MULTILINGUAL PRACTICES IN THE BALTIC COUNTRIES

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Edited by Anna Verschik

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INTRODUCTION

Anna Verschik

1. General remarks

The current volume comprises papers by several scholars working in the field of multilingualism, sociolinguistics and language contacts in the Baltic region. While there exists a significant body of literature on post-Soviet macro-sociolinguistic issues (some examples being Hogan-Brun, Melnyk 2012; Pavlenko 2008), and language policy in the Baltic states (for instance, Hogan-Brun et al. 2008), there is a need for a collection of articles on various case studies on Baltic multilingualism, linguistic behaviour, language attitudes, language contacts, and so forth. The volumes edited by Siiner et al. (2017) and Lazdiņa and Marten (2019) partly compensate this gap but it will be an exaggeration to say that we have an exhaustive knowledge on how individuals in the Baltic states use languages, what language choice decisions they make in everyday life or in their family context (including emigrant communities) and what kind of contact-induced change occurs in the languages of the region.

This volume seeks to give an overview on the research topics in Baltic multilingualism rather than a focused treatment of a particular problem. It is a kind of a snap-shot of the current state of the Baltic sociolinguistics. This is partly due to the situation in which the respective communities of scholars are tiny and quite a lot depends on the interests of a particular scholar. In other words, a contribution of a particular scholar has much more impact on the development of the field than in bigger countries with large and diverse research communities. That is, there may be only a couple of scholars concentrating on family language policy or on contact linguistics in one Baltic country. Nevertheless, planning and organizing a volume like the current one creates a discussion platform where scholars from

the Baltic countries, both experienced and beginners, can compare their notes, to put it figuratively.

Some topics have already been addressed in all three countries, for instance, investigation on linguistic landscapes appears to be quite attractive (Kedars 2018; Pošeiko 2015, 2018; Ruzaitė 2017; Zabrodskaja 2014). Family language policy has so far been a research subject for scholars in Estonia and Lithuania (Doyle 2013, 2018; Ramoninė 2013), while Lithuanian scholars focus on Lithuanian emigrant communities as well (Gudavičienė 2019; Hilbig 2019; Jakaitė-Bulbukienė and Vaisėtaitė 2019). Unfortunately, contact linguistic research seems to be represented only in Estonia so far (see references in Bone, this volume; Kilp, this volume). This is a serious gap both in an empirical and theoretical sense, i.e., we lack knowledge about what exactly is happening in the languages or about overall similarity/differences between – to name several examples – Estonian/Latvian/Lithuanian impact on the local varieties of Russian; the growing impact of English on the titular languages; general understanding of the presence/absence/order of emergence of contact phenomena, and so on. Ideally, a new generation of scholars interested in contact linguistics should be brought up and the mentioned issues should be addressed in the near future.

While the authors of this volume remain true to their habitual disciplines within multilingualism research, they either add new aspects or combine several approaches. Comparative approach is employed in several papers. A brief list of topics and approaches follows, beginning with linguistic landscapes, moving to more individual level of family language policy and changes in linguistic biographies and ending with contact-induced language change in rare combinations of languages.

- The usage of multilingual linguistic landscapes (LL) in language pedagogy in Estonia (Saagpakk and Meristo);
- a case study of a sociolinguistic and metalinguistic conflict in understanding of linguistic landscapes in Latvia (Burr (Pošeiko));

- comparison of linguistic landscapes in the Old Towns of two Baltic capitals, Tallinn and Vilnius (Kedars and Verschik);
- combination of family language policy research and choice of language of instruction in school in Latvia (Lazdiņa and Marten);
- Russian-speaking teachers' transition to Estonian as a language of instruction at school (Koreinik and Klaas-Lang);
- comparison of two Lithuanian immigrant communities in two different countries (Jakaitė-Bulbukienė and Gudavičienė);
- comparison of heritage language maintenance in siblings in an immigrant Lithuanian community (Miežytė and Ramonienė);
- comparison of individual bilingualism of two persons with the same combination of languages, Estonian and Latvian, and description of individual factors in contact-induced language change (Bone);
- contact-induced change in languages of a tiny trilingual (Estonian-English-Japanese) Facebook community (Kilp).

In the following section the scope of this volume is discussed in more detail. In the terms of methodology, all studies are bottom-up, qualitative and interpretative.

