

Linguistic practices in migration:
Sociolinguistic, ethnographic and pedagogical perspectives

Book of abstracts



**Networking the
Educational World:
Across Boundaries for
Community-building**

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Linguistic practices in migration: Sociolinguistic, ethnographic and pedagogical perspectives.

Workshop themes, programme and abstracts

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Organizers: Paolo Della Putta & Eugenio Gorla, University of Turin

Workshop themes

The concept of mobility has always been an important object of study in the social sciences, but it is in today's globalised society that it has become an unprecedented explicative variable of cultural, social and linguistic phenomena. Individuals have always tried to move between social strata to seek greater wellbeing, and sometimes this metaphorical movement necessarily entailed physical movement, i.e. displacement from one region to another, from one Country to another. Crucially, the current era of globalisation is probably the historical period most characterised by migratory phenomena aimed at seeking greater wellbeing (Faist 2013). We witness modern diasporas of ethnic groups that leave their native territories to settle in new Countries according to a predetermined migratory plan; at the same time, we observe a rising number of forced migrants, i.e. people that had to relocate abruptly, usually as a consequence to a traumatic socio-political event, without the possibility to even devise any migratory plan (Huot et al. 2018). This multicomposite and multifaceted new landscape of migration has been defined by Vertovec as "superdiverse" (Vertovec 2007): migration processes are nowadays characterised not only by a greater number of Countries of origins and different types of migratory projects, but also by other important identifiers of diversity such as ethnicity, religious affiliation and practice, political orientation and local identities in migrants' home societies. This highly diverse picture is further complicated by the widespread use of social media and inexpensive communication technologies that allow constant contact between displaced individuals, thus helping maintaining a sense of belonging to the home country but also allowing the building of global networks of (displaced) citizens. As a consequence, migrant communities are deployed on a global scale that allows multiple subsequent migrations across

culturally, politically and economically contiguous territories such as the European Union or the Schengen area.

Sociologists such as Appaduraj (2001), Urruy (2007) and Glazer (1997) have variously talked about a multicultural or mobility turn in social sciences that have recently felt the need to deal with fragmented, deterritorialized and hybrid identities and social practices. In Linguistics, and in particular in Sociolinguistics and Applied Linguistics, these social phenomena have not gone unnoticed, and we have recently witnessed a so-called “multilingual turn” (May 2014) in language sciences. The hybrid identities of many migrant citizens, who live at the crossroads between global scenarios and local communities, has brought about different processes and results of contact and hybridization between languages and codes. Various studies have pointed out that migrant languages retained in the new post-migration scenario as heritage languages develop a number of innovative features, as a result of contact with other languages, peculiar acquisition trajectories, and patterns of language maintenance vs shift (Benmamoun et al. 2013, Polinsky 2018, Nagy 2018). On the other hand, it has been pointed out how the presence of relatively stable migrant communities within a territory may lead to the formation of new varieties of the dominant language that saliently characterise specific ethnic groups, sometimes labelled as ‘ethnolects’ (Clyne 2000, Auer 2003, Wiese 2012). Superdiverse scenarios are also a context for the emergence of ‘multiethnolects’ produced within mixed-origin peer-groups (see e.g. Cheshire et al. 2015, Auer & Siegel 2021). New migrant settings create new linguistic practices where migrants are usually seen as creators of new repertoires that accommodate, at different stages and with different competences, multiple languages that they met during their migration process (D’Agostino 2021, Ender 2021). It has been shown for example by Goglia (2021) and Lupica Spagnolo (forthcoming) that migrants who relocate to a new country of immigration may retain in their repertoire some of the linguistic practices acquired during their previous linguistic experiences, often in the form of fossilised registers confined to specific contexts of use. These repertoires are usually made up of “bit and bites of language practices” (Garcia and Flores 2012: 240) in which individuals with different social and linguistic backgrounds engage in their everyday life.

These practices and the contact phenomena they contribute to give birth have been object of inquiry in research endeavours dedicated to psycholinguistics processes (see, e.g., Byalistok et al. 2012 on bilingualism and Prada Perez 2019 on cross-linguistic influence in heritage speakers), to Sociolinguistic phenomena, both at a global (see, e.g.. Blommaert 2010) and local level (e.g. Bonomi & Sanfelici 2018 for Latino communities in Italy) and to pedagogical issues (Piccardo 2018).

