

***Multilingualism in European Bilingual Contexts: Language Use and Attitudes.***

David Lasagabaster and Ángel Huguet, Eds. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters. 2007. Pp. 1 + 251.

*Multilingualism in European Bilingual Contexts* is a timely publication in light of the European Union's continuous and forceful promotion of multilingualism. The authors describe the research they present in the book as an "attempt to break some ground" (p. 249) in understanding the challenges of multilingualism in Europe, and through the book they advance the argument that language awareness will play a key role in overcoming those challenges. The book is based on a transnational research study that was conducted in nine different bilingual regions of Europe. The same research design and instrument were employed across all of the contexts that were studied to survey the language use and language attitudes of pre-service teachers. The scope of languages was broadened in this study to include not only minority and majority languages but also the foreign languages often used in the regions. Therefore, as the authors state, the book "goes beyond bilingualism and into multilingualism" (p. 4). The respective cases and the research report as a whole will help readers compare different language situations, identify common patterns, and also gain an understanding of how language education policies and sociolinguistic conditions exert influence on the ground in various European contexts. Although each case represents its own unique situation, the rather contradictory juxtaposition of efforts toward minority language revitalization and the continued emphasis on English was identified across all cases. The editors had particularly chosen pre-service teachers to be the principal informants of the study under the belief that teachers have a profound impact on students' language use and attitudes. Accordingly, a central argument of the book is that explicit language awareness education will lead to linguistic tolerance and acceptance, and reduce parochialism.

The instrument that was used across all contexts was a questionnaire based on Baker's (1992) instrument on language attitudes. More than 1,800 aspiring teachers living in nine different regions—four in Spain and five in other regions of Europe—responded to the questionnaire. In the brief introduction, the editors situate the research by accentuating the present study's significance and explain the methodology and instrument used for the research. Aside from the introduction and conclusion, the book is comprised of nine chapters that are divided into two parts, the first representing the Spanish regions and the second representing the other European regions. All of the chapters are similarly organized, making it not only an easy and clear-cut read, but also extremely informative. Each chapter starts with a description of the current situation of each area, including historical, political, and educational circumstances, followed by a brief review of research of studies on language attitudes that had been carried out in the respective regions. The findings are presented, accompanied with a discussion in reference to the particular context. In the concluding chapter, the editors compare the results obtained in the nine regions, describe common findings, and with support from the data, argue that including language attitude courses in curricula will help improve language learning, proficiency in foreign languages, and even abolish perceived hierarchies between languages.

Part 1 of the book illustrates the context of Spain in four areas: Catalonia, Galicia, the Basque Country, and Valencia. Obviously, Spanish is the majority language in these areas while Catalán, Galician, and Basque are the minority languages. English is highlighted as the most emphasized foreign language. The educational system of Spain is decentralized, each region

adopting different linguistic models in terms of the language(s) used as the medium of instruction on their own distinctive grounds. For example, because the main goal of language policy in Galicia is to achieve equal linguistic competence in Galician and Spanish, this region's policy requires that pupils not be separated by the languages they speak, and that they acquire literacy in both Galician and Spanish. On the other hand, in the Basque Country, policies are focused on reversing language shift, and different types of programs with distinctive characteristics are available for the pre-university level. In these Spanish regions, language education policies seem to advocate the promotion of minority languages and a positive attitude toward the minority languages seems to prevail. However, when the results of the attitude survey were unveiled, the minority languages still seem to be perceived as informal languages, functioning more in the home and family domain than any other. For example, in Catalonia, where linguistic immersion programs in Catalán have been successfully institutionalized, the overall level of importance attached to Catalán by informants of the study was surprisingly low. As for the foreign language, English, informants from this region turned out to have a generally neutral attitude toward English and did not perceive themselves to have high competence in English. In view of the results, the authors of this chapter ask why the success of the Catalán model of bilingual education could not be applied to teaching foreign languages. The authors go on to raise the issue of teaching methodology and suggest that if the Catalán model is based on a strictly communicative approach, then it may be equally extended to the teaching of foreign languages as well.

