

Multilingual Norms

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The sight represented a bit of uncertainty in our world,
which in every other way knew only sameness.

Lloyd Jones, *Mister Pip*

Multilingualism, language norms and multilingual contexts¹

Madalena Cruz-Ferreira

1. Multilingualism concerns people, not languages

Multilingualism has nothing to do with particular languages, because languages cannot be multilingual. People can. It follows that insights about multilingualism draw on uses of language, not on features of particular languages.

Monolingual people and multilingual people are linguistically different because they use languages differently. Monolinguals naturally use them monolingually and multilinguals, just as naturally, use them multilingually. Truistic though this observation may be, it has been functionally ignored within research on multilingualism: multilinguals are instead expected to show evidence that they use languages as monolingually as their monolingual peers. This is an intriguing prospect that raises the no less riveting question of whether monolinguals, in turn, can be expected to use their single language multilingually. To my knowledge, research on monolingualism has so far not attempted to provide answers to this question. There appear to be two core reasons for this lack of interest in finding parallels between monolingual and multilingual uses of language. First, research has focused not on the language users, but on the languages themselves, an issue whose rationale will be detailed in the next section. The issue is compounded by the use of the words “bilingual” or “multilingual” and their cognates to designate two or more single languages, for example in collocations like “multilingual corpus” or “bilingual test”. Second, research has so far not aimed at finding parallels between monolingualism and multilingualism at all: monolingualism has instead been anointed the default norm of language uses, against which multilingual uses must therefore be gauged.

The plentiful studies adopting comparative methodologies of this kind use comparison not as a tool designed to uncover similarities and differences among different populations, which may afford generalised insight into uses of lan-

¹ I wish to express my indebtedness to Linda Thompson and Jason Rothman for their feedback on a previous version of this chapter.

guage, but as an end in itself, to uncover instances of where multilinguals fail to behave like monolinguals as, by tacit assumption, they should. It is clear that requiring multilinguals to shed what makes them multilinguals and at the same time claim that this provides insight into multilingualism is, to say the least, rather odd. It is also clear that looking for deviations from an assumed norm that matches only one of the two populations under investigation *will* find deviations to that norm in the population to which the norm cannot fairly apply. That is, the study of multilingualism has been a study of deficits, in that it has had the goal of finding out how multilinguals are not monolinguals. Given that multilinguals are in the majority, worldwide, it is equally odd to reach the conclusion that most human beings must be deficient language users. It is time, in short, to find out how multilinguals are multilinguals, that is, which *norms* of language use are found in multilingual populations.

Focus on languages as the prime mover of research on multilingualism means of course focus on monolingualism, because different single languages are compared across users. Findings consist in reports about the comparative state of health of each of the languages of a multilingual, relative to the assumed pristine state of the same languages singled out for comparison among monolingual populations. The assumption that monolinguals are by definition exemplary exponents of their language goes unchallenged. As Romaine (1995) points out at the outset of her monograph, it would be strange to find publications featuring “monolingualism” in their titles: monolingualism does not need addressing because it “is” the norm (but see Ellis 2008, for a thought-provoking exception to this rule). Underlying this mindset, and despite occasional acknowledgement in the literature that multilingualism is essentially different from monolingualism, we find the related assumption that the study of multilingualism amounts to the study of distinct monolingualisms: a multilingual must match monolingual-like proficiency in several languages. Accordingly, a multilingual is viewed as the sum not only of several monolinguals, but of several monolinguals with very real cohabitation issues within the same body (and mind). Corollary findings from such studies therefore concern what languages can do to people, instead of what people can do with languages. That is, *users* of language are portrayed as its victims. One example is the research question announced in the all-new Linguistics and Language section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS 2008), inviting thoughts on “how language is affected by bilingualism”. No-one asks what one single language can do to monolinguals, or how language is affected by monolingualism, in all likelihood because everyone agrees that these questions lack sensible foundation. The intriguing issue is why sensible researchers see it fit to ask similar questions about multilinguals. It is this view that explains why multilinguals continue to be treated as linguistic chimeras, whose “feats” arouse mixed feelings ranging from awe

through deficiency to incredulity, as a cursory browse through the literature will show². The problem is of course that what is awe-inspiring is not normal.