Moreover, from a second language acquisition point of view, the call for a more socially-situated paradigm has led numerous scholars in the field to conceive (second) language learning as a “situated practice,” where learners achieve learning opportunities by playing an active role in dynamic and changing tasks, and where the learner’s agency on linguistic choices has to be very closely considered (Mondada & Pekarek Doehler 2004). As a consequence, the conception of monovarietistic and monolingual repertoires have slowly given way to a more heteroglossic perspective on language structure and use, shifting to a more dynamic view of the use of different languages – and varieties thereof – to make meaning in a more and more changeable and different social landscape. Also in the field of language pedagogy, the multilingual turn has been recognised as a valuable key to describe today’s linguistic practices, and this new awareness has given way to the so-called plurilingual approaches to language teaching (Candelier 2008, Cenoz & Gorter 2015) that encompass different methods and techniques that share the aim to foster the use of two or more languages in education, and to promote plurilingualism as a resource and a basis for pedagogical activities. With the view of preserving, valuing and building plurilingual repertoires and skills in young citizens, both with migrant and non-migrant background, plurilingual approaches to language education have had to face the so called monolingual mainstream perspective of traditional language teaching, according to which languages have to be taught separately one from another following a subtractive or additive bilingualism fashion (Garcia & Flores 2012). Even if plurilingual classes are nowadays the normal case in European schools and despite a general positive attitude toward plurilingualism (Solerti 2021, Portolès & Martì 2020), teachers struggle to exploit the pupils’ plurilingual background as a resource for a real plurilingual education. Teachers’ education have rarely taken plurilingualism as a base in school activities and curricula (Duberti 2019), and top-down training approaches proved to be ineffective in changing teachers’ practices (Macias 2017; Fiorentino et al. 2009). Thus, in language education there is still a lot to do in order to help teachers recognise their pupils’ fragmented and multifaceted repertoires as a resource on which classroom multilingualism can be not only recognised but also expanded and trained.

Building on the general picture sketched out so far, the aim of this workshop is to strengthen the dialogue between neighbouring subfields of Linguistics that deal, from different angles, with the linguistic practices of migrant individuals and communities in Italy.

Programme

9.30 (Eugenio Goria & Paolo Della Putta)

Introduction

First session (moderators: Paolo Della Putta & Eugenio Goria)

10.00 Francesca Moro (Univ. Napoli L'Orientale), Gina Russo (Univ. dell'Insubria)

Heritage Tagalog in Italy: a preliminary investigation

10.45 Valeria Tonioli (UAB Barcelona)

'Tell me': language and cultural practices and family language policies in transnational Bangladeshi families living in Venice

11.30 Gerardo Mazzaferro (Univ. di Torino)

Language practices, identities and ideologies within diasporic families and communities

12.15 Paolo Della Putta, Fabio Gasparini, Eugenio Goria (Univ. di Torino)

L'uso del code-switching in migranti arabofoni a Torino

13.00 Lunch

Second session (moderator: Silvia Sordella)

14.30 Nicola Nasi (Univ. di Bologna Alma Mater)

Newcomers' apprenticeship in the primary school: children's language acquisition and identity construction in and through peer interactions

15.15 Claudia Vallejo (UAB Barcelona)

Documenting and promoting plurilingual practices in non-formal education and teacher training in Catalonia as potential for social and educational transformation

