
Multilingualism in Immigrant Communities

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Abstract

Immigrant multilingualism is at the crossroads of many academic disciplines. Educational specialists, policy makers, linguists, social psychologists and immigration researchers are equally interested in immigrant multilingualism. In this paper, immigrant multilingualism is discussed from a variety of perspectives. Discussions surrounding language maintenance/shift, language loss, bilingual language acquisition, the relationship between school achievement and bilingualism, social inclusion and exclusion of immigrant groups are presented. As shown in the paper, a change of focus in the study of immigrant multilingualism is needed. Research on immigrant multilingualism needs to contribute to a better understanding of the language dynamics that take place in the contact between majority and minority languages in contexts of migration. Applied linguists and critical sociolinguists often argue that multilingualism ought to be seen as the norm. However, there is little discussion on how immigrant multilingualism should or could be accommodated in education. The paper presents a number of suggestions for future work on immigrant multilingualism.

Keywords

Bilingualism • Discrimination • Immigrant bilingualism • Language as resource or deficit • Linguistic integration • Multilingualism • Social hierarchy of languages

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Introduction

Immigrant multilingualism is a very complex topic. It is at the crossroads of multiple disciplines that have fundamentally different perspectives on the topic. Depending on the ideological approach taken, immigrant multilingualism is seen either as a deficit or a resource. Immigrant minority (IM henceforth) languages are most often associated with problems of poverty, underachievement in schools, social and cultural problems, as well as lack of integration into the society of residence. Even though policy makers make a sharp distinction between national, regional minority, and immigrant minority languages, these languages have much in common. Depending on the status of national and minority languages, there are rigid boundaries between them. On their sociolinguistic, educational, and political agendas, we find issues such as their actual spread; their domestic and public vitality; the processes and determinants of language maintenance versus shift toward majority languages; the relationship between language, ethnicity, and identity; and the status of minority languages in schools, in particular in the compulsory stages of primary and secondary education. In line with the aims of this volume, issues surrounding immigrant multilingualism will be discussed in this chapter. The focus will be on societal and educational aspects of immigrant multilingualism in a number of national contexts ranging from Australia to the EU.

Early Developments

Individual bilingualism or plurilingualism is mostly seen as an asset across the globe. However, bilingualism in a less prestigious immigrant language and a majority language is not always valued. While German plus English or French is highly valued, German plus Turkish is not valued. According to Franceschini, (2011, p. 346) “multilingualism conveys the ability of societies, institutions, groups, and individuals to have regular use of more than one language in their everyday lives over space and time.” Depending on the prevalent language ideology in the immigrant-receiving society, language policies are made. As documented by Extra

and Yağmur (2004), the legal status of IM groups within host societies is not as straightforward as that of regional minorities. In most immigration contexts, legally, socially, and economically, immigrants are not considered to be equal members of the mainstream society; instead they are often considered as temporary, marginal, or even undesired within the host society. In the literature, four clusters of state ideologies shaping integration and language policies of immigrant-receiving societies are identified (Bauböck et al. 1996; Bourhis 2001; May 2011) as pluralist, civic, assimilationist, and ethnist. A *pluralist* ideology proposes duties and responsibilities to be observed by all members of the society. In this ideology, learning the official or mainstream language is the responsibility of the citizens themselves, and the state provides opportunities to facilitate language learning. Concerning the home languages of citizens, the state has no mandate in defining or regulating the private values of its citizens in the domestic domain, nor their political or social affiliation. Different from other ideologies, the state provides financial support for mainstream language classes and for cultural activities to promote first-language maintenance. Usually, Australian and Canadian multicultural policies are good examples of the pluralist ideology, but even in those contexts, immigrant languages are in a vulnerable position (Rubino 2010; Burnaby 2008). According to Burnaby (2008), Canadians have considered immigrant languages as deficit and encouraged immigrants, especially children, to forget their mother tongue. A *civic* ideology expects that immigrants adopt the public values of the mainstream society. Like the pluralist ideology, the state does not interfere with the private values of its citizens, but unlike pluralism, the state does not provide any provisions for the maintenance or promotion of linguistic or cultural values of IM groups. An *assimilation* ideology expects IM groups to comply fully with the norms and values of mainstream society. The assimilation ideology expects complete linguistic and cultural assimilation into the mainstream society. In the name of homogenization of the society, assimilationist language policies aim at accelerating language shift and language loss of IM groups. With its Unitarian approach, French policies fit the assimilationist ideology cluster quite well. Recent political developments, such as restrictions on marriage partners of IM groups, abolition of community language classes, and compulsory integration classes in Denmark and the Netherlands, show a strong shift toward assimilation ideology. An *ethnist* ideology shares most aspects of the assimilation ideology; yet, it makes it difficult for IM groups to be accepted legally or socially as full members of the mainstream society. Citizenship and naturalization laws are quite representative for distinguishing ethnist ideologies. The principle of *jus sanguinis* (“law of the blood”) underlies acquisition of citizenship in such countries. Even though Germany is shown to be an ethnist model, the states of Hamburg, Berlin, and North-Rhine Westphalia undermine that overgeneralization. These states take all the pluralistic measures to promote immigrant minority languages and cultures.

