition of the pupils is stimulated in the way described above. Remarkably, it proved a hard ordeal to make teachers use the task based materials that were developed in the way they were meant to be used.

Two examples to illustrate this fact.

- In order to create time to work on these tasks, the Center for Language and Education (CTO) of KU Leuven developed an alternative spelling method of which they could show that pupils reached an comparable result to pupils in traditional classes in about half the time. It was baffling for the developers of the method that hardly any school adopted it. It was only when the concept of language was brought into the equation, that they could make sense of this refusal: From a structure perspective on language, learning a language takes time (Characteristic 2, cfr supra). So subjects the school spends much time on are more important than subject the school spends less time on. Spending less time on spelling meant, from a worldview in which the structure concept of language dominates conscious thinking about and planning of language education, that spelling became less important. And as spelling is, of course, from that point of view one of the primary matters in correctness of language (most people find spelling mistakes the most deadly sins a language user can make), paying less attention to it was for most teachers not an option.
- CTO also developed a task based method for the teaching of French at the primary school. In the first lesson, teachers were supposed to show a video of a police inspector, who told the class that a painting had been stolen in Liège (in the French speaking part of Belgium), and there was good reason to believe that the painting was hidden in the neighborhood of the school. The pupils were asked for assistance in retrieving the painting. Of course, the pupils, not knowing any French, did not understand the message. The idea was that the teacher told them that (s)he did not understand the message either, but that it seemed to be about a stolen painting, and that the police inspector asked for their cooperation. At that point, pupils could begin to decipher the message, finding out for themselves (with the aid of the teacher) which words were used and what these words meant. The method was not a success. Almost all teachers, again starting from the concept of language as an external system, thought it their duty to look for the new words themselves and teach them to the children prior to showing the video. As a result the course in French started with three weeks of tedious word learning, and after that, no child believed that it would yield an expansion of his/her lifeworld and offer them chances to do things they could not do previous to their learning French.

The government reacted to the fact that the introduction of TBLT had not managed to solve the problem of underachievement of minority children with new policy measures. These measures were typically thought of from a structure concept of language. One of these measures was the introduction of tests at the end of kindergarten and at the end of primary school. The idea behind the tests was that they would show how far pupils were lagging behind, so that extra measures could be taken to do away with the arrears. Typically, the measures that were envisaged, all dealt with the factor time: children lagging behind at the beginning of primary or secondary school would be obliged to spend extra time acquiring the language. In a lot of instances, buying extra time for them would mean that they are forced to leave the group they are in. For most students, the effect of a bad test would be felt as a punishment. In that sense, the cure would be worse than the disease, in that it created an unsafe environment in which the implicit learning of these children came to a halt. That the group felt this way, was made clear through a number of house visits that were carried out with Turkish heritage children. A number of the parents refused to be interviewed because, as they put it, ‘it would end up anyway by blaming them for everything that went wrong with their children at school’.

6 Conclusion

In this paper, I started from the double concept of language and the relation between the two concepts. I pleaded for the view in which language is seen as inherently variable, and the uniform concept of language is derived from that inherently variable language through processes of norm formation. I related both concepts to what in RST is seen as structure and agency. I also argued that the structure approach to language is, at a surface level, socially sterile, but is in fact an objectification of social inequality. Then I went on to show that most language policies aimed at emancipating people, are based on a structure concept of language. The consequences of such an approach were discussed. The outcome of the discussion was that we did not need prescriptive but facilitating policies.

What the government should do in terms of policy, is create the facilities through which teachers could put children to work on something they really would like to accomplish. While doing so, teachers can provide relevant input in Dutch. Explicit language teaching can provide the language elements that are needed for the task accomplishment, especially for beginners. The government can also make the situation in which these pupils experiment with Dutch, safe by making sure that a failure to acquire does not result in punishment in one form or another. It can stimulate the use of didactic formats in which support is given to the pupils to help them accomplish the task at hand, for instance by creating conditions in which the stronger pupils help the weaker ones, in whatever language that seems helpful to them, in this way avoiding having to make the group homogeneous all the time. And the government should take measures to make clear to teachers that language is for

doing things, and they are not the sentinels of society paid to guard the honor of an ideal language form.

I remember the story of a principal who had introduced task based language learning in primary school, and who had a mutiny of the parents of the children at hand. He called us to ask whether we could come in and talk to the parents. We did. After a long discussion, where we used every possible argument to defend the approach of the school, one of the parents said to us: 'You know, we have been to school, too. And we hated Dutch, it was so boring, so we gave up, and see where that brought us. My child comes to school and he actually likes Dutch. That can't be right. I want him to bite the bullit so he won't end up in our position.' If the policy is not supported by the parents, and by society at large, for that matter, we are bound to make the same mistakes over and over again. We need to reframe the issue (Lakoff, 2008), and that is not an easy matter, especially when the issue that needs reframing is in itself an objectification of social inequality.

References

Agha, A. (2003). The social life of cultural value. *Language and Communication, 23*(3), 231–273.

Bally, C., & Séchehaye, A. (1916). *Ferdinand de Saussure. Cours de linguistique générale*. [Ferdinand de Saussure. Course on general linguistics]. Editions Payot and Rivages.

Blommaert, J., & Rampton, B. (2012). *Language and superdiversity*. MPIMMG.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). L'économie des échanges linguistiques [The economy of linguistic exchanges]. *Langue Française*, 17–34.

Bourdieu, P. (1982). *Ce que parler veut dire* [What speaking means]. Fayard.

Carter, B., & Sealey, A. (2000). Language, structure and agency: What can realist social theory offer to sociolinguistics? *Journal of SocioLinguistics, 4*(1), 3–20.

Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. M.I.T. Press.

Clark, H. H. (1996). *Using language*. Cambridge University Press.

Clycq, N., & Timmerman, C., Van Avermaet, P., Wets, J. & Hermans, P.. (2014). *Oprit 14. Naar een schooltraject zonder snelheidsbeperkingen* [Access 14. Towards a school trajectory without speed limitations]. Academia Press.

Council of Europe. (1992). *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*. http://www.conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=148andCM=8andDF=10/09/2014andCL=ENG

Dixon, L. Q., Zhao, J., Shin, J.-Y., Wu, S., Jung Hsuan, S., Burgess-Brigham, R., Gezer, M. U., & Snow, C. (2012). What we know about second language acquisition a synthesis from four perspectives. *Review of Educational Research, 82*(1), 5–60.

Dreyfus, H. L. (1996). The current relevance of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of embodiment. *The Electronic Journal of Analytic Philosophy, 4*(Spring), 1–14.

Dreyfus, H. L., & Dreyfus, S. E. (2004). *A phenomenology of skill acquisition as the basis for a Merleau-Pontian non-representationalist cognitive science*. University of California, Department of Philosophy.

European Commission. (2012). *First European survey on language competences*. Publications Office of the European Union.

Heine, S. J., Proulx, T., & Vohs, K. D. (2006). The meaning maintenance model: On the coherence of social motivations. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 10*(2), 88–110.

Hulstijn, J. H. (2005). Theoretical and empirical issues in the study of implicit and explicit second-language learning: Introduction. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 27*(02), 129–140.

Hulstijn, J. H. (2007). The shaky ground beneath the CEFR: Quantitative and qualitative dimensions of language Proficiency1. *The Modern Language Journal, 91*(4), 663–667.

Hulstijn, J. H. (2011). Language proficiency in native and nonnative speakers: An agenda for research and suggestions for second-language assessment. *Language Assessment Quarterly, 8*(3), 229–249.

Hulstijn, J. H. (2014). The common European framework of reference for language: A challenge for applied linguists. *ITL, 165*(1), 3–18.

Jaspaert, K. (1986). *Statuut en structuur van standaardtalig Vlaanderen* [Status and structure of the standard language in Flanders]. Leuven University Press.

Jaspaert, K. (2014). En is't de tale niet, wat is't dan dat mij kwelt [If it's not the language, what is it that bothers me]. In F. van de Velde, H. Smessaert, F. van Eynde, & S. Verbrugge (Eds.), (pp. 723–734). University Press.

Jaspaert, K., & van Belle, W. (1987). The evolution of the diglossic system in Flanders (1850–1914). In *Language and intergroup relations in the Netherlands and Flanders* (pp. 67–79). Foris Publications.

Johnstone, B., Andrus, J., & Danielson, A. E. (2006). Mobility, indexicality, and the enregisterment of "Pittsburghese". *Journal of English Linguistics, 34*(2), 77–104.

Jørgensen, J. N. (2008). Polylingual languaging around and among children and adolescents. *International Journal of Multilingualism, 5*(3), 161–176.

Kaufman, S. B., DeYoung, C. G., Gray, J. R., Jiménez, L., Brown, J., & Mackintosh, N. (2010). Implicit learning as an ability. *Cognition, 116*, 321–340.

Kerckhofs, M. (2014). *Framing van taal in de Vlaamse pers* [Framing of language in the Flemish press]. KULeuven Ma thesis.

Kloss, H. (1969). *Research possibilities on group bilingualism: A report*. Quebec International Center for Research on Bilingualism.

Labov, W. (1972). *Sociolinguistic patterns*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Lakoff, G. (2008). *Don't think of an elephant!: Know your values and frame the debate*. Chelsea Green Publishing.

Lee, N. (2009). *The interactional instinct: The evolution and acquisition of language*. Oxford University Press.

Little, D. (2006). The common European framework of reference for languages: Content, purpose, origin, reception and impact. *Language Teaching, 39*(3), 167–190.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of perception*. The Humanities Press.

North, B. (2000). *The development of a common framework scale of language proficiency* (459 pp). Peter Lang Publishing.

Nussbaum, M. C. (2012). *Not for profit: Why democracy needs the humanities*. Princeton University Press.

Onderwijsinspectie. (2010). *Onderwijsspiegel 2010* [Educational mirror]. Brussel, Ministerie van Onderwijs en Vorming.

Ortega, L. (2009). *Understanding second language acquisition*. Hodder Education.

Paradis, M. (2004). *A neurolinguistic theory of bilingualism*. John Benjamins Publishing.

Paradis, M. (2009). *Declarative and procedural determinants of second languages*. John Benjamins Publishing.

Popper, K. (1978). Natural selection and the emergence of mind. *Dialectica, 32*(3–4), 339–355.

Sbarcea, K., & Jaspaert, K. (Forthcoming). Implicit foreign language learning in Flemish primary schools.

Searle, J. R. (2005). What is an institution? *Journal of Institutional Economics, 1*(1), 1–22.

Spolsky, B. (2004). *Language policy*. Cambridge University Press.

Tomasello, M. (2003). *Constructing a language*. Harvard University Press.

Ullmann-Margalit, E. (1977). *The emergence of norms*. Clarendon Press.

Van den Branden, K. (Ed.). (2006). *Task based language education. From theory to practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 30*(6), 1024–1054.

Vlaamse Regering. (2014). *Vertrouwen, verbinden, vooruitgaan. Regeerakkoord Vlaamse regering 2014–2019* [Trusting, connecting, moving ahead. Government agreement of the Flemish government 2014–2019]. http://www.vlaanderen.be/nl/overheid/vlaamse-regering/regeerakkoord-van-de-vlaamse-regering-2014-2019

Wardhaugh, R. (2006). *An Introductio nto sociolinguistics*. Blackwell Publishing.

Teachers-in-Training and the Policing of Language Variation

Jos Swanenberg, Anne Kerkhoff, and Petra Poelmans

Abstract In the domains of education and labor, we may expect to be assessed on competences and capacities. Alas, stereotyping and prejudice hinder this for people from peripheral areas and marginalized groups. One of the important factors in this is their language. Why does speaking with an accent diminish one's opportunities in the job market or the achievements in one's school career? Why are some accents better than other accents?

In a pilot study at a teacher training college we addressed the question if future teachers of Dutch may or may not speak with an accent in the class room. Apparently, speaking with an accent will be tolerated by future teachers of Dutch, but it depends on which accent one uses. Indigenous accents are evaluated more positively than foreign accents, especially those we associate with labor migration.

Although diversity in the pronunciation of Dutch may have increased, the social acceptance of accents is quite selective. Adolescents have to deal with stigmatized representations when people hear and assess their accents. Tolerance towards speaking with an accent is limited, and this may damage the position of young people from the countryside and specific ethnic groups.

Keywords Language attitudes · Accent · Evaluation · Stereotypes · Education

1 Introduction

"It is pure discrimination. We are dumb farmers, beer drinkers, men in clogs, and more of such things". "I wish I could turn off my accent."

J. Swanenberg (✉)
Department of Culture Studies, Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands
e-mail: a.p.c.swanenberg@tilburguniversity.edu

A. Kerkhoff · P. Poelmans
Teacher Training, Fontys University of Applied Sciences, Tilburg, The Netherlands

© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2021

M. Spotti et al. (eds.), *Language Policies and the Politics of Language Practices*, Language Policy 28, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-88723-0_8

In the domains of education and labor, we should assess each other on our competences and capacities. Alas, again and again, it becomes clear that stereotyping and prejudice hinder a valid and objective assessment, especially for people from peripheral areas or belonging to marginalized groups. One of the important factors in this type of stereotyping and prejudice is the way people's language is perceived.

Although accent is not the most prominent linguistic feature as it comes to functionality of communication, this characteristic of a speaker's language is an important source of stereotyping and prejudice. In many cases, the target of stereotyping and prejudice is the speakers' native language. More specifically, certain features that are associated with that language are targeted, such as an accent when speaking the dominant language in a certain society, in our case standard Dutch. Speaking without an accent is also one of the goals of many courses aimed at newly arrived migrants, since this is thought to be pre-condition for being taken seriously and assertive (Spotti, 2011).

This idea of the ultimate goals of foreign or second language teaching has long been common, and was closely in line with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, the influential tool the Council of Europe published in 2001 to promote the learning and teaching of foreign languages. This framework describes different characteristics of six levels of foreign language proficiency, ranging from the lowest level A1, the 'basic user', to the highest level of the 'proficient user', level C2. From the fourth level, B2, pronunciation of the foreign or second language is described as "Has acquired a clear, natural, pronunciation and intonation". In this way, the CEFR fits with the practice outlined by Spotti (2011). But there's hope. In 2018, the CEFR from 2001 has been 'refreshed' and adapted to user experiences and new developments. One of the scales that changed most dramatically, is the scale related to pronunciation. No longer the phonological control of an idealized native speaker is the ultimate goal of language acquisition because, as the editors of the Companion Volume say: "Idealized models that ignore the retention of accent lack consideration for context, sociolinguistic aspects and learners' needs" (Council of Europe, 2018: 134).

The presentation of the Companion Volume with its adapted and sometimes completely new scales seems to be in line with other social developments with regard to attitudes to language and linguistic variation. Tolerance towards accent variation seems to increase, e.g. on television and on social network sites, and our society in general is becoming more international and diverse. However, despite these encouraging signs, at the very moment it is still true that some accents are considered better than other accents. Speaking the dominant language with an accent is believed to diminish one's opportunities in the job market as well as the evaluation of one's achievements in school career (Jaspers, 2012). As we will see, the educational domain is where people learn how to deal with linguistic diversity in an appropriate way. One of the questions we may therefore ask is how teachers assess and evaluate various accents. In this chapter, we will present a case study on the attitudes of teachers-in-training (in Tilburg, the Netherlands) towards various accents. We found that these teachers-to-be reported to be quite tolerant towards accent variation, although we also found results that could lead to concerns about prejudice and discrimination.

2 "I wish I could turn off my accent"

Every now and then, we read or hear in the media about young people who feel discriminated, or who are afraid they will be discriminated, because of their accent. Often these stories refer to experiences regarding the job market and job interviews, for instance when young people from peripheral areas in the Netherlands (e.g. Fryslân, Limburg, Brabant, de Achterhoek) confess they do not dare to apply for jobs in the Randstad, the central and dominant area in the West of the Netherlands, because they speak with a regional accent.

In one of such stories in a newspaper, a 25-year-old psychologist from 's-Hertogenbosch in Brabant said:

> "Mijn accent belemmert me en iedereen maakt er altijd opmerkingen over. Na mijn studie heb ik bewust gesolliciteerd in Brabant. Hier is iedereen aan het accent gewend, pas buiten Brabant merk je hoe groot het verschil is. Ik zou willen dat ik mijn accent kon uitzetten." (Metronieuws, 2016).
>
> [My accent hinders me and everyone makes comments on it. After I graduated, I consciously applied for a job in Brabant. Here, everyone is used to the accent, but elsewhere you notice how big the differences are. I wish I could turn off my accent].

She also stated:

> "Een van mijn vriendinnen is niet naar een sollicitatie gegaan toen ze hoorde dat er alleen maar kandidaten uit het westen op afkwamen." (Metronieuws, 2016).
>
> [One of my friends did not go to a job interview when she heard all other candidates were from the West].

Furthermore, it is striking that the same psychologist found herself unprofessional:

> "Tijdens mijn studie presenteerde ik graag. Eén project deed ik samen met een studiegenoot zonder duidelijk accent. We hebben de presentatie een paar keer doorgenomen en besloten toen dat hij het beter kon doen. Ik vond mezelf onprofessioneel." (Metronieuws, 2016).
>
> [During my studies, I liked to present. One project I did together with a fellow student who did not have a marked accent. We looked over the presentation a couple of times and then decided he should present. I thought myself unprofessional].

