Anne-Claude Berthoud, François Grin & Georges Lüdi (eds.)


The book assembles an impressive body of research that focuses on a rapidly changing multilingual Europe. Migrant communities, European border expansion, job transfers are only three examples of the valuable terrain that the European context provides for the observation of the dynamics of multilingualism emerging from the contact among societies, languages and cultures. The editors, Swiss scholars Anne Berthoud, François Grin and Georges Lüdi, have coordinated the European funded *Dylan* project (http://www.dylan-project.org/Dylan_en/presentation/presentation.php); the primary sources of data have been presented in this work. Through the collection of a vast amount of empirical data, the *Dylan* project’s ambitious goal is to investigate the contexts within which multilingualism is an asset rather than a disadvantage. This book provides a snapshot of the complexity of the field as well as an in-depth view of the perfectly orchestrated research conducted within the European project.

The volume comprises four parts. The first three assemble research conducted in the contexts of 1) Commercial entities / corporates; 2) European Institutions; and 3) Higher Education. The fourth part presents research that tackles transversal issues and provides a cross-sectional view of the work undertaken in the project. A very succinct and insightful introduction and conclusion frame the four sections and provide a clear summary of the salient findings.

The first section of ten chapters deals with studies conducted on national and international companies, of varying sizes. Numerous language contexts are investigated. The multilingual practices, representations and ideologies documented take into consideration not only national, official languages (English, French, German, Danish, etc.) but also minority languages such as Slovene and Gaelic. Hence, multilingualism in companies has been tackled in terms of how it manifests in users’ practices but also in their representations. Furthermore, the data collected allow for the exploration of different facets of multilingualism implemented in the European context. The first three chapters present the results from very fine-grained analyses of interactional data collected in both French and Swiss-based companies. Whilst the first two adopt a conversational analysis framework and thus boast an emic perspective, the third chapter adopts a discourse analytical approach and taps into aspects of multilingual management. An important element underpinning the
interactions analyzed in the first two chapters is intersubjectivity, the principle that ensures comprehension between individuals engaged in the same conversation. Through an interactional and multimodal approach, the authors show how intersubjectivity is enabled through language negotiations, repairs, etc. Thus, these two studies demonstrate that speakers will, through their language activity, adjust their language choices. These adjustments are evidence of the plasticity inherent to multilingual practices. The third chapter, focused on multilingualism and management in companies, provides a complementary view, showing the interdependence between multilingualism and multiculturalism. As suggested by the authors, multiculturalism is the necessary condition for maximising the benefits of multilingualism. Chapters four and five deal with the representations of multilingualism via the analyses of interview data collected in French and Danish companies. The dynamic nature and the tensions of multilingualism's representations are highlighted, as well as the resultant close relationship between individual and group identities. It is somewhat surprising that Tajfel's (1978) landmark work has not been taken into consideration as he has written extensively on the tensions between individual and group identities. Chapter six focuses on Gaelic and language planning. The authors grapple with difficult issues concerning the efficiency of language policies especially when these pertain to minority languages (as is Gaelic) that are confronted with the pressure of English, the dominant language. The results from this research are certainly valuable for policy makers who are required to balance the “cost efficiency” of language policies with their potential significance on an ideological level. Although not focusing on language minorities, the last chapter of the first section deals with management of language diversity within corporate websites. Similarly to the findings in the other chapters of this section, this chapter underlines the supremacy of English as the language medium par excellence. Interestingly though, the authors observe that companies’ Internet sites contain a wide selection of languages the reader could choose from, suggesting that, despite the observed English supremacy, companies wish to broaden their sites’ readership by expressing their specificities in a wider variety of languages.

The second section of the volume comprises three chapters pertaining to multilingualism in European Institutions. Similarly to section one, these focus on language practices, policies and representations within and beyond post-Enlargement European institutional contexts. Adopting a multi-level perspective, the research presented in this section skillfully captures the dynamics of communication in workspaces where language practices are on a continuum between monolingualism and multilingualism. In ever-changing
communicative contexts, addressing issues of language policies and strategies is of particular importance. Research presented in this section provides an invaluable contribution to decision and policy makers towards understanding the complexity of the European terrain and supporting the implementation of evidence-based strategies.

The second section opens with chapter eight presenting a multi-perspective research study, which questions the coherence between European policies and European reality. Kruse and Ammon investigate how the working languages (English, German and French) are implemented in communicational contexts that are internal and external to the European institutions. Once again, English is by far the most frequently used language, suggesting a movement towards monolingualism. This finding, among others presented in the chapter, leads the authors to observe a discrepancy between policy and politics. Similarly, chapter nine questions the compatibility between multilingual language policies and the opportunities provided to use minority languages like Slovene. Although this study focuses on Slovene only, its findings challenge the implementation of policies that have failed to bring about clear ideological changes, with repercussions on minority language usage. Issues on ideologies are discussed in more detail in chapter ten. Using a multilevel approach, the authors explore the European Union’s institutional language regimes and regulations from an original perspective. They tackle these issues by comparing language ideologies with the ways multilingualism is regulated and is effectively present in practices observed in institutional spaces. Numerous discrepancies between visions and concepts of multilingualism are observed: the authors advocate for further multilevel research to gain understanding in order to make sound political decisions.