In many national contexts, studies on immigrant multilingualism have been conducted from a number of different perspectives. Initially, language use and language choice of immigrants were investigated by sociolinguists, demo-linguists, educational linguists, and even cross-cultural psychologists. In a macro-sociolinguistic perspective, researchers have investigated patterns of language

maintenance and shift in immigrant communities through a so-called sociology of language approach (Fishman 1964). The factors involved in language maintenance or shift were divided into two categories such as those affecting a speech community and those affecting individuals within a speech community (Kipp et al. 1995). In that division, birthplace, age, period of residence, gender, education/qualifications, marriage patterns, prior knowledge of the mainstream language, reason for migration, and language variety are included in the category of individual factors. Group factors were listed as “size and distribution of an ethnic group, the policy of the host community towards community languages, the position of the language within the cultural value system of the group, and proximity or distance of the community language to or from English” (Kipp et al. 1995, p. 123). However, Kipp et al. (1995) admit that it is not always easy to draw the line between individual and societal factors, as there is an ongoing interaction between an individual and the speech community that he or she belongs to. In most cases these factors are interrelated, both on the individual and on the group level.

In the Australian context, using demolinguistic data derived from population census, Clyne and his associates investigated language maintenance and shift of immigrant groups. The Australian LOTE system (teaching Languages Other Than English) has gained worldwide recognition; however, some researchers still expect more from the system. According to Clyne et al. 1997 (cited in Rubino 2010, p. 17.6), LOTE programs are quite widespread in major states in Australia, but these programs do not always work effectively toward the development of the linguistic skills that immigrant children bring to school because of organizational issues or misrecognition of the needs of immigrant pupils. Nevertheless, the Victorian School of Languages in Melbourne has led to an internationally recognized breakthrough in the conceptualization of multilingualism in terms of making provisions feasible and mandatory for all children (including L1 English-speaking children), in terms of offering a broad spectrum of LOTE provisions (more than 40 languages are on offer) and in terms of governmental support for these provisions.

In the European context, development of multilingualism followed a different path than the traditional immigration countries such as the United States, Canada, or Australia. As a result of large-scale workforce immigration since the 1960s, urban development in many large European cities has become highly stratified. With ongoing integration of member states in the EU, linguistic diversity has become very rich. As underlined by the EC Communication (2008, p. 4), multilingualism has become the norm in the EU:

Today's European societies are facing rapid change due to globalisation, technological advances and ageing populations. The greater mobility of Europeans – currently 10 million Europeans work in other Member States – is an important sign of this change. Increasingly, people interact with their counterparts from other countries while growing numbers live and work outside their home country. This process is further reinforced by the recent enlargements of the EU. The EU now has 500 million citizens, 27 Member States, 3 alphabets and 23 EU official languages, some of them with a worldwide coverage. Some 60 other languages are also part of the EU heritage and are spoken in specific regions or by specific

groups. In addition, immigrants have brought a wide range of languages with them: it is estimated that at least 175 nationalities are now present within the EU's borders.

In spite of this rich diversity, European nation-states are still reluctant to accept benefits of immigrant multilingualism. As documented by Extra and his associates (Extra and Verhoeven 1993; Extra and Gorter 2001; Extra and Yağmur 2004; Extra and Gorter 2008), immigrant languages are seen in a deficit perspective.

