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Worldwide globalization, international migrations, and the varying faces of multilingualism: Some historical perspectives

by

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Worldwide Globalization, International Migrations, and the Varying Faces of Multilingualism: Some Historical Perspectives¹

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1. Introduction

Informed especially by Weinreich (1953) and Haugen (1972), linguists have been interested in both INDIVIDUAL multilingualism, often called *plurilingualism* in recent years, and SOCIETAL multilingualism, henceforth *multilingualism*, since the mid-20th century. *Plurilingualism*, applies to the coexistence of languages in individual speakers, whereas *multilingualism* characterizes ethnolinguistically heterogeneous populations. Evidently, plurilingualism presupposes multilingualism, regardless of how the latter has obtained, such as when a population relocates to a destination where another language is the vernacular and its members feel pressure to learn it, or when a population colonizes another and forces members of the latter to learn the non-indigenous language. This paper focuses on multilingualism, although some of the phenomena discussed presuppose and will prompt me to invoke the behaviors of plurilinguals, as in the case of language endangerment and language shift (Austin & Sallabank 2011, 2014).

To be sure, the dynamics that drive language evolution, including language endangerment and loss, lie in the behaviors of individual speakers. Like structural changes, language shift is the cumulation of decisions speakers make individually in their speech acts

¹ I am grateful to Cécile B. Vigouroux for feedback on a preliminary draft of this paper and to Heather Brookes, Nkululeko Mabandla, and Rajend Mesthrie for verifying my comments on Afrikaans in note 3.

(Mufwene 2001, 2008). However, the focus in this essay on the communal level makes it easier to frame the discussion from a historical perspective, regarding especially linguistic DIVERSITY, the MARGINALIZATION of some languages spoken in the same polity, the opposition between DOMINANT vs. MINORITY languages, and the ecological factors that produce these states of affairs. I use the terms *ecology* and *ecological* in reference to factors outside a language, such as the socioeconomic structure in which its speakers evolve, that bear on its vitality and/or its structures (Mufwene 2001, 2008).

From the point of view of multilingualism, it's especially informative to invoke POPULATION STRUCTURE, which makes it necessary to consider, among other factors, whether the overall population is segregated or integrated, and how. It matters whether the political and economic systems of the coexistent ethnolinguistic groups have merged, whether their languages are in competition with each other, and whether one of them has emerged as more important or useful than the other(s).

We must also make a distinction between two kinds of multilingual situations. The first involves two or more ethnolinguistically distinct populations that share the same topographic space but do not generally interact with each other. The populations are bridged only by a few plurilinguists, such as, when the first European colonists settled in the Americas and in Australia and the Europeans lived segregated not only from the indigenous populations but also from each other. The same situation obtained during European exploitation colonization of Africa and Asia, and the colonizers lived in their own separate quarters and communicated with the masses of the Natives through intermediaries identified in history as "colonial auxiliaries" (see below).

The second kind of multilingualism involves ethnolinguistically different populations that coexist in a topographic space that is not (rigidly) segregated, where they can interact with each other by learning the other's language. Which one is more (likely to be) learned by the other population is evidently subject to diverse ecological factors, including political and economic power, as well as cultural attraction (e.g., music or religion).

Although both types of cohabitation have been characterized as multilingual, I discuss especially those that lend themselves to relatively unrestricted interactions between members of the different groups. I do not completely ignore the first kind of multilingualism either, as it has often been a transition to the second kind, such as when the European colonists in the Americas and Australia wound up mixing into a group identified racially as White or European as opposed to non-Whites or non-Europeans. This particular evolution sheds light on the way the emergent dominant language has evolved structurally (such as in the case of creoles and indigenized Englishes) and can be quite informative about how language competition proceeds.

2. How old is multilingualism?

Multilingualism is not be a recent phenomenon (Pavlenko, to appear); nor need it be associated with the colonization of the world by Europeans since the 15th century. It must be as old as the earliest population contacts in which the migrants or colonists and the Natives or locals coexisted and interacted with each other across their ancestry lines. For instance, starting mid-stream, we can speculate that, if they were not already, both Egypt and Babylon became multilingual with the enslavement of the Hebrews, with the latter assuming the burden of learning the host population's language. Another example is Rome as a city-state, which

became multilingual, as people from different parts of the Empire migrated or were brought there and learned to speak (Vulgar) Latin, in addition to their heritage languages.

