MULTILINGUALISM AND TRANSLATION

Studies on Slavonic and Non-Slavonic Languages in Contact
Introduction

The present collection of essays tackles the issues that arise when multilingualism meets translation. Somewhat neglected even by international research in multilingualism, the intersection of multilingualism and translation – relevant as it is both from a theoretical and from an applied perspective – has, so far, not been discussed in Slavonic studies. Here, the collected volume steps in to open up a new angle within the wide field of research in multilingualism, besides systematising some topically relevant approaches and ideas in international Slavonic studies. Therefore, the objective of this volume is to draw attention to the tricky interface between multilingualism and translation and to discuss the current preliminary findings with a particular focus on Slavonic migrant languages.

A social and, at the same time, individual phenomenon, multilingualism has been a representative ingredient of international linguistics for decades, even if we take into account different Indo-European and non-Indo-European languages. A range of comprehensive reference books, handbooks, and studies have been published on the subject, such as *Bilingualism and Multilingualism* (Wei (ed.) 2009), *The Blackwell Guide to Research Methods in Bilingualism and Multilingualism* (Wei/Moyer (eds.) 2007), *Handbook of Multilingualism and Multilingual Communication* (Auer/Wei (eds.) 2007), *The Handbook of Bilingualism and Multilingualism* (Bhatia/Ritchie (eds.) 2004) – to mention only a few. These are complemented by papers that analyse the phenomena of multilingualism in America and Europe with a particular focus on the respective language policies – not least, because multilingualism plays an increasingly important role in modern societies due to migration processes and has become an indispensable part of migration, education, and integration politics (cf. Lebsanft/Wingender (eds.) 2010, Helfrich/Riehl (eds.) 1994 and others). Several dedicated international journals such as *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, *Bilingual Research Journal*, *International Journal of Bilingualism*, *International Journal of Bilingual Education & Bilingualism*, *Journal of Multilingual & Multicultural Development*, *The International Journal of Multilingualism* among others deal with the special, complex, multidimensional, and interdisciplinary problems of bilingualism and multilingualism. That research in multilingualism has become increasingly relevant also to school and university education as well as to social interaction in everyday life is reflected by new research centres for multilingualism at universities in Germany, the UK,
the USA, and Israel such as Universität Freiburg (Institut für Mehrsprachigkeit); Universität Hamburg (Zentrum für Mehrsprachigkeit und Sprachkontakte); Birkbeck, University of London (CMMR – Centre for Multilingual and Multicultural Research); heritage language research centres at Harvard and in Israel.

International research in multilingualism – which is taken up and supported by Slavonic linguistics of migration – deals with the following aspects according to Aronin/Hufeisen (2009: 3):

The main strands in multilingualism seem to be situated in the framework of the following research domains:

– sociolinguistics (cf. Cenoz and Genesee 1998; Cenoz and Jessner 2000; Hoffmann and Ytsma 2004) with subgroups in societal areas (cf. Aronin and Ó Laoire 2004; Cenoz 2005) and individual multilingualism (cf. Dewaele 2004),
– psycholinguistics (cf. Herdina and Jessner 2002; Jessner 2006; Hammarberg 2001; Ringbom 2007),
– neurolinguistics (cf. Franceschini 1996; Franceschini/Zappatore and Nitsch 2003),
– pragmalinguistics (cf. Franceschini 2000; Safont Jordà 2005),
– applied linguistics (cf. Hufeisen and Marx 2007; Meißner 2004),
– teaching/instructing/learning (cf. Cenoz/Hufeisen and Jessner 2001; Ó Laoire 2006),
– applications to the concrete learning events with initiatives such as CLIL, immersion, and the common curriculum (cf. Hufeisen 2007; Hufeisen and Lutjeharms 2005).

In the wake of the changing geo- and socio-political situation in Eastern Europe – which led to mass migration from Eastern Europe to Western Europe, the USA, and Israel and which shifted the balance that has existed so far between Russian as a lingua franca and the titular languages in the national republics of the former USSR – multilingualism, after a noticeable delay, now commands linguistic attention also in Slavonic studies. With regard to the non-Slavonic language area, research focuses mostly on individual multilingualism, covering various aspects of bilingualism or bilingual language competences, whereas the Slavonic language area is primarily described in terms of multilingualism in society. This is true particularly of Russian linguistics, where research in multilingualism represents a major aspect of modern sociolinguistics. Here, the emphasis is on language policy issues of Russian and non-Russian bilingualism in the former Soviet republics and autonomies and on the sociolinguistic framework governing the loss or preservation of Russian (Alpatov 1997, 2005; Wright (ed.) 2000; Wingender 2008; Pavlenko (ed.) 2008).
Even though the language policy issues were, at first, disregarded by the research discourse on Slavonic multilingualism outside the Slavonic language area, they still had an influence on the facets of research. In line with the original forecast of the impending loss of L1 following the massive migration in the 1990s (Zemskaja 2001; Polinsky 1995, 1998; Anstatt 2008), the first studies focused on the description of attrition or erosion in L1. Today, however, researchers investigate phenomena of language preservation in migrant communities (Walczak 2001; Rieger 2001; Achtenberg 2005; Kasatkin et al. 2000; Steinke 2012; Moser 2012 and many others) as well as second-generation language acquisition and language variation (Brehmer 2008 and in press; Warditz 2014) – in addition to the langue-related and sociolinguistic loss mechanisms of individual categories or speaking skills.