2. The scope of this volume

This section provides a short overview of the papers. It is difficult or even impossible to group the contributions by topics because the majority of the articles belong to several fields (for instance, family language policy and language-in-education). For this reason, the authors are listed in the alphabetical order of their last names.

Elina Bone compares two Estonian-Latvian bilinguals, using code-copying framework (Johanson 1999, 2002). Her study shows that although the combination of languages is the same, the outcome in the two bilingual individuals differs. Both acquired Estonian/

Latvian later in life but in one informant copying in both directions, i. e., both from L1 to L2 and from L2 to L1 (Estonian > Latvian and Latvian > Estonian) is rather similar, while the other informant's speech exhibit mostly L2 (Estonian) > L1 (Latvian) influence. Clearly, in the absence of a bilingual community, there are no community norms, and only social (education, status) and individual (convenience, personal preferences and ideas about languages) factors play a role. One may argue that for the first informant the languages are not separated, copying goes smoothly in both directions. In a sense, despite later acquisition of L2, cognitively both languages are treated in the same way, that is, the generalisations on different mechanisms and different outcomes of contact-induced change in L1 and L2 (Thomason and Kaufman 1998) are not valid in this case. Quite differently, the speech of the second informant exhibits language separation with occasional copies from Estonian onto Latvian.

Solvita Burr (Pošeiko) takes further an already existing tradition of linguistic landscape research in Latvia, viewing a particular case through the prism of Language Management Theory (Jernudd, Neustupný 1987; Sloboda et al. 2010; Fairbrother et al. 2018). The author analyses a case of usage of foreign languages at Jelgava railway station by asking how social actors interpret exceptions that, in their opinion, allow usage of foreign languages and how they support their view in the conflict with language legislative authorities. Latvian is the sole state language, while Livonian is considered an autochthonous language and Latgalian as a regional variety of Latvian. All other languages are foreign. Public information – except at sites in the historic area of Livonian and Latgalian – should be in Latvian, with some exceptions [notably international tourism and public safety] where bilingual signs are allowed.

However, the concept of "foreign" languages becomes blurred since, for tourists, it is Latvian that is a foreign language. Tourists seek an authentic experience abroad, yet they have to feel secure in the unfamiliar environment, so there is a clear need for a balance between practical and commercial considerations and the

understandable wish to protect Latvian. The case of Latvian-English-Russian signs in Jelgava railway station demonstrates a sociolinguistic problem (the choice of languages) and a metalinguistic problem (norm questioning and/or interpretation). The argument of the State Language Commission was that only Riga railway station is considered to be involved in international tourism, while other locations are not. For the railway authorities, this is not sociolinguistic but rather a metalinguistic issue. The case shows that there are interpretative possibilities and that the State Language Commission is unable to monopolise the right to decide on language use if other state institutions and enterprises do not support it.

Kristina Jakaitė-Bulbukienė and Eglė Gudavičienė compare linguistic behaviour and language attitudes among two groups of recent Lithuanian emigrants in two different European capitals, Oslo and London. The attitude towards Lithuanian remains positive and warm because the language is linked to the native land and culture. Since the respondents left Lithuania as adults, their acquisition of Lithuanian was not affected by the dominant languages of the country of destination. Both groups agree that it is necessary and useful to know the language of the country but the level of proficiency in the local language significantly varies in the two countries. Because the respondents learned English at school and due to the international status of the language, all know English; however, Norwegian is learned only by some Lithuanians because one can get by with English. Interestingly, several Lithuanians in Norway reported that they had acquired some Polish due to work contacts with the numerous Polish diaspora. The prior knowledge of Russian, a language related to Polish, helps to master Polish.

As for maintenance and intergenerational transmission of Lithuanian, the situation varies. Some have a non-Lithuanian partner and the home language is not Lithuanian. Traditional immigrant communities like those formed after WWII do not hold such importance anymore as they used to. There is a discrepancy between the wish to transmit Lithuanian to the next generation and the reality.

As expected, transmission of Lithuanian is easier in families where both parents speak Lithuanian and where the contact with relatives back home remains close.

