

Universitatea “Babeş-Bolyai” Cluj-Napoca

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**MULTILINGUAL PRACTICES OF NEW MINORITIES
IN ROMANIA. A CASE STUDY**

- Summary -

PhD Advisor:

Prof. Dr. Ştefan Oltean

PhD Candidate:

Alina Cîmpean

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Summary

The matter of multilingualism has been a pressing and complex one for decades and still continues to be so today. Even the concept itself raises difficulties and is in a continuous state of change. If traditionally multilinguals were understood to be two or more monolinguals and being proficient in all languages known to that individual, more recent views consider that the level of proficiency in one language does not need to be the same as that in another and the notion of verbal repertoire was introduced to replace that of language. Also, while in the past multilingualism and language alternation were seen as deficiencies, nowadays they are seen as an asset for any individual.

One of the main issues raised by multilingualism has been due to the monolingual views that some individuals and some institutions still maintain. As a result, the general question is whether multilingualism or monolingualism represents the norm. In the case of those who defend the later, references are usually made to Genesis and the story of the Tower of Babel. According to this tale, before the construction of this tower, monolingualism was the norm, while multilingualism was the punishment given by God to man for his/her attempt to reach the Heavens and thus avoid judgment. Another argument for the monolingual ideology is the fact that multilingualism represents a threat to national and social cohesion. This is because it is considered that only by using the same language can a nation state or country maintain its unity. On the other hand, scholars have mentioned several times that such a perfect homology among nation, state and language never existed in Europe or anywhere else for that matter (Gal, 2009). Also, according to estimations, most individuals throughout the globe speak at least one language besides their L1

(Auer and Wei, 2007). As such, regarding the matter from a quantitative point of view, it could be stated that multilingualism, rather than monolingualism, is the real norm and therefore cannot be ignored, especially if we take into consideration the fact that

“[t]o interpret the current multilingual situation in Europe [for instance] as a deviation from (largely nineteenth century) expectations of national monolingualism is false to the history of every country in Europe and false to the nature of language. In a sense, just as – and because – there are no homogeneous speech communities, there are no native-speakers to idealise” (Brumfit, 2009: 39)

Thus, looking back at our history it can be noticed that monolingualism has never been the general norm and that language underwent several changes, part of which took place through language contact.

However, a conflict between the two ideologies will still exist as long as multilingualism is seen as a threat towards national and linguistic identity. It is interesting to notice that there are still voices that consider national identity or identities as being threatened by multilingualism since, in certain respects, identity has never been a fixed entity but rather a fluid one as shown in the following quotation:

“... throughout the region ... national identity or identities do not remain stable. They change over a few generations; they mutate during the course of a war; they are reinvented following the break-up of a large empire or state; and they emerge anew during the construction of new states” (Glenny, 1999, as quoted by Brumfit, 2009: 33)

As it can be seen, multilingualism has been and still is a complex matter that still spurs discussion, debates and sometimes even conflicts. As a result, the present paper deals with conceptions of and attitudes towards multilingualism, with phenomena that appear through language contact and multilingual practices existing within new minority communities in Romania.

The aim of the present paper is to answer the question of whether Italian is still maintained by first generation Italian immigrants to Romania and whether instances of language alternation are encountered in their public discourse. To this end, recorded data has been used for a corpus-based analysis of both formal (interviews) and informal (spontaneous conversation) interactions. Furthermore, the present paper is also interested in dealing with matters surrounding the notion of multilingualism in order to offer a conceptual framework before dealing with multilingual

practices. For this purpose, I have divided the present thesis into six chapters, one of which represents the introduction.