Likewise, the provinces of the Roman Empire also became multilingual, especially after the collapse of the Western Empire, as an elite class had emerged that spoke Latin as the emblem of their social status. There was undoubtedly also a protracted transitional period during which Vulgar Latin prevailed as the vernacular of the commercial, then emergent urban centers, while the Celtic languages continued to be spoken in the rural areas. A certain amount of multilingualism must likewise have been typical before the emergent neo-Latin varieties spread and displaced the Celtic languages.

Owing to inter-regional trade between indigenous populations speaking different languages, there had always been plurilinguals in sub-Saharan Africa before the Europeans traded with indigenous rulers and subsequently colonized their lands. Likewise, the large kingdoms and empires which the European traders and colonizers discovered were multilingual, as they typically comprised diverse ethnolinguistic populations. Indeed, interpreters are reported to have been present in royal and imperial courts (as in similar institutions elsewhere around the world, e.g., in China²) and to have held a special administrative status. The practice of slavery, through war captives, must also have contributed to local multilingualism. Although the captives must have experienced more pressure to learn

² According to van Dyke (2005), the European merchants trading with China during the 17th and 18th centuries were always required to use interpreters assigned to them by the Chinese rulers, even when the merchants could speak Chinese (presumably Cantonese) or the interpreters were not so competent. The interpreters also acted as brokers.

the language of their captors, the latter (or their agents) must have learned their captives' languages too, for security reasons.³

One can thus argue that contact with Europeans extended the range/repertoire of multilingualism in sub-Saharan Africa, as it introduced additional languages, from Europe. The arrival of Europeans on the African coast also gave rise to a class of indigenous middlemen in the trade with the hinterlands. These learned the languages of both the interior and the Europeans who hired their services. Thus, they "bridged" the newcomers with the indigenous populations not only as trade intermediaries but also as interpreters (often identified as *linguists* in history).

Subsequently, the European rulers introduced language STRATIFICATION within their colonies. The interpreters/intermediaries, who were indeed instrumental to the subsequent exploitation and colonization of the continent, also benefited economically and often socially from the regime, owing largely to their knowledge of the European languages. The most competent of them would sometimes rise to important administrative positions as senior colonial auxiliaries (see below).

³ Worth pointing out here from recent history of power asymmetry are two South African cases. First, as much as the Afrikaners were committed to apartheid before the political change in 1994, those living in the rural areas also learned the more indigenous African languages spoken locally, especially on farms, where Afrikaner and Black children grew up together. The languages have enabled them to communicate with the Black people they interact with, especially those working for them in adult life. Second, non-Afrikaner Whites in South Africa who grew up during the apartheid regime can speak Afrikaans too, despite negative stereotypes about or attitudes towards its heritage speakers. The reason is that although English has always been more prestigious than Afrikaans and carried economic power, the Afrikaners ruled South Africa and controlled much of its formal economy for almost half a century. Afrikaans was then used in the government, the higher levels of the judicial and administrative systems, and the white collar sector of much of the economy. So, if the non-Afrikaner Whites did not learn Afrikaans naturalistically, they certainly learned it in school, because knowledge of it provided them a wider range of employment opportunities.

Note that the increased multilingualism fostered by the colonization of Africa was correlated with the introduction of new communicative functions associated exclusively with European languages, especially in the colonial administration and judicial system, and in post-elementary education.⁴ The new language regime also introduced a new class of individuals identified as *colonial auxiliaries*, who, as noted above, interfaced between the colonizers and the masses of the indigenous populations. This class included not only lower-level clerks and lower-jurisdiction judges, but also teachers, military and police officers, health officers, and all sorts of other appointees that could oversee the un- or less schooled indigenous people that served the colonial system.

