Within Europe, there are huge differences in the way the second and third generation migrants adapt to the dialectal and regiolectal ways of speaking found in the receiving societies. They range from (apparently) complete accommodation of the whole repertoire from standard to dialect in places such as Sicily and southern Italy in general, Switzerland, or Norway, to an outright rejection of dialects as spoken by the 'white' autochthonous population and which are perceived as part of middle class mainstream culture, such as in the Netherlands, northern Italy, or (at least parts of) Germany. Variation within a country has also been reported (Denmark).

While these differences may be due to how speakers with an immigrant background position themselves vis-à-vis the receiving societies, they may equally be a consequence of social restrictions imposed on these choices by community norms and by the legitimate, entitled users of dialects. Hence the question of whether second/third generation immigrants use dialects (or at least regional features) seems to reflect both on the status of the dialects in the respective society, and on the relationship between immigrant and non-immigrant population. It is therefore highly indicative of the social processes underlying transformations of late modern European societies due to migration. Differences between rural and urban geographies almost certainly play a role as well. In addition, there may be significant developmental differentiation between early and later generations of immigrants.

Although sociolinguists in various European countries have started to investigate the issue, a comprehensive view and interesting sociolinguistic generalizations are only possible once these single investigations are confronted with each other. The workshop therefore aims at bringing together sociolinguists from various north, middle and south European countries to develop such a perspective and to discuss different methodological approaches to such studies.
Language and integration in rural areas: 

first- and second-generation dialect acquisition and identity construction

Jan-Ola Östman & Lena Ekberg

Language and Integration in Rural Areas in Finland and Sweden (LIRA) is a joint project with scholars from Stockholm university and the University of Helsinki. The project focuses on language use, variation and language contact in rural areas in Sweden and in Swedish-language Finland. Integration is approached both sociolinguistically and from the point of view of linguistic structure. So far data have primarily been gathered in Swedish-language dominant municipalities in Ostrobothnia in Finland, in communities where the local dialect is very prominent. Immigrants – e.g. from Bosnia, Vietnam and some 40 other countries – thus need to learn not only standard Swedish, but also the local dialect and – if they want to "get ahead" in life – and Finnish.

The presentation focuses on the complex relation between integration, language and identity, and how identity and social belonging are constructed among Bosnian immigrants (who arrived in the early 1990s), and among their children, who are now rapidly approaching 20 years of age. In the group of first generation immigrants we can see how they construe a "third space" as an identity resource, not identifying with either Bosnians nor Ostrobothnians. At the same time we see a differentiation between those who mediate and remain as neutral as possible, and those who feel marginalized in every respect.

With respect to identity construction among the second-generation Bosnians, we see two positions: on the one hand, those who are happy to learn – and live – the dialect, and who have become part and parcel of the local community; on the other hand those who do not want to speak the dialect, and who aim for a life and occupation elsewhere in Finland.

The study discusses how these different positions are realized linguistically and in the attitudes the informants express.

Hybrid use of dialect and ethnolect in an urban housing estate

Pia Quist

Sociolinguistic work on adolescents’ speech in superdiverse urban spaces in Europe is typically concerned with emergent speech styles (sometimes called ethnolects or multiethnolects, e.g. Bodén 2010, Quist 2008, and Wiese 2009). Only few studies of multiethnic speech practices focus on the use and acquisition of regional dialect among second and third generation migrants. However, a few studies show that young speakers combine features associated with multiethnic speech with more traditional dialect (e.g. Christensen 2009, 2012 and Cornips 2002). Christensen (2012) shows that youth of migrant backgrounds in a multiethnic housing estate even use more dialect than youth from mono-ethnic neighborhoods.
New data from the social housing estate Vollsmose in Odense (the third largest city in Denmark) indicates that a few traditional dialect features are used as part of a local register that may – for some of the speakers – be described as a hybrid of distinct registers. The non-standard multiethnic register differs linguistically from standard Danish in terms of pronunciation, some grammatical features and lexical loans (mostly from Arabic). Most of these resemble what has been described as multiethnolect in Copenhagen (e.g. Quist 2008, Hansen & Pharao 2010). The regional Funen register comprises mostly prosodic features. Based on participant observations, sociolinguistic interviews and group recordings of 50 9th graders in a public school in Vollsmose, this paper examines the following interconnected questions:

1. How and to what extent are features associated with regional Funen combined with features associated with a multiethnic register?