16.00 Milin Bonomi (Univ. di Milano Statale)

Lo spagnolo della diaspora in Italia tra teoria e prassi

17.00 Poster session (coordinator: Silvia Sordella)

Pedagogical perspectives for a plurilingual approach to language teaching

Abstracts

Heritage Tagalog in Italy: a preliminary investigation

Francesca Moro & Gina Russo

Università di Napoli L'Orientale, Università dell'Insubria

In this talk, we will introduce our project on heritage Tagalog in Italy and present preliminary results. Tagalog is an Austronesian language spoken as heritage language by the Filipino community, which is one of the largest in Italy, counting 156,317 Filipino citizens (Istat 2022). This community has been mainly investigated from an economical perspective, by focusing on their remittance flows (Basa, De Guzman & Marchetti 2012). Other studies focused on the issues related to integration, such as religious pluralism (Molli & Ambrosini 2021), and domestic conditions of Filipino women (Marchetti 2022). Little is known about the linguistic profile of this community, especially regarding the number of languages that members of the community speak, and the status of their heritage languages. In fact, in the Philippines many regional languages are spoken alongside Tagalog. This is a pilot study (12 months) with two main aims: 1) to describe the sociolinguistic profile of the Filipino immigrant community, by investigating issues such as number of heritage languages spoken, self-reported competence in these languages, and contexts of use; 2) to conduct an investigation on linguistic variation and change on Tagalog spoken as heritage language by second generation speakers. To do so, we will collect two types of data: (i) sociolinguistic interviews, and (ii) linguistic data on heritage Tagalog. This project will involve 10 first generation speakers and 10 second generation speakers. The sociolinguistic questionnaire will be used to collect data regarding the language history and language choice of the speakers and will include topics such as biographic information, the language(s) acquired in childhood and adulthood, the language chosen with particular interlocutors (parents, siblings, etc.), and in specific situations (home, church, etc.) or through the media (Facebook, TV, etc.). As shown by previous research (Wei et al. 2000, Vietti 2010), we expect speakers with stronger ties to maintain their heritage language more than speakers who have a loose-knit social network. With regard to linguistic data, they will be used to investigate one specific area of Tagalog grammar, namely voice and word order. The data will be collected by means of a set of pictures, following the methodology outlined in Bondoc et al. (2018), and the wordless picture book *Frog, Where are you?* The dataset will yield a source for data mining, which permits to investigate specific hypotheses about voice and word order, but it also opens the ground for future research on other grammatical areas. Based on previous studies (Tanaka et al. 2019), we expect

heritage speakers (Italian dominant) to differ from first generation speakers (Tagalog-dominant) in their production of

word order and to prefer verb medial order. In this talk, we will present the preliminary results, as at the time we are writing this (January 2023), we are collecting data. From the data collected so far from six speakers, we already see that the linguistic repertoire of the Filipinos includes more than just Tagalog, as two participants reported being (semi-)speakers of Ilokano, and two also speak Kapampangan, as these were main languages they were exposed to at home during childhood.

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'Tell me': language and cultural practices and family language policies in transnational Bangladeshi families living in Venice.

Valeria Tonioli

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

The aim of our communication is to present the results of a research project called 'Tell Me', conducted from October 2018 to March 2020. The project focused on Bengali children living in Venice, Italy, together with their families. The purpose of the research was to describe (1) children's linguistic repertoires in the home environment and at school; (2) the quality and quantity of input they receive in every language (both at school and at home); and (3) how the family language policy and the Italian language institution policy at schools may influence their language development.

The project was conducted through a qualitative methodology and an ethnographic approach. It involved seven children with migration background between the ages of four and six. All these children were suspected of having a communication disorder, a language acquisition disability, a delay in the language development, etc., since they did not speak Italian fluently as a second language at school or Bengali as their first language at home.

Results showed that children were not exposed sufficiently to quality L1, L2, or L3 input (at home and in different social contexts). In fact, Bangladeshi children involved in our study belong to low SES (socio-economic status) families who mainly come from rural areas and who live in Italy in marginalized and isolated districts. Bangladeshi families in Italy are mainly made up of mononuclear families in which parental networks are absent and in which few opportunities for interaction are promoted inside the family. Moreover, as parents are mainly low literate, opportunities to receive high-quality linguistic input are weak. The condition of social isolation experienced by many of the families resulted in the children having little opportunity for social, relational, and consequently linguistic interaction with other peers outside the home. In addition, parents' beliefs regarding language education in Bangladeshi children influence the way they interact within the home. Results will also show that there are some Bangladeshi language and cultural practices and beliefs that differ from the ones expected in Italian schools and that may influence the children's language education. Finally, results showed that in many cases the children involved in the project were learning English as their main language, as it was considered as a status symbol, as well as a resource able to improve their lives.