Multilingualism is about as awe-inspiring as monolingualism. The goal of this book is to promote investigation of what *multilingual norms* of language use consist of. Norms cannot induce marvel, because they reflect observation of what goes on in real life. Marvelling at facts is not part of a fact-finding mission either. The strangeness that continues to imbue multilingualism simply derives from looking at it with tools that do not serve it. Focus on monolingualism as a norm has generated research on what, in my view, should properly be called “multi-monolingualism”, and so deprived researchers of an adequate methodology to deal with multilingualism. The claim, paradoxically found in such research, that multilinguals are *essentially* different from monolinguals means *qualitatively* different: a multilingual is as much a simple addition of monolinguals as a multi-instrumental player is a sum of single-instrumental players. A multilingual is a multilingual regardless of the quantity, or type, or combination of languages in their repertoire, just like a monolingual is a monolingual regardless of which single language they use. Language uses, not the languages themselves, are the relevant issue, to which I now turn.

2. Language norms arise from dynamic uses of language

Looking at multilingualism as an accumulation of languages predictably raises all sorts of insurmountable obstacles. There are just short of 7,000 known living languages, according to the Ethnologue’s (2008a) language counting criteria, although there are also “40,000 or so names for different languages that are in use”, according to speakers’ own reports about which languages they speak (Makoni and Pennycook 2007: 11). Whichever way one chooses to count lan-

2 Emotionally-charged words qualifying multilingualism abound in the literature. For example, the number of hits in a scholar’s web search for the “phenomenon of bilingualism”, as opposed to the “phenomenon of monolingualism” attests to the awed stance of scholars towards multilingualism. A sample of other examples:

- “Aiding children to reach proficiency in two or more languages is an amazing mental feat”. Tokuhama-Espinosa, Tracey (2000: 1). *Raising Multilingual Children: Foreign Language Acquisition and Children*. Westport, CN: Bergin & Garvey.
- “[...] the astonishing fact of multilingualism in individuals.” Hall, Christopher J. (2005: 212). *An Introduction to Language and Linguistics. Breaking the Language Spell*. London/New York: Continuum.
- “One of the most remarkable abilities of bilinguals is to produce and/or to perceive a switch from one language to the other without any apparent difficulty”. Abutalebi, Jubin, Simona M. Brambati, Jean-Marie Annoni, Andrea Moro, Stefano F. Cappa and Daniela Perani (2007: 13762). The neural cost of the auditory perception of language switches: an event-related functional magnetic resonance imaging study in bilinguals. *Journal of Neuroscience* 27(50): 13762-13769.

guages, the search for differences between each of the languages of a multilingual and its monolingual counterpart is virtually endless. In addition, on the assumption that findings about different combinations of languages equal findings about multilingualism, the sheer number of language combinations is simply staggering, in twos, threes, or whatever the number involved in different multilingualisms may be. There are just too many multilingualisms.

Focusing attention on single languages has therefore appeared as more compliant with empirical scrutiny. A single language becomes a stable research object, not because it actually is one, but because it is assumed to always be itself, regardless of who uses it where, when, how, to whom and why. Analyses of languages proceed *in abstracto*, commonly through dissection and detailed inspection of their component parts, as one would a dead body: just like there are cardiologists and neurologists, there are phonologists and semanticists. The assumption is that deepened understanding of each body part will afford understanding of the body as a whole, and the corollary is that a language is a cumulative effect, as it were, of its parts. The same parts-for-whole (or trees-for-forest) assumption neatly transfers to multilingualism, one notch up the empirical chain of observation: multilingualism is best understood through a dissection of (dissected) component languages.

But single languages can only misleadingly be assumed to be stable and tame. Going by the no less staggering lack of agreement about findings and interpretations of findings concerning single languages that research has churned out for centuries (English being the current major focus of attention), monolingualism emerges as no less baffling a “feat” than multilingualism is said to be. There are too many monolingualisms too. Granted, ideal speakers, language standards and the “L” in FL/SL³ teaching and learning are all monolingual, but so are dialects, sociolects, idiolects, registers, global languages and the “L” in L1⁴, L2, L_n, as shown the elegant dodging of monolingual variability under unifying labels like *Englishes*, *Mandarins* or *Swahilis*. Individual languages are invoked to provide insight into “language” (in the uncountable meaning of this word), because they are portrayed as so many epiphanies of it. In other words, it has been a monolingual linguistics through and through. Not least, we are back to square one, to the premise that monolingualism can provide a usable benchmark to approach multilingualism. The point is that if endless variability has not deterred prolific research on monolingual uses of language, there is no reason why variability in itself, or an added dimension to it, should stump researchers. Monolinguals use their single language in different ways according to need and multilinguals do the same with their different languages. The issue preventing

