Multiple perspectives on small-scale multilingual settings

Epistemological and methodological reflections

Overview

• Short intro to the geographic setting
• African environments for small-scale multilingualism
• Local motivations for multilingualism
• Different discourse contexts
• Generalisations

Great genealogical diversity

Individual repertoires

Lexical similarity (Sapir 1971)
Large-scale patterns

Large scale geographic and ecological factors for convergence

Diamond (1999), Güldemann & Hammarström (in press): “latitude spread potential” and “longitude spread constraint”

“Language diversity cannot be understood without modelling the pressures that physical, ecological and social factors exert on language users in different environments across the globe.” (Bentz et al 2018: 816)

Diversity, divergence and fragmentation

Lexico-grammatical descriptive coverage (Hammarström 2016)

Case studies on rural multilingualism (Good et al 2016) and the location of the Subsaharan fragmentation belt (Golla 1976)

Divergence and convergence co-exist

Sands (forthcoming)
Small-scale motivations

Diego Velásquez Las meninas

Relational identities

For a researcher on Baïnounk, BM and JHM are speakers of the Baïnounk language Gujaher

At least two languages of their repertoire are focused in their ethnic identity and linked to the place where they live in patrimonial fashion.

A monolingual conversation?

For researchers on Kriolu (Biagui, Nunez & Quint forthcoming), BM and JHM are speakers of Kriolu

Perspectives on the speech event: ANM

Perspectives on the speech event: FL
Two perspectives in transcription

(1) Jean, héé! ibayinde e monte jan
ANM K K F K

‘Jean, hey! They went to have fun.’

(2) Kaarus e commencé koore
ANM K K K F

‘Have the cars started running?’

Floating items and their interpretation

ans / pπe
3PL.SBJ AS.PRF dire un CARD sîère
PRN V DET

‘it's one of qu’un vites (y est allé)’

Transcription as a perspectival representation

<gravoul> vs. <graw-ul>
continuer bebe
[grav-ul] [graw-ul]
be.serious-NEG

‘It’s not a problem’

Verdicts on purity depend on emblematicity and perspective

1) imeŋ a-n-kələnəsi-pa-le mandɛŋgə
3Pl 3-Pl-colonise-Pass by Def.Pl Mandinka
‘They have been colonized by the Mandinka.’

2) d-a-n-lo-ba-bə-lob b-a-n-jɛn ŋko
Neg.Fut-3-Pl-speak Cl.ba-speak Neg.Impf-3-Pl-say Nko
‘They don’t say a word without adding « Nko ».’

3) minɔ gu-bəːher pyrg-i-n-lob-ɛ
1Plincl Cl.gu-Bainounk pure Foc.Obj-1-Pl-speak-1Plincl.Perf
‘It is us who speak a pure Bainounk.’

Verdict of a speaker of Bainounk Gubëeher on speakers of the Bainounk language Guñaamolo

Multiple viewpoints

Multiple cues

Name
Gender
Patrimonial identity
Religion

Patrimonial language
Categorical association with language

Place
Region
Country

Linguistic features
Transcription conventions

Familiarity
Unfamiliarity

Through the looking glass

Two couples and their lodger

Their repertoires

A multilingual conversation?
The importance of trajectories and linguistic biographies

- Only looking at identity languages (patrimonial and/or ancestral/ethnic) does not reveal full repertoires
- Repertoires are dynamic, and languages are added throughout individuals’ life
- Patrimonial languages are not always lost through mobility
- Repertoires are shaped through interaction with with language regimes of places and through speakers’ networks

GS’ language socialisation

- Father from Djibonker, mother from Essil
- Lived with mother in Niassia, where he learned its patrimonial language
- Lived in Ziguinchor and started picking up French and Wolof at school
- Moved with mother to Essil where he learned its patrimonial language
- Moved to his father’s village as a young adult and learned its patrimonial language, most closely corresponding to his ethnic identity
- Learned Kriolu and Portuguese through socialising with palm wine tappers from Guinea Bissau

Repertoires and trajectories at a local scale

Lüpke & Watson forthcoming

Social roles of two local languages in GS’ repertoire in 1995 and 2015

Watson in Lüpke et al under revision
Alexis Peskine

Prototypes and indexicality

Perspective and scale determine which features are seen as prototypical and how non-prototypical features are classified.

Vergence and social meaning

1. If a feature is merely an artefact of vergence in a speaker’s social network, it will remain variable.
2. Divergent feature that have become second order indexes (Silverstein 2003, Eckert 2008) will become enregistered (Agha 2005, 2007).
3. Features have more potential to become enregistered in contexts that are central to a speaker’s identity.

Monolingual contexts?

- Speakers pay attention to language
- They have the intention to stay within one named language
- Language separability
- Code interaction:
  - Insertion
  - Code-switching
  - Over time, conventionalisation ("borrowing")

Language contexts
Speakers don’t pay attention to language, but to communicative intent:

- Relationality
- Creativity, playfulness
- Emphasis, repetition
- Addressee specification, inclusion, exclusion

Multilingual contexts?

- No clear language separation or code interaction:
  - Floating forms
  - Fused forms
  - (Trans)language
  - Over time, mixed codes

Language contexts

Multilingualism is maintained as long as different named languages/lects fulfill social indexical functions and communicative functions in a particular language ecology (Lüpke 2017).

References


Lüpke, Friederike; Stinson, Kristine, Cakalar: Flora, Chacon, Throsby, da Cruz, Alves, Franquetti, Bruna et al. (Jülicher visions (2018)): Comparing rural multilingualism in Lowland South America and Western Africa. In Anthropological Linguistics.


References (cont’d)