The second chapter entitled *Conceptions of and Attitudes towards Multilingualism* focuses on different approaches to multilingualism. As such, in subchapter 2.2 *Defining Multilingualism*, both traditional and newer interpretations of multilingualism are tackled. This subchapter represents a review of the literature meant to offer a glimpse into the changes and developments that took place regarding the notion of ‘multilingualism’. This discussion is of importance due to the fact that nowadays there are two main approaches, where one views multilingualism as complete knowledge and competence in several languages while the other views multilingualism as a truncated knowledge of several languages. The discussion is continued with subchapter 2.3 *Ideologies: An Overview*, where monolingual, multilingual and language ideologies are dealt with. The discussion on monolingual ideologies begins by first discussing the above-mentioned story of the Tower of Babel, and continues by pointing out the fact that countries with a widely-spoken language, such as English, French or Spanish, promote monolingualism, considering it as the natural state of man. However, this view raises a deficiency, since “not only may the English become the only educated monolinguals in the world, but some of them will become very defensive about their state and more and more aggressively monocultural in attitude” (Brumfit, 2009:40). This might have an effect in the long run due to the fact that, as it has been seen throughout history, the status of *lingua franca* that English holds at the present moment is a temporary one. Regarding encountered monolingual views, this subchapter discusses examples from the UK. Here members of different parties consider that monolingualism is the desirable state, while multilingualism is a threat to British values. In addition, as it is shown, some of them go even further, considering that only by learning and using English can a member of a minority community overcome what David Blunkett considers to be their social schizophrenia (Blackledge and Creese, 2010). This discourse comes to show that discussions on language ideologies are usually connected to issues of migration. However, the fact that migration cannot be hindered must be taken into consideration. As such, given the discrepancy between our multilingual reality and our monolingual ideology, the latter should be rethought so as to be more compatible with the former.

The next subchapter deals with multilingual ideologies and begins by tackling notions of *minority*, *new minority* and *immigration*. Although the general policy of the European Union promotes multilingualism and multiculturalism, members of immigrant minorities are still referred to as *foreigners*, in the European public discourse. On the other hand, it must be mentioned that more and more countries have started to adopt more positive views on minority communities and languages. As such, this subchapter offers a glimpse into present attitudes towards multilingualism. Regarding the debate between monolingual and multilingual norms, this subchapter brings arguments for the latter. This is noticeable especially when dealing with *de facto* and *de jure multilingualism*, for it is shown that, in most countries multilingualism represents the reality of speakers who are members of the given society. For instance, although Romania is an officially monolingual country (which is mentioned in the constitution) most of its speakers are familiar with at least one other language or language variety (which is also a result of the educational policy that promotes individual multilingualism). On the other hand, Switzerland is an example of an officially multilingual country (having French, Italian, German and Romansh as official languages) but with speakers who are seen as monolingual due to the fact that they live in monolingual cantons. However, there are also examples of countries that are both *de jure* and *de facto* multilingual. Such is the case of Luxembourg where speakers need to have a working knowledge in all three official (French, German and Luxembourgish) in order to fully participate in the country's social medium. Regarding educational policies, the notions of *fixed* and *flexible multilingualism* are introduced. In order to exemplify these two new types of multilingualism, the examples of Luxemburg and the Basque Country are dealt with. While the latter started changing its educational policy into a more flexible one, in accordance with the increased flow of immigration, the former maintains its more rigid fixed policy, although it does not correspond anymore to individual requirements and to the needs of the labour market.

The next discussion is focused on language ideologies, since they represent an important part of the beliefs of individuals regarding both multilingualism and monolingualism. As such, four of the most widespread ideologies are dealt with. The first is represented by the *Standard Language Ideology* which is based on the belief that a language is a homogeneous entity so that uniformity can be applied through standardisation. Furthermore, this process of standardisation still takes place since the desire of most nation-states (often in connection with state-making) is to have