This change was correlated with the introduction of a new population structure, especially through the emergent commercial, administrative, or urban centers, where indigenous people speaking different vernaculars came in contact not only with their European employers or their auxiliaries of other ethnolinguistic backgrounds but also with each other. New urban vernaculars, such as Lingala, urban Swahili, urban Wolof, and Town Bemba emerged that occupied the middle position between, on the one hand, the European languages, associated with prestige, and, on the other, the traditional vernaculars, then considered inferior, “uncivilized,” backward, etc. The new urban vernaculars have also been associated with modernity, especially where a vibrant non-traditional popular culture, often epitomized by music using European instruments such as the guitar and the trumpet, has emerged.

⁴ Christian missionaries, whose presence in Africa has also increased during the same period, preferred to proselytize in major indigenous languages (Samarin 1986), although they ran many schools, in which the European languages were taught or which were taught in European languages especially after the third grade of elementary school.

Thus, the colonial regime fostered the now well-established distinction between the URBAN and RURAL environments, corresponding to greater and less/marginal European colonial influence, respectively. However, while the traditional indigenous vernaculars have remained ethnic markers in both environments, they did not carry the same stigma in the rural environment as in the urban centers, where their domains of usage were being restricted to the family or private spheres of life, including ethnic associations. In contrast, the urban vernaculars have spread only as lingua francas in the rural areas, where they have been used in the school system, in the lower court, and in trade with merchants from the urban centers, while the ethnic vernaculars have maintained all their traditional domains of communication.

Overall, the European colonization not only of made multilingualism in sub-Saharan Africa more extensive and complex but also stratified languages socially and made the indigenous people less egalitarian. Nonetheless, although colonization nearly fostered monolingualism in the masses of the urban populations, this evolution was reversed after Independence by the subsequent collapse of the formal economy on which cities were expected to thrive. The concurrent expansion of vernacular economy, on which a large proportion of sub-Saharan Africans now live (Vigouroux 2013), has strengthened the indigenous languages. Rural exodus has also brought to the city more speakers of various ethnic vernaculars that are not fully integrated in the traditional urban social fabric. These changes have made the cities more multilingual in indigenous languages.

Unsurprisingly, there are few mentions of indigenous African languages in the literature on language endangerment, especially none of those endangered by European languages. On the contrary, mention should have been made of cases where they appear to keep them from

evolving into non-elite vernaculars. In places such as Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, modernity is associated not with command of the European language but with participation in urban popular culture, which thrives in the urban vernacular (Lingala in this case), though political and economic powers are still associated with the European language. To the eyes of urban youths, highly educated people coming from the provinces who are not fluent in the capital's urban culture are no more than "educated villagers" (Mufwene 2010).

In former European exploitation colonies, language contact has obviously not been as deleterious to the indigenous languages as in the former settlement colonies of the Americas and Australia (Mufwene 2008, 2016; Lüpke 2015, Lüpke & Storch 2013). To be sure, in both types of colonies, the range of multilingualism was extended with all the languages that the colonists, colonizers, and immigrants brought with them. However, the new socioeconomic world order that settlement colonization introduced, with a dominant formal economic system, favored gradual evolution toward monolingualism, even when no laws were promulgated to this effect, such as in the United States. Along with the early extermination of indigenous populations through the ills that the immigrants brought with them (Crosby 1992) and through genocide (Casas 1552), the new socioeconomic world order has driven numerous indigenous languages to extinction; only a small fraction of them are still being spoken today.

However, this picture remains incomplete without mention of the competition between the immigrants' national or parochial economic systems, which eroded the vitality of languages spoken by free immigrants who were politically and/or economically weaker, such as Dutch, Swedish, and Italian in Anglophone North America. When indentured servitude and slavery were practiced, the languages of the dominated did not survive either. Today, English

has prevailed as the dominant European language of the United States and Canada, despite the fact that French has been revitalized in Quebec and, with increasing immigration from Latin America, Spanish is emerging as an important minority language in several cities such as Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Dallas, and Miami.

The above discussion highlights the divergent linguistic consequences of the world-wide economic globalization fostered by European colonization since the 15th century. Contrary to the dominant discourse (see Section 3), this phenomenon has not driven the endangerment and loss of indigenous and other languages, although it has facilitated these processes, through the mobility of people. It is local socio-economic dynamics that have worked either for or against multilingualism. Thus, the impact of the European exploitation colonization on multilingualism in sub-Saharan Africa leads me to ask, along with Silverstein (2014) and Pavlenko (to appear): What is new about the so-called “linguistic super-diversity” observed in Western European cities since the 1990s? I return to this question below.