Major Contributions

Linguistic diversity is a key property of Europe's identity, and both the EU institutions based in Brussels and the Council of Europe based in Strasbourg have been active in promoting language learning and multilingualism/plurilingualism. The major language policy agencies in these two institutions are the Unit for Multilingualism Policy within the Directorate-General of Education and Culture in the European Commission and the Language Policy Unit of the Directorate of Education in the Council of Europe. The work done by these agencies underpins the important resolutions, charters, and conventions produced by the respective bodies. EU language policies aim to protect linguistic diversity and promote knowledge of languages, for reasons of cultural identity and social integration, but also because multilingual citizens are better placed to take advantage of the educational, professional, and economic opportunities created by an integrated Europe. Multilingualism policy is guided by the objective set by the EU council in Barcelona in 2002 to improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching at least two additional languages from an early age. Of all the nonnational language varieties in the EU, immigrant languages are the least recognized, protected, and/or promoted, in spite of all affirmative action at the European level. The Council of Europe and the EU institutions support the inclusion of immigrant languages and call for the recognition of these languages; however, the nation-state responses to these calls are not always positive.

There have always been speakers of immigrant minority languages in Europe, but these languages have only recently emerged as community languages spoken on a wide scale in urban Europe due to intensified processes of migration. Turkish and Arabic are good examples of so-called non-European languages that are spoken and learned by millions of inhabitants of the EU member states. Although immigrant minority languages are often conceived of and transmitted as core values by immigrant minority language groups, they are less protected than regional minority languages by affirmative action and legal measures as, for instance, in education. In fact, the learning and certainly the teaching of immigrant minority languages are often seen as obstacles to integration by speakers of dominant languages and by policy makers. At the European level, guidelines and directives regarding immigrant minority languages are scant and outdated. Immigrant languages are not recognized to have a significant value due to a number of misconceptions or misrepresentations.

In the European public discourse on immigrant minority groups, two major characteristics emerge: immigrant minority groups are often referred to as foreigners (*étrangers, Ausländer*) and as being in need of integration (Extra and Yağmur 2004). First of all, it is common practice to refer to immigrant minority groups in terms of nonnational residents and to their languages in terms of non-territorial, non-regional, nonindigenous, or non-European languages. The call for integration is in sharp contrast to the language of exclusion. This conceptual exclusion rather than inclusion in the European public discourse derives from a restrictive interpretation of the notions of citizenship and nationality. In spite of having the citizenship of their country of residence, many immigrants, including third or fourth generation, are still considered as outsiders in the mainstream public discourse.

A second major characteristic of the European public discourse on immigrant minority groups is the focus on integration. This notion is both popular and vague, and it may actually refer to a whole spectrum of underlying concepts that vary over space and time. The extremes of the conceptual spectrum range from assimilation to multiculturalism. The concept of assimilation is based on the premise that cultural differences between immigrant minority groups and established majority groups should and will disappear over time in a society which is proclaimed to be culturally homogeneous. On the other side of the spectrum, the concept of multiculturalism is based on the premise that such differences are an asset to a pluralist society, which actually promotes cultural diversity in terms of new resources and opportunities. While the concept of assimilation focuses on unilateral tasks of newcomers, the concept of multiculturalism focuses on multilateral tasks for all inhabitants in changing societies. In practice, established majority groups often make strong demands on immigrant minority groups to assimilate and are commonly reluctant to promote or even accept the notion of cultural diversity as a determining characteristic of an increasingly multicultural environment.

It is interesting to compare the underlying assumptions of “integration” in the European public discourse on immigrant minority groups at the national level with assumptions at the level of cross-national cooperation and legislation. In the latter context, European politicians are eager to stress the importance of a proper balance between the loss and the maintenance of “national” norms and values. A prime concern in the public debate on such norms and values is cultural and linguistic diversity, mainly in terms of the national languages of the EU. National languages are often referred to as core values of cultural identity. Paradoxically, in the same public discourse, immigrant minority languages and cultures are commonly conceived of as sources of problems and deficits and as obstacles to integration, while national languages and cultures in an expanding EU are regarded as sources of enrichment and as prerequisites for integration.

