

Anglistentag 2015  
University of Paderborn



## **SECTION 5: ENGLISH IN MULTILINGUAL INDIVIDUALS, SOCIETIES AND SCHOOLS**

**Organised by Angela Hahn (München) und Tanja Angelovska (Salzburg)**

### **Abstract Section 5**

The interest in multilingual individuals and societies is certainly one of the greatest hallmarks characterizing the last decade. Although several studies have shown qualitative differences between the acquisition of English as a first foreign language and the subsequent acquisition of a second foreign language (de Bot et al. 2007; De Angelis, 2007), the various assets of English as one of the languages of the multilingual repertoire have been under-researched.

The new approach of the multilingualism of the European Union advocates the ideal of a multilingual European citizen, speaking her or his mother tongue as well as two other (European) languages, resulting in the increase in individual multilingualism. Among the research topics identified by the EU Commission are the language competence of adults, the knowledge, and use of the multiple languages at the level of the individual speaker, as well as on a societal level (a bounding and shifting continuum). Hence, the treatment of English as a crucial language in the multilingual world over centuries has been wide-ranging, encompassing linguistic facets of individual, cultural, sociological, educational, and psychological dimensions. The presentations in this section address various fields of linguistics from many different angles.

**Thursday, 24 September 2015**

**11.00-11.15 am**

**Introduction**

**11.15am-12.00noon**

**Markus Bieswanger (Bayreuth), Sarah Buschfeld (Regensburg), Alexander Kautzsch (Regensburg), Anne Schröder (Bielefeld)**

**English in multilingual and multiethnic Namibia**

The linguistic situation in present-day Namibia is characterized by the co-existence of a multitude of languages, e.g. English, Afrikaans, and German, as well as a host of indigenous African languages. Despite this linguistic diversity and although Namibia was never under direct British rule, English was introduced as only official language with independence (The Constitution of Namibia 1990, Art. 3 Language) and hence has been made the main language of education in Namibian schools. However, “this massive decision was made without all the required resources being in place” (Harris 2011: 57) and with allegedly 98% of the Namibian teachers not being sufficiently proficient in this language (*The Namibian*), “Namibia’s language policy is ‘poisoning’ its children” (*The Guardian*). Both this local perception as well as the rather exceptional decision to introduce English as the sole official language show that the status of the

language in this country needs to be empirically assessed. Drawing on findings from recent field research, based on phonetic analyses (lexical sets), questionnaire data, and sociolinguistic interviews with pupils, university students, and teachers from various linguistic and ethnic backgrounds, the present paper will address questions such as the use, role and function of English in the multi-ethnic context of Namibia, the effects of the change from EFL to ESL in this country, as well as phenomena of linguistic transfer from the respective L1 of the informants into their variety of English.

**12.00noon-12.45pm**

**Ursula Lanvers (The Open University, UK)**

**Monolingualism in a multilingual country:  
language learning policy and practices in the UK**

The four nations of the UK (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland) share a low priority on modern languages education: at Secondary school level, language learning is only compulsory for three years (age 11-14), and in one foreign language. Language proficiency among the UK adult population consistently scores among the lowest in Europe (European Commission 2012). On the other hand, the UK is a linguistically very diverse nation, with 17.5% of Primary and 12.9% of Secondary school pupils speaking languages other than English (DfE 2012), and over 150 languages spoken in cities such as London and Manchester; however, the true multilingual face of the UK remains largely obfuscated in the public sphere.

The well-documented reluctance of the British to learn languages undermines the EU's objectives of all EU citizens to speak two languages in addition to their mother tongue, and leads to a lack of language skills in the UK for business, commerce, diplomacy and the military. As the global spread of English seduces UK English native speakers all too easily into the fallacy of 'English is enough', permitting the erosion of language education policy, native speakers miss out on cognitive, social and professional advantages of plurilingualism. The paper concludes with a discussion of educational and policy measures to counter this English monolingual outlook.

**4.00-4.45pm**

**Till Meister (Bielefeld)**

**Language Attitude towards English in a Global Society**

When referring to English in the European Union as a multilingual society, we must not forget that English has long since gained the status as the lingua franca of a global society. Speakers of English with all kinds of different language acquisition biographies engage in international communication. Regional and social varieties as well as transfer from native language shape these speakers' English. The resulting abundance of non-standard structures makes it impossible for the English speaker involved in international communication to be familiar with all forms their interlocutors, depending on biography and language competence, might use.