Also noteworthy are the statements made by a 29-year-old woman from Oss (Brabant) showing a negative attitude towards her own accent. She agrees: her accent will not help when looking for a job; it offers little perspective for the future.

> "Mijn uitspraak maakt me wel eens onzeker. Ik vind de tongval lomp en boers." (Metronieuws, 2016).
>
> [My pronunciation makes me insecure. I think the accent is bulky and boorish].

Classmates told a 17-year-old student from Fryslân in secondary education in Groningen:

> "Ga terug naar je eigen land. Waarom ben je hier? Je hoort hier niet te zijn." (NPO Dealen met je dialect 2017).
>
> [Go back to your own country. Why are you here? You do not belong here].

As she speaks another regional language (Frisian) than the other pupils in school, she was regarded as not belonging and out of place (cf. Thissen, 2018) in Groningen, and therefore she was harshly excluded.

A 19-year-old actor from the Achterhoek was told to lose his accent or lose his job. Although he chose to go to a speech therapist and managed to lose his accent, he feels offended.

> "Het is pure discriminatie. We zijn domme boeren, bierzuipers, klompendragers en meer van dat soort zaken." (NPO Dealen met je dialect 2017).
>
> [It is pure discrimination. We are dumb farmers, beer drinkers, men in clogs, and more of such things].

These examples show how young people from peripheral areas in the Netherlands are worried about being confronted with their regional accents and consequently stigmatized as inferior persons. Furthermore, speaking with a *foreign* accent is even more reported to have a negative influence on evaluations and assessments, regardless of the speaker's actual proficiency in the language involved. Minorities who speak the dominant language with an accent experience discriminative behavior. They feel they are categorized as incapable, unintelligible and unintelligent, and therefore less competent and less valuable. This is strikingly visible on the job market where foreign language speakers in general underachieve in comparison to autochthons. This cannot be explained by pointing to lower language proficiencies. Hence, we observe an *accent ceiling* (Jaspers, 2012: 385), similar to the *glass ceiling*, the vertical segregation based on gender in our society. This segregation by accent is the cause of unequal treatment of various minorities in our society.

> "Allochtonen hebben voldoende kennis van het Nederlands maar ondervinden last van negatieve beeldvorming".
>
> [Foreigners have sufficient competence in Dutch but they meet with negative images] (Citation from the Flemish Job Counseling Service in 2004, in Jaspers, 2012: 384).

These negative images are the result of "processes and practices whereby performable signs become recognized (and regrouped) as belonging to distinct, differentially valorized semiotic registers by a population"; these processes and practices are labeled *enregisterment* (Agha, 2007: 81). Linguistic features that are part of an accent become indexical of a social category (a group), when these features are recognized and categorized (Agha, 2007: 145). Next, such features can be associated with stereotypical properties of perceived categories, e.g., people who speak with a certain accent may be seen as dumb farmers, beer drinkers, men in clogs. Language is one of the most prominent factors we use to recognize and categorize people in our heavily 'languagised' world (Jaspers & Madsen, 2016).

3 Linguicism and Verbal Hygiene

When a Dutch documentary maker reflected upon a television program (*De Kennis van Nu,* broadcast at NPO2 at 18 January 2016), which had a Dutch person and a Moroccan Dutch person each speaking with the same people on the telephone, he said:

> "Marokkaanse Nederlanders zijn agressief, lelijk, onbetrouwbaar en dom in vergelijking met andere accentsprekers. Dat zijn enkele diepgewortelde oordelen die mensen hebben als ze Marokkaanse Nederlanders alleen maar horen spreken, maar niet zien. Soms grenzen deze beelden zelfs aan latent-racisme." (Metronieuws, 2016).
>
> [Moroccan Dutchmen are aggressive, ugly, unreliable and dumb, compared to speakers of other accents. Those are the deeply rooted judgments of people, when just hearing Moroccan Dutchmen speak, but not seeing them. Sometimes these images even border on latent racism].

Language discrimination or language racism is the discrimination of speakers of a certain language. Another term for this phenomenon is *linguicism*. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) coined the term: "Linguicism can be defined as ideologies and structures which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and non-material) between groups which are defined on the basis of language (on the basis of their mother tongues)." (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988: 13) Kontra adds that if we ignore the second parenthetical phrase, this also covers intralingual discrimination that speakers of a standard language tend to impose on their nonstandard speaking compatriots (Kontra, 2006: 97–98).

A logical consequence of this sort of discriminative behavior is *verbal hygiene* (Cameron, 2012). It refers to the "[…] motley collection of discourses and practices through which people attempt to 'clean up' language and make its structure or its use conform more closely to their ideals of beauty, truth, efficiency, logic, correctness and civility" (Cameron, 2012: vii). Central to her discussion is the idea that, behind the apparent desire to regulate language and ensure standards, verbal hygiene practices hide a range of deeper social, moral and political anxieties. Verbal hygiene practices are inevitable and therefore common to all language users, according to Cameron. Whether these practices are carried out to criticize deviant or incorrect language forms and to impose standard forms, or to argue against any form of interference with 'natural' changes, both linguists and laypeople have compelling ideas about how a specific language should be spoken and written. "Our norms and values differ", but "what remains constant is that we have norms and values" (Cameron, 2012: 9). By verbal hygiene practices, we prescribe how language should work and we try to control language as a manufactured product. This "urge to meddle in matters of language" (Cameron, 2012: xix) is a consequence of the fact that people do not just use language, but they also observe and reflect on the language they use. We form opinions on language in use, and these opinions influence the attitudes we have towards our interlocutors.

4 Increase of Tolerance?

Strikingly, where we may expect linguicism and verbal hygiene to cause pressure on various accents, public tolerance towards variation in speech seems to have increased over the last 40 years. In Dutch television broadcasting, we now hear much more accented speech than in the 1970s, early 1980s with its program announcers on public television (traditionally one of the icons of the speakers of 'proper Dutch', cf. Smakman, 2006).

A process of democratization of standard languages seems to cause this increase of tolerance (Van der Horst, 2008). In addition, the sympathetic attention to regional culture may have increased the tolerance towards language variation, referred to as "the rise of the regional" (Mugglestone, 2003: 273), leading to a "dialect renaissance" (Grijp, 2007). People become more concerned with regional culture and accents are a central part of such culture. Secondly, present day multilingualism will have increased tolerance towards language variation, since practically everyone in our societies speaks more than one language. Many of those languages are spoken with a certain accent (cf. the many forms of English, in the UK or the US, in India or South Africa, in China or Russia; see Kachru, 1992, and Gerritsen et al., 2016). Never before have there been so many people in the Netherlands for whom Dutch was not their mother tongue, nor was our economy so immensely international. In addition, never before was our society so free-spirited, also when it comes to language (Stroop, 2003: 11), and its speakers can afford to vary their speech in ways that were unthinkable in the past. In general, pronunciation has become extremely diverse, and accents are everywhere:

> "Er is niet langer een algemeen geaccepteerde standaard"; "De uitspraak op radio en televisie (…), in het klaslokaal van de middelbare school, is al enorm divers geworden." (Van der Horst, 2008: 274, 306).
>
> [There is, no longer, a generally accepted standard. Pronunciation in radio and television broadcasting (…), in the classroom of a secondary school, has become immensely diverse].

The development outlined above results in a more variable common language; in other words, in a version of Dutch with many different accents: we no longer have a generally accepted standard. Does this mean that any accent is accepted? That is not the case, there still is much critique on deviations in speech. Oftentimes, speaking with an accent is seen as inferior and speakers are still confronted with comments on their supposedly 'vulgar' or 'sloppy' pronunciation. This chapter started with some examples of experiencing such comments and the feelings they cause. Tolerance-oriented rights are still in danger, especially in the domains of education and the job market.

Thus, on the one hand we observe more and more Dutch with an accent, also in situations where we would expect formal or 'proper' Dutch (on television, in Parliament), and the social acceptance of accents seems to increase. On the other hand, we observe a very critical attitude towards accents in our examples in the introduction. This is of high societal relevance, since it can be a threat to school

careers and job market positions. It seems like many of us want less accents, but in practice we get more accents.

5 Education as Decisive Domain

Linguicism and verbal hygiene take place on the base of language subordination, the idea that one language (or language variety) is better than others are. Such subordination tactics bring about discrimination and can make racist, sexist or classist sentiments more publicly acceptable as linguistic deviance will be associated with e.g. lower class or ethnic minorities. This way, people who do not speak standard language self-assess as inferior (Lippi-Green, 1997).

Language subordination is part of standard language ideology and a product of misunderstanding. Lippi-Green defines such ideology as "a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogenous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model the written language but which is drawn from spoken language of the upper middle class." (1997: 64). Standard language ideology is linked to identity, power, aesthetics, and morality (Schieffelin et al., 1998).

Standardization processes are mainly held up by educational systems where nonstandard accents are corrected, ruling out language variation and change in the dominant language. Schools are institutions where linguistic normalization takes place (Martín Rojo, 2017). Standard language ideologies thus can raise negative consequences: people who talk with an accent may believe that if they learn to speak more standard they could get access to money, success and recognition.

One might however argue that the standard language does not exist, at least, not as a specific language. It is "an idea in the mind rather than a reality – a set of abstract norms to which actual usage may conform to a greater or lesser extent" (Milroy & Milroy, 1991: 22–23). This is why Lippi-Green speaks of "the myth of non-accent" (1997: 41). Given that language is continuously changing and all spoken language is necessarily and functionally variable, in practice we rarely encounter standard language without any variation. Perhaps we should therefore be more tolerant towards accents. "Accent is just shorthand for variable language" (Lippi-Green, 1997: 44).

Linguicism gives undue preference to speaker communities of the dominant language and discriminates speaker communities of minority languages, based on prejudice and stereotyping, and typically is a product of the dominant position of the standard language. One of the key factors is prescriptive and prestige-based correctness and one of the key actors is our educational system (Kontra, 2006). Prestige-based correctness is built upon the usage of representatives of a certain elite whose behavior is regarded as the model for society (Myhill, 2004). School thus functions as a site for language laundering (Woolard, 2008), making nonstandard speaking children aware of the inappropriateness of the use of their mother tongue. Minority languages and regional languages are marginalized, already in day care centers and

playgroups. On the basis of the examples we presented in the introduction, this seems not only to be valid for minority languages and regional languages, but also for the associated accents. Thus, it also concerns intralingual discrimination that speakers of a standard language tend to impose on their nonstandard speaking compatriots (Kontra, 2006: 97–98).

In this regard, the role of teacher attitudes is crucial. In a research project in Kerkrade (Limburg), teachers rated writing tasks of dialect speakers in their classroom lower than tasks of standard speakers. When the tasks were anonymized and other teachers rated them, there were no differences in the ratings. Apparently, negative attitudes of teachers towards dialect speakers in their classroom influence the assessments of their language proficiency. Furthermore, the majority of teachers-in-training in Limburg turns out to be reluctant towards any type of using dialect in class (Kroon & Vallen, 2009: 171–172).

In language ideologies, following the norms of educated literacy is the "right" thing to do, and this is very influential. In various situations where power relations play an important role (next to education, mass media and language planning and policy are imperative), the standard language more or less has a monopoly position (Swanenberg, 2012). Educational institutions therefore typically opt for a Dutch only, monolingual habitus (Kroon & Sturm, 1994).

Naturally, the standard language therefore has high overt prestige: *a language is a dialect with an army and navy*, as Max Weinreich put it. Vernaculars and their natural dynamics and diversities are often seen thus as different, deviating, and deficient. This gives regional and ethnic minority languages low overt prestige. Siemon Reker therefore proclaimed: *a dialect is a language with bad luck*. Standard language is correct; non-standard is deficient. Such beliefs are explained as: "Language guardians always consider non-standard usage (and sometimes standard colloquialisms) to arise from the perversity of speakers or from cognitive deficiency (an inability to learn what is 'correct')" (Milroy & Milroy, 1991: 219). In short, educators are regarded as the first-line dispensers of the standard language, the guardians of linguistic norms, and as users of a 'better' standard language than other language users, even other highly educated language users (Delarue & Ghyselen, 2016). Therefore, the educational domain is central in this theme, and therefore our case study addresses attitudes and norms of teachers-in-training towards various accents. First, we will briefly sketch the language policies on dialects and accents in general.

6 All Accents Are Equal, But Some Accents Are More Equal Than Others

Where individual teachers will have their own beliefs and ideas about dialects and accents, on which they base their bottom up norms, authorities and academic communities provide top down norms, meant for society. For a linguist all language varieties are equal in all respects yet we know that some language varieties have

more prestige than others do and this causes discriminative behavior. This is not only caused by the implementation of the standard language ideologies in the educational system etc. but also in the inconsistent policies on language variation. In various policies on minority languages or regional languages, we see that languages and language varieties are not treated as equal to the dominant (standard) language (Swanenberg, 2014). François Grin gives the following definition of language policy: "Language policy is a systematic, rational, theory-based effort at the societal level to modify the linguistic environment with a view to increasing aggregate welfare. It is typically conducted by official bodies or their surrogates and aimed at part or all of the population living under their jurisdiction." (Grin, 2003, 30). Although Grin stresses the public policy character of language policy, language planning does not necessarily only comprise activities executed by a central authority. Active individual citizens or NGOs can also lobby for language rights for example.

Thus, by creating inequality between dominant languages and unofficial languages and language varieties, authorities and policy makers create a breeding ground for language subordination and the possible discrimination of accents that may follow from it.

An argument in favour of the protection of regional or minority languages is the belief that every person should have the right to use his or her own language. In this opinion, each individual is entitled to language rights. According to Dónall Ó Riagáin, then special adviser of the European Bureau for Lesser used Languages, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 already acknowledged, "no one should be denied certain basic rights on the grounds of language". Art. 2 declares that the rights mentioned in the Declaration are to be conferred "without distinction of any kind such as […] language." The declaration cannot be conceived as an exact statement of the existence of language rights, but it could be interpreted as the basis of the development of language rights (Ó Riagáin, 1999: 292).

The extent of these rights is up for discussion. Kloss' work addresses the core of the discussion on what language rights consist of. He made the distinction between 'tolerance-oriented' and 'promotion-oriented' rights (Kloss, 1997). Promotion-oriented rights refer to rights people have in public institutions such as schools (see e.g. Kymlicka & Patten, 2003). Tolerance-oriented rights safeguard individuals from government interference in their private language choice. That way people are free to speak the language of their choice when they are at home or at work, for instance. Prestige planning involves efforts to create a positive image of the language which helps stimulation of the language. This may also help the acceptance of speaking with an accent. In 2019, the Dutch Language Union published a vision statement on language variation (Taalunie, 2019). Central in this statement is the sensitivity for register: it propagates an open mind and tolerance to language variation of any kind, but also points to the importance of the awareness of register. Speakers should be aware of when and where to use standard varieties or non-standard varieties. Language variation policy of the Dutch Language Union is more tolerance-oriented than promotion-oriented. The latter type of language policy is regarded as a responsibility for regional authorities, under the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

Language policies on dialects and accents in general as developed by authorities are mostly tolerance-oriented. In the next paragraph, we present a case of the policies in practice, in the educational domain.

7 What Teachers-in-Training Think About Accents

In order to dig deeper into this interesting issue, we did a case study at the teacher training college (Fontys Lerarenopleiding Tilburg). Here, we specifically addressed the question if future teachers of Dutch may or may not speak with an accent in the classroom (Poelmans et al., 2016). Beforehand we noticed students at the teacher training college often do not mind their own accents:

> "De meeste van mijn leerlingen hebben zelf een Marokkaans accent. Waarom zou ik dat van mij dan moeten aanpassen" [most of my students speak with a Moroccan accent themselves. Why should I adjust my accent].

> "Waarom zou ik mijn accent veranderen? Ik ga toch in Tilburg werken." [Why should I change my accent? I will work in Tilburg anyway].

Attitudes of this sort are not only about accents and intelligibility, but also about stereotypical associations people experience when assessing speech. What are the attitudes of teachers-in-training towards accented speech?

Asking in an inquiry means delving for metalinguistic knowledge: the ideological constructs of what we think we know of language, whereas assessing speech itself delves into the categorization of perceived language itself. The combination of these two assessments does justice to findings of Preston (2011) in folk linguistics research where the laymen's knowledge of language is the research theme. When asked what they think of a certain accent, people do not (or not only) give linguistic arguments, but also or predominantly cultural arguments ('this speaker is from the south, he sounds like a hillbilly'). In other words, when it comes to assessing accents, we tend to think in prejudice and stereotypes.