3 FL: Foreign Language; SL: Second Language.

4 L1, L2, etc.: first language, second language, etc. I will not attempt to unravel here the profound confusion associated with the use of (ordinal) numerals to designate languages.

the approach to multilingualism on its own terms cannot therefore be the inherent complexity of research objects and findings. The issue in fact turns out to be a reluctance to look at language as a process, not a ready-made product.

The overarching assumption behind language counts and body-part descriptions is that languages are “objects”, amenable to both inspection and possession by human beings. This is a contentious matter, as Ethnologue (2008b) compilers themselves are well aware of: “Increasingly, scholars are recognizing that languages are not always easily treated as discrete isolatable units with clearly defined boundaries between them. Rather, languages are more often continua of features that extend across both geographic and social space”. Statements to the effect that people “have” one or more languages, or that they “master” (or not) specific languages, are therefore unfortunate in the impression of stagnancy that colours them. They imply that human beings are passive, vessel-like collections of languages or repositories of skills in one or more languages: they express themselves through languages, instead of *with* them, as if languages had a life of their own independently of, and despite, their human hosts. Reification of languages is particularly striking in instances of multilingualism, as Koven (2007: 3) pithily observed: there are “folk beliefs that see (any) language as external to and merely describing a fully constituted “core” self that is stable across contexts”. Again, nowhere are the users in sight. Reductionist assumptions of this kind continue to be questioned by linguists (Harris 1981, 1998; Hermann 2008; Yngve and Wasik 2004), because their fundamentally static tenets do no justice to the inherent flexibility of language in use: they fail to tell us how languages are put to work. In particular, they fail to tell us how multilingual repertoires are put to work. As Blommaert, Collins and Slembrouck (2005: 197) point out, “multilingualism is not what individuals have and don’t have, but what the environment, as structured determinations and interactional emergence, enables and disables”. It is certainly interesting and useful to learn about the formal anatomy of languages and language components, but the truly intriguing questions are about languages *in action*. Languages are processes of engagement with other people and our environment, developing according to dynamic needs and adapting to them. Uses of language are a “continuously monitored creative activity” (Harris 2005), which means that languages are probably better described as “*linguaging*” (García 2007: xi), i.e. as verbs rather than nouns.

Real-life “languages” in fact tend to skip formalities as readily as real-life people do. More tellingly, wherever and whenever the need arises, everyone behaves like a multilingual. Monolingual visitors to a foreign country and a foreign language, whether tourists, *Gastarbeiter* or white-collar expatriates, will soon find ways to bend their linguistic habits in order to accommodate not languages, but communication. Pidgins, flourishing in 16th century trading outposts as naturally as in 21st century shopping malls, are a well-know example of linguistic creativity of this kind for similar purposes. Perhaps less known, though

no less common, is the instant linguistic resourcefulness found in neighbouring countries with officially different “languages”. Two examples from present-day Europe, a continent where only recently has academic awareness emerged about the prevalent multilingualism within its countries, illustrate the issue. “Monolingual” Swedes, Danes and Norwegians in conversation switch to their own self-labelled “Scandinavian” (*skandinaviska*, in Scandinavian), which consists in avoiding vocabulary, accent and constructions idiosyncratic to each of their languages, and probing for language-independent and/or mixed terms, pronunciations and grammar that favour consensus among their interlocutors, for the benefit of everyone involved in the exchange. The same happens with speakers of Portuguese and Spanish, and their own “Iberian”, better known among users as *portuñol* (Portuguese *português* and Spanish *español*). Scandinavian and *Portuñol* may have names, but they are no “languages” in the traditional linguistic sense of this word, although they are as used as any of their more well-behaved counterparts. On the other hand, countless versions of similar linguistic adaptation to the communicational shortcomings of well-behaved “languages” are likely to be and remain nameless, worldwide, because what matters with languages is not their name, if any: what matters is that they serve a purpose. Using languages does not consist in producing matches to things, it consists in *doing* things (monolingual languaging is probably in dire need of conceptual revamping in this connection too, but this book is about multilingualism). The “languages” themselves play second fiddle.