Marleen Kedars and Anna Verschik discuss a need for comparative studies of linguistic landscapes (LL) in the Baltic countries. Their article compares LL in the two main streets of Old Towns in Tallinn and Vilnius. The body of literature on LL in various Baltic cities and towns is constantly growing (see references in Burr (Pošeiko), this volume; Kedars, Verschik, this volume) but a comparative perspective is not (yet) mainstream. Some comparative research has been conducted in several resort towns in Lithuania (Ruzaitė 2017). That provides a useful background for discussion of LL in Vilnius, as we see that the LL in the resort towns in question contains more languages, keeping in mind tourists from Poland and, to some extent, from Russia. Although there are significant similarities in the political and sociocultural history of Estonia and Lithuania, especially in the 20th century, and on the surface language legislations of the two states look alike, there are differences in practices.

Lithuania seems to be torn between official linguistic purism in corpus planning and status planning on the one hand, and practical needs (tourism, commerce etc.) on the other, while in Estonia the use of Estonian in public signage is compulsory and the use of other languages is not restricted in any manner. Polish, the language of a significant segment of the Vilnius population, is practically invisible, while Russian appears in only a couple instances. Both Old Towns have a number of bilingual signs where the second (or even first) language is English. Finnish, German and Russian are the main languages of tourists in Tallinn and are represented to some extent. As a whole, the main streets of Vilnius Old Town have more monolingual Lithuanian signs than any other type, while Tallinn exhibits a more diverse picture.

Geidi Kilp explores Estonian-Japanese-English trilingual communication in Facebook conversation. The combination of languages

is rather rare and the communicators are speakers of Estonian who have studied or study Japanese in Estonia. The author uses a code-copying framework (Johanson 1999, 2002) in order to detect and describe contact linguistic phenomena. Theoretically, impact in six directions (Estonian-Japanese, Japanese-Estonian, English-Japanese) is possible but multilingual speech is not a mechanical sum of discrete monolingual systems, so the impact of English on Japanese was absent. As in other studies on language contacts in internet communication, global copies (lexical impact) are prevalent, while the share of other types of copies, selected and mixed (i.e., structural impact) is rather modest. This is typical for initial stages of language contacts. What makes this study quite distinctive is the utilisation of the concept of pragmatic gap (Estigaribia, forthcoming; Verschik 2010). When one learns a semantically specific lexical item in another language, one may experience a lexical gap in the first language because of the need to refer to this specific item or phenomenon [culture-specific lexicon may serve as a good example here)]. In the same vein, having mastered a language with a complicated system of registers expressing various degrees of politeness, like Japanese, one may feel that an Estonian/English system is "deficient". This is why Japanese personal honorific terms or items that refer to entire registers are used in Estonian.

Kadri Koreinik and Birute Klaas-Lang introduce a relatively new research topic in sociolinguistics, namely, teachers' resilience in the situation of education reform. They observe closely how teachers with Russian as L1 who previously worked in schools with Russian as a medium of instruction now cope with teaching their subjects in Estonian. The transfer to a school with a different language of instruction may be compared to geographic relocation. Notably, not only language of instruction, but also educational culture differs, proving more authoritative in Russian-language schools [although parents can contact teachers at any time and talk about life] versus the Estonian culture that is more democratic but more distant in interpersonal relations. The factors contributing the teachers'

resilience are, for instance, the motivation and patience and good leadership displayed by children who have already been studying in Estonian-medium schools. However, the researchers emphasize that studies on unsuccessful cases are needed and the pool of informants should be increased.

The paper by **Sanita Lazdiņa and Heiko Marten** may be considered as a mirror image of the contribution by Koreinik and Klaas-Lang (this volume) because they focus on Russian-dominant parents whose children study at Latvian medium schools. The paper addresses issues of language-in-education, multilingualism, and family language policy. This is a novel approach in the Latvian context. The authors employ a version of a descriptive model developed by Curdt-Christiansen (2018) that, in addition to the well-known triad language ideology – language management – language practices (Spolsky 2004), considers a wider range of contexts (sociolinguistic, sociopolitical, socioeconomical and sociocultural) and factors like parental background, economic resources, home environment and language socialisation. Despite the increase of domains where Latvian has been used since the1990s, self-isolation of Russian-speakers (i.e., self-sufficient monolingual networks) continues to be a problem. The choice of Latvian-medium schools is still considered unusual because the majority of Russian-speaking children attend bilingual schools, requiring motivation and persistence from the families. The families in the study have adopted the policy „Russian at home, Latvian outside”. Access to either language does not depend on economic resources. Economically, it is useful to know Latvian, albeit, all in all Latvians tend to value economic advantages of proficiency in Russian higher than Russians value proficiency in Latvian. At the same time, they have to face emotional reactions both from relatives and some Latvian speakers. They have an in-between identity that includes Latvia as their home while belonging to Russian culture (but not the Russian state).