7.1 Essays

In our case study at the teacher training college, we asked first grade students to write an essay on the theme 'speaking with an accent'. During their studies, the students had not yet received any education on language and linguistic variation or the role of language variation in classrooms. This writing assignment is part of the regular language assessment of first grade students at the teacher training college and was taken two months after the start of the course. It consists of writing a coherent text of 300–400 words in response to a news item on the college website. For our pilot study, the theme of the essay was accent evaluation. The students wrote the essay in response to the experiences of a student with a strong Limburgian accent in

Delft, near Rotterdam. This was where this (fictitious) teacher-in-training did his internship. As a dialect speaker, he had difficulties speaking Dutch without an accent. His students complained about his accent. The assignment to our respondents was to write an essay and attend to the following questions. What do you think of a teacher with a strong accent? Is speaking with an accent harmful? Should the teacher training college attend to speaking Dutch without an accent?

We analyzed the essays of 88 students of various school subjects: Biology (9), Dutch (12), English (9), German (8), Geography (7), Social studies (10), History (10), Economics (5), Physics (10), Health and welfare (8). We present a global overview of our findings.

Our main finding is that the vast majority of students - 75 out of 88 - show a tolerant attitude towards variation in accents. Students seem to be aware that almost every speaker has an accent and they seem to regard an accent as an inseparable aspect of someone's identity. According to these future teachers, an accent should not be a problem, not even for teachers, as long as that accent is easily understood by the audience.

> "Iedereen spreekt met een accent"
> *[Everyone speaks with an accent].*

> "Geen enkele taaltoets behelst accentloos spreken. Daarbij komen bij mij enkele vragen op: wie kan dit objectief beoordelen? En is dit niet strafbaar op grond van discriminatie?"
> *[No language test includes speaking without an accent. This raises a number of questions for me: who can objectively assess this? And is this not punishable on the grounds of discrimination?]*

> "Accent hoort bij identiteit en moet gerespecteerd worden. Maar de docent moet voor iedereen verstaanbaar zijn."
> *[Accent is part of identity and must be respected. But the teacher must be understandable to everyone].*

> "Mijn mening is dat je je moet aanpassen en kunnen accepteren dat iemand met een accent praat. We leven in een Multiculturele samenleving waar tolerantie een groot goed is."
> *[To my opinion, one should adapt and accept that someone speaks with an accent. We live in a multicultural society where tolerance is of high importance].*

> "School moet hierin zijn studenten begeleiden maar ook de eigen identiteit van zijn studenten bewaken. Niemand wil een neppe docent voor de klas."
> *[School has to supervise students in this, but at the same time guard the identity of their students. Nobody wants fake teachers in class].*

Thus, accents are believed to be part of identities and as long they do not hinder intelligibility, they should be tolerated. Some students even point out possible advantages of an accent. According to some students, a shared accent can strengthen the relationship between teacher and pupils:

> "Een accent kan er binnen een bepaalde regio zelfs voor zorgen dat je meer binding ontwikkelt met een klas."
> [*In a certain region, an accent will even help you to develop a better bond with a class].*

Almost all students explicitly point out one condition that teachers' language use must meet: students must be able to understand their teacher without difficulty. Most students seem to assume that accents will have a negative influence on the intelligibility of a teacher.

> "Ook al zeggen sommigen dat een docent goed moet zijn en een accent niet uitmaakt, moet men begrijpen dat contact met zowel leerlingen als collega's lastiger wordt."
>
> *[Even though some say, a teacher must be professional and accent does not matter, one has to understand contact with students and colleagues will be more difficult].*

Only a few students show to be aware of effects of accents of pupils:

> "De kans op miscommunicatie wordt groter wanneer de docent het accent van de leerling niet kan verstaan."
>
> *[Chances of miscommunication will become bigger when a teacher cannot understand the accent of a student].*

Most reservations are expressed against the intelligibility of accents of speakers of Dutch as a second language. When students give examples of experiences with teachers who were hard to understand, they mostly refer to teachers with foreign accents.

> "Maar in de alinea hierboven heb ik het over een regionaal accent. Docenten met een buitenlands accent vind ik persoonlijk wel storend. Het onderwerp buitenlanders is sowieso erg gevoelig en er zijn zeker mensen die een docent met een buitenlands accent niet zullen tolereren. Daarom kan het zijn dat de kwaliteit van het onderwijs achteruit gaat als er les wordt gegeven door iemand met een buitenlands accent."
>
> *[But in the paragraph above, I am talking about a regional accent. Personally, I find teachers with a foreign accent disturbing. The subject of foreigners is very sensitive anyway and certainly there are people who will not tolerate a teacher with a foreign accent. It is therefore possible that the quality of education will deteriorate if there is a foreign accent in the teaching.]*

> "Een accent van iemand die uit Limburg komt, klink waarschijnlijk aangenamer dan een docent uit Polen die in Nederland les komt geven. (…) Waar het op neerkomt is dat leraren/aankomende leraren les moeten geven dicht bij huis. Natuurlijk geldt dat niet voor iedereen maar specifiek diegenen die met een accent praten…"
>
> *[The accent of a person from Limburg probably sounds more pleasant than a teacher from Poland who comes to teach in the Netherlands. (…) This ultimately means that teachers/teachers-in-training should teach close to home. That does not concern everyone, of course, but specifically those who speak with an accent…].*

> "Het gaat dan met name om het accent uit Limburg, Friesland en het buitenland."
>
> *[It mainly concerns the accent from Limburg, Fryslân and foreign countries*].

> "Zelf had ik een Turkse economiedocent. De man kon nog zo goed uitleggen, ik begreep hem niet (en ik was niet de enige)."
>
> *[I had a Turkish teacher for economy myself. The man could explain well, but I could not understand him and I was not the only one].*

> "Zelf had ik een lerares wiskunde die uit Polen kwam. Ze kon wiskunde echt ontzettend goed uitleggen maar er was een duidelijk accent te horen. Daardoor ging ik soms meer op haar accent letten dan dat ik echt de uitleg meekreeg."

[I had a teacher for mathematics, from Poland. She could explain mathematics very well, but an accent was clearly audible. Therefore, I sometimes payed more attention to the accent than that I could properly understand her explanation].

Thus, foreign accents are mentioned when intelligibility and distraction are referred to. Foreign accents are also considered less pleasant.

One student shows that he is aware that in some situations a regional accent can also be beneficial for the intelligibility of a teacher.

"Vanuit de andere visie waarover wordt gesproken wordt niet meegenomen dat dat leerlingen het ook moeten begrijpen. Zo kan het voor nuchtere Friezen lastig zijn als iemand zonder Fries accent perfect Nederlands praat. Zodoende zouden er dus problemen kunnen ontstaan zodra iemand niet met een accent spreekt."

[From the other viewpoint discussed, it is not taken into account that these pupils also need to understand it. For example, it can be difficult for sober Frisians if someone without a Frisian accent speaks perfectly Dutch. In this way, problems could arise if someone does not speak with an accent."]

No matter how tolerant and reasonable most students seem to be regarding accents, many of them show to be aware of possible negative effects of accented speech (next to appearance and dress) in the classroom.

"Iedereen herinnert zich wel een leraar waar flink om gelachen kon worden. Dat kon om uiterlijk gaan, om kleding of om het accent."

[Everyone remembers a teacher who could be laughed about. That could be because of appearance, dress, or accent].

"Ik kan mezelf voorstellen dat er docenten zijn die met accent lesgeven op een plek waar het desbetreffende accent erg opvalt en hier zelf, i.p.v. de leerlingen last van hebben. Zo kunnen ze uitgelachen, bespot of vernederd worden en hierdoor zal de kwaliteit van het lesgeven van deze docent zeker achteruitgaan."

[I can imagine there are teachers who teach with an accent in places where that accent is very conspicuous and this will bother them, instead of their pupils. They could be laughed at, ridiculed, or humiliated and this will diminish the quality of teaching of this teacher, surely].

"Soms komt lesstof niet overtuigend over omdat hoe slim de persoon ook is, een zwaar accent wordt als dom ervaren."

[Sometimes teaching material does not come across convincingly, because, no matter how smart the person, a severe accent will be regarded as dumb].

Here, accents are directly linked to intelligence or level of education. Maybe it is this kind of reasoning that explains why many students - including those who show themselves to be tolerant of accents - argue in favor of teaching speaking skills in teacher training:

"Kortom zolang je als docent verstaanbaar bent is er niets aan de hand, maar als je zodanig met een dialect praat dat de kwaliteit van het lesgeven erop achteruitgaat, dan vind ik dat je geholpen moet worden. Hierdoor groeit je zelfvertrouwen."

[In sum, as long as you are comprehensible, nothing is wrong, but when you speak dialect in such a way that the quality of your teaching deteriorates, then you should get help, to my opinion. This way, your self-confidence will increase].

> "Scholen moeten mogelijkheden aanbieden om studenten met een accent goed verstaanbaar te leren spreken. Zo kan iedere docent in iedere provincie lesgeven, welk accent ze ook hebben."
>
> *[Schools should offer opportunities to students to learn how to speak with an accent in a comprehensible way. Then every student can go teach in every province, whatever accent they have.]*

7.2 Questionnaire

Next to these qualitative data, we also worked with a questionnaire (n = 136). The respondents were first grade students of various school subjects at the teacher training college in Tilburg: Biology (46), Geography (19), Social studies (25), Dutch (26) and English (20). We asked the respondents to give their opinion on Dutch speech with the following accents: Amsterdam, Brabantish, Limburgian, Flemish, Dutch-Antillean, French, Turkish, Moroccan, and Polish. The Dutch capital Amsterdam is part of the Randstad, the central area in the Netherlands. Speech from the peripheral areas is considered less standard than speech from the central area (Pinget et al., 2014: 41). Brabantish and Limburgian are instances of speech with a regional accent from the periphery.

Our aim was to find out how attitudes towards various indigenous and foreign accents would differ. The topics were assessments of the accents, of language users in general, of language users who are teachers, and of language users who are students. The assessments were given on Likert scales. We asked how beautiful or ugly the different accents sound (a), how intelligent or dumb speakers with the different accents are (b), how good or bad teachers with the different accents are (c), how much of an authority teachers with the different accents are (d), how approachable they are (e), and how sympathetic (f). In this way, we tap into the aesthetics of accents and speakers' traits such as professionalism, likeability, intelligence and leadership (Table 1).

The results show that first grade students at the teacher training college generally are quite positive about language variation. They are aware that in practice, everybody has some sort of an accent, and they assess accents quite positively. The differences in appreciation of distinct accents are small. They think the accent from their immediate surroundings (Brabantish) least problematic. Our research site, Tilburg, is situated in the center of Brabant. Remember that the quotes in the introduction from people with a Brabantish accent relate to another scale, the national level (Brabant as periphery in the Netherlands as opposed to the Randstad as the center), whereas these data give us an impression of the regional level (Tilburg as central city in Brabant).

The mean score in our Likert scales is 3, and all scores for Brabantish are below 3, except the 3,13 for dumb-intelligent which was asked in reverse order and therefore is also more positive than the mean score 3. The respondents consider a teacher with a Brabantish accent as more sympathetic and accessible than teachers with

Table 1 means on Likert scores for six questions on attitudes towards nine different accents (n = 136)

	Brab.	Limb.	Amst.	Flem.	DuAnt.	French	Turk.	Moroc	Pol.
a	2,39	3,26	3,58	2,92	3,19	2,99	3,87	3,99	4,06
b	3,13	2,84	2,71	2,99	2,72	3,33	2,70	2,56	2,65
c	2,59	3,01	3,10	2,96	3,16	2,96	3,24	3,26	3,22
d	2,89	3,47	3,22	3,17	3,26	2,96	3,18	3,30	3,21
e	2,22	2,68	2,99	2,65	2,71	3,15	3,26	3,41	3,33
f	2,22	2,53	2,94	2,46	2,50	3,02	3,06	3,26	3,29

a: 1=sounds beautiful, 5=ugly
b: 1=dumb person, 5=intelligent
c: 1=good teacher, 5=bad
d: 1=with authority, 5=no authority
e: 1=approachable teacher, 5=not approachable
f: 1=sympathetic, 5=unsympathetic

Table 2 means on Likert scores for three questions on attitudes towards three interactional situations (n = 136)

	Teacher in class	Student in class	Student during breaks
Mean	3,16	2,39	1,59
Standard Deviation	1,44	1,37	0,97

other accents. Furthermore, they find Brabantish accents least ugly or dumb, and a teacher with a Brabantish accent is better and has more authority than teachers with other accents have. Brabantish has the lowest scores overall, except for dumb-intelligent where it scores second place for intelligent, after the French accent.

Students are also quite tolerant to a teacher with a Flemish, French or Dutch-Antillean accent, and a little less tolerant to the other Dutch accents, from Amsterdam and Limburg. Our respondents gave the most negative evaluations to a teacher with a Turkish, Moroccan or Polish accent, especially when it comes to ugliness of the accent. In Table 1 the Turkish, Polish and Moroccan accents score more than the mean 3 in all six attitudes, except for dumb-intelligent which was asked in reverse order and therefore is also more negative than the mean score 3. For Polish, all mean scores are above 3 (and beautiful-ugly even scores more than 4), except the 2,65 for dumb-intelligent which was asked in reverse order and therefore is also more negative than 3.

Mostly, speaking with an accent is only assessed negatively when the intelligibility becomes problematic, as we noticed in the essays. Intelligibility was connected to Turkish and Polish accents, in some of the quotes from the essays. It seems that those accents are seen as more ‘foreign’ (see also Van de Weerd, 2019) than for instance French.

We also asked if an accent is tolerated in class, if spoken by the teacher or the students, and if students can speak with an accent during breaks, thus distinguishing between formal and informal settings. Here, we also used Likert scales, 1 denoting that an accent is fine and 5 denoting an accent is not permitted (Table 2).

There is a clear difference between the expectations of the language used by a teacher in class (above 3), by students in class and students during breaks (very low: 1,59). In informal situations such as lunch breaks, our informants tolerate accents. However, when teaching, an accent in the language used by the teacher is assessed as less expedient.

Students at the teacher training college on the one hand state that an accent may help to create a bond with a class. On the other hand, they point to accents worsening the intelligibility of a teacher. In addition, speaking with an accent will harm the persuasiveness and status of the teacher: an accent can be found dumb. From the essays we analyzed it is not always clear if the authors (the students at the teacher training college) also themselves think a certain accent is dumb, or that they just mean a classroom population may think this.

The difference in both perspectives lies in the sort of accent: accents familiar to the classroom are helpful, accents that are less familiar ("Fryslân and foreign countries") are harmful. The rejection of speaking with an accent depends on the sort of accent. Especially, accents historically associated with labor migration are rejected, as we saw in the qualitative data: Turkish, Polish, as well as in the quantitative data: Turkish, Moroccan, Polish.

Next to the sort of accent, the extent of accent matters. When an accent is so severe that a teacher's language becomes intelligible, obviously it will be rejected. There also seems to be a correlation between sort and extent: when the students refer to the extent of accents, they especially mention accents associated with labor migration in the essays. When students mention instances of problematic accents, because they hinder intelligibility, they explicitly talk about Polish and Turkish teachers.

Apparently, our future teachers tolerate speaking with an accent, but it depends on which accent one uses. This pilot study of assessments of Dutch with a Brabantish, Limburgian, Moroccan, Antillean, French, Turkish, Polish, or Amsterdam accent resulted, in Tilburg, in a preference for Brabantish. This is in line with the findings of Pinget et al.: listeners from the South of the Netherlands (Brabant and Limburg) find speech from their own region more beautiful and more standard than listeners from other regions in the Netherlands did (Pinget et al. 2014: 41).

Furthermore, we found that the accents that are linked to labor migration (Turkish, Moroccan, Polish) are valued less. Apparently, a foreign but Western European accent (French) and an overseas but Dutch accent (Antillean) are considered better than a foreign accent associated with labor migration. There is a limit to the tolerance of speaking with an accent. This points to different types of attitude towards accents: language variation can be more prestigious or more plebeian (Jaspers, 2009: 17–20). The question of course is how these teachers-in-training will think about various accents when they finish college and start working in secondary education.

8 Conclusion

In general, first grade students at the teacher training college do not ventilate negative feelings about language variation. They express being aware that everyone has some sort of accent. They assess accents quite positively, and the differences in appreciation of distinct accents are small. Just like general trends in society (according to Stroop, 2003, Van der Horst, 2008, Council of Europe, 2018), tolerance towards accents seems to increase. This gives us an idea of the bottom up norms and values, when it comes to linguistic diversity, which is not very different from the proposal of the Dutch Language Union (Taalunie, 2019), exemplary for the most recent top down policy work on linguistic diversity.

Speaking with an accent is just assessed negatively by the students at the teacher training college when intelligibility becomes problematic. Still, negative remarks about accents regard a certain group of accents: those accents associated with labor migration are mentioned explicitly. When accents are discussed and intelligibility is referred to, these accents are subject of the examples (Polish, Turkish). The data from the questionnaire show that the same accents are evaluated most negatively: Polish, Turkish, Moroccan, are considered less beautiful etc. This tells us that we still witness ideologies at work that are built on language subordination and may possibly feed linguicism. That also is part of bottom up norms and values.

Apparently, some accents are associated with languages of less value, speakers whose capacities are of less value and eventually people who may be considered of less value. Here, enregisterment (Agha, 2007) and the ideologies of language subordination and stereotyping possibly lead to prejudice and linguicism.