The public discourse on the integration of immigrant minority groups in terms of assimilation versus multiculturalism can also be noticed in the domain of education. Due to a growing influx of immigrant minority pupils, schools are faced with the challenge of adapting their curricula to this trend. The pattern of modification may be inspired by a strong and unilateral emphasis on learning (in) the language of the majority of society, given the significance of this language for success in school and

in the labor market, or by the awareness that the response to emerging multicultural school populations cannot be reduced to monolingual education programming. In the former case, the focus is on learning (in) the national language as a second language only, in the latter case, on offering more languages in the school curriculum.

Schools as Major Sites for Blending or Melting

One of the most crucial domains where we see the effects of multilingualism is education. Yet, nation-state ideology uses schools as the most important apparatus to instill the national ideology in young minds. Achieving social cohesion and national unity through a common language has been one of the most important goals in nation-states. Language planning is responsible for achieving linguistic unity. Various other domains of intervention can be distinguished in which measures of language planning and language policies are considered necessary by the nation-state: the choice of status given to a language, e.g., as an official language or as an acknowledged minority language, and, furthermore, the use of language in legislation, administration, justice, science, technology, media, culture, or information in urban public spaces. However, language education policies have always been regarded as the most important tool for language policies available to the nation-state. Schools are the most important site for the state to impose institutional power and to distribute social capital. The feeling of superiority emerges best in classrooms in which the monolingual ideology heavily influences teaching practices. Teachers are social agents who execute institutional power in subtle ways through their teaching practices based on official curricula but also through the way they evaluate students' work and in the way they assign value to the (linguistic) resources the children bring into the classroom. Moreover, teachers tend to teach the way they were taught during their own schooling. In other words, teachers who ignore the various linguistic resources of children who grow up in multilingual families and who regard their competences in the dominant (legitimate) school language as flawed or even incompetent produce power differences among students and contribute to the feeling that being monolingual means feeling superior (Moyer and Martín Rojo 2007, p. 7). By measuring content learning against the norms of the standard language and by comparing the work of plurilingual students always with that of monolingual students, teachers play an important role as agents of social selection and in the process of social inclusion and exclusion.

As reported by Cenoz and Gorter (2010), the specific training and methodology the teacher uses when dealing with multilingualism is important. Some schools and teachers may consider multilingualism as a resource that provides opportunities to develop intercultural understanding. As documented in the Language Rich Europe (LRE) project (Extra and Yağmur 2012), many European countries need to revise their teacher training programs. In the framework of LRE project, data were collected regarding the recognition of multilingualism and plurilingualism in the European context. Challenges facing European public education include the

organization of multilingual education and preparing teachers for linguistically diverse classrooms. Specific questions targeted whether educational institutions recognize the plurilingual repertoire of children and multilingualism in society at large. In the same vein, questions also targeted whether the teachers are trained or encouraged to valorize and make use of the plurilingual repertoire of children in their classrooms. Findings show that on the whole, the averages for pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools are above 60% regarding the recognition and facilitating multilingual practices in the classrooms by teachers. As reported by Helot and Young (2002), in regular French classes, teachers are not trained to deal with the problems of second-language acquisition (which is often confused with foreign language acquisition); most of the teachers are white, middle-class, and from monolingual backgrounds and therefore have little sensitivity to what it means “to leave your language at the door” when you enter school. In line with most European teachers, many French teachers still believe that speaking an immigrant language at home delays the acquisition of French (and consequently integration into French society). Such teachers are not aware of the research on cognitive theories of bilingualism and the curriculum which has demonstrated the importance of maintaining the home language for the development of the school language. Such views are not unique to the European context; Collins (2012, p. 201) reports that American teachers and administrators believe that Spanish-speaking children might have learning problems in the school. Thus, home languages other than English are identified as problematic for mainstream schools. On the basis of a large-scale LINEE project, Franceschini (2011) reports that many of the teachers in their research believe that using the home language might be an impediment to the students’ learning of the official language because the home language could confuse the learners. Franceschini points out the most important problem by emphasizing the role of teachers in influencing the parents. The fact that not all teachers seem to be aware of the beneficial effects of prior language knowledge on further language learning is important not only because it influences their teaching practices but also because they are often asked for advice by migrants when it comes to language learning and language use. In such situations, many teachers will probably recommend not to use the migrants’ language at home, because they see it as an impediment to the learning of the host language. This indeed is the case in many national contexts. Most immigrant parents are misguided by teachers by giving inaccurate information on the role of home languages in the learning of school languages. This type of monolingualism ideology is not limited to mainstream teachers alone. As reported by Creese and Blackledge (2010) in complementary schools, some teachers insist on the use of the target language only. Instead of making use of the linguistic resources students already possess for effective learning, such teachers seem to insist on the use of ethnic language only, which is not different from the monolingual mindset mostly seen in mainstream classes.