2. To what extent are these combinations dependent of specific speakers and contexts?

The paper does not present any concluding argument, but rather work and ideas in progress. Focus will be on the linguistic examples.


Attitudes towards immigrants' use of local dialects; questions of authenticity, belonging and entitlement

Unn Røyneland & Bård Uri Jensen

A popular singer-songwriter from a small town in Mid-Norway, well-known for the use of local dialect in his lyrics, released a song a couple of years ago where he refers to refugees as flies and lice. Since then he has given numerous interviews where he warns against immigration and claims that Muslims contaminate Europe. In her blog and also in a number of interviews a young Iraqi refugee to the same town in Mid-Norway speaks out against this. And she does so speaking the local dialect. Her statement has both received massive support and evoked negative reactions – some of them questioning her claim to be an authentic, entitled and legitimate citizen of this local community. Even if she sounds local, she doesn’t look local.

Among the many questions this story raises, one is what it takes to be accepted as someone who belongs: what should you sound like to sound like you belong – and what should you look like? Previous research indicates that it is generally seen as predominantly positive that immigrants acquire and use the local dialect (e.g. Jølbo 2007; Van Ommeren 2010). However, different dialects seem to vary as to the degree of acceptance and authenticity they provide when spoken by a person with immigrant background.

In order to investigate attitudes towards immigrant’s use of dialect, a visual-verbal-guise and an extensive online questionnaire was designed. In the guise a number of rural and urban dialects were played once with a traditionally Norwegian-looking face and once with a foreign-looking face. The guises were evaluated using traditional five point semantic differential scales (e.g. Zahn & Hopper 1985). In addition, the respondents were asked to evaluate the guise according to how foreign and how Norwegian they were perceived to be. Almost 400 high school students from different urban and rural places in Eastern and Western Norway took part in the study. In order to test the effect of face-voice versus voice only, approximately 100 students were presented with a traditional verbal guise – that is, only voice and no face.

In our paper we will present the results both from the experimental study and from the questionnaire, and attempt to answer the question of the extent to which immigrants are seen as authentic and entitled dialect users by young people in Norway.

References


Language attitudes and dialect acquisition:
Ecuadorians and Dominicans in Madrid

María Sancho Pascual & Cristina Martinez Sanz

The goal of the IN.MIGRA2-CM research project (Migrant population in the Autonomous Community of Madrid: interdisciplinary study and tools for sociolinguistic integration) is twofold: 1) On the one hand, the project explores from a multidisciplinary perspective the process of sociolinguistic integration undergone by the migrant population in Madrid; 2) On the other, it aims to design instruments to facilitate integration. In order to make possible the investigation of the processes of linguistic accommodation and dialect acquisition by Latin Americans in Madrid, we analyse cognitive dimensions such as the language attitudes and beliefs that underlie linguistic behaviour and guide dialect acquisition. In the first phase of the project the research focused on first generation immigrants. Specifically, the language attitudes and accommodation processes of specific grammatical features in first generation Ecuadorians were investigated.

Our results show that the study of language attitudes provides relevant data that inform us on specific factors that determine the process of dialect acquisition. Taking as a point of departure these results, in the second phase of the project we are investigating second generation immigrants. Our research currently focuses on gathering a corpus of oral speech that will allow us to carry out studies that will relate language attitudes with dialect acquisition. This corpus will include data from different communities (second generation Ecuadorians and second generation Dominicans). From the initial observation of the interviews that are being carried out, it is perceived that second generation speakers display a heterogeneous behaviour with respect to dialect acquisition. Furthermore, different groups show diverse patterns of accommodation, which in turn differ from the ones displayed by first generation speakers. Disentangling the diverse beliefs and language attitudes that underlie these patterns will be instrumental not only for the explanation of the different parameters that are at play in forming group identities, but also to define the factors that guide linguistic accommodation.