Language practices, identities and ideologies within diasporic families and communities

Gerardo Mazzaferro

Università di Torino

The aim of this presentation is to contribute to current debate on processes of intergenerational recognition, transmission and negotiation of heritage languages, identities and ideologies within diasporic families and communities (Mazzaferro, 2018b). I illustrate this with my concrete ethnographic fieldwork within Ghanaian families and communities in Turin and Vicenza (Italy).

Foucault's concept of heterotopia (1986) is introduced to conceptualize diasporic family and communities as temporal and spatial configuration of rupture, where different subjectivities, identities, power relations and discourses, (in)compatible with each other meet. Drawing from Foucault's term 'actuality' to describe the concrete sociohistorical conditions that define the present, I investigate the lived experience of diasporicity as "not what Ghanians are but what they are becoming" (Foucault, 1977; 1994). I argue that diasporicity has significant consequences for how young Ghanians re-position themselves (and are re-positioned by others) in and through everyday translanguaging practices within (and beyond) diasporic families and communities. Translanguaging, though not always, represents a 'potentially' performative and transformative communicative mode through which individuals are able to confront the past and engage with their present, establishing possibilities for change and transformation of individual (and collective) identities and discourses. What seems to emerge from this research is that though young (both 1.5. and 2 generation) Ghanians are dependent on discourses of the past as self-referential and fixed, they have room for action, that is, they are able to construct language and discursive practices, which "disturb ... what was previously thought immobile, ... fragment ... what was thought unified ... show the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent with itself" (Foucault, 1991: 82).

L'uso del code-switching in migranti arabofoni a Torino

Paolo Della Putta, Fabio Gasparini & Eugenio Gorla

Università di Torino

Questo lavoro si propone di restituire una prima descrizione dei dati relativi alle pratiche plurilingui rilevate nella comunità arabofona di Torino, che include individui per la maggior parte di origine nordafricana. Secondo i dati Istat (2022), la comunità marocchina è la seconda comunità straniera più numerosa a Torino, a cui si devono aggiungere anche i residenti di origine marocchina che hanno già ottenuto la cittadinanza italiana, e sono dunque esclusi da questo conteggio. A questi dati sono stati aggiunti quelli relativi a migranti provenienti da altri Paesi del Nordafrica, in particolare Egitto e Tunisia, in ragione della continuità linguistica che sussiste fra le tre comunità, i cui membri sono tutti arabofoni, e della sostanziale somiglianza nei repertori linguistici.

Saranno dunque analizzati i materiali raccolti nell'ambito di due progetti di ricerca dell'Università di Torino: *ParlaTo* e *Con Parole Mie*. Il progetto *ParlaTo* (Cerruti & Ballarè 2020) è il primo tentativo di creare un corpus orale plurilingue della città di Torino, e per questo motivo ambisce a includere parlanti con profili sociolinguistici molto differenti, fra cui migranti transnazionali e cittadini provenienti da famiglie transnazionali. Parte del corpus è dedicata alla comunità arabofona di Torino e include interviste condotte a studenti e studentesse di origine nordafricana. Il progetto *Con Parole Mie* (Andorno & Sordella 2021) ha per oggetto le lingue dello studio in uso presso bambini della scuola primaria con un background plurilingue, molti dei quali sono arabofoni. Nel corso del progetto sono state registrate le conversazioni fra alunni della scuola, genitori e mediatori linguistici durante lo svolgimento dei compiti: durante questa attività, frequentemente l'italiano si alterna con le altre lingue presenti in famiglia, in episodi di *code-switching* e *code-mixing*.

I dati dei due progetti permettono una prima esplorazione delle pratiche linguistiche che caratterizzano la comunità arabofona a Torino: queste includono sia l'utilizzo del *code-switching* come risorsa interazionale che entra in gioco nello svolgimento di specifiche attività, talvolta con funzioni identitarie, sia la pratica del *code-mixing* intesa come uso di risorse lessicali e/o grammaticali provenienti da tutte le lingue a disposizione della persona (cfr. Auer 1999, 2014).