a standardised language that represents the norm and that should be used by all. However, it should be taken into consideration that the standard language ideology “simultaneously shapes and hides many of the actual speakers, especially minorities and migrants” (Gal, 2009: 14). Furthermore, as Milroy and Milroy (1999) state, one should take into consideration that complete standardisation of a language is possible only in the case of a dead language, as is the case of Latin. The next ideology discussed is the *one nation – one language* one. This ideology has held sway in the recent Western history and it is based on the notion that one nation should be unified under one common language. As a result, this ideology completely ignores minority languages and, thus, the linguistic diversity that is generally encountered in most countries. This comes to show that for most individuals there still is a strong connection between nation, state, identity and language. In order to portray how this ideology manifests, the case of the US is discussed in this part of the subchapter. Although the US has been considered as having one of the most tolerant language policies, the situation is in fact different. Since the early 80s there has been an English-Only movement whose main purpose is to have English as the *sole* official language of the US. Although at the national level the goal has not been reached, the situation is different at the state and local level where English has already been proclaimed as the *sole* official language in thirty-one states. One of the arguments promoted by this one nation – one language movement is to protect the national unity of the US from the threat posed especially by the Spanish community. The following language ideology discussed is that of the *mother tongue* which is based on the notion that each individual has one mother tongue. One issue that is raised by this ideology is the fact that there is no clear definition of what constitutes and how to identify a mother tongue. Also, a concept that arises when dealing with mother tongues is that of *native speaker*, a concept that is seen as bringing a negative view on the non-native speaker who is viewed as being ‘deficient’ in comparison to the native speaker. Furthermore, through generalisations such as all Germans speak German a monolingual rather than a multilingual norm is promoted. On the other hand, by not having a clear definition of what constitutes one’s mother tongue the speaker has the freedom to choose his/her own. The last ideology discussed here is that of *purism* which militates for maintaining one language form (generally a standardised one) and getting rid of all foreign and undesirable elements that are found within a given language. Among the nation-states that have applied or are applying an ideology of purism are Luxembourg and Turkey. Similar to the previous

ideology, this purist belief also militates on the idea that one language, the national language, should be maintained and promoted. As it can be seen, although discussed separately, all four ideologies are interconnected and complement each other. Also, generally neither of these ideologies acts alone but rather work together towards a specific purpose: national unity.

Subchapter 2.4 entitled *Redefining Multilingualism* deals with new perceptions on multilingualism. As such, the concept of *metrolingualism* (Otsuji and Pennycook, 2010) is introduced. Through this concept researchers are trying to move the interest away from pluralising languages and towards present linguistic practices where there is a constant negotiation between fluid and fixed identities. The concept also encompasses the fact that nowadays many multilinguals no longer identify themselves with one category or another but rather “play with and negotiate identities through language” (Otsuji and Pennycook, 2010: 246). Also, similar to Blommaert’s view (2010) on present linguistic practices, the concept of *metrolingualism* focuses on the mobility of language, a mobility that is even more present today due to the process of globalisation. It should be mentioned that due to the fact that I believe that more research needs to be done from the perspective of *metrolingualism*, for the interest of the present paper the notion of ‘multilingualism’ is still maintained. Also, because I consider that all terms referring to the knowledge and use of several languages (such as ‘bilingualism’, ‘trilingualism’, ‘plurilingualism’ etc.) can be subsumed under the notion of ‘multilingualism’, other terms will be avoided as much as possible throughout the entire paper. Furthermore, when dealing with multilingualism the notion of ‘language’ is still used although as a researcher I believe that the notion of ‘verbal or linguistic repertoire’ is a preferable choice since I consider, similar to other researchers, that ‘languages’ do not represent bound and static entities. However, considering that the concept of ‘language’ is a well-established one, it will still be used together with the notions of ‘repertoire’ and ‘variety’.

The third chapter entitled *Linguistic Practices in Multilingual contexts: Language Contact Phenomena*, deals with two common phenomena that appear when two or more linguistic groups are in constant contact: *borrowing* and *code-switching*. *Borrowing*, which is discussed in subchapter 3.2, is seen as the most common and natural phenomenon that takes place within all languages. Although it is a common process, it is not also an equal one since members of one linguistic group will always take in more words from the other linguistic group that they are in

contact with, than the other way around. This comes from the fact that one language is generally seen as being more prestigious than another. As such, there is a division between *donor language* and *recipient language* which is based on prestige. When referring to this process of taking in words from another language three terms are used *borrowing*, *loan words* and *interference*. However, it should be mentioned that neither of these terms is a proper one considering the fact that taking in words from a *donor language* represents a ‘one-street’ process since the words are never given back. On the other hand, due to the fact that these terms are well established in the literature they will still be used while keeping in mind that once taken, a word is never returned. Considering that borrowing represents a complex matter, subchapter 3.2.2 deals with two categories of borrowing (as discussed by Myers-Scotton, 2006a): *cultural* and *core borrowings* where the former refer to lexical items that have as a role to fill in gaps in the *recipient language* for they represent concepts from a *donor language* that do not exist in the lexicon of the *recipient language*, while the latter represent lexical items that duplicate already existing words from the *recipient language*.