Diversity in the pronunciation of Dutch may have increased but the social acceptance of accents is quite selective. Adolescents still have to deal with stigmatized representations when people hear and assess their accents. Tolerance towards speaking with an accent is definitely present, but limited, and this is important since it damages the position of disadvantaged young people from the countryside and from specific ethnic groups.

Although the evaluation of accents may seem politically correct at first sight, there still is a certain amount of unequal treatment in the evaluation of accents. That brings us back to language subordination, verbal hygiene, and linguicism: if teachers-in-training treat different accents in unequal ways, this may lead to unfair evaluations, leaving speakers stigmatized and discriminated.

References

Agha, A. (2007). *Language and social relations*. Cambridge University Press.

Cameron, D. (2012). *Verbal hygiene.* (2nd edn; first published 1995). Routledge.

Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge University Press.

Council of Europe. (2018). Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. *Companion volume with new descriptors.* www.coe.int/lang-cefr

Delarue, S., & Ghyselen, A.-S. (2016). Setting the standard: Are teachers better speakers of standard Dutch? *Dutch Journal of Applied Linguistics, 5*(1), 34–64.

Gerritsen, M., van Meurs, F., Planken, B., & Korzilius, H. (2016). A reconsideration of the status of English in the Netherlands within the Kachruvian three circles model. *World Englishes, 35*(3), 457–474.

Grijp, L. (2007). Singing in Dutch dialects: Language choice in music and the dialect renaissance. In P. Margry & H. Roodenburg (Eds.), *Reframing Dutch culture. Between otherness and authenticity* (pp. 225–243). Ashgate.

Grin, F. (2003). *Language policy evaluation and the European charter for regional or minority languages*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Jaspers, J. (2009). Inleiding. In J. Jaspers (Ed.), *De klank van de stad. Stedelijke meertaligheid en interculturele communicatie* (pp. 7–32). Acco.

Jaspers, J. (2012). Het algemeen Nederlands: uw sociale zekerheid? In K. Absilis, J. Jaspers, & S. van Hoof (Eds.), *De Manke Usurpator. Over Verkavelingsvlaams* (pp. 371–399). Academia Press.

Jaspers, J., & Madsen, L. M. (Eds). (2016). Sociolinguistics in a languagised world. *Applied Linguistics Review (special issue) 7*(3).

Kachru, B. (1992). *The other tongue: English across cultures*. University of Illinois Press.

Kloss, H. (1997). *The American bilingual tradition*. Newbury House Publishers.

Kontra, M. (2006). Sustainable linguicism. In F. Hinskens (Ed.), *Language variation – European perspectives* (pp. 97–126). John Benjamins.

Kroon, S., & Sturm, J. (1994). Das nationale Selbstverständnis im Unterricht der Nationalsprache: Der Fall der Niederlande. In I. Gogolin (Ed.), *Das nationale Selbstverständnis der Bildung* (pp. 151–182). Waxmann.

Kroon, S., & Vallen, T. (2009). Discoursen over dialect en school. In J. Jaspers (Ed.), *De klank van de stad. Stedelijke meertaligheid en interculturele communicatie* (pp. 165–181). Acco.

Kymlicka, W., & Patten, A. (2003). Language rights and political theory. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 23*, 3–21.

Lippi-Green, R. (1997). *English with an accent: Language, ideology, and discrimination in the United States*. Routledge.

Martín Rojo, L. (2017). Language and power. In O. García, N. Flores, & M. Spotti (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of language and society* (pp. 77–102). Oxford University Press.

Milroy, J., & Milroy, L. (1991). Authority in language. In *Investigating standard English*. Routledge.

Mugglestone, L. (2003). *Talking proper: The rise of accent as social symbol*. Oxford University Press.

Myhill, J. (2004). A parametrized view of the concept of 'correctness'. *Multilingua, 23*, 389–416.

Ó Riagáin, D. (1999). The importance of linguistic rights for speakers of lesser used languages. *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights, 6*, 289–298.

Pinget, A.-F., Rotteveel, M., & Van de Velde, H. (2014). Standaardnederlands met een accent. Herkenning en evaluatie van regionaal gekleurd Standaardnederlands in Nederland. *Nederlandse Taalkunde, 19*(1), 3–45.

Poelmans, P., Kerkhoff, A., & Swanenberg, J. (2016). 'In de pauze mag het wel'. Hoe denken aankomende leraren en leerlingen over accenten in de klas? Paper presented at *Taal en Tongval*-colloquium, Ghent 25 November 2016.

Preston, D. (2011). Methods in (applied) folk linguistics: Getting into the minds of the folk. *AILA Review, 24*, 15–38.

Schieffelin, B., Woolard, K., & Kroskrity, P. (1998). Language ideologies. In *Practice and theory*. Oxford University Press.

Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (1988). Multilingualism and the education of minority children. In T. Skutnabb-Kangas & J. Cummins (Eds.), *Minority education: From shame to struggle* (pp. 9–44). Multilingual Matters.

Smakman, D. (2006). *Standard Dutch in the Netherlands. A Sociolinguistic and Phonetic Description.* PhD dissertation, Radboud University.

Spotti, M. (2011). Ideologies of success for superdiverse citizens: The Dutch testing regime for integration and the online private sector. *Diversities, 13*(2), 39–52.

Stroop, J. (2003). *Waar gaat het Nederlands naar toe? Panorama van een taal*. Bert Bakker.

Swanenberg, J. (2012). Language variation as a nuisance. How to deal with 'mistakes' in the classroom. *Tilburg Papers in Culture Studies, 37,* 1–17.

Swanenberg, J. (2014). All dialects are equal, but some dialects are more equal than others. Fairness and policies on regional languages. *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, European and Regional Studies, 5*, 89–104.

Taalunie. (2019). *Visie op taalvariatie en taalvariatiebeleid. Visietekst van de Adviescommissie Taalvariatie in opdracht van het Algemeen Secretariaat van de Taalunie.* Retrieved July 3, 2019, from http://taalunieversum.org/sites/tuv/files/downloads/Visietekst%20taalvariatie%20-%20februari%202019.pdf

Thissen, L. (2018). *Talking in and out of place. Ethnographic reflections on language, place, and (un)belonging in Limburg, the Netherlands.* Unpublished Dissertation, Maastricht University.

Van der Horst, J. (2008). *Het einde van de standaardtaal; een wisseling van Europese taalcultuur*. Meulenhoff.

Van de Weerd, P. (2019). "Those foreigners ruin everything here": Interactional functions of ethnic labelling among pupils in the Netherlands. *Journal of SocioLinguistics, 23*(3), 244–262.

Woolard, K. (2008). Language and identity choice in Catalonia: The interplay of contrasting ideologies of linguistic authority. In K. Süselbeck, U. Mühlschlegel, & P. Masson (Eds.), *Lengua, nación e identidad. La regulación del plurilingüismo en España y América Latina* (pp. 303–323). Vervuert/Iberoamericana.

News Items on Websites

Anker, E. (2016, January 28). *Discriminatie bij Marokkaans-Nederlands accent.* Retrieved August 15, 2019, from https://www.metronieuws.nl/nieuws/binnenland/2016/01/vaker-discriminatie-bij-marokkaans-nederlands-accent

De Smit, M. (2017, September 22). *Dealen met je dialect.* Retrieved August 15, 2019, from https://nos.nl/op3/artikel/2194300-dealen-met-je-dialect-ze-zien-ons-als-boeren-bierzuipers-klompendragers.html

Rijsdijk, D. (2016, October 31). *Jongeren schamen zich voor accent.* Retrieved August 15, 2019, from https://www.metronieuws.nl/nieuws/binnenland/2016/10/brabantse-jongeren-schamen-zich-voor-accent

Preach or Practise? Preach and Practice!

Contributions of Sjaak Kroon to Language Practices and Models for Language Policy Within the Dutch Language Area and Beyond

Johan Van Hoorde

Abstract Is it an overstatement to claim that research experts active in the field of language policy and planning, develop their activities from a scientific point of view and are not normally directly involved in the actual practices? The complement seems even less exaggerated: many people who are active in (language) policy bodies and organisations, often show no familiarity with or even interest in scientific insights and research results. Thus, research and practice largely remain different worlds. Think of issues like language use in the class room, attitudes towards language norms and variation or the way our society should cope with linguistic and cultural minorities. These issues show that an evidence-based approach cannot be taken for granted, as it often interferes with ideologically biased perceptions and value-laden convictions.

Sjaak Kroon is certainly an exception to this rule. He managed to combine the two frames of reference, as he was involved in many crucial endeavours of the Taalunie. Our paper will take these endeavours as point of departure to sketch their effects on the language policy landscape as we know it today.

Keywords Language policy · Policy practices · Nederlandse Taalunie (Dutch Language Union)

It seems an exaggeration to claim that researchers active in the field of language policy and planning develop their activities from a purely scientific and research perspective and are not themselves involved or directly interested in actual language policy practices. Of course, they expect their results and insights to contribute to

J. Van Hoorde (✉)
Nederlandse Taalunie (Union for the Dutch Language), The Hague, The Netherlands
e-mail: jvanhoorde@taalunie.org

© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2021

M. Spotti et al. (eds.), *Language Policies and the Politics of Language Practices*, Language Policy 28, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-88723-0_9

these practices, but in an indirect way: for instance, they expect that policymakers will read their contributions and build on them. More often than not, the reality is disappointing. In many cases, policymakers are not familiar with the world of science and research and quite often they show no interest in its results. Even worse: they seem more concerned with symbolic behaviour and rhetorical statements than with problem-solving on a rational and empirical basis. Consider, for instance, the opinions of policymakers (politicians and civil servants) in domains such as language variation and addressing this in the class room, or the issue of language norms and standards or an effective approach to coping with linguistic and cultural minorities. How many of the perceptions, convictions and points of reference of our policymakers are based on the critical observation of reality and are concerned with verification or – if required– falsification? These examples show that an evidence-based approach should certainly not be taken for granted, as it often interferes with ideologically biased interests and perceptions and value-laden convictions.

Sjaak Kroon is an exception to this rule. He managed to combine both frames of reference and for many years has been directly involved in a number of the crucial policy initiatives of the Taalunie.[1] In my capacity as a policy advisor in this institution, I have had the privilege of collaborating with him in some of these, especially in the second half of the 1990s and the early years of the present century. This collaboration has had real impact. In more than one domain Sjaak has thrown stones into the water, so to speak, and, by doing this, has relocated the riverbed and transformed the flow of the river. As a preparation to this contribution I decided to reread some of the texts and reports with which Sjaak had been involved. This literature offered interesting material for reflection, since political as well as language situations have changed since those days and the same can be said for the climate of public opinion relating to societal issues which have linguistic dimensions. All these changes have put many of the assumptions and perspectives of only twenty years ago under the spotlight. The reports invite us to reflect on the status of language policy of our times. I hope that this contribution will do justice to both the history and the present, and especially to the great merits of Sjaak and his policy-oriented scientific work, and will at the same time offer a modest contribution to the reflection on choices and dilemmas for varieties of policy approach for the future, and especially on the relationship between science and policy.

1 Sjaak Kroon and the Taalunie

Allow me to give a short description of the Taalunie as an institution, before I start the description of the role Sjaak Kroon has played within its structures. This short introduction will be especially relevant to the readers who are less familiar with the Dutch language area and its language policy infrastructure. The Taalunie is an intergovernmental organisation which was founded by Treaty in 1980 by the Kingdom of

[1] The full name of the Taalunie is *Nederlandse Taalunie*, i.e. Union for the Dutch Language. See: https://over.taalunie.org/dutch-language-union

the Netherlands and the Kingdom of Belgium,[2] as the instrument for a common policy in matters of Dutch language and literature. As of 2004 the Republic of Suriname has joined the founding countries as an associated member country and nowadays there are also collaborative structures with the Caribbean islands as well. The Taalunie has a somewhat complex internal structure, and consists of four bodies defined in the 1980 treaty: (a) a Committee of Ministers from the Dutch and Flemish governments, which operates as its decision-making body; (b) an Inter-parliamentary Commission composed of members of the Flemish parliament and the States-General of the Netherlands, as the body for parliamentary control; (c) the Council for Dutch Language and Literature, as the policy advisory body; and (d) the Secretariat-General, as the unit responsible for both the preparation and execution of the policy plans and activities. To the outside world the Secretariat-General and the Secretary-General as its head are the most visible parts of the institution, to such an extent that they are often identified with and referred to as the Taalunie as such. The headquarters of the institution are in The Hague, with a secondary office in Brussels.

The issues of competence for the Taalunie include language-related tasks such as establishing the official orthography and grammar (!)[3] of the Dutch language, the elaboration of a common terminology for legislation and public administration, the responsibility for the international status and position of Dutch, especially in its capacity as official and working language within the institutions of the European Union, the teaching and learning of Dutch both at home and abroad and the pursuit of a common policy for Dutch literature, for instance in the promotion of a culture of reading amongst our citizens. Since 2003, the Taalunie has collaborated with the language planning and language policy institutions of the other European countries within the *European Federation of National Institutions for Language* (EFNIL), of which it has been one of the most prominent and active agents.

The Taalunie takes pride in being a truly unique institution, since it claims that nowhere else are there different sovereign states sharing the same language that have given up their national sovereignty as regards language matters in favour of a common supranational body. As a matter of fact, this is not entirely correct, since there is a comparable body for the Irish language, through which the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland implement a common policy for Irish Gaelic.[4]

Sjaak has been active in several domains of interest of the Taalunie: (a) policy activities regarding language variation within the Dutch language area; (b) language policy on an international and especially European level with respect to collaboration between planning institutions; and (c) language teaching and learning, especially in the field of education of Dutch as a second language (L2). He is the author

[2] Since Belgium has become a federal state in which language and cultural matters come under the exclusive authority of the language communities, the oversight of the Treaty on behalf of Belgium has been delegated to the institutions of the Flemish Community, i.e. the Flemish Government and the Flemish Parliament.

[3] The juxtaposition of orthography and grammar in the text of the treaty is a demonstration of the lack of awareness of the authors of the text of the distinction between normative and more descriptive aspects of language planning.

[4] *Foras na Gaeilge* (www.forasnagaeilge.ie/?lang=en), established in 1999 as part of the so-called peace process between the Republic and Northern Ireland.

or co-author of several preparatory research and vision reports on L2 Dutch, published in the serial *Voorzetten.*[5] Last but not least, for many years he has been a member of the Council for Dutch Language and Literature, the official advisory body of the Taalunie, and as such, has had a say in many of the issues and policy plans of the Taalunie, even those outside the direct scope of his scientific expertise. In this contribution I will not go into detail about his role in the domain of language education, since I have not been active in that field myself and as a result do not have first-hand information, but I will focus on the other sub-domains mentioned above. Through his commitment in policy activities, Sjaak Kroon has also influenced the approach to and philosophy of language policy within the Taalunie, especially in helping the institution to distinguish between different, not to say contradictory types of policy interventions. The choices between these types were not merely a matter of preference, as they were and are related to different answers regarding their legitimacy within a democratic society. This policy influence will also be the object of this contribution.

2 Language Variation

Like a number of other colleagues, Sjaak Kroon has had a strong influence on our policies as regards language variation, especially for the varieties of Dutch used in the Netherlands, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium and Suriname, and the differences in status and prestige between them. In 2000 the Taalunie organised a high-profile conference about language variation and language policy in Ghent, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Taalunie Treaty. Sjaak was a member of the scientific committee responsible for preparing the conference. The general theme *variation* was divided into three sub-themes, i.e. (a) language policy and lexical variation between North and South; (b) policy and perception concerning multilingualism within the class room and the school system; and (c) language variation in relation to globalisation, including the rise in status and use of English as a lingua franca and its consequences for Dutch. Sjaak was in charge of the second sub-theme, together with his late-lamented Tilburg colleague Ton Vallen. It proved to be a significant conference which produced some remarkable results, which led the well-known Belgian media personality Jean-Pierre Rondas, who moderated the closing panel, to characterise the outcome of the conference as a *paradigm shift.*[6] The conference formed the basis of an extensive advisory report on language variation policies which the Council for the Dutch Language and Literature handed over

---

[5] *Voorzetten* was a series of preparatory policy reports published under the auspices of the Taalunie.

[6] The contributions of the conference were published as a book: De Caluwe J., D. Geeraerts, S. Kroon et al. (eds.) (2002), *Taalvariatie & Taalbeleid. Bijdragen aan het taalbeleid in Nederland en Vlaanderen* (Language Variation and Language Policy. Contributions to the language policy in the Netherlands and Flanders), Apeldoorn – Antwerpen: Garant Uitgevers.

to the Committee of Ministers of the Taalunie.[7] At that time Sjaak was himself a member of the Council and had also been a member of the work group that prepared this report, and which consisted of both Council members and external experts.