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Newcomers' apprenticeship in the primary school: children's language acquisition and identity construction in and through peer interactions

Nicola Nasi

Alma Mater Università di Bologna

In contemporary public school, the growing immigrant influxes of the last decades resulted in a conspicuous presence of children with a migratory background (Eurydice 2019). These children start attending the lessons and are gradually introduced to the appropriate ways of thinking, feeling, and acting in the new community (Ochs & Schieffelin 2017; Lave & Wenger 1991). By interacting on an everyday basis with more competent peers or adults, they become increasingly able to deploy the resources in their repertoires to pursue various social aims (Hall 2018). Despite a certain emphasis in previous literature on teacher-led socialization, children also play a central role in newcomers' acquisition of sociolinguistic skills. Notably, the process of peer socialization is intertwined with children's identity construction, as children steadily negotiate their respective roles and positions in the peer group. In this regard, peer group interactions can be seen as a "double opportunity space" (Blum-Kulka, Huck-Taglicht & Avni 2004), serving as an arena for children's learning and development and for the local co-construction of the social organization of the peer group (Cekaite et al. 2014).

This presentation illustrates a perspicuous case of the process of children's peer socialization, as it focuses on newcomers' social interactions in the Italian L2 classroom. Data are drawn from a video-ethnography that involved two primary schools in Northern Italy. These schools enroll a relatively high number of children with a migratory background and organized several Italian L2 classes in order to deal with children with limited competences in Italian. The analysis will show that (a) children introduce their classmates to the appropriate ways of speaking/reading/writing Italian in the classroom and (b) children negotiate the social organization of the peer group in relation to local positions of dominance and subordination among classmates. In the discussion, risks and opportunities of these kinds of practices are briefly outlined from a pedagogical perspective. This appraisal also includes some reflections on the relevance of children's peer practices for the process of social inclusion and exclusion and for the construction of difference and belonging in the classroom.

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Documenting and promoting plurilingual practices in non-formal education and teacher training in Catalonia as potential for social and educational transformation

Claudia Vallejo

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In Catalonia, where the research described herein took place, intense flows of transnational mobility in the 21st century have transformed the local sociolinguistic landscape from bilingual to highly multicultural and multilingual. In only a decade, the percentage of foreign residents rose from less than 3% in 2000 to over 15% in 2010, a percentage that has remained quiet stable thereafter. The latest Catalan census identifies more than 170 nationalities within this territory, with Moroccan, Romanian, Chinese and Pakistani among the main foreign communities (IDESCAT, 2021). In terms of cultural and linguistic diversity, Catalonia, a traditionally bilingual society, is now home to more than 300 languages and cultures (GELA, 2021). These demographic and sociolinguistic transformations have raised educational challenges, prompting the need to revise a well-consolidated bilingual immersion model structured around Catalan, the vehicular language of the school system, and Spanish, the State's official language, to attend to an increasingly multilingual school population. In this context, specific measures have been adopted to facilitate newcomers' learning of the local language, conceptualised as the medium of social cohesion and integration. More recent educational policies have also focused on promoting intercultural and plurilingual approaches to acknowledge the increasing complexity and diversity of the Catalan society. However, research as well as data from international and local assessment programs show that the plurilingual repertoires and literacy practices that many children and youth bring to schools are often not those required for

educational success, and are rather perceived as deficitarian and a challenge towards educational and social inclusion. This mismatch between what counts in and out of schools results in transnational background students' lower academic outcomes in comparison to their local peers, doubling their rates of school failure (EUROSTAT, 2021). Paradoxically, local research has documented how plurilingual, migrant background students get very dissimilar categorizations and better results in other, non-formal educational contexts, where they find opportunities to display multiple linguistic, cultural and mediating competences which do not often find a space and recognition in formal education (Reyes, 2017; Vallejo, 2022). These studies argue for the transformation of the monolingual habitus (Gogolin, 1997) that still permeates many educational practices through the development of inclusive plurilingual pedagogies. In line with these

arguments, in this communication I will present and analyze ethnographic data that documents plurilingual children's complex and competent communicative practices as they participate in a non-formal literacy program in Catalonia. The analysis foregrounds how these practices challenge linguistic hierarchies, deficit-based categorizations and monolingual ideologies, and might promote more inclusive approaches to language use and language learning. Based on these data, I will also present the articulation of a collaborative project involving pre-service primary education teachers and children from the literacy program, aimed at acknowledging and incorporating pupils' entire repertoires and multiple competences into the program's institutional dynamics for the development of more inclusive plurilingual pedagogies and the betterment of educational trajectories for all students.