Part three gathers studies conducted on a different terrain, namely higher education, mainly at university level, with the exception of one example from an institution for secondary education. Consisting of six chapters, the central goal is to investigate the repercussions of a changing sociolinguistic context on the language policies and strategies within the educational sphere. The papers in this section evaluate how multilingualism benefits and supports knowledge transmission. The section opens with an exploration of multilingualism in two Catalan university contexts. Interactions during multilingual activities were analyzed through a conversational analytic approach. The key finding is that multilingual practices are a daily reality for speakers in tertiary education and that such practices promote knowledge construction. However, official documents do not consider multilingual practices as assets for instruction: the authors appeal for a more efficient use of this linguistic capital within the education sphere. Similarly, chapters twelve
and thirteen also highlight the importance and the benefits of multilingual communication for knowledge construction and transmission. Based on fieldwork conducted in a trilingual Italian (Bolzano) and in the Swiss (Zurich) contexts, the papers also emphasize how multilingual practices enhance knowledge transmission and stimulate creativity, while simultaneously ensuring mutual comprehension. These first three chapters of section three deconstruct the unfortunate stereotypical image of multilingualism as a practice that hinders linguistic and cognitive progression. Through numerous, thorough analyses, the scholars put forward evidence of multilingualism not only as an asset from a pedagogical point of view, but also from a social point of view, as it increases cooperation among students. The last three chapters of section three deal with language policies and institutional strategies in education in three different contexts. Firstly, in chapter fourteen, language policies at Finnish universities are investigated. Interestingly, the analyses in this chapter are valuable not only because they highlight the advantages of multilingualism but they also raise issues and questions that are pertinent to minority language policies seeing that for Finnish speakers – as it is for minority language speakers – multilingualism is a pre-requisite for communication outside the Finnish boarder. Moving on to a similar situation, chapter 15 deals with multilingual practices as well as attitudes and representations among students registered at a Romanian university. This chapter discusses the advantages and the potential challenges linked to multilingualism, thus giving a balanced account of the possible situations policy makers and educators should consider. The final chapter in this section provides a picture of the ways in which policies influence multilingual education and how the latter influences practices, from a local (Belgian, Brussels) and a European viewpoint. The comparative approach is particularly valuable because it argues for the importance of multilingualism on a local, intra-national level, as well as on an inter-national level. The authors identify four parameters affecting European policies. They suggest that these parameters are indicators of the time needed to implement multilingual education on the local (national/regional) level; the latter seems to lag behind European strides for multilingual education. In line with the conclusions drawn by the studies included in this section, Van de Craen and colleagues clearly advocate for content and language integrated learning (multilingual education) as a more scientifically and pedagogically sound system, with proven success also on a psycho-social level, favoring empowerment and emancipation.

The fourth section of this volume contains three chapters that touch on transversal issues. These chapters go beyond disciplinary borders and bring to
light the highly coherent research conducted within the DYLAN project. From the perspective of policy evaluation, chapter seventeen proposes criteria to enable the comparison, and consequently the assessment, of the merits of situations characterized by varying degrees of multilingual practices. This chapter has both theoretical and practical importance, as it sets out a number of “indicators” of efficiency and fairness in multilingual communication. Efficiency (in resource allocation) and fairness (in distribution of material and symbolic resources) are two concepts borrowed from the field of economics and skilfully applied to multilingualism management and policy evaluation. Moving on to a language that has an important symbolic capital, chapter eighteen focuses on English as a lingua franca. Interestingly, the authors highlight how these communicative contexts seem to favor the emergence of new ways of communication between speakers with divergent linguistic repertoires. More importantly, the results presented in this chapter urge linguists to broaden their views on the definition of language, especially when it is in contact with other languages. In other words, the authors discourage views of multilingual practices as encounters of standardized, monolithic, monolingual impermeable blocks. Finally, chapter nineteen traces multilingualism in European history showing how representations of language usage and multilingualism have evolved. In their presentation, the authors emphasize the influences these representations have on language choice and usage, which, as has been shown, can lead to the adoption or the abandonment of multilingual practices.

The volume concludes with a valuable summary of the main ideas for future research but also for policy makers who aim to preserve linguistic diversity. These conclusions converge with Nettle and Romaine’s (2000) suggestions who state that the preservation of language diversity guarantees the well being of speakers and of their environments.

This book provides an important cross-disciplinary contribution to the scientific community. Although it is aimed at a readership of scholars, its findings provide convincing evidence of the advantages of multilingualism in different spheres of communication. It therefore becomes important to disseminate the results also to non-specialists who contribute to preserving language diversity. The chapters are skilfully divided into sections, to guide the reader towards an in-depth understanding of the complexity and the dynamic nature of multilingualism. In sum, the book tackles difficult issues and complex fields in an admirable way and provides important directions for future research.

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References