We may now safely conclude that, depending on what we take as norm, monolingualism and multilingualism alike can be found to be as “deviant” or as “normal”. One issue remains, that we still lack norms for multilingual uses of language. As discussed above, the common research paradigm has been to look for multilingual (mis)matches against monolingual norms, often in a quest for what is not there. This book’s proposal is to shift focus to where we can start looking for what *is* there. To this purpose, we need to visit multilinguals in action, in multilingual environments.

3. Multilingual norms are found in multilingual contexts

The number of languages at the disposal of individuals is a matter of chance that has nothing to do with the languages themselves. We all use exactly the number of languages that we need in order to function comfortably in the contexts where we happen to find ourselves, for purposes of everyday interaction with people and our environment. This being so, the study of the effects of single languages across users is of scant relevance to multilingualism: we need to look at what users do across languages instead, and we need to do this in context. That is, we look at multilingual uses of language as they arise in spontaneous everyday interaction. In addition, we look at policies addressing multilingualism, because

these are often the factors that facilitate or doom multilingualism within a community. Such policies must be studied in context too, in order to understand their genesis, implementation and effects.

There are as many multilingual contexts as there are multilingual communities. This book is concerned with spoken language and/or its printed counterpart, although issues about multilingualism vs. monolingualism of course arise among users of sign languages too, whether bimodal (sign-spoken) or monomodal (sign-sign), see e.g. Deuchar (1977), Lucas, Bayley and Valli (2001), Petitto and Holowka (2002), Sutton-Spence (2004). Before detailing the organisation of the book itself, an explanation is due about why the multilingual context of Singapore forms a substantial part of it.

Singapore is a city-state of 4.6 million inhabitants, where 75% of the population are ethnic Chinese, 14% Malay and 9% Indian (Statistics Singapore 2007) and where multilingualism is the norm. The country has a unique language policy which both accords equal status and cultural capital to four co-official languages, English, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil (other Chinese, Malay and Indian languages are also spoken, see Gupta 1994), and explicitly links multilingualism to education and economic development (Silver 2005). Regardless of the languages and language combinations used in Singaporean homes, bilingualism is nurtured from the start of schooling. All children learn English and their so-called “mother tongue”, the latter defined according to ethnicity (Gupta 1998): Mandarin, Malay and Tamil, respectively, for ethnically Chinese, Malays and Indians. Although research on multilingualism in Singapore dates back to several years (e.g. Gopinathan, Pakir, Ho and Saravanan 1998), only recently has interest in child language in Singapore surged forth, from developmental, pedagogical and clinical perspectives, addressing multilingualism where it starts and where its development is nurtured and assessed (see Cruz-Ferreira 2008, for a bibliography on this topic).

Singapore therefore appears as an ideal source to tap knowledge about multilingual practices as well as policies in actual multilingual contexts, which besides involve major world languages. Importantly, the proactively multilingual Singaporean experience sheds light not only on its achievements, but also on shortcomings of both practices and policies, thereby pointing the way to what remains to be done for our understanding of multilingualism worldwide.

4. This book

4.1. Genesis and focus

Multilingualism in Singapore is also the reason why this book arose. For several years, I taught child language modules and supervised research on child language at the National University of Singapore. Students' projects, graduate as

well as undergraduate, involved collection and analysis of original Singaporean child data. Naturally, most projects targeted child multilingualism, and all had to take multilingualism into account. The students, multilinguals themselves, reported the stumbling blocks that they faced in attempting to make sense of the children's use of their languages, and the nurturing of their multilingualism, from within the monolingual perspectives available in the literature. Several went on to produce research specifically designed to tap multilingual features of language use. I also taught the linguistics framework of the Masters Programme in Speech-Language Pathology, launched in 2007 at the same institution. From a clinical perspective, the students' realisation was that deficit approaches to multilingualism as "deviant" monolingualisms confounds the variables that need to be controlled for assessment of speech-language disorders: we need to find out what healthy multilingualism is, before we can decide on deviant multilingualisms.

