Editorial

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Language use in multilingual contexts is an integral part of everyday life, not only in so-called border regions ("Euro-Grenzregionen"), but also in larger cities, towns and even small villages all over Europe. Listening to parents and their children at home or at playgrounds, to pupils and students during leisure time at schoolyards or at universities, to conversations in public and private spaces, one recognizes that contemporary language use is rarely restricted to only one language. The combination of lexical and grammatical elements of the two or more languages involved is often characterized by reciprocal penetration and sometimes even by an absence of boundaries between the languages or language varieties. The forms, structures, and their frequencies usually converge, sometimes accompanied by tendencies of divergence. New forms not rooted in any of the languages in contact, however, rarely emerge.

The emergence of new language varieties can be arranged along a continuum: at one end, there is a pure monolingual code, a well-known particular language. And on the other end, one finds the new fusionlect, which over time becomes increasingly stable. Between these two extremes, several more or less stable bi- or multilingual varieties mark different mile-stones, or transitions, along the continuum.

This process, which extends over generations (and even centuries), may be compared to the emergence of the Romance languages. Remember the stages of the formation of French: (1st stage of romanization: foundation of Aquae Sextiae > Aix-en-Provence 122 BC and of Narbonne 118 BC, South of France; 2nd stage: conquest of the northern part, *De bello Gallico*, 54 BC) which led to centuries of diglossia (Vulgar Latin and Gallic) and, later, to the linguistic convergence with Franconian, the Germanic conquerors' language (see literature on substratal, superstratal and adstratal languages: Ascoli 1873; Wartburg 1932, 1950; Valkhoff 1932; Tagliavini 1972; on parallel language use of several languages and their respective social functions: Ferguson 1959; Fishman 1967). During the centuries of transformation from classical Latin towards the Romance languages, several more or less stabile varieties (Vulgar Latin) were spoken by different social groups in different places. As vulgar forms of these diatopic and diastratic variations were increasingly used in written domains, they underwent a process of normalization and standardization which led to the languages now recognized as French, Spanish and other, less common present-day Romance languages such as Provencal and Asturian.

Contrary to numerous linguists focusing on synchronic contact between already-established languages who view boundaries between languages as fixed (in part, this view is apparent in the terms used: *crossing* – see Rampton 2005; *jumping* over boundaries between languages – see Hinnenkamp/Meng 2005, *transgression* – see Audehm/Velten 2007), the authors of this issue adopt the multilingual speakers' perspective. They take the social practice of bi- and multilingual discourse seriously, and intend to describe the step-by-step processes in the development of routines among groups, which eventually result in regularized language use. How do new forms in the grammar and lexicon emerge? While the picture thus far has mainly been based on research examining the language use of adolescents (often of adolescents in

socially privileged contexts), we want to improve it by focusing on adults and speakers living in other social contexts. The authors emphasize the fluid character of language use and the process of emerging structures. They take into consideration the language attitudes which have strong influence on the evaluation of, and therefore on the selection of the varieties (and their speakers) involved. They view the possibility of alternating between different varieties and languages as the norm rather than the exception. Defining languages (as opposed to variations or dialects) is a highly problematic enterprise. Why is it that the variants of Arabic and Chinese are dialects, while Spanish, Portuguese and Catalan are languages? From the diachronic perspective: at what point in time is there a French language in the territory of modern France, and when has it ceased to be a Gallo-Roman dialect (see Weydt forthcoming)?

Covering bi- and multilingual societies in history, politics and media, this issue starts with a view on a multilingual hotspot in Europe, the Small Caucasus, undertaken by the quartet of authors Veronika Ries, Stavros Skopeteas, Emrah Turan and Kristin Nahrmann. They focus on Georgia, and in particular on the minority of Greek descent. Part of this population has Urum as its mother tongue, a Turkish variety in close contact with Russian, Georgian and several other languages. As very little on the prehistory of these language contact situations is attested, the authors use a new form of analysis of the lexicon as evidence of early influences from neighboring languages, and to then order them chronologically.

Gëzim Xhaferri analyzes the Swiss model of a multilingual society and the respective language policies, with the aim of finding out whether and how it could be applied to the multilingual Macedonian state. The focus of Mª Elena Gómez lies on immigrant newspapers for Italians distributed for free in the public transport stations and trains in Madrid. In these media, she looks at language convergence between the two Romance languages Italian and Spanish.

The following five articles shift the perspective to the individual bi- and multilingual people themselves. Bilingual societies and the language attitudes practiced between their citizens in Belarus (Sender) form the link between the first and the second group of papers. The volume concludes with research on conversations in bi- and multilingual contexts. Speakers and their listeners' reactions are observed, taped, transcribed and described, and finally interpreted and systematized. The reader will find data on German in contact with Turkish and other non-European languages (Montanari), with Polish (Pulaczewska), and finally with Russian (Ries on contact in Germany, Tauschwitz on contact in the Altai region). To close the introduction, we present the focus of each of these papers in the following paragraphs.

Language attitudes in Belarus are the topic of Natallia Sender’s paper. Turning to analyze spoken data, Elke Montanari observes children speaking German as an L2 in Kindergarten. She is interested in the way they use the grammatical features of determination and genus, especially when their use diverges from patterns in their mother tongues. Bilingual language use among school children in Germany is the focus of Hanna Pulaczewska's paper. She gives a Polish perspective on the institutional practices of the two languages. Speakers of German descent migrating from Russia to Germany are at the center of Veronika Ries' paper, while Yves Tauschwitz observes the language use of a group in similar German-Russian contact. This language community still lives in the former Soviet territory east of the Caucasus, in the

Altai Krai. Tauschwitz observes important changes in the use of pronominal pronouns and their paradigm in this language community.

We are convinced that the curious reader of this volume will recognize the multifaceted reality of multilingual language use in different places, and will gain an awareness of the different contexts in the respective societies in Western, Central and Eastern Europe. In some aspects, the situations for migrants are quickly changing, while in some respects they remain stable over time. Language convergence is one of the phenomena which may be observed in the way bi- and multilinguals of different ages and in various social settings talk to each other. Only sometimes does this use develop certain routines which may mark the first step of an emerging new language variety. Even if its use is abandoned later on, it is a manifestation of its speakers' creativity. Language convergence is an important topic, as the rules of language use among multilinguals reveal an insight into the structure of language in general. They also help describe contact between historic languages during any period and at any place. We hope that our readers will experience the spirit of the common endeavor we share as European citizens.

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