Part 2 of the book examines the situation and results of the research in four European regions: the capital region of Brussels in Belgium, the province of Friesland in the Netherlands, the island nation of Malta, and the region of Wales in the UK. Certainly, these regions are more heterogeneous than the aforementioned Spanish regions. For example, Brussels displays the most linguistically heterogeneous and, therefore, convoluted situation. In this region, language can be considered a political entity of its own. It is characterized not by bilingualism but by a *dual monolingualism* which is even further complicated by continuous waves of migration, and also the status of Brussels as an international community in which English functions as a lingua franca. Within this complex situation, the attitudes of the surveyed informants were directly linked with their language communities. Interestingly, the informants from both the Dutch and French communities showed a more positive attitude toward English than to the other language (either French or Dutch). As such, tensions based on language were found, underscoring the profound impact factors external to education have on language attitudes. In addition, immigrant generations were found to be confronted with a different problem as they cannot claim membership to either community.

A comparison of the case of Friesland and Ireland helps readers recognize how difficult it is for educational policy to change societal atmosphere. In Friesland, despite the low position of Frisian in education, overall the pre-service teachers still seemed to hold a positive attitude towards Frisian, responding in the questionnaires that Frisian was important to live in Friesland. In Ireland, which is often cited for its success in reversing language shift through status and acquisition planning via education, the Gaelic language is highly valued, but it is valued more for what it symbolically represents. A sense of allegiance and loyalty towards the language exists, but the attachment is expressed in a rather passive way that does not lead to its active use. In Malta, where English shares equal status with Maltese, both Maltese and English are actively used in written and spoken forms. However, English is attached to an incomparable degree of prestige, and has a direct

association with class, while Maltese is not valued as such since Maltese people acknowledge that the usefulness of Maltese is limited at best outside of the island. Regardless, the results showed that Maltese was more favored by the informants than any of the other languages in the region (e.g., English and Italian).

Consequently, a few patterns were found. The research suggests that minority languages are associated primarily with informal domains including the family. However, the results also indicate a high proficiency in minority languages as well as a positive attitude toward the minority languages. As such, the efforts to support minority languages appear to be successful. Another widespread pattern was the perceived low competence in foreign languages (mostly English) and a neutral attitude towards them. The editors note that, in order to make multilingualism work, language awareness needs to be a significant component in all language teaching, including the teaching of foreign languages. Among the various factors posited to influence language attitudes, the family language (i.e., the language used in the home) and the linguistic model employed in education were identified as the two most influential factors in all contexts. In view of this analysis, further investigation into the relationship between the family and school, and their impact on the formation of language attitudes is called for. The overall positive attitudes found in this large scale study suggest a favorable future for the linguistic situation of Europe. However, achieving the European Union's goal of keeping multilingualism as one of the main characteristics of a European identity in today's rapidly globalizing world will undoubtedly require much more effort by all those involved.

This book successfully accomplishes its initial objective of analyzing "the linguistic issue among pre-service teachers in different bilingual contexts where there are at least three languages in contact" (p. 239). While books that focus on multilingualism in Europe are available (e.g., Cenoz & Genesee, 1998; Extra & Yagmur, 2004; García, Skutnabb-Kangas, & Torres-Guzman, 2006), this book is a significant and unique contribution to the study of multilingualism and language education to promote multilingualism, specifically as few book-length volumes have been arranged around one coherently conducted transnational research project. Most book-length publications on the topic are compilations of separate studies or separate discussions of distinctive situations, which are not easily comparable across contexts. A possible weakness of the book is the description of the selection of geographic areas that were researched, in that the editors did not elaborate on how the regions were selected or why other regions were not selected. In addition, while the editors do persuasively argue that language awareness education is in urgent need, they do not provide much insight into how language awareness teaching could take place, or what language teaching would look like once language awareness is incorporated as a significant component. A follow-up study which investigates how the language attitudes of the surveyed pre-service teachers actually play out in classrooms would be a significant addition to the study. A wide range of readers, including students, researchers, teachers, and policy-makers, will find this book of interest, especially if they are looking for empirical research on the correlation between affective factors (e.g., attitudes) and language, language education policy, and circumstances of languages in contact, particularly in European contexts.

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