Meanwhile, in October 2006, I convened a conference on language norming at the National University of Singapore, attended by academics, teachers and speech-language clinicians, Singaporean and otherwise. The conclusions which emerged from this meeting again reinforced the paradox of approaching multilingualism through monolingual norms, a standard practice even in a country like Singapore, where multilingualism is both the official norm and an officially sanctioned educational goal. Language teachers and clinicians, among other professionals, work with assessment of multilingual populations, and there can be no assessment where there is nothing to assess against. Multilingualism is not a given. It needs nurturing and, above all, it needs to be understood from the complementary perspectives of those who use it, grow up with it, assess it in school or in clinic, and legislate about it. Two further findings from this meeting are certainly not restricted to Singapore: first, that teachers and clinicians alike were found to devise and use their own language norms, to account for their students' and clients'⁵ actual linguistic backgrounds and everyday practices, all of which are so far unavailable to colleagues and other professionals working with multilingualism in Singapore and elsewhere; and second, that everyone involved in any way with multilingualism, from academics to educationists through speech-language clinicians, remains in the dark about everyone else's experiences, successes, failures, proposals, practical strategies and insights about multilingualism.

Matching the steadily growing awareness about multilingualism worldwide (Auer and Li Wei 2007; Baker 2006; Grosjean 2008; Li Wei and Moyer 2008; Ng and Wigglesworth 2007), this book gathers together insights about multilingualism from scholars based in Asia, Europe, Australia and America. Child and adult multilinguals are visited at home, at school and at work, including in clinical settings, in a sample of multilingual contexts which were deemed

5 The term "client" is standard in speech-language therapy.

to provide an overview of the kind of interdisciplinary issues likely to become relevant for our understanding of multilingualism from a multilingual perspective. The book sets out to rethink multilingualism, aiming to lay a solid foundation to the all-new concept of *multilingual norm*, understood as distinctively multilingual language practices, and the all-new field of language norming in multilingual contexts. Its purpose is threefold:

- To glean cumulative findings, insights and resources (or lack of them) about multilingual norms of language use;
- To raise awareness of what multilingualism is about, and of the urgent need for language norms which reflect multilingual uses of language;
- To dispel misconceptions about multilingualism, that often entail sanctioned but damaging advice to individuals and families, as well as school and corporate policy-makers.

The focus of the book is strongly empirical. With one exception mentioned below, all chapters draw on current fieldwork, teaching and clinical practice in multilingual settings. Contributors, most of whom are multilinguals themselves, range from academics to language teachers, teacher trainers and practising speech-language clinicians. The book is targeted at professionals, whether monolingual or multilingual, involved with child and/or adult multilingualism. Prospective readership includes teachers and educators at all educational levels, speech-language clinicians, decision-makers dealing with language curriculum planning and implementation in schools, as well as researchers and scholars. Theoretical issues are kept to a minimum. It is not the purpose of this book to settle, or even discuss, the theoretical validity of constructs like for example “language dominance”, or to appreciate debates like for example the “one vs. two language systems”, because this book does not aim to address current research on multilingualism. The five references quoted in the previous paragraph, together with Genesee, Paradis and Crago (2004) and Romaine’s (1995) classic monograph, provide ample background to these issues. Chapter authors in this book refer to these and other constructs as and when needed, for which working definitions as used in each chapter are given in the book’s glossary, as explained below.

I should add here that leading this book to completion was a team work. Several authors generously doubled as blind reviewers of other chapters at my request, for which I wish to express my very sincere gratitude.

4.2. Organisation and contents

The book is organised into four parts, followed by an Afterword. This layout reflects one choice, among several possible, of dealing with issues pertaining to

norming itself, child language development, language uses at home and in school, and clinical language assessment in multilingual contexts, respectively. The Index/Glossary at the end serves a double function. First, the usual one of guiding readers to find discussion of keywords across the book and second, an explanatory one about technical and/or idiosyncratic terms used in different chapters. Given that this book does not deal with theoretical issues in linguistics, multilingualism or clinical research, there are no definitions for terms which were deemed to have intuitive consensus among authors, such as *verb*, *syllable* or *phoneme*, although I am aware that it is not always the case that even “standard” technical terms like these are used in the same way in the literature. In other cases, I asked authors to provide their own definitions of keywords, as used by them in their chapters, in order to help readers understand the contents of each chapter as intended by the authors. For example, where the same term is used differently by different authors, the glossary explains why. Authors follow their own choices as far as chapter organisation, theoretical stance and style are concerned, because the scope and contents of different chapters are quite different too. Common features are that each chapter includes an abstract and its own set of references, so that each can be read on its own.