We will present results on the language attitudes that might explain the linguistic behaviour of second generation Ecuadorians and Dominicans. This study will guide the investigation of specific linguistic features in the process of dialect acquisition.
Arabic-French Linguistic Syncretism in Marseille's Housing Projects:
How Second-Generation Youth Transformed Marseille's Historical Dialect into a Vernacular for Young People of Color

Cécile Evers

Marseille’s dialect of French, more commonly known as the Marseillais accent, evokes the ethnically French, fisherman mode of life that cinematographer and author Marcel Pagnol depicted in his works between the 1930s and 1950s. The emblematic speakers of this “sing-song” (chantant) French are Marseille's “old-timers,” while its emblematic locales are seaside areas of Marseille like l'Estaque and the historic Vieux Port. Diasporic youth from Northern Marseille draw heavily upon the linguistic hallmarks of Marseille’s dialect, leading some local listeners to report that they speak an exaggerated Marseillais. Others report that such youth, who were born in bilingual and sometimes bicultural Muslim households in the city's northern housing projects (cités), speak an Arabic-accented French.

This paper examines the language practices of a group of twenty second and third-generation youth from La Castellane project, whom I observed participating in a public school Modern Standard Arabic classroom between 2012 and 2013. I demonstrate how these young men and women have transformed Marseille’s dialect, notably by intensifying certain local features and peppering their Marseillais with Arabic phonology, colloquial lexis, discourse markers, and Arabic-like neologisms. I argue that youth have created iconic linkages between the “scratchy” (i.e., /χ, dγ, tʃ/) and pharyngeal (i.e., /h/) sounds they deploy and the qualities they strive to embody, like grit and resourcefulness. Thus, although their way of speaking, which they term Castellanois after their project, overlaps partially in repertoire with Marseille’s dialect, it nevertheless differs substantially in its social indexicality. I discuss the various dimensions of the project (quartiers) youth persona, as well as the other social types to which these youth counterpose themselves, including the typical working-class speaker of Marseille’s dialect and the paillot, or white, bourgeois, and Standard French-speaking person.

Dialect as a bond, a barrier, or a threat
Case studies from Romance and Alemannic varieties spoken in Switzerland

Raphael Berthele

The notion of “dialect acquisition” in Switzerland refers to a rather diverse set of sociolinguistic situations, ranging from learning a second variety of the respective native dialect to learning a dialect of a second or foreign language. First, I present a taxonomy of these settings that fits the case of multilingual Switzerland. Second, I discuss the ideological correlates both in language policy and in current-day sociolinguistics that shape the perception and the values attributed to local language/dialect proficiency. Third, I discuss two very different situations in which
migrants acquire local varieties: Migrant children in the officially Romansh speaking territories in eastern Switzerland and migrant children in German-speaking Switzerland. The concluding discussion is an attempt to capture the tensions migrants find themselves in in a linguistically complicated host country such as Switzerland: They are bound to make meaningful acquisitional choices in a field of conflicting construals of ‘good’ and ‘legitimate’ languages/dialects.

Some features of Swiss German dialects spoken by second-generation immigrants

Stephan Schmid

As is well-known, the sociolinguistic situation of German-speaking Switzerland is characterized by a type of diglossia in which the ‘low variety’ has a strong value and a large diffusion in almost all domains of everyday communication (cf. Berthele, this conference). Therefore, the acquisition of a Swiss German dialect is the default option in the case of second-generation immigrants. Nevertheless, one can observe different scenarios how Swiss German enters into the repertoire of these multilingual subjects.

The first scenario implies code-switching between a heritage language and Swiss German, where the latter displays no structural divergence from the varieties spoken by non-immigrant speakers. Such bilingual conversations have been documented since the 1980s, in particular within the Italian community (cf. Schmid 1993, Schmid & Russo submitted).

