

REVIEWS

Immigrant Languages of Europe edited by Guus Extra and Ludo Verhoeven. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, Ltd. 1993. 326 pp.

Reviewed by
Robert A. Agajeenian
University of California, Los Angeles

The focus of *Immigrant Language of Europe* is on immigrant groups and their languages in the highly industrialized nations of Western and Northern Europe. We shall look first at some fundamental concepts on which the articles in this volume are based, and then look briefly at each of the articles themselves.

In the first place it is important for American readers to be aware of a few significant differences between the relative language situations confronting immigrants to the U.S. and those to Europe. In the U.S. the immigrant enters an overwhelmingly monolingual culture, whose language is at the present time the preeminent language in the world for all activities which take place on a trans-national economic, cultural, and political level. In Europe, on the other hand, the immigrant encounters a culture where the idea of a multilingual education is much more common. This is especially true in countries where the majority language has comparatively little international currency and where the educated inhabitant will probably speak at least one or two of the major languages of Europe, besides the dominant language of the country. The immigrant in Europe faces, therefore, many other prestige languages besides English.

A related issue which it is important for the reader to understand is that the concept of European Community (EC) languages has the connotation of referring to the national or official languages of the EC member states, very rarely referring to indigenous or non-indigenous minority languages (Extra & Verhoeven, p.5). Therefore, at the expense of indigenous or non-indigenous minority languages, we see a standardizing of the national language within national borders under the influence of mass media, tourism, labor migration, international trade, and many other factors, accompanied by a strong linguistic nationalism with respect to the national language which shows no signs of abating in

front of the increase in the membership of the Community over the coming decades. This development in itself is not so strange to an American observer; however, the great linguistic diversity of the EC as a unit is quite different from the American condition.

Another issue is the difference in the nature of immigration in the two countries. In the U.S., immigrants traditionally have arrived with the intention of remaining and putting down roots in this country. The traditional expectation, in fact, was that immigrants actually should "assimilate" so that a Russian or a Chinese immigrant would eventually become American. In Europe, especially since the strong development of the European Community over the past couple of decades, immigrants have traditionally been thought of as "migrant workers," or *Gastarbeiter*, but who gradually brought their families, and raised their children, and now we see a shift in denotation accompanying this demographic shift, from migrant worker to immigrant family to ethnic minority (Extra & Verhoeven, p.4), thus creating a situation more similar to the U.S. experience.

Turning now to an overview of the organization of this volume, the first part provides a general discussion of immigrant language varieties in Europe. The focus of Part 2 is on processes of first language acquisition in a second language environment. Part 3 provides a study of code switching, and the fourth part looks at language maintenance and language loss. In order to permit cross-linguistic comparisons, different languages are discussed throughout the four parts.

The four chapters of the first part deal with immigrant languages and how they respond to the pressures from the majority language. Specifically, Finnish in Sweden, the languages of South Asia in Great Britain, and Turkish and Moroccan Arabic in the Netherlands are all considered. Croatian and Serbian in diaspora throughout Western Europe are also studied. In the first of these chapters, Finns in Sweden have shown a language shift to Swedish after two or three generations (as is common also with Finns in the U. S. and Canada, p.26-27). "Semilingualism," the condition where the L1 of adults, and especially, of first-generation children, begins to vary from the language as it continues to be spoken in the original speech community after the people have been living in the L2 environment for some time and without full and regular contacts with the original L1 environment, is a common experience in both Europe and the U.S. The L1 in these L2 circumstances has a reduced scope

for application and lacks the input of the new developments in the language which are occurring in the meantime. (For further discussion on this subject, see also Kalantzis et al., 1989, pp. 29-34) This problem of "Semilingualism" has necessitated, in Turkey, for example, that the Turkish government provide special school programs for the many Turkish youngsters returning from Germany, whose parents have brought them back to Turkey, and who find that the children are quite far behind their peers in language skills. (E. E. Talu, personal communication). "Semilingualism" is not uncommon in the various immigrant and minority language communities in the U.S., either.

The second chapter studies the South Asian languages in Great Britain. The efforts at language maintenance of the South Asian communities as well as the current distribution and use patterns of these languages are discussed. The third chapter looks at evidence from recent research on minority languages in the Netherlands. The focus is on Turkish and Moroccan Arabic as these constitute the major Mediterranean languages in the Netherlands. After this introduction the authors outline a current research program supported by the Dutch Science Foundation in cooperation with the University of Nijmegen. The aim of the research is to study the processes of language change over time in these two communities, which represent the largest Mediterranean groups in the Netherlands. In the fourth chapter, the development of Croatian and Serbian language varieties in Western European countries is described. The author focuses on the social and demographic background and the self-reported L1 and L2 proficiency of children in the countries of immigration also studies the children's actual proficiency in both L1 and L2 by means of a multiple-choice grammar test and a composition task.

Part 2 of Extra and Verhoeven's book deals with the issue of L1 acquisition in an L2 context. In the fifth chapter the author investigates the acquisition of Turkish in Berlin. She describes major research projects with her main focus being on the functional development of conversational competence in a bilingual context. The second study on L1 acquisition in an L2 environment also concerns Turkish children but now in the Netherlands. The author studies a group of 11-year-old children and their language proficiency at the lexical, morpho-syntactic, and discourse levels. She is mainly concerned as to the degree to which these levels are affected by language erosion and has found certain evidence to this

effect at least at the lexical and morpho-syntactic levels. The third study in this part of the book is an attempt to assess diagnostically the ethnic language proficiency of Turkish and Moroccan children at the end of primary school. (A very interesting discussion of questions of evaluation of the L1 and L2 proficiency of German and Macedonian immigrant children in Australia can be found in Kalantzis et al., 1989, pp. 91-130.) Oral measures for vocabulary and listening comprehension and written measures on the level of lexicon, syntax and text were undertaken. Parents' attitudes towards bilingualism are very important in a discussion of ethnic community languages, and the final chapter of this part of the book deals with this issue. The author of this chapter gives an empirical account of such attitudes in the Nordic countries and finds, not surprisingly, that parents generally want public support of their languages. Although dealing almost entirely with English-speaking contexts, Edwards (1984) contains several chapters on the relationship between multicultural policy and education issues. Especially interesting in this regard are Jim Cummins (1984) and William F. Mackey (1984).