Teachers’ opinions are affected by the social status of the immigrant languages. There is a hierarchy of languages in the EU and immigrant languages are at the bottom of this status hierarchy. As argued by Euromosaic (1996, p. 1), most minority languages lack the political, institutional, and ideological structures which can

guarantee the relevance of those languages for the everyday life of members of such groups. In this respect, it is easy to persuade parents that teaching their children the minority language is counterproductive for their social and economic progress because it clashes with the language policy of formal education. As a result, because the value of immigrant minority languages for social mobility and educational advancement is low, the social status of these languages remains low.

Resource or Deficit

Immigrant languages are seen as obstacles before the learning of national language in almost all immigration contexts. Reflecting on the lower school achievement among immigrant children and in particular among Turkish immigrant children, Ammermüller (2005) argues that the main reason for the low performance of immigrant students in the German context should be searched in their later enrollment in schools and the less favorable home environment for learning. Most German students achieve high, because they have more home resources as measured, e.g., by the amount of books at home. He claims that many immigrant children have lower achievement levels because about 40% of all immigrant students speak a language other than German at home. According to Ammermüller (2005), differences in parental education and family situation are far less important. As in many national contexts, also in the German context, students' home languages are apparently shown to be the culprits for low achievement in the schools. Most of the educational experts and researchers blame multilingualism of immigrant children for lower school achievement. International literature on school achievement shows that there are multiple factors that account for school success (e.g., Cummins 2014). The school's language policy, the structure of curriculum, the teachers' qualifications and experience with language minority children, and parental factors account especially for bilingual children's school achievement. Whether the school has a bilingual approach or a submersion approach would make a huge difference in the language development of minority children. Submersion is the most common educational approach in the German school system. Bilingual education as a form of coordinated language teaching and learning has seldom been regarded as necessary (Luchtenberg 2002). Even though there is a general reluctance to refer to migrant students as bilinguals and to develop bilingual programs for them, there is widespread support for native German students in various bilingual programs. Bilingual programs in high-status languages such as English-German or French-German find huge public support but strong negative attitudes surround immigrant children's bilingualism. In a typical anti-bilingual fashion, many German teachers believe that immigrant children are overloaded by dealing with two languages, which lowers their proficiency in German. Apparently, this old-fashioned separate underlying proficiency model can still find some supporters in the German context. Moreover, home language instruction is not regarded as a proper subject in German schools, and in evaluating students' school career, no reference is made to their skills in the home language (Bühler-Otten and Fürstenau 2004). Preparing language

minority children for more successful school careers ideally requires a balanced bilingual approach in which children's greater proficiency in the home language is utilized to promote general cognitive development and acquisition of the school language (Leseman and van Tuijl 2001). However, given the widespread use of submersion models in most European schools, immigrant children's first-language skills cannot be further developed. As reported by Cenoz and Gorter (2011), the idea that nonnative speakers are deficient communicators is still widespread in school contexts. The goal for second-language learners and users is often to achieve native command of the target language, and this creates a feeling of failure and incompleteness especially among immigrant children.

Work in Progress

Given the institutional priorities, there are not many projects on the status and use of immigrant languages in the European context. Recent large-scale Language Rich Europe project on multilingualism in 24 European countries and regions delivered valuable data on the status and teaching of immigrant languages. Pre-primary and primary schools are crucial for language development of children. In order to enhance cognitive development, language skills of children should be developed in early stages of schooling. By making use of home languages, schools can support second-language acquisition of immigrant children. Many EU and Council of Europe documents underline the importance of early language learning; however, the focus is always on the learning of the national language. Council of Europe Policy Center (Beacco et al. 2010, p. 45) highlights the importance of early language learning for immigrant children in the following way:

As spaces for discovery and socialisation, pre-primary schools represent a basic stage in plurilingual and intercultural education, particularly for children from underprivileged and migrant backgrounds, whose language practices at home may conflict with the varieties and norms selected and fostered by schools. To that extent, and since the issue here is the right to quality language (and general) education, one of the first desiderata is that schooling of this kind for very young children be guaranteed and provided in optimum conditions for all the groups concerned – both permanently resident natives and recently arrived immigrant families.