The significantly expanding interest in Slavonic migrant languages also as second-generation languages (heritage languages) reveals a sociolinguistic and demographic as well as a language-policy background. Thus, Spolsky und Shohamy (1999: 236) give several reasons that facilitate the preservation of Russian and its sociolinguistic status in Israel, where it is perceived as the biggest heritage language in the country of immigrants:

1) Demographic factors: Russian is the L1 of 2.0 million Israelis, i.e. of one third of the rural population; large groups of immigrants usually live closely together;

2) Sociolinguistic and cultural-ideological factors: a large number of well-educated Russian-speaking immigrants since the 1990s; their conscious attitude in favour of preserving the heritage language and the Russian culture.

The turnaround in language policy – brought about by thorough linguistic studies of migrant languages – plays an additional supporting role when it comes to preserving Slavonic languages also in the USA and in Europe. Only a short time ago, a quick switch to the language of the country of immigration was regarded as a precondition for a desired integration; the preservation of L1, however, was seen as an obstacle on the way into the receiving society (Edwards 1994: 4; Trudgill 1995: 124; Skitnebb-Kangas 1983: 66). Today, the prestige of bilingualism and multilingualism is on the rise as is the acceptance of a linguistic double identity, also because the acquisition of L1 is now regarded as a precondition for successful integration (cf. Najditch 2005: 225 for Israel; Lebsanft/Wingender (eds.) 2010 for EU states).

However, the new demographic, sociolinguistic, and language-policy situation also brings with it new linguistic problems as well as subject- and language-specific didactic challenges:
In the 1990s, the number of Americans who speak a language other than English at home grew by 47% (US Census 2000). As a result, foreign language teaching professionals across the country are encountering increasing numbers of heritage learners. There is a general recognition that the needs of heritage learners are different from L2 learners. (Chevalier 2004: 4.)

After the current demographic change in the migration societies, sociolinguistic research found out that the Slavonic migrant languages are preserved also in the second generation of immigrants (Achtenberg 2005; Isurin 2011). This discovery opened up a new research perspective: in the USA, Israel, and in Europe, Slavonic migrant languages of the second generation are studied as heritage languages also with regard to the new framework of subject-specific didactics, because the second generation constitutes the majority in Slavonic studies in America, Israel, and Western Europe (mostly Germany). From the point of view of second language acquisition research (e.g. with a focus on German as a second language), languages of the country of origin are more and more regarded not as an obstacle but as a resource. It has been shown that a profound and well-established knowledge of L1 has a positive impact on the acquisition of L2 (cf. Montanari 2012a, 2012b). What takes centre stage, here, are didactic requirements and didactic preferences of the speakers as well as any relevant support measures (e.g. Kreß 2014).

However, in the research landscape of Slavonic migrant languages outlined above, the interface between multilingualism and translation has hardly been discussed so far. The present collection of essays is designed to help close this gap. The practical relevance of the issues arising from the juncture of multilingualism and translation, then, results from the sociolinguistic situation described above, in which the second generation of Slavonic immigrants like choosing a career path in which they can benefit from their bilingual identity. For example, Slavonic bilinguals often choose to pursue translation studies or get involved in community interpreting due to their knowledge of languages. From a theoretical point of view, a closer look at multilingualism and translation is likely to shed light on the translation skills and strategies of multilinguals as well as on the cognitive mechanisms underlying the translation process.

While, in translation studies, there are a few papers on the translation skills of multilinguals, these papers subsist even here on the fringes of the research discourse. The exemplary research work deals mostly with the subject-specific didactic basis of multilingualism in translation studies, with the translation skills of bilinguals acquired “naturally” rather than by learning, and with the comparison of bilingual and translational language and culture competences (Kaya 2007; Presas 2000; Lörscher 2012). The general bias of these studies mainly serves to
substantiate the need of translation training also for multilinguals, as is obvious from the rhetorical question, “Is every bilingual a translator?” (Kolawole 2012).