Živilė Miežytė and Meilutė Ramonienė explore individual differences in Lithuanian as spoken by two adult siblings who grew

up in a refugee family in Australia. The authors use a variety of elicitation techniques (interview, film retelling) and a fluency test. The study is at a crossroads of several disciplines, such as heritage language research, L1 attrition, and family language policy. The siblings exhibit differences in their Lithuanian speech. It has been shown in the literature that the existence of siblings and their age may be critical for input, acquisition and maintenance of a heritage language (for instance, see Kopeliovich 2013). Usually older children tend to have more input in the heritage language and for the younger siblings it is crucial what language they use in communication with each other. However, the study shows that the relation between the order of births and the degree of proficiency in the heritage language is not so straightforward. The younger informant Gintaras has a richer vocabulary, the degree of lexical diversity is higher and he switches to English more seldom than his older sister Dalia. This contradicts the aforementioned claims about better proficiency in the heritage language among older children. Such a discrepancy may be explained by individual choices, identity and linguistic-biographic trajectories of the siblings. The older sibling preferred English, even while living at her parents' home; while the younger one tried to expand domains where he would use Lithuanian (travels to Lithuania, reading Lithuanian literature and periodicals).

Maris Saagpakk and Merilyn Meristo focus on so-called eduscapes, i.e., linguistic landscapes in foreign language education with the focus on German and French in the Estonian context. While German language and culture are a part of Estonian history up to WWII and it is present everywhere from German borrowings in Estonian and invisible German models in literature to material artefacts such as architecture and inscriptions on grave stones; French was (and still is) a relative stranger. Nevertheless, both are present in linguistic landscapes in a broad sense; that is, not only on signs and restaurant menus, but also as inscriptions on various merchandise.

The authors use linguistic landscape research in a creative way, asking university students who learn German and French to look for the texts in these languages in Tallinn and other localities, to take photos and to make a presentation in class or to play a dialogue between a tourist wondering about his/her language and a local who shows them around. Apart from learning the languages and discovering local history (i.e., the localisation of languages), the assignment serves a greater goal, namely, bringing multilingualism to the students' attention and raising their metalinguistic awareness. The next step, as the authors suggest, could be a schoolscape study; for instance, either looking for the presence of particular languages or just for any signs of multilingualism.

In sum, the volume provides new empirical evidence of multilingualism in the Baltic countries as well as some novel theoretical considerations. I am looking forward to the continuation of the tradition of Baltic sociolinguistics and multilingualism studies.

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TWO ESTONIAN-LATVIAN BILINGUALS: SAME LANGUAGES, DIFFERENT REPERTOIRES

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Abstract. The article examines the linguistic repertoire of two Estonian-Latvian bilingual speakers. The focus of this article is on language use of individuals because an individual is where contact-induced change starts. The data is analyzed using Johanson's Code-Copying Framework (2002) taking into consideration bidirectionality: imposition (L1 > L2) and adoption (L2 > L1). For one participant, the cognitive boundaries between the two systems are blurred and there is no difference between adoption and imposition, while for the other participant the languages are cognitively separated. The aim of the article is to discuss whether greater or lesser separation between languages depends on individual and social factors. Also, the data demonstrates that global copies prevail and there are slightly more selective copies than mixed copies in the participants' speech.

Keywords: language contacts, Estonian, Latvian, code-copying, individual bilingualism

Elīna Bone is a PhD student at Tallinn University. Her field is contact linguistics with the focus on Latvian-Estonian and Latvian-English language contacts.

1. Introduction

The aim of the article is to compare the speech of two Estonian-Latvian bilinguals. The focus is on an individual's linguistic repertoire because this is where contact-induced change starts (Backus 2012; Matras 2009). Several studies concur with this claim and state