Instead of providing here a summary of each chapter in turn, customary in introductions to collected work but redundant where chapters include abstracts, my choice is to present the book from within a number of recurrent sub-themes across chapters. One note is in order: I said above that the focus of the book is not on theory. It is nevertheless striking that dealing with multilingualism from a multilingual perspective uncovers the true scope of well-anchored analytical concepts in language studies, all related and all of relevance to language research in general, as will become clear below.

One first common thread concerns the interplay between language and “nation”, a concept as reified and as nebulous as “language”, and the related in-statement of “national languages”. Jason Rothman and Michael Iverson (Chapter 2) and Jean-Jacques Weber (Chapter 10) discuss the problematic association of one nation to one language and its consequences for what is subsumed in the literature under the label “bilingual education” – where “bilingual” often means what it says, two languages. One of these languages will be the national language, the other is the learner’s “mother tongue”. As the recurrent singular form of this term suggests, there appears to be only one per individual, although the (single) mother tongue of a multilingual is not easy to find, particularly where multilingualism is simultaneous. Deborah Chua (Chapter 5), Tan Ying Ying (Chapter 8) and Jean-Jacques Weber (Chapter 10) report interesting parallels to administrative solutions to this problem, across two continents: for purposes of schooling, children are assigned to a mother tongue (or vice versa) on the strength of their ancestry. In Singapore, the added twist is that your mother tongue hinges on your father’s ethnicity (see Bokhorst-Heng 1999, and Bok-

horst-Heng and Caleon 2009, for implications of this policy). Quandaries arising from the assignment of one mother tongue to multilinguals are not evidence of the “complexity” of multilingualism; they are evidence of the lack of applicability of the (singular) concept to multilinguals. Jean-Jacques Weber accordingly takes issue with “mother tongue” ideologies, to conclude that for the term to gain any descriptive validity, it is best re-conceptualised as “linguistic repertoire”, a definition which applies to monolingual repertoires as well.

A similar terminological muddle shows where multilinguals in general are compared to “native speakers” of their languages, with the bizarre consequence of depriving simultaneous multilinguals of nativeness in their languages: if they were “native speakers”, it would make little sense to compare them to themselves. The issue becomes clear when we realise that labels like “native speaker”, or “inner-circle user” (Chapters 9 and 12), are in fact as many euphemisms for “monolingual”. Speakers of “minority” or “heritage” languages (Chapters 2 and 4) are, on the other hand, multilingual, identified by terms which turn out to refer not so much to a quantity or a quality, respectively, as to a policy: they designate users of non-official languages. The case of Singapore shows that the matter is one of political will, or languages like Malay and Tamil, with 14% and 9% of users, respectively, would not be official languages in the country.

Some languages may become international, for reasons which have nothing to do with features of the languages themselves and all to do with their extended usability worldwide. However, in order to partake of this usability, newcomers to these languages are required to learn their features. These features are monolingual, because so are the varieties of languages that are exported for purposes of foreign and second language teaching and learning. Learners, being (incipient) multilinguals, are thus expected to reproduce uses of (a) language which are twice foreign to them. David Deterding (Chapter 9) deals with the international pronunciation of English from the crucial perspective of intelligibility, which is as contingent on the speaker as on the listener. He finds that multilingual features of a language may better serve its intelligibility, as speakers adapt their new language to new uses and to their other languages. English is currently both the major international language and a *lingua franca* worldwide (Graddol 2006), which has spawned a prolific literature on “English-knowing” multilingualism (Kachru 1983). Although focus on this kind of multilingualism sets English-bound limitations to our understanding of multilingual uses across the board, it highlights the fact that a *lingua franca* is, by definition, a multilingual variety of a language, a definition endorsed for the English LFC (*Lingua Franca Core*, Jenkins 2000) by Jennifer Jenkins (personal communication). Three chapters in the book reveal the scope of resources that are available to multilingual users of English, namely, Chapters 7 (Nala Huiying Lee) and 8 (Tan Ying Ying) for suprasegmental features, and Chapter 9 (David Deterding)

for segmental features. These chapters deal with contact between English and non-Indo-European languages, prompting caution about conclusions concerning contact of languages which share close family traits (commonly, English and Spanish). Nala Huiying Lee sources data on contact Hokkien, among other tone languages, and Tan Ying Ying's findings raise thought-provoking questions about what defines a language itself: for example, do her Indian informants speak English with Tamil intonation, or do they speak Tamil with English words?