There is no mention of “optimum conditions” for quality language learning and how immigrant children should receive instruction. However, on the basis of LRE project findings, it appears that provision in immigrant languages in pre-primary education is not yet very common. However, in spite of the difficulties involved in identifying appropriate teachers and learning materials, three countries do offer immigrant language support to very young children, namely, Denmark, Spain, and Switzerland. The canton Zurich has a remarkable offer of no less than 17 languages. There is no provision in any of the other 24 countries/regions. In order to promote linguistic integration of immigrant children, language support programs are provided in their home language in preschools in Switzerland. In line with the Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration 2007–2010 in Spain, a number of immigrant

languages are offered in preschools for the maintenance and development of languages and cultures of origin. In Denmark, national, regional, or local funds cover all costs for these programs, while in Spain and Switzerland, source country-related funds cover the costs through bilateral agreements.

Immigrant languages are taught in more number of countries in the primary school period. Out of 24 countries and regions, only five countries report a significant offering of immigrant languages at the primary level. These are Austria, Denmark, France, Spain (in Madrid and Valencia), and Switzerland (in the canton of Zurich). In France and Switzerland, immigrant language classes are open to all children, while in Austria, Denmark, and Spain (Madrid, Valencia, Seville), they are reserved for native speakers of immigrant languages. There are no minimum group size requirements in Switzerland and France. In Spain more than five pupils are required to start a class, and in Austria and Denmark a group of ten is required. In Austria and Denmark, there is a coherent and explicit curriculum, while in the other countries, the curriculum is expressed in general terms. In Spain, it is common to use immigrant languages as a medium of instruction, whereas in Austria, Denmark, and France, this is less widespread. In Switzerland these languages are only taught as a subject. Spain and Switzerland offer lessons partly in school hours, whereas in the other countries they are offered as extracurricular activities. Achievement in immigrant languages is not linked to any national, regional, or school-based standards, although the development of language skills is monitored in all countries. Lessons in immigrant languages are fully funded by the state in Austria and Denmark, whereas in France, Spain, and Switzerland, they are mainly supported by the country of origin.

As Salomone (2013, p. 2044) indicates though a number of European nations have officially recognized regional/territorial languages in varying degrees, immigrant languages have not garnered the same recognition.

Problems and Difficulties

Lower school achievement among immigrant minority children is a serious problem in most European countries. Factors leading to underachievement at school are complex and interrelated. In the literature on bilingualism and school success, individual characteristics of minority students are shown to be one of the most influential on school failure. Because of subtractive bilingual environments, cognitive skills of ethnic students do not develop sufficiently compared to mainstream children. If a child's home language is undervalued or banned on the school ground, identity development might also be hampered. As a result, lower self-esteem among minority students might lead to lower achievement. Due to segregated schools, there is insufficient exposure to the majority language which might in turn lead to inadequate proficiency in the mainstream language. It is also common knowledge that there are gaps between home and school culture due to different socialization patterns, which might also have an effect on school achievement of immigrant children. Most immigrant parents are known to be non-proficient in the mainstream language, which leads to restrictions in parental involvement. If schools want to

improve school achievement of immigrant children, old-fashioned submersion models need to be dropped. By employing teachers and support personnel from linguistic minority backgrounds, schools could support first- and second-language development of immigrant children.

The current linguistic reality in Europe is more complex than many politicians can envisage. Populist discourse on integration and immigration contribute to increased anti-immigrant feelings among the native populations, which in the long run is the real threat for social cohesion and social unity in Europe and elsewhere. It is extremely intriguing that the more integration among nation-states in the EU is achieved, the more exclusionist is the discourse on immigrant minorities in the individual nation-states. It seems that the weakened position of nation-state ideology in the process of European integration is strengthened by increased intolerance toward immigrant languages. Yet, the only way to achieve social cohesion is through social inclusion not exclusion.