Subchapter 3.3 deals with *code-switching/code-mixing* and it is of importance since in the corpus-based analysis of the present paper instances of code-switching are identified and analysed. It should also be mentioned that although *code-mixing* is touched upon when discussing Auer’s take on language alternation, throughout the entire paper code-switching is used as a cover term for all language contact phenomena. In *Defining Code-switching* (3.3.1) a general definition is given to it as “the use of two language varieties in the same conversation” (Myers-Scotton, 2006a: 239) and two general types of code-switching are identified, under the form of *intra-sentential* (takes place between two full sentences) and *inter-sentential code-switching* (takes place within the same utterance). Further on, several approaches on code-switching are discussed from two perspectives: grammatical and socio-functional. Within the socio-functional perspective the approaches of Gumperz (as presented by Gafaranga, 2010), Myers-Scotton and Auer are taken into consideration. In the case of Gumperz two dichotomies are encountered: the one between *we* and *they code* and the one between *metaphorical* and *situational code-switching*. The *we/they code* differentiation is based on the notion that speakers make use of different codes according to the types of interaction. As such, the *we code* is seen as the ‘solidarity code’ that is generally used in informal, in-group interactions (a fact that comes to show once more that language is seen as connected to national

identity). On the other hand, the *they code* is seen as the ‘deference code’ that is generally used in formal, out-group interactions. Within the second dichotomy, on the other hand, *metaphorical code-switching* refers to the notion that through code-switching particular values that are related to a certain identity are invoked, while *situational code-switching* is based on the notion that a speaker’s linguistic behaviour is influenced by external factors, such as a change in situation. Myers-Scotton (2006b, 2006a), on the other hand, proposes the Markedness Model which is based on the notion that the linguistic choice of a speaker is chosen in accordance with that speaker’s goals and after assessing both the costs and the rewards of his/her choices. Furthermore, the model separates code-switching into two categories: *marked* and *unmarked* (which is, in turn, divided into *sequential unmarked code-switching* – which is inter-sentential –, and *unmarked code-switching* – mainly intra-sentential), of which the latter generally represents the safest choice. An unmarked choice is discussed here as being the expected choice in an interaction (generally represented by the common language existing between two speakers) and can be influenced by situational factors such as a shift in topic or a change in addressee (this is similar with Gumperz’s *situational code-switching*). A marked choice on the other hand is seen as a deviation from the expected, being generally used to show authority combined with anger or annoyance, for exclusion based on ethnicity or aesthetic effects. Also, unlike the previous one, it is structurally flagged through repetition, emphasis or higher pitch. In order to portray these types of code-switching examples from the African multilingual context are used (as presented by Myers-Scotton (2006b)), although they can be identified in other contexts as well (as it is shown in chapter 5). The last approach that is discussed from the socio-functional perspective is that of Auer. Unlike Myers-Scotton who uses code-switching as a cover term for both inter-sentential and intra-sentential instances of language alternation, Auer differentiates between code-switching, language mixing and fused lects. While the first one is reserved for inter-sentential switching, language mixing refers to the language alternation that takes place within the same sentence (intra-sentential switching) or for instances where there is a difficulty in identifying one language or the other as the main language of interaction, and fused lects is used for those items taken from one language and which become an obligatory part of the grammar and lexicon of the recipient language.