The multilingual use of language resources addressed in these and other chapters naturally redirects focus away from the languages themselves towards the language users, child as well as adult. Examination of language development in multilingual contexts must take into account the actual targets to which children are exposed, because children all over the world end up speaking like someone else, and because their language acquisition is in fact deemed "complete" when they do so. These targets concern not only multilingual input itself but, importantly, the language varieties to which children are exposed, an issue whose relevance stands out in monolingual contexts too: a look at Sharynne McLeod's speech data for "the same" language (Chapter 3) drives this point home, alerting against recourse to exnormative standards for observation and assessment of language uses, another recurrent theme in this book. It is actual linguistic input that models language for learners, whether child or adult, thereby setting the norms that govern emerging and stable language use, from early infancy (Chapters 4 and 7) to school age and beyond (Chapters 2 and 9).

The whole linguistic repertoire of multilinguals must therefore be taken into consideration in two complementary ways. First, when evaluating and implementing policy decisions which concern multilinguals' everyday contexts. Joyce Lew and Alison Cannon (Chapter 12) observe that liaison between home, on the one hand, and school and clinic, on the other, is far from ideal in this respect. Madalena Cruz-Ferreira and Ng Bee Chin (Chapter 15) discuss similar issues, in both Singapore and the US. The call to coordinate efforts among researchers and clinical practitioners is as urgent, as Chris Brebner points out (Chapter 14), particularly where data about typical child language acquisition in different languages and language varieties is concerned. Lack of information, together with misinformed judgements about resources available to multilinguals, often translate into worry about language policies in the home (Chapter 5) or enforcement of less than serviceable practices in school and in clinic: school language policies under the banner of "bilingual education" can in fact result in the opposite of the avowed effect, erasing linguistic resources from the children (Chapter 10), because the focus is on language lessons, instead of language uses (see e.g. Palmer and Lynch 2008); and multilingual clinicians in multilingual settings resort to advising against multilingualism itself, in cases of suspected language impairment (Chapter 15).

The second way in which multilinguals' resources need to be heeded relates to assessment. Reaching out to the child where the child is, or failing to do so, has significant consequences for assessment scores. Tan Seok Hui (Chapter 6), Annick de Houwer (Chapter 13) and Chris Brebner (Chapter 14) report adaptation of assessment instruments to local linguistic and cultural practices, the two former for vocabulary, the latter for expressive language skills. In the absence of normed multilingual instruments, several authors call for routine implementation of pragmatic solutions which target language ability independently of particular languages. In the area of child vocabularies, Barbara Pearson and colleagues have long advocated computation of double/multiple language measures that do justice to multilingual abilities, and here (Chapter 4), they examine child phonologies to investigate common and differential acquisitional landmarks along their developmental paths. On the related topic of phonological awareness, Heather Winskel (Chapter 11) finds differential proficiency among children's incipient literacy in unrelated languages which use alphabetic scripts, disconfirming claims of universality in the acquisition of phonological awareness generalised from research dealing with alphabetic spelling in closely related languages. Phonological awareness cannot thus be assumed to transfer across languages and must be assessed in each of a child's languages. Joyce Lew and Alison Cannon (Chapter 12) in turn propose a set of practical, language-independent clinical procedures to diagnose a range of impairments, while Annick De Houwer (Chapter 13) finds that gathering specific data from a single language of young simultaneous bilinguals may help identify possible language delay.

All authors nevertheless agree that serving multilinguals requires adequately normed multilingual guidelines because, as Nala Huiying Lee warns (Chapter 7), "cross-linguistic" findings are not synonymous with "multi-linguistic" findings. They do avoid assuming any single language as a "norm", but they are based on features of individual languages. Barbara Pearson, Ana Navarro, D. Kimbrough Oller and Alan Cobo-Lewis (Chapter 4), Annick De Houwer (Chapter 13) and Chris Brebner (Chapter 14) accordingly exercise sobriety when interpreting the meaningfulness of scores obtained without the help of standardised multilingual instruments. Extant assessment instruments, whether academic or clinical, can only provide rough guidance, not only because they are normed for monolingual uses, but also because it is in the general nature of tests to "only show us deficits, they do not show us powers" (Sacks 1986: 172). The absence of adequate assessment instruments may further trigger the risk that normative tests resorted to in their stead become normative in the other sense of this word, prescriptive, that is, "perceived as devices which are effective in enforcing conformity" (McNamara and Shohamy 2008: 89; see also Menken 2008).