Code-switching is the topic of Part 3. The authors of the four chapters in this part would agree with Fishman (1971) that "both interference and switching are related to the domains and variance sources of bilingualism, on the one hand, and to socio-cultural processes and type of interaction, on the other." The first chapter opens the discussion with a study of basic principles of language change among Turks in Scandinavia and Germany. The author criticizes the basic concepts of traditional contact linguistics, such as "borrowing," "transfer," and "substitution," and, claiming that the elements of the majority language merely serve as "models of imitation" (p.201), he prefers the concept of copying as providing better insight into the processes involved in interactions between languages in contact. On the basis of the Turkish data, the author outlines various types of copying processes, such as "global copying," which is the insertion of blocks of speech from the other language, and "selective copying," where only selected bits of the second language serve as the model for imitation. The focus of the next chapter is Turkish-Dutch code switching among Turkish adolescents in the Netherlands. The empirical data are explained in terms of both the sociolinguistic markedness model and the frame-process model. Both of the above chapters bring out the point that younger people, with greater proficiency in both the majority and the

minority languages, will vary the degree of code-switching. They will speak Turkish with little L2 switching with older family members and strangers in the Turkish community but use a high degree of code-switching in in-group situations with their peers. The status of Dutch single word switches in the language use of Moroccan adolescents in the Netherlands is the topic of the next chapter, and the question is raised whether it is appropriate to consider single word switches as a separate category rather than as a particular type of intrasentential switching. The final chapter of this part is a comparative study of code switching patterns among Finns and Americans living in Sweden. According to the study, Finns tend to integrate Swedish items whereas the Americans tend to use the Swedish items in an unintegrated way, which the author explains in terms of the structure of the languages involved, the social context of immigration and the degree of linguistic neutrality.

The concluding Part 4 of this volume deals with aspects of language maintenance and language loss. According to Fishman (1971), language loss and shift are due in part to "the general inability of dislocated populations to maintain domain separation and, therefore, a sufficiently distinctive functional allocation of codes in their verbal repertoires, such as to render their mother tongues necessary for membership and status even in the home, neighborhood and other intra-group domains." The first chapter of this section studies immigrant minority languages in Sweden. The author shows that language shift in the second generation is widespread despite an official government policy of support for freedom of choice and home language instruction. She expects, however, this pattern to change because of the recent increase in immigrants from more distant countries than hitherto experienced in Sweden and the larger numbers of such immigrants. Chapter 14, the next chapter in this section, gives an empirical account of the maintenance of the Romani language, used by the gypsies of Europe and composed of a great many dialects. Romani is undergoing a period of profound change under the differential influence of the various majority languages its speakers encounter, changes which are rendering the dialects more and more mutually unintelligible. There is also a definite threat that the language will die out entirely as fewer and fewer children are proficient in it. Deliberate attempts at reversing this trend, for example, creating a dictionary of the most common dialect words and creating a standardized literary language, are also discussed. (Interesting further discussion of issues of

language standardization and literacy are to be found in Coulmas, 1984.) The final two chapters deal with language attrition. The first of these discusses methodological issues regarding language shift research, presenting data on social conditions influencing language shift among Italian and Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands and Flanders. For example, the authors look at the choice of language in different social situations, the subject's social, cultural and educational background, language proficiency, and attitudinal and affective factors. The concluding chapter is a study of lexical aspects of language attrition and shift, concentrating on the development of the migrant's native language in a country where this is not the dominant language. Explanations of lexical loss depend to an important degree on the underlying account of how the bilingual lexicon is stored in memory. The authors review four such accounts. The *extended system hypothesis* represents languages as undifferentiated in the memory, each being a different surface representation of the same underlying concept; the *dual system hypothesis* claims that each language is represented independently; the *tripartite system hypothesis* places those elements which are identical in both languages in a single common neural substratum while those that are different have each their own separate representation; and, finally, the *subset hypothesis*, favored by the authors, assumes the use of a single storage system where links between elements are strengthened through continued use.

An interesting historical perspective on the influences of a "prestige language," analogous in many ways to the relationship of the majority language *vis à vis* the minority language or languages of immigrants and *Gastarbeiter*, can be gained in Kahane (1986). A classic in the field of languages in contact is Weinrich (1970), which should be consulted for most of the themes touched on in this volume under review.

The principle focus of this volume, as its title suggests, is the minority languages themselves and how they are impacted by their contact with the co-areal majority language. This focus is important and somewhat different from the usual American focus on the influences of the immigrant languages on the acquisition of L2 English, or the usual European focus on the development of the national language to the neglect of both indigenous and non-indigenous minority languages. There is noticeable overall bias in the direction of broad support for "multiculturalism" and "pluralism," but Kalantzis *et al* (1989, pp. 7-28) provide a salutary

discussion which puts these concepts in some perspective. Anyone who is interested in the issues of minority language survival, the linguistic adaptation of immigrant communities to the majority language and culture, and even the general issues of European, and especially EC, response to one part, at least, of the monumental changes occurring in European society, will find this a highly useful book.

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Robert A. Agajeenian is a graduate student in the department of TESL & Applied Linguistics at UCLA.

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