From a grammatical perspective, and for the interest of the present paper, only Myers-Scotton’s (2005, 2006a) Matrix Language Frame is discussed. The present model is based on the

notion that the two or more languages that participate in an interaction are not equal in the formation of code-switching. As such, there is a hierarchy between the Matrix Language (main language that gives the morphosyntactic frame) and the Embedded Language, which is necessary for the Matrix Language Frame model to be applied. As a result, the Matrix Language Frame model can be applied only in multilingual CPs (where the CP represents the unit of analysis) for it is interested only in intra-sentential code-switching. The reason why monolingual CPs are not of interest for the model is that in their case there is no hierarchy between languages and as such only the Matrix Language can be identified while the Embedded Language is non-existent. Here, the discussion also focuses on the two principles that are meant to identify both the Matrix Language and the Embedded Language, and which are represented by *The Morpheme Order Principle* and *The System Morpheme Principles*.

The last discussion found in this chapter is the one focused on *borrowing* vs. *code-switching*, with a main interest on singly occurring words. Although Myers-Scotton's (2006a) position is that the Matrix Language Frame covers such occurrences and that they can be considered as examples of code-switching there are researchers who consider that such singly occurring words should be considered as 'nonce' (or temporary) borrowings. However, as shown in this subchapter and according to Myers-Scotton (2006a) the only similarity between singly occurring Embedded Language items and established borrowings is that they are both integrated into the morphosyntactic frame of the main language. On the other hand, one clear differentiation between the two instances is the fact that while established borrowings lose their original pronunciation after being adopted in the *recipient language*, while the singly occurring items still maintain theirs and furthermore, they do not have a 'reoccurrence value', which means that they can be encountered in only one instance throughout the entire conversation.

The fourth chapter entitled *Multilingualism in Romania* has as an aim to offer a glimpse into the present situation of multilingualism and multiculturalism in Romania. In order to do so, the chapter is divided into four parts, each part dealing with influencing factors on and aspects of multilingualism in Romania. Due to the fact that the European legislation has priority before the Romanian one, subchapter 4.2 deals with the two most important legislative documents regarding minorities and minority languages: *The Framework Convention for the Protection of National*

Minorities (4.2.1) and *The Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (4.2.2). The discussion on each of the mentioned documents includes information on the provisions of each of them and also a list that comes to show which are the signatory states and which are the states that have not yet ratified and applied both or either of the two documents. As a result, it is shown here that although most European countries have signed the two documents, not all of them have agreed to apply the provisions that they offer within their territory. Thus, the recognition of minorities and of the linguistic and cultural diversity is not embraced by everyone. The discussion is continued with the application of the Convention and Charter in Romania (subchapter 4.3). Dealing with this subject is considered of importance because attitudes towards multilingualism are influenced by a country's active legislation. Also, considering that the *Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* supports the maintenance and promotion of regional or minority languages there is an importance in identifying the twenty minority languages that have been recognised through its ratification and in identifying what clauses present in the document apply to which minority. Furthermore, this discussion comes to show that, although there is still room for improvement, Romania is one of the countries that have embraced their cultural and linguistic diversity, and that have taken steps towards the promotion of multilingualism and multiculturalism. The next subchapter (4.4 *The Situation of Minorities in Romania: Statistics*) touches upon the present situation of minorities in Romania according to the 2011 census published in 2013 by the National Institute of Statistics. This subchapter is of importance since it comes to show that not all minorities and minority languages are recognised. The final point of the present chapter is represented by subchapter 4.5 (*Moving the Discussion Forward: Multilingual Practices in Romania*). Here, the discussion is centred around Romanian multilingual practices as noticed in a previous study undertaken in 2010 for my MA dissertation and in which multilingual practices of adolescents and young adults were identified in *Short Text Messages* and *Instant Messages*.