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Lo spagnolo della diaspora in Italia tra teoria e prassi

Milin Bonomi

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Lo spazio sociolinguistico italiano è una realtà in costante trasformazione. I cambi radicali ai quali abbiamo assistito negli ultimi decenni si devono alla presenza di una nuova cittadinanza caratterizzata da una forte propensione al transnazionalismo, le cui pratiche linguistiche e translinguistiche si sono inserite in un contesto “ufficialmente” considerato monolingue. Il cambiamento del paesaggio linguistico di diverse città italiane è di fatto il risultato dei processi di deterritorializzazione e reterritorializzazione che nell’era del new mobility turn (Sheller and Urry 2006) stanno ridisegnando gli ethnoscape nella maggior parte delle geografie contemporanee. Tra questi processi rientrano anche le diaspore latinoamericane, che negli ultimi anni hanno favorito l’emergere di nuove forme globali di parlare spagnolo (García e Otheguy 2014) anche in Italia (Calvi 2015; Bonomi 2018, 2019), dove gli immigrati di origine ispanica rappresentano uno dei gruppi più numerosi in molte città del Nord. Il carattere mobile, ibrido e creativo che caratterizza queste pratiche globali - fortemente radicate nel contesto locale – può essere inquadrato nel concetto di translanguaging (García e Li Wei 2014), e in generale in tutta quelle serie di approcci teorici che non si riconoscono in una relazione biunivoca tra lingua e identità e che si soffermano piuttosto sulla pluralità e sull’eterogeneità come caratteristiche intrinseche dei repertori linguistici della maggior parte dei parlanti.

Nonostante i cambiamenti sociolinguistici che si sono creati a livello globale, le forme di bilinguismo basate sulle lingue migranti continuano ad essere soggette a processi di stigmatizzazione a livello percettivo e ideologico (Heller 2007) da parte di molte istituzioni pubbliche, soprattutto in alcuni contesti caratterizzati da politiche fortemente improntate alla difesa delle lingue nazionali. Questo è il caso, ad esempio, di molti contesti educativi europei, dove la visibilità delle lingue di origine degli alunni transnazionali è spesso purtroppo ancora deficitaria rispetto a realtà di più lunga tradizione migratoria (Moyer e Martin Rojo 2007). Purtroppo, la presenza di questi codici può essere addirittura interpretata come un ostacolo per il corretto apprendimento e considerata un vero e proprio "gap linguistico" (Avineri et al. 2015; Leeman 2012), finendo per entrare in contraddizione con gli obiettivi di inclusione socio-linguistica evocati dalle politiche linguistiche europee che mirano a incentivare la "diversità linguistica".

Il presente contributo ha una doppia finalità, che si può ricondurre da un lato a una prospettiva teorica, e dall’altro pratica. Nel primo caso mi propongo di analizzare le pratiche linguistiche,

discorsive e identitarie delle comunità ispanofone milanesi, così come la mobilità dei loro repertori linguistici. Una mobilità favorita, peraltro, dalla vicinanza tipologica tra le due grammatiche che compongono il loro repertorio bilingue.

Nel secondo caso mi propongo di analizzare la mobilità dello spagnolo in quanto heritage language all'interno dei contesti educativi, riportando l'esperienza di una ricerca-azione del progetto Mi(s) Lengua(s). Un progetto che si è proposto di introdurre lo spagnolo come lingua di studio, oltre all'italiano, con un gruppo di giovani latinos di una scuola media inferiore di Milano, e che si può inquadrare all'interno di una prospettiva didattica di impronta glottopolitica (De Arnaux 2000; Del Valle 2014), ovvero una prospettiva che tende a interpretare determinate pratiche, fenomeni e concetti non solo per il loro carattere strettamente linguistico, ma come il risultato dello stretto legame che intercorre tra processi politici, ideologici e sociali.