The second scenario became apparent shortly after the turn of the millenium. While code-switching could still be observed (Häberli & Wollensack 2006), it was also noticed that the Swiss German dialects used by second-generation immigrants revealed some particular features on different linguistic levels, i.e. discourse, lexis, grammar and – most importantly – pronunciation (cf. Tissot et al. 2011, Schmid 2012). Moreover, this ‘multi-ethnolect’ underwent several transformations along the lines identified by Auer (2002) in Germany, viz. as ‘secondary ethnolects’ created by comedians and as ‘tertiary ethnolects’ in the speech of non-immigrant speakers.

This talk will illustrate some of the most salient linguistic features of Swiss German multi-ethnolects, focusing in particular on the phonetic level.

References

Young Stuttgart people with migrant background don’t use dialect

Peter Auer

In this report I try to summarize what is known about (German) dialect acquisition and use among second (or "middle") generation immigrants in southwest Germany. I will present three different groups of speakers who position themselves differently by acquiring/using or by not acquiring/using Alemannic dialect features as they are found in the receiving society. The first group are second generation Italians living in smaller towns in the area between Freiburg and Basel. Their language is often almost indistinguishable from that of their monolingual, autochthonous peers, i.e. they speak the same (regiolectal) Alemannic. This can be interpreted as a sign of accommodation and successful integration. The second group are middle generation Russian immigrants (usually with a German ethnic background) living in rather segregated neighbourhoods in and around Freiburg. They also acquire features of the regional dialect or regional standard and use them to a certain extent in sociolinguistic interviews. In addition, they share with the autochthonous Germans a positive attitude toward the German dialects. Finally, I will discuss the results of a study carried out in Stuttgart among second/middle generation adolescents with mainly Turkish and Balkan family backgrounds. For these speakers, the dialect of Stuttgart plays no role whatsoever. Instead, they use ‘multiethnic’ features. Both can be seen as an act of divergent self-positioning against German mainstream society in an urban context.
Exploration on dialect acquisition by new speakers in the Netherlands

Leonie Cornips

In this talk, I will explore the process of dialect acquisition – dialect varieties and features by new speakers and their descendants in the Netherlands. Before doing so, I will first problematize the labels standard Dutch and dialect as used by laypeople and linguists in the Netherlands. It will be shown that laypeople believe that on the one hand standard Dutch is regionally neutral while on the other they associate the west of the Netherlands with standard Dutch (Smakman 2006:112). Consequently, the label dialect is reserved for language varieties that are spoken outside the west and, hence, is inextricably intertwined with the so-called peripheral areas in the Netherlands.

To date, while even including the west, there has been little research on dialect or local language acquisition in the Netherlands. Therefore, this talk will gather bits and pieces of micro and macro-sociolinguistic research that has been undertaken in the last four decennia (Cornips 2002; Cornips & de Rooij 2014; Hinskens et al. 2014a/b).

The main part of the talk will be devoted to the acquisition of dialect (features) by new speakers in the south-eastern part of the Netherlands i.e. the provinces of Brabant (Mutsaers and Swanenburg 2012) and Limburg (Paulissen 2011; Thissen 2015) on the basis of spontaneous speech data collected by ethnographic fieldwork. I will focus by means of video data on the use of dialect (features) in the process of attributing an identity/ies – both self-ascribed by new speakers in Limburg and ascribed to them by established dialect speakers.

How to be legitimately illegitimate?

Analyzing the vernacular of French-speaking Belgians of immigrant descent

Philippe Hambye

In this paper, I will suggest that, in order to make sense of linguistic practices of French-speaking Belgians who identify themselves (and are identified) as "immigrants", we need to focus on the issue of legitimacy. I will try to show that because of their social background and because of the larger social context in Belgium, certain ways of speaking are or not available for them, since certain stances are socially construed as adequate for them, while others are not. More precisely, I will show why it is often not an option for them to act as a legitimate student and to use the legitimate language, even if this does not mean that they are actively contesting dominant norms or taking a transgressive stance. Unlike many scholars who view these speakers linguistic practices as acts of resistance to the social order, I will consider them as ways of assuming assigned positions within this social order, and hence as ways of reproducing it.
Expressing identity in London and Paris: ethnicity, class and youth