The fifth chapter entitled *Multilingual Practices of New Minority Communities in Romania, The Case of the Italian Community* has as an aim to identify whether Italian is still maintained among first generation Italian Immigrants and whether instances of code-switching, and as such of language alternation, are encountered in the public discourse of native Italians. Also, when code-switching is encountered the goal is to identify whether it is Romanian/Italian (with Romanian as a Matrix Language) or Italian/Romanian (with Italian as a Matrix Language). In order to do so, the

chapter is divided into two parts. The second part (subchapter 5.2 *The Italian Community: An Overview*) offers a historical background for the Italian community that is found within Romanian territory. As such, here it is shown that immigration from Italy to Romania can be traced back to the 12th century and that the waves of immigration continued, with certain fluctuation in numbers, until the beginning of the 20th century. If up until now Italians had immigrated to Romania in search of a better life, after the 20th century the situation changed and Romanians started emigrating towards Italy due to a similar motivation. Also, during the 20th century Italians who came to Romania were no longer looking for a job but were actually offering jobs to Romanians. The reasoning behind this phenomenon is the fact that while the economic situation stagnated in Romania, the Italian situation started improving. This subchapter also deals in part 5.2.1 with aspects of language and culture maintenance within the Italian communities by shortly presenting stories of members of the Italian community, which are found in the *Siamo di nuovo insieme* magazine.

The third part of the chapter (5.3 *Multilingual Practices of Italian Immigrants in Romania*) represents the corpus-based analysis of the present paper. As such, it is divided into two parts: one dealing with the methodological framework (including the presentation of the data and of the informants) and one dealing with the analysis *per se*. The data collected throughout the six months of research consists of both formal (interviews) and informal (spontaneous conversations) interactions. The premise of the present study has been that Italian is still maintained among native Italian speakers and that in their discourse speakers make use of all their linguistic repertoires, thus giving way to instances of code-switching. One of the difficulties encountered while conducting my research was represented by the fact that there was little positive response to the request of participating in the present study. As such, I have opted for a qualitative, rather than a quantitative study, due to a small number of informants. Regarding the number of informants, three native Italian speakers were recorded although there was only one main informant. As such, the data analysis consisted of two interviews (of which one was conducted by me with the main informant, G.C. and one was found on the webpage of the Transilvania L!ve TV channel where K.R. was invited as a guest in the ‘de la 5 la 6’/’from 5 to 6’ talk-show) and other spontaneous conversations, including one where the participants were G.C., another native Italian speaker and the chef from G.C.’s restaurant.

Following the analysis, Italian has been identified as the unmarked choice between in-group discussions (between two Italian speakers) while Romanian was identified as the unmarked choice when one of the interlocutors is Romanian. However, in the case of G.C. it is shown that his unmarked choice is represented by Romanian/Italian rather than Romanian when his interlocutor is a native Romanian speaker. Also, several instances of code-switching have been identified and analysed as well. The most common instances of code-switching that were identified were of the unmarked types, while marked code-switching was encountered only in a few number of situations. The study also offers a comparative study on the basis of the two interviews. According to this approach it has been noticed that in the discourse of G.C. the instances of code-switching are much more frequent than in the case of K.R. Also, in the case of the latter informant instances of Romanian/English and Romanian/Italian and English code-switching were encountered, instances that do not appear in the discourse of G.C. Furthermore, instances of language alternation have been encountered in the case of all three informants which comes to show that the speakers make use of all their linguistic repertoires in order to accomplish their communicative purpose. In addition, in order to portray language alternation within the discourse a scheme that comes to show how speakers switch from one type of CP (either multilingual or monolingual) to another one was adopted. This scheme was created in order to show how language alternation takes place within a larger discourse rather than just within shorter sentences or clauses.

The sixth chapter of the present paper is represented by the conclusions, followed by the bibliography and the annexes.

As mentioned before, the present thesis had as premises that members of the Italian community in Romania still maintain their L1 and that language alternation takes place in their public discourse. In order to identify this, the thesis has first offered a conceptual framework and then has focused on multilingualism in Romania as well as on the linguistic practices of Italian immigrants in Romania. According to the results that were reached after the data analysis, the conclusion is that the premises have been proven valid. On the other hand, considering that the research represents a qualitative study rather than a quantitative one a generalisation regarding all members of the Italian community cannot be made. However, the present study represents a first step towards further research regarding multilingual practices of new minorities in Romania.

Furthermore, taking into consideration that Romania represents the grounds for a rich linguistic diversity, studies regarding the linguistic practices of its speakers could offer a more comprehensive view on the presence of multilingualism in this country.

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