Both the conference and the advisory report have become milestones in the policy of the Taalunie ever since, not only with an important symbolic value but also with real impact on the subsequent policy choices of the Taalunie. They brought the Committee of Ministers to an explicit resolution which stated that Dutch Dutch, Belgian Dutch and Suriname Dutch had to be considered as fully acceptable national varieties of standard Dutch, with equal dignity. This confirmation of the status of the national varieties is of invaluable symbolic and psychological significance, since it strengthened the speakers of the traditionally non-dominant varieties of Dutch, i.e. the Belgian and Suriname varieties, in their claims and perception of equal dignity. In the past, many generations of speakers had been forced to accept Dutch Dutch as the only legitimate norm for their language, to which they had to conform. This approach was the cause of a somewhat generalised feeling of inferiority amongst the speakers of the non-dominant parts, accompanied by a continuous fear of being accused of committing language errors.

The impact was not limited to symbolic value alone, though, but has also had a real impact on our policies. One of the most tangible results was the introduction of a new approach to providing language advice within the environment *Taaladvies.net*, the official forum of the Taalunie for providing normative language support to the community of Dutch language users.[8] The new approach had important consequences in matters of variation between the varieties of Dutch as used in the Netherlands, Flanders, Suriname and the Caribbean. It was introduced in 2003, soon after the publication of the advisory report of the Council, and has been at the centre of our advice practice ever since.

The most important change was that the strict dichotomy, by which any language variant had to be necessarily considered either as standard or non-standard, was replaced by a more nuanced approach which distinguished three different normative positions instead of two: (a) standard language in the Dutch language area as a whole, (b) standard language in only one part of the language area, i.e. only in the Netherlands, Belgium or Suriname (or in incomplete combinations of these) and (c) non-standard language. In order to be considered as having standard status - even limited to only one part of the language area - any variant had to meet five different criteria. Needless to say, this new approach emphasised a more tolerant attitude towards the variants of non-dominant parts of the language area, especially Belgian

[7] *Variatie in het Nederlands: eenheid in verscheidenheid. Taalvariatiebeleid in Taalunieverband* (Variation in Dutch: unity in diversity. Language variation policy within the context of the Taalunie), Raad voor de Nederlandse Taal en Letteren. See: https://taalunie.org/publicaties/94/variatie-in-het-nederlands-eenheid-in-verscheidenheid

[8] *Taaladvies.net*, is a web-based forum for language advice open to all users of Dutch, which every year boasts a huge amount of users and consultations: more than 4.5 billion language users and 12 billion consulted pages. Users can consult a data base primed with language questions and answers and they can also submit new queries if they fail to find answers to their questions in the database.

Dutch. Previously, advice used to be much more strict and severe: in the traditional language advice resources (advice books, school methods, dictionaries) Belgian variants were automatically considered non-standard merely because they were used only in Belgium and it was advised that they be replaced by Dutch Dutch alternatives.[9] The same approach was never or almost never used for variants that are exclusively used in the Netherlands: these forms were traditionally accepted as part of the standard language without any limitation whatsoever, regardless of the category to which they belonged, whether it be lexical, morphological or syntactic.

From 2003 onwards all this was no longer the case. Even among language advice experts this shift led some people to express feelings of consternation and (temporary) perplexity. Members of the language advice commission TAO,[10] in charge of monitoring the reliability of the language advice on *Taaladvies.net*, responded to the new approach with some consternation: *How can an expression be part of the standard language only in the Netherlands? If a term is standard in the Netherlands, doesn't that automatically imply that it is normal, good Dutch?* This example clearly shows that the mind sets needed to be adjusted. Support in society for a more relaxed attitude towards variation, in the direction of acceptance of differences between the various countries that constitute the pluricentric Dutch language area, has undoubtedly grown. This has given more status and prestige to (standard) variants from the traditionally non-dominant parts, notably among the speakers of these communities themselves. Does this mean that the long ideological struggle between the moderates and the orthodox has finally come to an end in favour of the first category? Not at all! Language and language norms are and remain the subject of debate and bring to the surface competing attitudes that in many cases are part and parcel of a more generalised ideological struggle regarding the importance of linguistic unity between the Netherlands and Flanders. They also highlight differing assessments, related to this, of the dangers connected to the threat– real or only perceived - of linguistic disintegration as a result of too relaxed attitudes towards norms and standards. Quite often, the more strict and orthodox attitudes are part of a much broader extralinguistic pursuit of a cultural and even political unity between the North and South.

A second aspect of real, tangible impact concerns the corpus planning for Dutch. At the core of the *Unity in diversity* advisory report by the Council there is a well-determined approach to explicit, non-spontaneous, heteronomous language standardisation efforts, which can be considered as evidence-based. According to this philosophy, normative value judgements and advice have to be based on a sound knowledge of the language facts, including knowledge of (a) the distribution of language phenomena in terms of countries, regions, gender, classes and other important distinctions which are often linked to language variation, and (b) the attitudes and perceptions of the language users within the language community.

[9] The only exceptions to that rule were the institutional variants, i.e. names for institutions that are specific to the Belgian context, e.g. Senaat (Senate) instead of Eerste Kamer to refer to the second chamber of the House of Parliament.

[10] *Taaladviesoverleg* (TAO), i.e. language advice platform

This approach implies a permanent, continuous effort to collect the relevant data for all registers and styles from all the parts that constitute our language area. The report explicitly argues in favour of a continuous collection of written and spoken language records, in which all regions are proportionally represented. The advice resulted in a sort of catch-up corpus planning policy in favour of those varieties that were thus far under-represented, Suriname Dutch initially, and then Caribbean Dutch later on, e.g. for lexical variants to be included in the *Woordenlijst Nederlandse Taal*, the official orthographical dictionary of Dutch, published on the web under the auspices of the Taalunie.[11]

The variation advice report of the Council was not only limited to the problems of variation within standard Dutch, which – as already mentioned – led to an official confirmation of the status of Dutch as a symmetrical pluricentric language – but focused on non- and extra-standard variation as well, especially between non-standard varieties of Dutch and standard Dutch. The approach of the Council was based on the concept that the term Dutch is not a synonym for (only) standard Dutch, but refers to a complex of related varieties, including diachronic and synchronic ones as well as regional, social, gender-based and situational types of variation, of which standard Dutch is only one equal variety. The Council's advice report also backed the position taken by the Secretariat-General a few years earlier regarding the recognition, in the context of the *European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages,*[12] of regional varieties such as Low Saxon, Limburgish and Zeelandicsh, i.e. that these varieties had to be considered forms of Dutch and, as a result, were not entitled to claim the status of minority or regional languages within this Charter, as it explicitly excludes varieties of the official language, in the same way that it excludes minority languages which are the result of recent migration. This opinion did not imply a negative value-judgement or depreciation for these varieties: quite the contrary!

The Council vividly proposed the introduction of a language area-internal recognition procedure for regional and minority varieties, which would not need to distinguish between separate languages and forms of the official language and would not have to exclude migrant languages, since these too had become part and parcel of our new, complex and variegated linguistic and cultural landscape. The Council confirmed that all language varieties need to be the object of policy concern. As far as dialects are concerned, it confirmed the importance of the scientific study, description and documentation of these language forms, which have to be considered crucial parts of the non-material cultural heritage of our societies.

The Council's argumentation was not a plea to reverse the situation of dialectal loss and to try to save or repair the authentic dialects and their habitat. What it did imply was a passionate plea for awareness-raising as regards a more positive attitude towards dialects and their speakers. The language policy and communicative

[11] The *Woordenlijst Nederlandse Taal*, is available for all users of Dutch on the website www.woordenlijst.org, which is an integral part of the corporate website of the Taalunie.

[12] European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, issued in the framework of the Council of Europe. See: https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages

strategy of the Taalunie should coalesce to combat strong feelings of prejudice and myths about dialects and their relation to standard Dutch, e.g. that dialects are ugly and mean and inferior to the standard variety, and that there is no place for dialects in modern society, or that they are an obstacle to excellence in the command of the standard variety and its norms.

The proposed language area-internal recognition procedure has never been realised, through lack of political commitment and – related to this – a commitment to supply the necessary funding. Since then, the political climate has not become more favourable and this is an understatement. Given the current political discourse and the prevailing sentiment within public opinion and across the media, a sympathetic recognition of the equality of migrant languages has become completely unfeasible, all the more so when this recognition would confer linguistic rights to speakers, enforceable by law.

Undoubtedly, during the 1990s and the first decade or so of this century there has been a positive evolution in the beliefs concerning variation, especially towards dialects, but this evolution has remained partial and has not altogether cancelled existing myths and prejudice. My impression is that in recent years there has been a return to stricter and more severe attitudes towards variation, with more focus on normative efforts, in which there seems space for only one norm for standard Dutch. It is the Taalunie itself that is, by this argument, expected to establish this norm, to defend and impose it, even by exerting a form of societal or legislative pressure and force.

This countermovement can be observed particularly in the public debate about language variation within the class room and the recommended strategies for handling it, i.e. whether to tolerate and even actively use other languages and language varieties that are present in the class room or not. More and more, the exclusive focus seems to be on the command of standard Dutch as the only legitimate form of Dutch and the sole and unique instrument capable of empowerment. Especially with regard to migrant languages, the pluralistic approach which accepts diversity as a social reality seems under growing pressure in favour of a unilateral assimilation. That pressure is not limited to linguistic assimilation but also encompasses the internalisation of the dominant cultural identity as a whole. The recent debate on the necessity of a Flemish cultural and historical canon is a good illustration for all this.

3 European Collaboration Between Languages

The second domain in which Sjaak Kroon has left his unique mark is without any doubt the field of international collaboration between the Taalunie and comparable institutions of the other countries of Europe. Sjaak was a member of the scientific committee that was asked in 1999 to organise an international conference on behalf of the Taalunie. The theme of the conference was *Institutional Status and Use of*

National Languages in Europe.[13] For the Taalunie, the conference offered an excellent opportunity to forge connections with colleague institutions representing other European languages for the very first time, for instance with the Institut für Deutsche Sprache (IDS) from Mannheim and with the various language councils of the Scandinavian countries, e.g. the Dansk Sprognævn from Denmark and the Institute for the Languages of Finland.

The example set by the Taalunie was followed by comparable initiatives on the part of the colleague institutions. A year later, in 2000, the IDS organised a new international event followed by another one at the famous Villa Medicea in Florence in 2001, the seat of the Accademia della Crusca, the oldest language academy in the world. These events created a shared conviction among the participants that we needed a permanent structure for our collaboration. This was seen as a necessary step because otherwise the established chain of contacts would break down under the pressure of the daily business of the participating institutions. In Florence a preparatory group for this permanent structure was set up. This committee prepared a new conference, which took place in 2002 at the premises of the European Commission in Brussels. The decision to establish a *European Federation of National Institutions for Language* was taken during that conference. The first regular conference of EFNIL took place in 2003 in Stockholm. Sixteen other conferences have taken place since then and EFNIL is more relevant than ever before. By now almost all official languages and countries of Europe are represented, not only EU member states but also countries such as Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Serbia.

Sjaak can therefore be considered one of the forefathers of EFNIL. As a matter of fact, the 1999 conference had already confirmed the importance of a cross-border collaboration between the language planning and language policy institutions, among other things as an instrument for joint international policy-oriented research and of course as an instrument for influencing the policies of the national governments and of the institutions of the EU, putting language issues on the policy agenda at a truly European level.

The evidence-based philosophy of language policy was again at the heart of the conference in 1999. This was the reason why the scientific committee opted for a truly multi- and interdisciplinary approach. As many relevant disciplines and perspectives as possible were invited to contribute. Although I had already been active in the field of language policy for some eight years already, many of these perspectives were entirely new to me: eco-linguistics, econo-linguistics, contact linguistics and the human rights approach to language use. As was the case with many other language (policy) institutes, the Taalunie was until then characterised by an almost exclusive focus on the more traditional disciplines that study language phenomena, i.e. pure linguistics, stylistics and socio- and psycholinguistics. The conference extended our field of vision. We learned to build on the results and insights of other

[13] The proceedings of this conference were also published in book-form: De Bot C, S. Kroon et al. (eds.) (2001) *Institutional Status and Use of National Languages in Europe* (Plurilingua XXIII), St. Augustin: Asgard Verlag.

disciplines as well. This is certainly a lesson learned from Sjaak and his colleagues. Later on I have tried to involve still other disciplines, involving areas such as social and political geography.

The 1999 conference was not only a precursor of EFNIL but it gave also birth to yet another important comprehensive advisory report of the Council for the Dutch Language and Literature to the Committee of Ministers of the Taalunie. The report entitled *Naar een samenhangend taalbeleid voor het Nederlands vanuit Europees perspectief*,[14] appeared in 2002. Like the report on language variation it was a special work group that did the preparatory work for the Council. Again, Sjaak was one of its prominent members.

Once more, the report argued in favour of strengthening our collaboration with the other countries and languages of Europe. It was certainly one of the milestones that have stimulated my institution to take an active interest in setting up the platform that developed into EFNIL. The advice was not limited to the European Union and not even to Europe. It also argued in favour of strengthening our collaboration with Afrikaans in South-Africa. The point of departure for this aspect of the advice was to contribute to the repositioning of Afrikaans as one of the eleven official languages of the new, post-Apartheid South Africa. That has been our perspective ever since. Our collaboration was not even limited to Afrikaans and Dutch as a foreign language but included other South African languages, especially regarding the (re-) use of the language infrastructure developed for Dutch, for instance for the management of lexicons, corpora and other language resources.

The report also dealt with developing policies for emigrants, i.e. Dutch-speaking people that went to live abroad, including a proposal to set up courses for Dutch as an ancestral language. Such recommendations have long been neglected by the Taalunie. Only recently the emigrants from the Netherlands and Flanders have become the object of projects and policies, through a scheme called *Vertrokken Nederlands* (Expat Dutch), a relatively large-scale research initiative into the attitudes and perceptions of emigrants towards Dutch language and culture. Even in this domain Sjaak and his colleagues in the Council have been agents of foresight for later developments.

All this means that Sjaak Kroon has played a prominent part in the international collaboration that the Taalunie initiated at the beginning of this century. The same applies to one of the first projects elaborated by EFNIL. This project is still at the heart of EFNIL's activities today. Like Sjaak Kroon and also the late Koen Jaspaert, then Secretary-General of the Taalunie and in many respects the soul mate and *companion de route* of Sjaak, the EFNIL board was convinced that policies should be based on a sound knowledge of language facts. This implied that these facts had to be collected where they were absent or insufficient. Therefore EFNIL started almost immediately with a project called the *European Language Monitor*, abbreviated

[14] *Naar een samenhangend taalbeleid voor het Nederlands vanuit Europees perspectief* (Towards a comprehensive language policy for Dutch from a European perspective), Raad voor de Nederlandse Taal en Letteren. See: https://taalunie.org/publicaties/96/naar-een-samenhangend-taalbeleid-voor-het-nederlands-vanuit-europees-perspectief

ELM. As its name suggests, it was intended to be a monitoring tool for the status, position and actual use of the various official languages of the European Union. It seeks to register and monitor the state of health of our languages by measuring a relatively large number of variables that can be considered as indicative for the use of the language in crucial domains and situations within our societies: e.g. the number of academic courses given in Dutch, Swedish and other languages as compared to English, the use of languages in television programmes, the quota for pop music in the national language, policies of business firms regarding corporate languages and many other comparable aspects.

Sjaak Kroon was one of the members of the eminent scientific committee that prepared the draft for the first questionnaire of ELM. The other scholars in the committee were Britt-Louise Gunnarsson (Sweden), the late Ulrich Ammon (Germany), Claude Trichet (France) and Augusto Carli (Italy).

From the very start of the project in 2003 it was the intention and ambition of the project to refresh its data every three years or so, thus creating a longitudinal dimension which would allow the identification of evolutions. As stated, the ELM project has been at the heart of EFNIL activities ever since. In 2018 a fourth data collection was organised, which means that by now ELM includes four points of measurement over a period of almost 16 years.[15]

The project has produced a treasure trove of information. The availability of comprehensive, comparable data for so many European languages is of great value for policy aims. I will give only one example. If we compare the data concerning the use of languages of instruction in higher education in the Netherlands with those for the other countries of Europe, we see without any possibility of doubt that no other European country uses English so often in tertiary education than does the Netherlands, with the single exception of the English-speaking countries themselves, i.e. Ireland, Malta and the UK. The Netherlands are in the vanguard of tertiary education in English, way ahead of the Scandinavian countries Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, which are traditionally considered to be co-leaders with the Netherlands when it comes to their orientation towards English as an instrument to gain international excellence, to compete on a global level and to attract foreign students.

4 Language Policy Models: Problem-Solving or Rhetoric Discourse?

In his involvement in the various policy projects of the Taalunie, Sjaak Kroon has proven to be an exponent of a functional approach to language policy on a scientific, empirical basis. This approach considers policy-making as a teleological activity,

[15] Further information regarding the *European Language Monitor* (ELM) is to be found on the EFNIL website: http://www.efnil.org/projects/elm

aimed at influencing states of affairs in real life, from relatively less appropriate or desirable to more appropriate, with the declared objective of helping to resolve or diminish problems in society. Key-words in this approach are *evidence-based* and *problem-solving*.