In this paper I will report on a study investigating attitudes towards non-standard structures in international written English. Native speakers of various languages, including speakers of English as a first, second, and tertiary language have evaluated the acceptability of non-standard structures associated with English as an international lingua franca and learner language, as well

as postcolonial varieties from multilingual societies like India and South Africa and non-standard structures from the UK and the US.

The results of the study question long-standing classroom ideologies based on assumed varieties of Standard English and the native speaker as an infallible role model for correct language usage and teaching. At the same time the results show that a laissez-faire policy in language teaching, aiming solely on the transfer of meaning, is not an option for successful communication among English speakers in a global society, either. Successful communication requires reconsidering how English is used at the interface of individual language competence and clashing regional as well as global norms.

**4.45-5.30pm**

**Nuria Hernández (Duisburg-Essen)**

**Bilingual encounters online:**

**Constructing a common linguistic code in German-English WhatsApp**

This paper presents a corpus of German-English WhatsApp messages between different groups (siblings, fellow students) who use the free instant messaging service to keep in touch on a regular basis. The resulting exchanges constitute an intriguing database for linguistic strategies of identity construction, both on the group and the individual level. By looking at how the texts are used to manage the relationships between the writers and to develop a common linguistic code, this study joins other recent research in computer-mediated communication which explores identity dynamics in multilingual user groups in genres that fall somewhere between written (edited) and spoken (unedited) code (e.g., Androutsopoulos 2007; Deumert and Masinyana 2008; Hinrichs 2006; Lexander 2012; Paolillo 2001, 2011; Rowe 2011; Siebenhaar 2006). Most of these studies examine larger speech communities from a sociolinguistic perspective, in terms of communities of practice (cf. Eckert 2000), frequently with regard to languages that were previously restricted to oral communication and are now starting to be codified in writing via CMC. The current paper adopts a different perspective, focusing more strongly on the linguistic code as a space for identity projection and the connotations that code-switching or code-dependent lexical choices may receive through frequent use. Different linguistic and extra-linguistic dimensions of the developing codes will be discussed, including the technical and social properties of WhatsApp (cf. Herring 2007), as potential shaping factors for language use and intentional identity construction; the different ways in which the users in this corpus develop a linguistic variety of their own, by switching and mixing of the two languages shared; and the different possible connotations of using English, as a matrix or switch language, in these social encounters.

**Friday, 25 September 2015**

**3.00-3.45pm**

**Anna Krulatz, Anne Dahl, Eivind Nessa Torgersen**

**(Sør-Trøndelag University College, Norway)**

**Forging a linguistically diverse future:**

**implications for EFL teacher education programs in Norway**

Similar to other European countries, Norway has seen a rapid increase in its immigrant population (Statistics Norway, 2014). The Norwegian government and the Department of

Education and Training (Utdanningsdirektoratet) have offered several incentives to support the development of language programs for immigrants. In fact, the Norwegian Education Act states that “pupils attending upper secondary education and training who have a mother tongue other than Norwegian or Sami have the right to adapted education in Norwegian until they are sufficiently proficient in Norwegian” (Education Act, 2013). However, contrary the European Council’s recognition of the foreign language teachers’ crucial role in supporting multilingualism (Council of Europe, 2005), English is often treated as a separate subject not related to the development of multilingual competence. Sponsored by funding from the Ministry of Education and Research (Kunnskapsdepartementet) and from Sør-Trøndelag University College, this project used an online questionnaire to collect information about EFL teachers’ professional training that focuses on multilingualism, and perceptions about knowledge, skills and resources needed to work with minority language students in the EFL classroom. In this presentation, we will give an overview of the findings from the survey in the light of existing EFL teacher education programs in Norway, and suggest changes in EFL teacher training curricula that lead to more emphasis on multilingualism. As an example, the development of a Master’s degree in English, planned to be offered at Sør-Trøndelag University College as of fall 2017, will be discussed.

**From 3.45pm  
Closing remarks**