Main Priorities of Monolingualism and Multilingualism in Education

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Abstract. The current article discusses the main peculiarities and effectiveness of multilingualism in higher education. Moreover, there are explored some features, benefits and drawbacks of monolingualism among learning field. The study covers ample theory and discussion data as well as methodological questions to reveal deep interpretation of the issue relevantly.

Keywords: multilingualism, monolingualism, official language, societal dimensions, context.

Introduction. In linguistics, multilingualism includes several types according to function and style. It is convenient and logical to distinguish between individual and societal multilingualism. This said, we must acknowledge that the domains of individual multilingualism and societal multilingualism are not clear cut. They are closely interwoven. Human language is a collective phenomenon (Andrews, 2014: 49; Donald, 2004) and it is impossible to study individual multilingualism without considering its societal dimensions. And the opposite is also true: societal multilingualism cannot be understood without knowing how multilingualism affects individuals [].

Individual multilingualism relates to the personal sphere and covers the acquisition and use of several languages by an individual. It deals with an individual's ability to master, and appropriately use, two or more languages, and includes language-related physical abilities and neurological processes taking place in the brain, in healthy, challenged and gifted individuals. Those researching individual multilingualism are interested in the emotions and attitudes of learners and speakers of multiple languages in relation to their own and others' languages. Such researchers also study and compare the life trajectories of users of different constellations of languages, and investigate how such individuals benefit from, or are challenged by, the set of languages in their life. The term plurilingualism is

sometimes used instead of *individual multilingualism,* especially in Francophone scholarship and documents of the European Union. The individual aspects of multilingualism are discussed in their own specific lecture (Lecture 5 by John Edwards) and are also dealt with in other lectures in this volume [].

The term *societal multilingualism* refers to the contexts, circumstances, order, manner and routines of use of languages in different kinds of communities, organizations and groups. People are not only aware of, but often regulate their language practices through the way they deal with the language varieties they know, and by introducing additional language varieties into their communal life. Societies have a prescribed or expected linguistic behaviour, associated with the particular position or status of languages in a family, school, nation and country. Language-related events going beyond an established frame are also a matter of interest for sociolinguists, applied linguists and sociologists of language. How multiple language varieties intersect in society, what the status and social opportunities of people are who use particular languages in certain multilingual contexts, what the language policies and practices are and how they change with time - all these issues are within the scope of societal multilingualism [] (Edwards, 2007). Also, multilingualism may impact on how the language(s) one uses influence how easily one can obtain medical help, publish an article, write a complaint and get a job in a multilingual country. Likewise, such details as whether one has a container in one's kitchen on which the word 'bread' is written in an indigenous or a lesser used language, rather than in an official language of a country, are matters of societal multilingualism.

By *societal multilingualism* we mean the organized and unorganized language practices with three and more languages and the handling of more than two languages by some or all members of a society, as well as the implications of these practices and this handling for the society and its members. 'Handling' involves language policies, attitudes, language behaviour and the assumptions underlying such behaviour in a particular community, all in the context of three and more languages being dealt with.

The existence of societal multilingualism in a country or region does not mean that the country or region in question is peopled by equally multilingual citizens. There are communities and territories where multiple languages coexist side by side. That is, in some countries speakers use their own languages but not so much the other languages of the community; they do not normally know and do not have to know or use all the languages spoken in this territory. When many languages simply coexist in a territory, without the necessity of all of them being used by all the citizens, it can be called *proximate multilingualism.* Switzerland, with its principle of territoriality, is a good example of proximate multilingualism. Although this country is considered one of the oldest multilingual countries in Europe, its citizens do not need to use all four official languages of the Swiss Confederation: German, French, Italian and Romansch. A single language (e.g. Italian in Ticino, German in Zurich, Glarus, Lucerne, Nidwalden, Obwalden) is recognized as official in most cantons for use in all domains of social communication. Only a few cantons are officially bilingual: Bienne and Freiburg, as well as the federal capital Berne with French and German as official languages. There is also the trilingual canton of Graubunden, where German, Romansh and Italian are official languages. People can manage very well using just one official language of a canton.

Methodology. There are different types of languages that may be part of the school. There are many possibilities and we can look at them according to their role in society. Some of the most common types of languages used and the aims of teaching these languages are shown in the table.

Table . Diversity of languages taught at school

Types of languages and examples	Aims
Dominant national language English in the US, German in Germany	To achieve full competence (oral and written) in the national language
Classical languages Latin,	To develop metalinguistic

Greek, Sanskrit	awareness by acquiring knowledge about the language and studying its grammar so as to read and translate written texts
Regional minority languages: Catalan, Basque, Aymara	To achieve competence (ranging from minimal to full oral and written competence) so as to maintain these languages and extend their use to all domains
Immigrant languages Turkish in the Netherlands, Italian in Canada	To achieve competence (ranging from minimal to full oral and written competence) and develop intercultural competence
Foreign languages English in Latin America or China	To achieve full competence (oral and written) to be able to communicate with people who speak other languages in other states

Multilingualism in education is usually the result of the combination of teaching and learning the dominant national language and other languages. Classical languages such as Latin, Greek and Sanskrit are not usually taught to the whole school population but in just some schools or to some students in higher secondary education.

Moreover, the questions below can be conducted as the needs survey or research question on research work.

1.   What is the difference between current and historical multilingualism? Why is it important to distinguish between the two?

2.   Describe the concept of the new linguistic dispensation. How are monolingual, bilingual and multilingual arrangements accommodated within it?

3.   Explain the concepts of dominant language constellation and language repertoire. How are they similar and how are they different? How are they

interrelated?

4.   Why is multilingualism of the utmost importance in the contemporary world?

5.   What are the two thresholds in the development of knowledge about multilingualism in human society?

Conclusion. Education is one of the most important institutions in society and the relation between schools and the society in which they are located is bidirectional. Language planning and multilingualism in education are related to the beliefs, attitudes and discourses of society. If a language or several languages have a high status or they have a very important symbolic value in society, it is more likely that they are an important part of the school curriculum and that the aims of education include multilingualism and multiliteracy in several languages.

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