On the opposite side we find more ideologically oriented types of approach, of which many are inspired by pre-established visions and ideological convictions, independent of real-world facts. The described opposition between these two types of policy does not mean that the approach of Sjaak and other ‘pragmatists’ can be characterised as completely neutral and value-free, simply because value-free policies do not exist. The functional approach is embedded in a broader concept of a plural, democratic society in which citizens can determine their own behaviour, including their linguistic behaviour, as autonomously as possible. Only in the case of manifest dysfunctions can policy interventions be considered, and then only if they are likely to produce the desired effect.

There is also a third key-word that is characteristic of the approach Sjaak has followed in his political practices and that is its orientation towards users rather than towards language as an independent entity in its own right. As Koen Jaspaert claimed in his conclusive remarks during the 1999 conference on the status and use of European languages, the ideologically oriented type of approach tends to focus on language. In this type of approach a specific language, e.g. Dutch, is considered a cultural heritage that needs to be preserved and protected together with the territory with which it is linked, in much the same way as a historical monument or a work of art.

The problem-solving model, on the contrary, does not focus on language as such but on the community of speakers and their real needs. Its aim is to facilitate matters for language users in the actual communicative situations in which they find themselves. Rightly or wrongly, Jaspaert’s impression at the end of the twentieth century was that “a gradual shift in European language-political thinking’ was taking place, away from a language policy that was a mere defence mechanism for preserving the linguistic-cultural heritage, towards a practical language policy aimed at supporting European citizens in their communicative needs in the multilingual Europe of tomorrow.

One can doubt whether this evolution has really occurred and was not some sort of optical illusion. Anyway, my impression is that in today’s Europe the pragmatic problem-solving model is more and more under pressure and again seems to make way for more explicitly ideological models, which persist in the assertion of a pure language with a homogeneous territory, without taking into account the real changes in society, especially the fact that due to changing patterns of mobility and offline/online communication and identities, our societies have de facto become multilingual and superdiverse and many citizens have acquired complex linguistic repertoires that go beyond the range of one single language. In spite of all this, the ideological model does not give up its pureness and homogeneity ideal. Any violation is considered a threat or a form of degeneration that has to be countered. Implicitly or explicitly it strives to restore the pre-supposed homogeneity where

threatened. Think of the almost exclusive and one-directional focus on Dutch language competence in the debate on the integration of cultural minorities.

All this means that the pragmatic approach needs continuously to be defended and protected, against the holistic and historicist claims of many of the policy types that are directly inspired by ideologies. Within these types of approach language policy is not - not merely and not in the first place - an instrument to solve problems of individuals in real-life situations, but offers leverage for the realisation of much more comprehensive, extralinguistic aims and objectives, even to the extent of changing the course of history or – as we will see – for taking revenge on it. The idealistic-historicist approach has always been an important current of the cultural mainstream within the Dutch language area and especially within the Flemish Movement. It is even a fundamental component in the legitimation of the institutional language and literature collaboration between the Netherlands and Flanders within the Taalunie. In the Explanatory Memorandum which accompanies the Taalunie Treaty, we find the following passage: "*De regeringen van beide landen hebben het voorstel tot instelling van een Nederlandse Taalunie tot het hunne gemaakt. Zij vertrouwen erop met de verwezenlijking daarvan de eenheid van de Nederlandse taal en letteren, als gevolg van de staatkundige scheiding zo lang bedreigd, te bevestigen en te bevorderen*".[16] Freely translated: "The governments of both countries have accepted the proposal to establish a Union for the Dutch language. They are confident that this will confirm and strengthen the unity of the Dutch language and literature, which has for so long time been threatened by the separation of our states".

The reference to the separation of the Low Countries shows without any shadow of doubt that the objectives go far beyond the needs of the community of language users. As already suggested, the real objective is more comprehensive and extralinguistic in nature, as a form of revenge for the separation of the Low Countries, following the fall of Antwerp in 1585 and the Belgian revolution of 1830. This legitimation finds its ideal basis in the movement indicated as heelnederlandism,[17] that considers linguistic unity between the Netherlands and Flanders as only one aspect of a wider cultural – and sometimes even political – unity between two *broedervolken,* i.e. two peoples that are closely related, as brothers of the same family.

Since the language ideology as described above is deeply rooted in the Flemish movement and in the classical thinking of the cultural mainstream, the pragmatic approach of language policy can in no way be taken for granted or be considered as

[16] *De Nederlandse Taalunie* (1982), the publication of the official acts concerning the institution of the Union for the Dutch Language, including the Treaty and the accompanying Explanatory Memorandum, Den Haag: Staatsuitgeverij, p. 33.

[17] *Heelnederlandisme* is a cultural movement or current that considers the Netherlands, Flanders and other historical areas such as the extreme North of France as one cultural area with a common history, a common language and a common identity based on it, that strives for the intensification of these historical socio-cultural ties, with a view to a common destiny in the future. Often a distinction is made between *heelnederlandisme* and *grootnederlandisme.* The latter also aims at political unity within a single nation-state.

an accomplished fact. In our view it remains the only model that can claim scientific status and is fully compatible with the idea of an open, democratic society that grants its citizens real self-determination, with as little interference by heteronomous authorities as possible.

The above description of the opposition between ideological and non-ideological conceptions of (language) policy leads us to a distinction between two fundamental types: archetypes as it were. They never, or almost never, occur in their pure state, since every real-world policy is almost inevitably a mixture of features of both archetypes. These real-life policies can tend towards one pole or the other and it is important for anyone working in the field of language policy, and notably also for scientific contributors, to be aware of this.

Idealistic	Realistic
Problematic relationship with reality	Critical-realistic relationship with reality
Rhetorical, symbolical, auto-referential	Pragmatic, instrumental
Ideological, dogmatic, aprioristic	Non-ideological, non-dogmatic, aposterioristic
Deductive	Inductive
Holistic, historicist, voluntaristic	Open to partial results, concerned about feasibility; history is not a matter of concern
Static, abstract, non-analysable concepts such as *language*, *people*, *language user*, *identity*	Dynamic, concrete, analysable concepts such as *language variety x-n, language user x-n, identity (features) x-n*
Elitist	Non-elitist
Ethical and aesthetic	Ethical, non-aesthetic
Tendency to regard spontaneous (language) change negatively	Neutral attitude towards spontaneous (language) change
Tendency to prefer legislation as the fundamental instrument of language policy (impose or forbid by law)	Tendency to prefer influencing as the fundamental instrument of language policy (encourage - discourage)
Focus on language as a value in itself, as a historical-cultural good	Focus on concrete language users and their real needs

The most fundamental difference between these two types is their attitude towards the existential reality, towards empirical facts.

The realistic type of policy seeks a permanent and critical confrontation with empirical data. Policy objectives are the result of a thorough analysis of the language situation of a given moment and place. This analysis aims at the identification of dysfunctions or at least states of affairs that can be improved. Within this philosophy, policy objectives are never absolute or unalterable and can never be taken for granted. This model has no difficulty with changing its objectives and strategies as a result of advanced understanding or changing circumstances in society. Moreover, it shows a vivid interest in the real effects of its actions and in the measurement of these effects, through comparison with the initial states of affairs. It is not only focused on the realisation of final goals but is also happy with partial and intermediate results, even in those cases in which the final goal proves to be unachievable.

The idealistic type of policy, on the contrary, tends to derive its actions from unalterable, a priori conceptions, ideas and goals, a sort of ideal that has to be imposed upon reality. The acceptance of language norms of the Netherlands in Flanders is a good example of this. This ideal and its legitimation in terms of norms and values are considered as a priori givens, with no space for doubt. A change in strategy or position tends to be considered immediately as treason to the just cause, even if it is the product of a critical evaluation of reality. Those active in the field of language policy and research experts who account for the functionality of Belgian informal Dutch – the so-called tussentaal or intermediate language – are familiar with this kind of reproach. The idealistic model implies an act of belief, a credo, in many aspects comparable with a religious belief. Like religions, it tends to be dogmatic and aprioristic. It is based on deduction since its aims and objectives are not the result of a thorough analysis of reality but, on the contrary, are derived from a priori ideas and ideals. As a consequence, this approach tends to give less attention to intermediate or partial results. Effects and results are not judged for their practical contribution to concrete solutions, but solely from the perspective of their relationship with the idealistic final goal.

Another crucial feature of this type of policy is its tendency to work with abstract entities and concepts that are not analysable, such as (the) *Language*, (the) *People*, (the) *Speaker* (of Dutch), (the national) *Identity*, written so to speak with capital letters and chiselled in stone. This is not the case for the realistic type. Its conceptions are concrete and analysable. *Language* is not considered as an unalterable, monolithic entity, but as a set of varieties with strong similarities and remaining differences as well. Language users are always people of flesh and blood, with individual characteristics, ways of behaviour and needs. Even the conception *identity* is not an indistinct whole, but a complex that changes with time and shows many individual differences, to a certain extent based on distinctions like region, gender, age and social class.

There is also a difference in the use of ethical and/or aesthetic criteria and judgements. Both models use ethical categories such as *good* vs. *bad*, *appropriate* vs. *less appropriate* and the like. Unlike its idealistic counterpart, the realistic model does not use aesthetic criteria and value-judgements. For this policy type there are no a priori superior of inferior language forms or kinds of linguistic behaviour. The idealistic type, on the contrary, makes frequent use of aesthetic judgements, even if they are covert. Examples of such judgements are *beautiful* vs. *ugly*, *pure* vs. *impure*, *well-educated* vs. *rude*. A frequently used word in this context is *taalverloedering* (language decay or degeneration), which has no extensional meaning but only invites aesthetically negative value judgements.

The two opposite types also have different preferences regarding the use of policy instruments. The idealistic type seems to have a preference for legislation and ruling. Policy actors within this category often try to impose 'by law' appropriate types of linguistic behaviour and language forms and/or sanction inappropriate ones. Probably this preference is an aspect of their voluntarism, i.e. a strong appeal to acts of will by the leading class or ruling elite, which claims to know what is good for society as a whole. Indeed, the decision regarding cultural trajectory is typically

not a matter of democratic consensus or self-determination of citizens, but a privilege of a cultural elite, that has the mission and moral obligation to impose its ideals as an act of edification on society and its population. Think of the ways in which during the immediate post-war period our dialects have been decried and the so-called ABN (general *cultivated* Dutch) has been promoted as the only appropriate and superior language variety to be used in all social occasions. I belong myself to the generation that had to stay on after school, having been reported for speaking the local dialect during playtime, i.e. in informal peer group communication.

In the Netherlands and a fortiori in Flanders the idealistic policy model aimed at the diffusion of one language standard for the Dutch language area as a whole. The declared ideal was one variety from Groningen to Maastricht or – within the paradigm of heelnederlandism – from Groningen to Diksmuide. Individual persons were supposed to speak and write in such a way that they did not betray their region of origin. Thus, the ultimate aim was to bring the real-life language situation in tune with their own imagined ideal, irrespective of functional criteria. Needless to say, their actions did not focus on the language users and their needs, but on language as an imagined, idealised entity and as a historical-cultural good that had to be transmitted to the next generations and had to be protected from decay and disintegration. In this world-view almost all kinds of spontaneous change are the object of suspicion, for instance the increased use of loanwords from English or phenomena such as youth slang. Such phenomena are almost automatically regarded as forms of degeneration, and quite often as a direct threat to the ideal of one single, unified variety of Dutch.

All this does not apply to the realistic policy model. That model does not start from an imagined language ideal but from the real needs of actual language users. It is not the aim of this kind of policy-makers to impose their own ideal or language variety on society as a whole. For this reason they are reluctant to impose or sanction by law and diktat. They prefer more persuasive instruments, such as strengthening or discouraging processes that are already taking place.

The analysis in the previous paragraphs shows that the awareness of differences in policy approach is not trivial, since these differences have far-reaching consequences that are closely related to different views about humanity and society. They also have important implications for the role and position of scientific work in civil society, and the way in which scientific insights and results can be used for practical and political purposes. Some types of use are legitimate, others are more problematic. Knowledge and sensibility of all this helps us to make our choices and determine our position. It is precisely for this reason that scientists and research experts should be interested in political theory and in reflecting on it. Sjaak Kroon is an example of an expert who has proved to be able to separate the wheat from the chaff, and who has put his insights and expertise at the exclusive service of functional actions within a problem-solving paradigm. In today's world of fact-free policies and 'alternative facts' this is not self-evident. In my view the younger generations will increasingly be compelled to draw sharp, strict lines of demarcation on how society and politics can legitimately use their contributions.

Bibliography

Bennis, H., & Van Hoorde, J. (2018). Different countries, one language – An integrated language policy: language policy in the Dutch language area and the role of the Taalunie. In G. Stickel (Ed.), *National Language Institutions and National Languages. Contributions to the EFNIL conference 2017 in Mannheim* (pp. 193–199). Research Institute for Linguistics – Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

De Bot, C., Kroon, S., et al. (Eds.). (2001). *Institutional status and use of national languages in Europe* (Plurilingua XXIII). Asgard Verlag.

De Caluwe, J. (2004). Conflicting language conceptions within the Dutch speaking part of Belgium. *Trans: Internet Journal for Cultural Sciences, 15*, 53.

De Caluwe, J., Geeraerts, D., Kroon, S., et al. (Eds.). (2002). *Taalvariatie & Taalbeleid. Bijdragen aan het taalbeleid in Nederland en Vlaanderen* [Language variation and language policy. Contributions to the language policy in the Netherlands and Flanders]. Garant Uitgevers.

De Nederlandse Taalunie. (1982). (the Union for the Dutch Language, publication of the official acts including the Treaty and the accompanying Explanatory Memorandum), Staatsuitgeverij.

European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, issued in the framework of the Council of Europe. See: https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages

Jaspaert, K. (2001). Language or citizens? European language politics as an instrumental policy aimed at the needs of European citizens. In B. De, C. S. Kroon, et al. (Eds.), *Institutional status and use of national languages in Europe* (Plurlingua XXIII). St. Augustin.

Muhr, R. (2004). Language attitudes and language conceptions in non-dominating varieties of Pluricentric languages. *Trans: Internet Journal for Cultural Sciences, 15*.

Popper, K. (1945). *The open society and its enemies*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Raad voor de Nederlandse Taal en Letteren. (2002). *Naar een samenhangend taalbeleid voor het Nederlands vanuit Europees perspectief* [Towards a comprehensive language policy for Dutch from a European perspective], See: https://taalunie.org/publicaties/96/naar-een-samenhangend-taalbeleid-voor-het-nederlands-vanuit-europees-perspectief

Raad voor de Nederlandse Taal en Letteren. (2003). *Variatie in het Nederlands: eenheid in verscheidenheid. Taalvariatiebeleid in Taalunieverband* [Variation in Dutch: Unity in diversity. Language variation policy within the context of the Taalunie], See: https://taalunie.org/publicaties/94/variatie-in-het-nederlands-eenheid-in-verscheidenheid

Russel, B. (1931). *The scientific outlook*. George Allen & Unwin.

Van Hoorde, J. (2002a). Werken aan de toekomst van het Nederlands. Tussen platonisch idealisme and pragmatisch realisme. In R. Haest et al. (Eds.), *Communicatief bekeken. Liber amicorum Stijn Verrept* (pp. 203–209). Kluwer.

Van Hoorde, J. (2002b). The Dutch language, the NTU and the European context. In G. Stickel (Ed.), *Europäische Hochsprachen und mehrsprachiges Europa* (pp. 62–71). Institut für Deutsche Sprache.

Van Hoorde, J. (2005), "Rituale of funzionale? Paradigmi della politica linguistica e contributo della ricerca linguistica", in: Guardiano, C. et al. (eds), *Lingue, Istituzioni, Territori. Riflessioni teoriche, proposte metodologiche ed esperienze de politica linguistica. Atti del XXXVIII Congresso Internazionale di Studi della Società di Linguistica Italiana (SLI),* : Bulzoni, pp. 15-32.

Van Hoorde, J. (2014). Competing, complementary of both? English as a Lingua Franca and the position of Dutch. In U. Ammon et al. (Eds.), *Sociolinguistica 28 European National Language Institutions' attitudes and policies towards English as the European Lingua Franca* (pp. 9–23). Walter de Gruyter GmbH.

The Kroonian Paradigm: Sjaak Kroon's Distinctive Style of Language Work

Joseph Lo Bianco

1 Introduction

I first met Sjaak Kroon at a conference in Israel in the early 1990s at which he presented fascinating research about Eritrean language policy and nation building (see Hailemariam et al., 1999; Asfaha et al., 2008). As I followed his peregrinations, both physical and intellectual, I noted a recurring interest in problems, theories, complexities and populations that mirrored my own. Our paths never, regrettably, overlapped because, although people often say it's a small world, Melbourne is 16,536 kilometres from Amsterdam. While our contemporary post-print 'republic of e-letters' keeps us in instantaneous touch, we are also immersed in local activities and institutions that keep us apart. This quality of 'together apartness' is shaping contemporary life and was dramatically made universal in the lockdowns and quarantines of the COVID-19 pandemic, exposing all too brutally that separation and dispersal remain part of our otherwise interconnected world.