Both Slavonic and non-Slavonic contact linguistics and research in multilingualism have so far hardly discussed the translational impact produced by multilingualism: see the above-mentioned standard works and handbooks as well as Boers et al. (eds.) 2008; Dewaele et al. (eds.) 2003; Gorter (ed.) 2006; House/Rehbein (eds.) 2004, or the studies specifically dedicated to immigrant minority languages or to bilingualism and bilingual training such as those by Extra/Yagmur 2004 and Hamers/Blanc 2000.

This is where the present volume has its point of departure. It covers the following questions, discussing them on the basis of empirical studies and theoretical involvement:

1) What theoretical and applied problems or aspects arise within the outlined research field (multilingualism & translation) for research in contact linguistics and multilingualism on the one hand and translation studies on the other?

2) Which of the so far accepted linguistic, translational, and also didactic concepts and explanatory hypotheses should be redefined or modernised in the light of this new research perspective?

3) What is the difference between translation competences and bilingual competences? What are the resulting interfaces from which multilinguals can benefit? What features are typical of their linguistic and translation competences? How should they be analysed? What methods and approaches can be used?

4) What attitudes can be observed both individually and socially? What are their effects in language and translation training, and also in practical translation?

5) What translation strategies do multilinguals use both with and without translation training? How far do these strategies characterise multilingual language competences?

6) What specific Slavonic features show in the answers to the above questions? To what extent are the insights gained from the Slavonic material also beneficial to the translingual research in multilingualism & translation?

The authors of this international collection of essays deal with different aspects of the issues outlined above, using different language pairs and different approaches.

Galina Denisova (Pisa) focuses on an interesting aspect at the juncture between multilingualism and translation: she discusses linguistic, iconic, and audio gaps and the ways in which they may influence the final perception of Soviet/Russian films translated into Italian and of Italian films translated into Russian.
In a case study featuring a bilingual Russian-Italian child, **Liana Goletiani** (Milan) also looks at special aspects of the translation process. She considers natural translation features in early bilingualism in a Russian-Italian bilingual setting.

The contribution by **Christof Heinz** (Regensburg) presents a case of intercomprehension between two closely related Slavonic languages, Czech and Polish. He looks at different phenomena of perception from a phonological and morphological perspective and discusses the concomitant transfer effects between L1 and L2 or L3.

**Katrin Bente Karl** (Bochum) presents the results of an analysis of Russian-German language data, tackling the question whether bilinguals use source- or target-oriented strategies when rendering idioms in everyday communication.

The contribution by **Alla Kirilina** (Moscow), “Translation vs. Interpretation and Language Mentality in Dynamic Synchrony: Mental Boundaries of a Language (on Example of the Russian Language in Moscow)”, focuses on the change to which languages are exposed through various globalisation processes. As a result of naive translations, these change processes often go hand in hand with the convergence of languages and with shifts in the mental conceptions of the world.

**Peter Kosta** (Potsdam) discusses the terms code-switching and code-mixing with reference to language change, language mixing and interference. To illustrate types of code-switching or code-mixing, he draws upon data from Russian-German bilinguals from Berlin and Brandenburg. As a typical instance of the latter, he refers to a fictional work, “Good Soldier Švejk” by Jaroslav Hašek, in which the bilingual situation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy is the source of the language change. Based on this comparison, he focuses on the question of whether a new pidgin language is emerging in the Russian bilingual community in Germany.

In her essay “Language Proficiency, Bilingualism, and Translation Studies”, **Larissa Najditsch** (Jerusalem) analyses the different factors that contribute to language competence and tackles the question of bilingual competence. She looks at different migration contexts (Austria, Israel, and – from a historical perspective – France) and draws conclusions for practical translation.

The article by **Ekaterina Protassova, Julia Ekman** und **Svetlana Kirichenko** (Helsinki) is about the acquisition of bilingual Russian-Finnish skills at school and university. The authors carried out a study in which they tested the translation skills of bilingual speakers. The results reveal specific difficulties for the Russian-Finnish language pair and show correlations between the respective bio-
graphical-linguistic background of the participants in the study and their language skills.

**Kira Sadoja** (Potsdam/Düsseldorf) describes translation strategies of bilingual children she tested within an experiment, conducted with seven bilingual teenagers aged 14 to 17 years. She shows the difficulties of the bilinguals with the written paradigm of the Russian language.

In his essay “A lexicographical focus on an international compound type (a comparison of Polish and German)“, **Dennis Scheller-Boltz** (Innsbruck) discusses issues relating to multilingualism and lexicography. He focuses on word formations that integrate foreign language material: especially, his paper analyses the relevance and frequency of Polish and German compounds containing “euro”.

**Vladislava Warditz and Malgorzata Tempel** (Potsdam) use experiments to analyse the translation competences of Polish-German bilingual students in departments of translation studies, uncovering the students’ strategies as they make creative and economical use of language when translating expressions that have no equivalent in the target language.

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**References**


Introduction