Paul Kerswill & Penelope Gardner-Chloros & Maria Secova

Young people in London and Paris use language to express their identities in a social space including age, class, gender, ethnicity and place. We present analyses of conversations between young people, looking at how they construct group identities. In London, ‘Cockney’, ‘Black’ and ‘posh’ refer to ethnicity and class, while the French ‘bléard’ and ‘wesh-wesh’ indicate origins and language. Ethnicity is differently expressed. In London, Anglos consider the inner city ‘black’, while ethnically mixed groups de-emphasise race. In Paris, ethnicities are named using verlan, e.g. ‘renoï’, and ‘quetur’, establishing distance from mainstream culture. We can partly trace the differences between what might be expected to be similar situations to the origins and linguistic characteristics of youth language in the two cities: Multicultural London English emerged through language and dialect contact, with many features shared across ethnicities. In Paris, the innovative features in phonology and grammar are strongly correlated with ethnicity and rarely used by Franco-French speakers. Basing ourselves on work by Hornsby and Jones (2013), we find an explanation in the very different patterns of migration and settlement in the two cities.

“People don’t see me as white”:
How appearance plays in dialect acquisition among immigrants in the U.S.

Cecelia Cutler

Models that make predictions about speech behavior on the basis of unconscious input and contact such as exemplar dynamics and Trudgillian accommodation are not entirely predictive because they rule out the effects of speakers’ social and psychological orientation towards the speech variety in question. While it may be difficult to demonstrate the extent to which these factors play a role in language change, sociolinguistic research has demonstrated that ethnic identity or group membership shapes interactional styles (Rickford & McNair-Knox 1994, Alim 2004). It has also been shown that immigrants and language learners take up particular ways of speaking associated with the groups they are assumed to belong to or that they aspire to belong to (Auer & Dirim 2003; Blake & Shousterman 2010, Ibrahim 2014, LePage & Tabouret-Keller 1986, Norton & McKinney 2011, Ricento 2005, Røyneland 2015). Thirdly, language learners have been shown to be motivated to learn languages and/or dialects that connect with members of a community of speakers who mirror their past, present, and future/ideal selves (Anya 2011).

Arguable, one of the most important dimension of one’s visible identity is the body and how it is conceived or pre-conceived, and “racialized” according to locally established conceptions of group membership. What role does this embodied subjectivity play in shaping one’s psychological orientation towards certain ways of talking? In this paper, I argue that the racialized body is involved in the process of taking up a language or a dialect, shaping how a
person is seen by others and how they come to see themselves, but not always in predictable ways. I explore how perceived or attributed ethnicity may trigger unexpected linguistic choices among immigrants and those from immigrant backgrounds in the U.S. context.

References


Challenges and opportunities for future research on the acquisition of dialects and the development of “new” lects by immigrant groups in Europe

David Britain

In this paper, I reflect – from outside, having largely worked solely on rural variation, and not on the dialectological effects of immigration – on research on ethnolect formation and migrants’ acquisition of local dialects. I dwell on two specific questions about immigrant lects before moving beyond:
1. I argue that the question of ethnolect development by migrants in the host country, and whether or not they pick up the host community's local dialects essentially boil down to the same thing: fitting in. To what extent (i.e. are they able?, do they wish?, are the conditions right?) do the migrants have integrative network ties of the kind that would enable them to acquire the host dialect, or ties which engender distinctive and fused ethnolects, or ties which engender dialects which still reveal traces of specific ethnic origin, etc?

2. In assessing the extent to which migrants (fail to) acquire local dialects, what would we expect and how would we measure 'success'? What is 'the local dialect' that they are (not) acquiring?

These are questions we would ask of the ability of any 'migrant' to pick up a new dialect in such contexts, whether that migrant be a non-native speaker, a native speaker from another country, a native speaker from not-so-far-away, or even a native speaker moving, for example, into another social class. If we strip away ethnicity, we are left with a more general set of questions, questions that enable us to explore a typology of outcomes of, ultimately, mobility. Exploring these issues in the context of mobility more generally enables us not only to shed light on our specific interest here, but also see the potential for exploring these questions in other sites, such as in rural areas, or among other groups, such as elite expatriate migrants.