Future Directions

All around the globe, a change of focus in the study of immigrant multilingualism is needed. Research on immigrant multilingualism needs to contribute to a better understanding of the language dynamics that take place in the contact between majority and minority languages in contexts of migration. As indicated by Rubino (2010) as a result of globalization, both long established and newly formed migrant communities are characterized by much higher mobility and fluidity compared with the past, leading to increased diversification both within and across communities. Immigration countries need to adopt more inclusive discourses. Identifying third- and even fourth-generation immigrants as allochthonous only leads to exclusion and hardened group boundaries. Social cohesion and unity can never be achieved through such discriminatory discourse.

Spatial segregation of mainstream and immigrant populations characterizes major urban centers. Many large European cities have become highly stratified. Most working class immigrants concentrate in inner suburbs of large urban centers creating ethnic “ghettos” where immigrant populations are excluded from mainstream society on a structural basis. On the one hand, policy makers and opinion leaders in the society emphasize the necessity of sociocultural and linguistic integration of immigrants, but, on the other hand, they take no concrete action to end urban segregation. Such segregated inner suburbs lead to segregated schools attended mostly by lower SES immigrant minority children. Parents belonging to the mainstream society do not send their children to such “ethnic” schools. In the Netherlands, these schools are named “black schools” showing the level of stigmatization surrounding such schools. Even the policy makers do not hesitate to talk about “white” versus “black” schools. School achievement in the schools of such poor suburbs is quite low. Instead of searching for the real cause of school failure, some scholars even blame the victims. It is even claimed that ethnic diversity in schools is correlated with lower educational achievement (Dronkers 2010).

According to Dronkers, the higher is the ethnic diversity, the lower is the educational achievement. Dronkers (2010) bases his arguments on the findings of international PISA study. Instead of looking into crucial factors such as the facilities in the schools, the number of children in each class, teachers' qualifications and skills, parental involvement, SES level of the parents, and so forth, he takes the "color" of the school as the only variable to explain school failure. Such unfounded claims strengthen the prejudice among native parents against multicultural schools. Ethnic diversity and multilingualism become problems in the mainstream discourse, which leads to further "white flight" from such schools.

PISA results of European nation-states caused intensive discussions regarding the share of immigrant children in low national scores of Austria and Germany. As reported by McNamara (2011, p. 437) "The PISA reports explicitly link the "poor" national performance of Austria to the presence of minority language students and constructs the multilingualism of immigrant students as a problem requiring remediation." German and Austrian policy makers complained the most about the influence of immigrant pupils for lowering the national scores; however, these countries have highly stratified school systems, which is detrimental to immigrant children's school achievement. The term stratification refers to the degree to which educational systems have clearly differentiated types of schools whose curricula are defined as "higher" or "lower." One typical feature of highly stratified school systems is early tracking, i.e., separating pupils into different school tracks (Griga and Hadjar 2013). By examining immigrant students' access rates to higher education institutions in countries with high and low stratified school systems, Griga and Hadjar (2013) concluded that a highly stratified secondary school system – as it is prevalent in many conservative welfare regimes (e.g., Austria, West Germany) – reduces immigrant students' chances of attaining a higher education degree. Instead of blaming the victims, by taking appropriate measures such as bilingual education, employing bilingual personnel, and abolishing the stratification system, immigrant students' school achievements can be improved.

Finally, applied linguists and critical sociolinguists often argue that multilingualism ought to be seen as the norm. However, there is little discussion on how immigrant multilingualism should or could be accommodated in education. García et al. (2009) suggested that multilingual schools should take into account and build further on the diversity of languages and literacy practices that children and youth bring to the schools. Providing bilingual education for major immigrant groups would decrease school dropouts among immigrant youth. The future research should concentrate on real causes of lower school achievement among school children.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Awareness Raising and Multilingualism in Primary Education](#)
- ▶ [Immigration/Flow, Hybridity, and Language Awareness](#)
- ▶ [Superdiversity, Multilingualism, and Awareness](#)

Related Articles in the Encyclopedia of Language and Education

Guus Extra: [Language Policy and Education in the New Europe](#). In Volume: Language Policy and Political Issues in Education

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