Sjaak's work that I have read and know addresses adult literacy (but adult literacy from a public policy, multilingual and radical perspective); globalisation, and its close links to questions of identity (which he has scrutinised around chronotope configurations, such as Chinese identifications in Eindhoven and adult learners and their languages and mental concepts, in Timor Leste); discursive practices in various social settings; English, of course, its problems, challenges, ubiquity and instantiations, such as in Asmara (Kroon et al., 2019); and also questions related to the marginalization and positioning of speakers. Sjaak has looked closely into identity in time and space in multiple settings and he has shown an abiding interest in diaspora and homelands, with a key with of his work located across Dutch speaking areas in Europe. Finally, he has examined many theory points in language planning

J. L. Bianco (✉)
Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne,
Melbourne, VIC, Australia
e-mail: j.lobianco@unimelb.edu.au

© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2021
M. Spotti et al. (eds.), *Language Policies and the Politics of Language Practices*, Language Policy 28, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-88723-0_10

(a favourite of mine is *New Speakers of new and old languages: an investigation into the gap between language practices and language policy*, by Spotti et al., 2019).

Beyond all this, Sjaak has worked on cities and their linguistic landscapes, such as Murcia in Spain; themes of resilience and community-building in the face of poverty and disaster; schooling and academic language; literacy and curriculum; language, dialect and change; and, inevitably, even more than all this. As people move so do their words and texts (Blommaert et al., 2015) and from Sjaak's work we learn that as people move and intermingle so does the attention we pay to them, the concepts we extract and use from these experiences to inform our understanding of things, and of what action we take and recommend. What we learn from these observations and this research is relevant to us at personal and collective levels, as in pedagogy, policy and praxis. I have not read all of Sjaak's many words on these many and varied topics, but from the ones I have read I have noticed his conversational presence and conceptual influence in my own work and thinking for many years.

As I write these words, I am conscious that a towering contributor to this volume and one of its editors, an immense influence, intellectual guide and personal friend to us all, the irreplaceable Jan Blommaert, has recently died. I have prepared this paper therefore not only with great and justified admiration for Sjaak but with deep sadness for Jan. Pervading this paper too, in a fusion of Sjaak and Jan, is an even deeper feeling about individuals who take socially grounded language analysis seriously, and who combine scholarship with real world activism. Such individuals, Sjaak and Jan, are rare and humanly invaluable, they produce writings and teachings which are deeply scholarly and politically important, wherever we live and work.

I must thank Sjaak for something more specific as well. In preparing this chapter I was drawn into reading material mostly new to me, but second nature to him. I entered the fascinating space of the 'Dutch language area', and I learned about a language world far from those I inhabit, in Australia and Southeast Asia where I mostly work, but a language world analysed so impressively well by Sjaak that I was able to draw many lessons for the far-away contexts I inhabit.

Over a long and very productive career Sjaak Kroon has contributed to language practices and to imagining and designing models of language policy. For the most part these apply to the Dutch language area which I have now come to recognise as a trans-national notion within which variable sovereignty practices are pooled. In a fascinating reduplication these pooled sovereignties are pooled a second time, when they are folded into the trans-national sovereignty of the European Union. Through past colonial expansion Dutch, and whatever its English plural might be ('Dutches' seems unlikely), is an ecology of interconnected language practices spread well beyond its homeland origins in Europe, but exhibiting patterns and tendencies which can inform even very different sociolinguistic settings.

In what follows I discuss each contribution to the book, and then present some of my own responses to Sjaak Kroon's work as a language planner and policy influencer.

2 Chapter Comments

2.1 Trump's Errors

Blommaert's chapter is on what meanings we can draw, for sociolinguistics and beyond, from former US President Donald Trump's many tweet errors, how these errors 'went viral' and the different things the reaction to the errors index and suggest.

Blommaert begins by tracking the origins of sociolinguistic scholarship to a kind of post Chomsky conjunction, for some people also no doubt an anti-Chomsky stance. A cardinal formulation, expressed in Blommaert's usual pithy insightfulness, is the foundational premise and observation of sociolinguistics of the principled equality of all languages, tied to their factual inequality.

In his chapter Blommaert looks at normative stratification, which essentially refers to how the empirical reality of language pluralism gets converted into asymmetries of value, prestige and social/economic opportunity. This transition from empirically existing as equal to hierarchically ranked and unequal flows from the application of human valuation to human communication. The judgment and the judging are of interest to much of Jan Blommaert's work, a life project he shared with Sjaak Kroon, consistently centred in his (Kroon's) studies of the internal communicative realities of the Dutch language area, and externally into the world beyond it. This accounting for how human language indexes and acts as a proxy for social arrangments, hierarchies and relationships, has become a central preoccupation of modern sociolinguistics nearly everywhere.

With regard to Trump's tweets (a bizarre yet far reaching communicative phenomenon of our times), the online world links directly and dramatically to offline realities. The two domains, online and offline, are real and actual, and mutually constitute each other. What is social is language mediated, and even more than this, the social is a kind of *language performed*, or we might say that the social is really 'languaged' reality, created in and through and therefore by language.

In Blommaert's predictably subtle and well-documented analysis the online/offline 'nexus', as he terms it, becomes a laboratory for observing the 'manifest sociolinguistic re-stratification' which formed a shockingly large preoccupation for the most powerful man in the world. Ex-president Trump's political demise (which was occurring live before the world during the final stages of Jan Blommaert's illness), was not predicated on orthographic errors he perpetrated on Twitter, and yet his Twitter persona marked by its errors, mattered because of the huge investment he made in cultivating it as his public linguistic 'visage'.

What and how much this contributed to his demise cannot be calculated but nor can it be discounted. He lost the presidential election (Blommaert's paper was written before November 2020) and the COVID catastrophe visited upon the United States eroded a great deal of his support.

Blommaert shows carefully what tweets and tweet errors indexed for those committed to Trump's aspiration to 'make America great again', who rallied not just to

Donald J. Trump but to his tweets as well. He was in his tweets and in their defence of their man his tweet errors became raw material they felt they needed to defend.

Because of this identification what Trump tweeted went viral and became vital, and what Trump tweeted were recurring errors of formal language expression to be partisanly met with condemnation and celebration. As Blommaert notes: "*multiple audiences apply very different indexical vectors to the errors, each of them iconicizing a more general set of perceived social and political divisions"*.

In Blommaert's felicitous phrasing this produces a "*complex, polycentric sociolinguistic system, far less stable than that imagined in earlier sociolinguistics*" and in this statement encapsulates one of his distinctive scholarly contributions to the science of language in society.

2.2 Status Sounds

In this same Kroonian spirit, Jos Swanenberg, Anne Kerkhoff and Petra Poelmans discuss two domains of public life: education and work. These domains are governed by public and authorised measures to assess our suitability for initial entry and later progress. Administrative and test measures are applied to govern these domains and these yield scores or marks of competence and capacity. These results (scores and marks) become indicators of capability, assumed to reflect some underlying quality of an individual, and yet they are drawn from an actual and constrained performance in a fixed time. We can see the tension immediately between what is presumed by administration to signify an underlying truth and the situated and highly variable conditions under which the mark/score is realised.

A meritocratic principle informs and sustains how these practices operate but it is undermined by bias and prejudice of different kinds, most egregiously by racism, and this in turn solidifies the marginalisation and social stratification on which it feeds. Language is present in a central way in the determination of these presumed and underlying capabilities, and therefore in the two domains explored in their analysis, the authors observe and critique an 'accent ceiling' of vertical segregation. This social use of accent draws on the sensible sounding subterfuge of *intelligibility*, and specifically claims that new migrants tend to lack this unimpeachable quality of making themselves understood.

Swanenberg, Kerkhoff and Poelmans show that "*accents linked to labor migration*" are given inferior esteem compared to regional accents, which they persuasively reveal to be an exercise of nativism, an ideology that holds that what is from here is superior to what is from elsewhere. The writers expose this as a ruse of intelligibility that sometimes, perhaps very often, is really something else. Despite recent sociolinguistic change that has expanded what counts as acceptable Dutch pronunciation, it has not, the authors show, expanded sufficiently to include accent and pronunciation associated with the speech of working class immigrant laborers.

While some prejudice against rural Dutch persists, the writers show that speakers of rural Dutch can mitigate injury because their varieties count as native, while

racial prejudice denies this exoneration to mostly urban dwelling immigrants. These two accent ceilings, the rural native and the urban immigrant, are peripheries to the central and prestige ways to sound in Dutch. Nevertheless, the writers found many positive and inclusive attitudes among trainee teachers with whom they worked. Many teacher trainees demonstrated sophisticated understanding of how accent variation works, and could discuss accents and how they vary in conceptually rich ways and apply their understandings productively in education contexts. This research shows that norms and attitudes proposed by the official Dutch language agency, Taalunie, which favor toleration and acceptance of variation within Dutch, influenced by Sjaak Kroon, appear to have achieved some welcome and admirable traction.

But not all future teachers are so exemplary. Swanenberg, Kerkhoff and Poelmans's research reveals that negative ideologies of race and language, social status and language, persist and are attached to particular categories of racialized immigrant laborers.

The authors make reference to Agha's (2007) 'enregisterment' to scrutinise such subordination in language and social relations and in doing this they take forward what Blommaert (2010), reviewing Agha's work, called *"how social beings become social by means of recognizable communication behaviour, and how such...communication behaviour actually constructs social relations and structure"* (p. 612).

2.3 Teaching Tigrinya

Yonas Mesfun Asfaha and Jeanne Kurvers move us towards another space where Sjaak Kroon's signature is present. Their paper is on colonial and missionary contributions in literacy education in the Horn of African country of Eritrea, with its multilingual setting, colonial inheritances, and economic challenges.

The chapter looks at classroom literacy instruction with a focus on historical actors who *"laid the foundations of modern education in Eritrea*" and specifically in the context of the cultural centrality of literacy, and religious literacy 'instructions'. The authors examine initial textbooks used by colonial (Italian) and Catholic and Protestant missionary educators alongside the traditional Orthodox Christian educational texts, which are of local provenance. The literacy they are describing are the particular sound/symbol correspondences regarding the teaching of the Tigrinya language.

Tracing the origins of pedagogical perspectives with contemporary ones, the authors focus on comparing and contrasting how development of literacy instruction in alphabetic and semi-alphabetic traditions has evolved. Essentially, reading teaching works via letter names proceeding to combinations of these into syllables; teaching schemes which work well enough with Tigrinya's Ge'ez orthography because it contains syllable level correspondences, but tends not to work at all at the phonological level.

Foreign didactic traditions and their instantiation in textbooks therefore are revealed as entrenching an essentially outsider and colonial practice of how reading teaching should be, which has rendered the overall pedagogy as static and needing locally stimulated innovation.

2.4 Ethnographies of Others and Selves

Massimiliano Spotti's chapter in this Volume is concerned with a volunteer, Frida, teaching Dutch as a second language to refugees in an asylum-seeking centre in Flanders, an interesting part of the Dutch language area, in research of how and where language policy encounters language politics. This encounter between policy and politics is shown to spark at times harsh conflicts embodied in its inhabitants' language practices (Spotti 2018).

The paper is reflexive as well as analytical. It discusses the role of an ethnographers' location, in this case wedged between the inventiveness that asylum seekers exhibit and the knowledge limitations inherent in an outsider seeking to understand interactive processes between teachers and learners. Hence scholarly peril is an additional but not initially ostensible focus of the paper.

The overt analysis is on what turns out to be the steady unravelling of Frida's practical professional knowledge as she must respond to challenges that arise in imparting control of Dutch to her students. Frida is forced into situations where she comes to rely on ready-made formulas (which appear to serve also as injunctions, admonitions, and aphorisms): 'write it as you speak it' and 'we first walk and we make steps and then we walk faster'. For the researcher these formulas are at odds with the sociolinguistic repertoires and creative abilities of the already multilingual students, and which impose form onto functional needs. In the struggle to reconcile limitations of professional practice knowledge with practical communication needs and communication repertoires of students, the teacher ends up categorising her learners as illiterate and denigrates their languages abilities as 'no real languages really'.

In concluding his discussion, Spotti reflects that doing linguistic ethnography is a kind of tripartite reality involving ethnographer, object of study, and stocks of existing knowledge. He advocates that we should be as interested in mundane construction of sameness as we tend to be interested in change, rupture, resistance, or disjuncture.

2.5 Data and Its Uses

The contribution by Guus Extra and Ton Vallen shifts attention to the needs and means for assessing the home language repertoires of multilingual school populations, which they contrast to the fixed-interval censuses, and other forms of administrative information collection about the language abilities of a population.

The key questions the authors address are: what is the purpose of collecting such information? whose interests would it serve? They are interested in the forms of speech we often call community languages; these are spoken at home, immigrant codes that are the communicative reality for immigrant pupils, and whose presence and functional relevance in students' lives is often ignored by schools.

Hence the answer to the questions the researchers pose is that the reason for collecting such data is to influence policy and practice, to push more conceptually refined thinking into the policy space by filling the disparity between a communicative demographic reality and an authorised program of language education policy.

The paper carefully sets out the role and utility of home language data, informing practice and (potentially) influencing policy. In their detailed case studies of repertoires Extra and Vallen also demonstrate the essentially iterative or interactive way that improved policy arises, with mutual framing of problem and information, in a relationship of co-evolution.

2.6 Creating Quarter

Koen Jaspaert continues the focus on language policy and specifically on a goal that contemporary language policy often espouses, which is to change existing language practices of particular named groups in the jurisdiction issuing the policy. He is especially interested in policy that has an 'emancipatory' function or ambition.

This framing of the discussion brings to the fore a range of normativities: about policy, social settings, language practices and particular groups of people.

The writing is premised in Realist Social Theory with the discussion contrasting two paradigms of linguistic theory: *uniformity* (normalising system and structure from which variation is seen as a departure) and *variationism* (in which functional diversification and situatedness in language are what is normalised and variation is characteristic and normal).

According to Jaspaert these paradigms are found in both language and social theory, and which we choose to follow has direct repercussions when critical objects of study, especially language, are interpreted from the perspective or paradigm we choose to adopt. The repercussions are to be found in the kind of language policy that emerges and the prospects of its success. The chapter contains a convincing account of these traditions in linguistic theorising, the variationist and the uniformist, which diverge fundamentally around ontological categorisation: what is assumed and thereby what needs to be explained, coordinated, accounted for, or problematised. In effect each tradition characteristically normalises and problematises in opposing ways.

Jaspaert foregrounds conditions of language super-diversity in his exploration of language phenomena, organising the discussion as a contrast between what is imagined as 'departure' from norms under each paradigm. When the primary organising assumption is variationist, it assumes multiple and proliferating forms of diversity that refract and multiply and when the primary organising assumption is uniformity,

this becomes a conceptualization in which the point of departure is stable and what is called for is documenting divisions which arise from the general language concept.

The paper makes intriguing analogical claims outside the academic discipline of linguistics to forms of thought and scholarly disciplines that also strive to account for both system change and system stability. The author supports a view of language as 'inherently variable', in which norm formation is an active if dynamic and ever present process of stabilisation. The pragmatic and policy repercussions are drawn out in relation to the teaching of Dutch, with moments of constructivism and moments of explicit language teaching, therefore of experimentation alternating in a principled way with stabilisation.

2.7 Yo Sí Puedo

Danielle Boon and Jeanne Kurvers examine the Cuban adult literacy program, *Yo Sí Puedo!* which has been described as magic on the blackboard.

Yo Sí Puedo!, has for many years now travelled well beyond Cuba and its foreign assistance programs. I myself have seen it in operation in Australia, and indeed in Timor Leste (where it is often known as *Los Hau Bele* in several adult literacy initiatives*)*, the setting where Boon and Kurvers did their research. The authors pose questions, in the spirit of inquiry and critical scholarship, about the application of *Yo Sí Puedo!* in mass literacy campaigns in developing country contexts. The research includes an evaluation of different adult literacy programs between 2009 and 2014 isolating factors that foster or hinder success. *Los Hau Bele* was implemented in Portuguese initially, an official language and the language of the former colonial state, and in Tetum, the most common local language which is indigenous to the country.

Hence Boon and Kurvers are reporting an examination of adult literacy skills acquisition in the context of multilingualism, and of language policies that promote Tetum alongside Portuguese, in a complex historical and geographic context of poverty, colonisation (Portugal and Indonesia), and significant resource limitations in education. They cite the UNDP's 2018 Human Development Index that between 2006–2016 Timor Leste reported an adult literacy rate of 58.3% (ages 15 years and older), contrasted to 78.6% among females and 80,5% among males in the 15–24 years age group. The authors probe the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching methods that aim to support learners to understand the alphabetic principle and which design reading and writing activities on themes relevant to learners. In doing this they question some of the core Freirean assumptions of *Yo Sí Puedo!*

The data they report shows that rote and practice learning of letter associations and numbers does little to assist learners acquire and stabilise control of phoneme-grapheme correspondences and ultimately does not relate closely to daily use of literacy. The researchers found that some of the practices used tended to place extra demands on learners, distracting them from actual writing tasks, and from sounding

out letters to blend into complete words. Class observations showed teachers performing decoding work on behalf of students.

The essential conclusion is that there is a discrepancy between rhetoric and intention on the one hand and demonstrable achievement on the other. Another was that measures used to declare some districts free of illiteracy were based on very minimal and basic literacy performance with little confidence that even this could be maintained into independent reading skill and much less writing skill.

