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

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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

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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.

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