The issue remains, then, that we cannot know what is atypical among language users if we do not know what is normal. This has been an obvious assumption in studies of monolingualism, and there is no reason why it should not apply to studies of multilingualism too. Insisting on treating multilingualism as an indicator of (in)conformity to other linguistic behaviours does not work, because looking for monolingualism in multilingual behaviour cannot offer generalisations about overall uses of language. The quest must be for common mechanisms governing use of the whole of our linguistic repertoires, whether we are monolinguals or multilinguals. The belief that enlightenment about multilingualism will eventually arise from extensive observation of different multilingualisms is equally misguided. There is no critical turning point here, because no amount of monolingualism(s) can ever result in multilingualism. This is an insight which pervades all contributions to this book, but which is neither mine nor new. François Grosjean spelled it out in 1985, in an article which I am fortunate to be able to include in this collection. Chapter 1 is in fact an introduction to the collection: it epitomises, still today, the state of the art about multilingualism, as far as research practices and everyday views are concerned, and it explains the reluctance to switch attention to multilingual norms, away from fractional monolingual ones. Chapter 1 thus provides background to the full range of topics addressed in the book. The book itself is both a personal tribute to François Grosjean's work and a follow-up to the article reprinted in it. Now, as then, we are still looking for the "specific linguistic configuration" which defines the accomplished hurdlers among language users.

The barriers to finding this configuration are, as we saw, partly a matter of terminological fuzziness, partly a matter of resistance to shedding habits of thought: there is no reason to pitch language users against each other on the strength of the number of languages that they happen to use. This book confirms the already plentiful evidence that multilinguals and monolinguals are in many respects the same population, whether we look in acquisitional data from speech sounds (Chapter 3), phonological systems (Chapter 4), vocabulary (Chapters 6 and 13) or grammar and related cognitive development reflected in reasoning about language (Chapter 5). Annick De Houwer (Chapter 13) besides finds that language-independent sampling methods afford knowledge about language ability in multilingual and monolingual children alike. A crucial caveat is in order here: the findings are no longer that multilinguals "behave like monolinguals", but that multilinguals and monolinguals behave alike. The way is thus open to comparisons among users of any number of languages, that target similarities, instead of differences. To give but one example, François Grosjean's additional insight into the language modes of multilinguals (see also Grosjean 2001) finds a parallel in sociolinguistic research into accommodation (see Giles, Coupland and Coupland 1991 for a review), which shows that monolinguals also adapt their uses of language to their interlocutors. The way is likewise open to

the realisation that multilingual behaviour is as normal as monolingual behaviour. The cumulative findings described in this book point in this direction, echoing Tomasello's (2003: 327) own finding about monolingual acquisition, that "language structure emerges from language use", that is, from *linguaging*. The same is true of multilingual patterns of language use, which further means that a quest for linguistic norms is a quest for moving targets: language *norming* is a process too, never a product.

One final note: this book offers the first description of multilingual norms of language use from a multilingual perspective. Its purpose is therefore not to provide ultimate insight into multilingual norming, but to call attention to the multitude of issues that need proper investigation for our understanding of multilingualism on its own terms. The book shows what cannot work in our search for questions and answers (for example, eliciting monolingual behaviour from multilinguals) and what may work (for example, observing actual multilingual behaviour) to extract recurrent patterns and formulate hypotheses which can be generalised and tested across multilingual contexts. This book cannot "solve" the issue of what *does* work in research on multilingualism, because we still do not know what research on multilingualism is. The book's proposals towards that goal will also be, I hope, controversial. Several authors' assumptions, methods and conclusions included here were also controversial to me. I nevertheless took it as my duty towards authors, readers and the all-new topic of this book itself to respect the range of different approaches found here. There can be no light when everyone agrees and when everyone goes on feeding the "sameness" of what has been done before just because it has been done before.

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