3 Discussion

Throughout his career, Sjaak Kroon has worked on multiple issues related to the presence of minority languages in education in the 'Dutch language area', and examined the development of policies and practices, both the formally announced laws of policy, and the more informal policing of practice. In Spotti's terms we can sense Sjaak Kroon's ethnographic interpretive methodology, apparently highly original in the Dutch academic landscape, expertly on display through this volume and generally in his work, in the research his students take forward, and in the policies and practices of various instutions.

As discussed in the chapter by Johan Van Hoorde, Sjaak Kroon's contributions to Dutch in its original contexts mark him out as more than a professional knowledge seeker, more than a 'mere' researcher. The author sees 'researcher' as a social category whose essential stock in trade is to gather, analyse and disseminate knowledge, and who justifies this, if it needs defending, as a noble effort to push back the frontiers of knowledge. However, in Van Hoorde's words, Sjaak Kroon both preaches and practices. Van Hoorde claims that a 'mere' researcher might "*expect that policymakers will read their contributions and build on them*", but seasoned researchers know and the new learn quickly that "*the reality is disappointing*". This is because policymakers reside in a different political community from the "*world of science and research*" and, devastatingly for 'mere' researchers, policymakers "*quite often … show no interest in … results*" of research.

Van Hoorde attributes this already dismal picture, if you are a researcher who seeks or expects knowledge to be read and absorbed by policy makers, to an "*even worse*" explanation. This is to do with the shallowness of policy making intentions which "*seem more concerned with symbolic behaviour and rhetorical statements than with problem-solving on a rational and empirical basis*".

I want to concentrate my discussion now on this, as a language planning academic and practical policy maker myself, and someone new to the context of Dutch language and societies shaped in and by Dutch, and my own tentative conclusions from an exploration of its official and officialised message projection.

All institutions engage in storytelling, partly this is to solidify constituents to their primary legitimation, but also it is to establish and define their distinctiveness and mission (Gabriel, 2000; Boje, 2001). My discussion below is informed by reading other works by Van Hoorde (2002, 2005, 2014), several of Sjaak's many

writings about language policy and his references to Dutch, as well as various online sources, cited below.

The Dutch language settings in Europe can be imagined as the space for policy and research to come together in a geo-political entity, known officially as Taalunie. This takes institutional and organisational form through the *Nederlandse Taalunie,* the Dutch Language Union. Its origins can be traced to a treaty signed in 1980, which Van Hoorde serves as senior language policy advisor, hence his observations cut significant ice. Headquartered in The Hague and at Brussels, Taalunie is bi-national, but in fact impacts beyond Belgium and the Netherlands to include Suriname (*De Nederlandse Taalunie* 1982, Bennis and Van Hoorde 2018).

Having no proficiency in Dutch I needed to search (and really search), the website of *Nederlandse Taalunie* for accessible information. I found the website to be very discrete about access to its English translations, something that seemed strategic rather than incidental. I eventually found these sequestered deep in the navigational space in a recess of the home page. I interpreted this as a process, quite proper in my view, of normalising Dutch as the expected language of information access and retrieval.

On the several occasions I attempted to access its promised English I was advised that <*geen toegang* > or < *De toegang tot deze pagina is afgeschermd*>. Some efforts later I located an informative single page entry that explained that Taalunie "*develops and promotes policy on Dutch in the Netherlands, Flanders and Suriname, and champions the Dutch language around the world…our experts can connect parties in a whole range of different areas. We work together to make Dutch a stronger and more dynamic language, and to ensure that as many people as possible are able to use Dutch to full effect*". The geographic scope is further clarified as "*Suriname is an associate member of the Taalunie. We also cooperate closely with Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten and the islands that constitute Caribbean Netherlands (Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba). This means that all countries where Dutch is an official language are actively involved in work of the Taalunie*."

The relation of Taalunie to these other settings is through their political dependency as territories of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, while associate membership for Suriname follows its sovereign decision as an independent polity to adhere to Taalunie.

The enumeration of competences or tasks for Taalunie is described as a list of 'focus areas', and key is Standard Language, comprising scientific descriptive actions on behalf of Dutch grammar, spelling, and terminology. There are also functions related to providing language advice and various forms of collaboration to develop technological aids. Significantly this category of action is described as encouraging "*the use of clear Dutch that is easy to understand"* in the interests of making "*Dutch more accessible to everyone*", though of course its principal roles are to serve the entire range of administrative, cultural and political functions for two national states and the official standing of Dutch as an official language of the European Union.

The other focus areas are concerned with:

- *language variation* (Taalunie develops policies that reflect this reality of many forms and varieties of Dutch co-existing in the context of surrounding multilingualism, and responds to developments and needs throughout society);
- *education* (here the function is described as supporting initiatives "*in which Dutch is taught as a first or a second language within our language area*" and "*helping policy-makers and the education sector by offering advice and expert opinion, and identifying issues as they arise");*
- *education 'outside the language area'* (where "*Taalunie stimulates, supports and promotes quality teaching of the Dutch language, in the Dutch language…in an advisory role and by providing substantive and financial support. [and by fostering] initiatives for collaboration and the exchange of essential resources, most notably knowledge and materials*");
- *language and culture,* under this rubric Taalunie is concerned with the promotion of cultural cooperation in Dutch "*between the Netherlands, Flanders, Suriname and the rest of the world*" and a range of other activities such as digitisation of Dutch-language literature, translation policy, exchange of translation expertise.

All of these activities position Taalunie as a contemporary, liberal, progressive union, sparked by the original treaty between Belgium and the Netherlands in 1980, which itself substituted a cultural agreement following World War II. Political change within Belgium in recent decades concerning the status of Flanders, in which the juridical and sociological status of Dutch was a significant factor in disputes with francophone Belgium, led to reformulation of the base treaty.

In their analysis of Belgian state formation, reformation and federalism from 1995, Goossens and Cannoot (2015) show how this is part of an ongoing process of constitutional, legal, sociological, economic and symbolic negotiation between the major demographic components of Belgium's population, particularly the territorially constituted Dutch-speakers of Flanders and the francophones of Wallonia.

Political administrative entities within the territorial space of modern Belgium have shifted from a unitary consolidated State to a federal union constituted of communities, regions and language areas, particularly strongly from the establishment of 'cultural communities' in 1970. This was in response to Flemish agitation for recognition, with progressive phases of attaching greater administrative competences to 'cultural communities', to formation of political regions with representative parliaments and ultimately to pooled sovereignty.

Particularly significant from a language planning perspective were a series of education reforms in the 1988–1989 period in which education responsibility was transferred to communities. From all this, in 1993 Belgium emerged as a federal polity with directly elected parliaments and further ethno-federal reform followed in succeeding decades.

A principal motivating force for the inter-group tensions that have driven political reform have been language grievances by Flemings against a polity dominated by francophones, and perceived to be biased against them and against Dutch. While other political questions, especially the position of the monarchy (the restoration of the rule of King Leopold III after World War II), and the language status of the

Catholic University of Leuven. In effect this came down to the role of Dutch within a traditional francophone medium institution, and resulted in the division of a commonly governed single institution into two autonomous universities.

The Union's regulatory power in relation to determination of what counts as Standard Dutch, *Algemeen Nederlands*, the promulgated norm for educational practice, has potentially deep practical effects beyond the Netherlands and Belgium, in Suriname and the Dutch Caribbean (Diepeveen and Hüning, 2016). But the problem with standards is hardly confined to technical questions, instead it merges with the deep moral, political, class and racial-ethnic classifications and hierarchies that standard language forms index (Agha, 2007). This is clear in how standard language forms are seen to operate today when we have learned as societies to believe that variation is not a marker of inferior status, but standards were universally regarded less problematically until very recent times. In its earlier incarnation Standard Dutch was *Algemeen Beschaafd Nederlands* meaning something like common, or standard 'civilised' Dutch, with the moral judgment about varieties of the language clearly regarded as not only inferior in socio-political status, but also uncivilised.

Out of all this, Dutch language areas are today sites of language policy innovation. A recent volume examining an instance of innovatve community based transformation of language policy (Faraclas et al., 2019), describes a 'bottom-up' transformation of norm values. The setting is St. Eustatius, an island in the Dutch Caribbean where Dutch is the teaching language in schools but most students speak only English and Creole. The setting and experience are rare because of successful community mobilisation of *"organizing, academic research and governmental responsibility*" to effect educational policy change. Through a sustained process of innovative advocacy and research-informed action public policy was transformed and attitudes to non-standard language improved.

No particularly strong regulatory function is described for Taalunie, at least not in the English I was able to access. It appears to be a 'Union' in a mostly rhetorical or perhaps aspirational sense. It clearly governs spelling policy as promulgated in official texts. In this normative function it determines entries in official registers of the language, and prepares associated grammar texts, and these inevitably shape content and attitudes in Dutch language courses worldwide.

Van Hoorde describes the 1995 modification of Dutch orthography, and especially how interfix-n in compounds is rendered. The initial proposed changes proved unpopular and were rejected by society and public media, then followed a sequence of Green Book and rival White Book proposals, so that the reforms took root in some but not all settings, with official spelling promulgated in schools and public offices in the Netherlands, while in Belgium the reform was not contested and prevailed.

For students of Dutch as a foreign language, far from Europe in Indonesia and South Africa (with its historic colonial links), Taalunie may only be present in documentary projects. As a result Indonesia and South Africa have been afforded 'special partner' status of the Union, while in settings where learners are required to learn in Dutch as the medium of instruction more complex policies arise. Academics seeking to have their research impact on policy and practice often play the role of an

intermediary between institutions and knowledge fields. They work between knowledge generation and action (though in reality the differences between these are rarely as clear cut as the terms imply). Some academics operate in an intermediary function, sometimes conceived as transferring expertise into implementation and decision making systems, while others establish a more reciprocal exchange between authorities and academic experts as sources of, or producers of knowledge. Various knowledge translation strategies underlie these roles (Dobbins et al., 2009).

So far as I can determine Sjaak Kroon's work has been represented across the entire range knowledge generation, translation and influence, into sites of policy determination and implementation, evaluation and monitoring. Specifically with Taalunie Van Hoorde attributes his influence in significant policy work, as throwing "*stones into the water*" with the effect these "*relocated the riverbed and transformed the flow of the river*". From these accounts of a period of two decades of participation with the Union Sjaak Kroon's work can be characterised as more extensive than the knowledge broker role of policy experts, since brokering knowledge rarely relocates riverbeds and transforms water flow. This implies deep impact reaching all the way to core conceptions, ideologies and orientations. Sjaak's work therefore must be felt within and throughout the tasks and functions I described above and how the 1995 reforms were conceived and the outcomes interpreted.

His work is concerned with attitudes to and policies towards language variation in Dutch, the settings and formulations of language policy, especially at European level, and include collaborative activities of official language agencies. His work has been influential in the teaching and learning of languages, particularly Dutch as a second language. Sjaak's role on the Council for Dutch Language and Literature, advising Taalunie in its deliberations, and ranging beyond science and technical knowledge extends to his sense of Dutch as an insider, a citizen of the community of communication that it constitutes.

In Van Hoorde's account therefore Sjaak's influence has fostered distinctions between different kinds of policy intervention, expanding how Taalunie conceives the very modality of its work. This expansion of how we should think about what counts as language planning has also been contributed by Sjaak all across Europe, and well beyond Europe into several parts of the world, where Dutch is prominent and where Dutch is absent.

One overarching aim of all this work has been to persuade people charged with governing the language that Dutch is polycentric, that is, Dutch is a language operating with several norm-generating centres. This idea is critical because it pluralises what counts as the communicative practice of Dutch, and extends this inclusiveness beyond its European heartland, but obviously within it too.

Van Hoorde nominates three milestone achievements of Sjaak's benevolent influence: the 1999 Taalunie conference that led to the formation of the European Federation of National Institutions for Language, his role in the conference on Language Variation and Language Policy in 2000, which established a "*more tolerant attitude towards language variation*", confirming national variants of Dutch in the Netherlands, Flanders and Suriname as "*fully acceptable forms of standard language*" and his key role as an initiator of the *European Language Monitor*.

I have not made reference to Sjaak's work on linguistic landscapes and have barely mentioned work in China, Timor Leste, and in the Horn of Africa, nor in theory and practice innovations in general sociolinguistics. What is clear is an arc, or rather a series of transitions with stages. A sociolinguist engaged in real world language problem solving, conceiving academic theoretical questions initially within the principle of Fishmanian spread of languages from heartlands and homelands to peripheries, to a post-Fishmanian sociolinguistics foregrounding multidirectional mobility and super-diversity, grounded in an epistemological interpretive ethnography.

This trajectory is richly on display in the 352 'research outputs' that tantalise the curious visitor to the Tilburg University research portal, which proudly projects to the world the many accomplishments of the Kroonian paradigm.

References

Agha, A. (2007). *Language and Social Relations*. Cambridge University Press.

Asfaha, Y. M., Kurvers, J., & Kroon, S. (2008). Literacy and script attitudes in multilingual Eritrea. *Journal of Sociolinguistics, 12*, 223–240. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2008.00355.x

Bennis, H., J. Van Hoorde (2018). Different countries, one language – an integrated language policy: Language policy in the Dutch language area and the role of the Taalunie. In Stickel, G (ed.), *National Language Institutions and National Languages. Contributions to the EFNIL conference 2017 in Mannheim* (pp. 193–199). Research Institute for Linguistics – Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Blommaert, J. (2010). Review of language and social relations by Asif Agha. *Discourse & Society, 21*(5), 611–613. Retrieved January 28, 2021, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/42889701

Blommaert, J., Kroon, S., & Dong, K. (2015). Truly moving texts. In M. Prinsloo & C. Stroud (Eds.), *Language, literacy, diversity: Moving words* (pp. 1–15). Routledge.

Boje, D. (2001). *Narrative methods for organizational and communication research*. Sage.

De Nederlandse Taalunie. (1982). (the Union for the Dutch Language, publication of the official acts including the Treaty and the accompanying Explanatory Memorandum), Den Haag: Staatsuitgeverij.

Diepeveen, J., & Hüning, M. (2016). The status of Dutch in post-colonial Suriname. In D. Schmidt-Brücken, S. Schuster, & M. Wienberg (Eds.), *Aspects of (post)colonial linguistics. Current perspectives and new approaches. Colonial and Postcolonial Linguistics* (pp. 131–155). De Gruyter.

Dobbins, M., Robeson, P., Ciliska, D., Hanna, S., Cameron, R., O'Mara, L., DeCorby, K., & Mercer, S. (2009). A description of a knowledge broker role implemented as part of a randomized controlled trial evaluating three knowledge translation strategies. *Implementation Science, 4*, 23. (2009). https://doi.org/10.1186/1748-5908-4-23

Faraclas, N., Ellen-Petra Kester, E.-P., & Mijts, E. (2019). *Community based research in language policy and planning the language of instruction in education in Sint Eustatius*. Springer.

Gabriel, Y. (2000). *Storytelling in organizations*. Oxford University Press.

Goossens, J., & Cannoot, P. (2015), *Perspectives on Federalism*, Vol. 7, issue 2, 2015 Centro Studi sul Federalismo. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/55799447.pdf

Hailemariam, C., Kroon, S., & Walters, J. (1999). Multilingualism and nation building: Language and education in Eritrea. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 20*(6), 475–493. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434639908666385

Kroon, S., Van Der Aa, J., & Asfaha, Y. M. (2019). English in Asmara as a changing reflection of online globalization. In S. Kroon & J. Swanenberg (Eds.), *Language and culture on the margins: Global/local interactions* (Routledge Critical Studies in Multilingualism) (Vol. 16, pp. 53–68). Routledge.

Spotti, M. (2018). 'It's all about naming things right': The paradox of web truths in Belgian asylum seeking procedures. In Gill, N. & A. Good (Eds.) *Asylum determination in Europe: Ethnographic perspectives* (pp. 69–90). Palgrave Macmillan.

Spotti, M., Kroon, S., & Li, J. (2019). New speakers of new and old languages: An investigation into the gap between language practices and language policy. *Language Policy, 18*, 535–551. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-018-9503-5

Van Hoorde, J. (2002). The Dutch language, the NTU and the European context. In G. Stickel (Ed.), *Europäische Hochsprachen und mehrsprachiges Europa* (pp. 62–71). Institut für Deutsche Sprache.

Van Hoorde, J. (2005). Rituale of funzionale? Paradigmi della politica linguistica e contributo della ricerca linguistica. In Guardiano, C. et al. (Eds.), *Lingue, Istituzioni, Territori. Riflessioni teoriche, proposte metodologiche ed esperienze de politica linguistica. Atti del XXXVIII Congresso Internazionale di Studi della Società di Linguistica Italiana (SLI)* (pp. 15–32). Bulzoni.

Van Hoorde, J. (2014). Competing, complementary of both? English as a Lingua Franca and the position of Dutch. In U. Ammon et al. (Eds.), *Sociolinguistica 28 European National Language Institutions' attitudes and policies towards English as the European Lingua Franca* (pp. 9–23). Walter de Gruyter.