3. Globalization and Multilingualism

World-wide globalization has often been blamed for the endangerment and loss of languages (e.g., Crystal 2000, Nettle & Romaine 2000, Skutbabb-Kangas 2001). However, this is an old phenomenon that was already underway when the Europeans started their trade and settlement colonies in the 15th century (e.g., Osterhammel & Petersson 2005, Chanda 2007). It was already underway when the Chinese and the Arabs dominated trade along the coasts of East Asia and Southeast Asia, in the Indian Ocean, and around the Mediterranean during the second half of the Middle Ages. It had been underway during the Hellenic and the Roman Empires, as also made evident by the saying “All roads lead to Rome.”

Although globalization has certainly changed in scope and complexity nowadays, people at different periods in history must have been struck by how much farther they could travel, how much more rapid long-distance transportation and communication were becoming, and how much more heterogeneous their world was becoming than in their pasts. It's all relative. What we need to know from the point of view of multilingualism is what has changed, in kind or complexity, in different places, especially under the influence of new political and economic institutions.

The following observation is probably not overstated: since the 19th century, when their exploitation colonization by Europe started, the position of sub-Saharan African and several other Global South nations within the world-wide web of globalization has weakened. The different parts of the world are no longer connected in an egalitarian fashion, as the Global North nations and their Global South counterparts no longer trade on equal terms. Experts distinguish between CENTERS and PERIPHERIES; and many, if not most, Global South nations are in the periphery.

One of the concomitants of the exploitation colonization of Africa, Asia, and the Pacific in the 19th was the weakening and marginalization of indigenous institutions. Even when the traditional rulers were allowed to participate in the administration of their lands (whose boundaries were different from and typically smaller than those of the colonies), they served the colonizers and had little negotiating power. Along with this destitution came the subordination of indigenous languages to those of the Europeans.

Over the past few decades since Independence, mismanagement of modern economies in most of sub-Saharan Africa's nation-states has reduced them to the status of powerless

partners in the globalized network. This weakening has provided more excuses for the subordination of their indigenous languages. Knowledge of European languages has been privileged in post-primary education and for the best paying jobs. Reliance on development aid from the former colonizers has also made it difficult to promote education in indigenous languages and their use in the white collar sector in the surviving formal economy. Only in oral exchanges in the political arena (such as in the parliament) has room been made for major indigenous lingua francas. They are hardly used, if at all, in major international business transactions or in diplomacy, not even between African countries.

Generally, economic development has been made so dependent on foreign aid that European languages have been privileged, both when Westerners come to invest at home and for when the Natives travel to the West. Although it has usually been claimed that, because most of the sub-Saharan African countries are so extensively multilingual, the adoption of the former colonial language as the, or an, official language is a neutral choice that favors no particular indigenous population (Albaugh 2014), the policy has also favored the political heirs of European colonizers. These are the current political rulers whose children can afford the best education (most of the time abroad) and thus can benefit the most from the status quo, as they typically can develop more competence in the foreign official language than their less fortunate counterparts.

During the colonial period, the Europeans also controlled the flow of long-distance migrations and the ensuing population structures, which determined whether multilingualism can or cannot be sustained. From the 15th century to the early 20th century, human traffic flew mostly from Europe to the colonies and from Africa to settlement colonies of the Americas and

the Indian Ocean.⁵ Only a small fraction of Africans went to Europe during the slave trade. A few of them consisted of courtiers who were dispatched as ambassadors or to learn a European language in order to serve as interpreters.

To be sure, many more were taken to Europe as domestic slaves, to work in royal families and the homes of wealthy people. It's not clear whether the latter maintained their ancestral languages; but they evidently contributed to multilingualism in Europe, at least nominally. Although these slaves saw each other in places such as the water wells of Lisbon, it is not evident that they spoke the same African languages and communicated in them. Like many African immigrants to Europe today, they probably often communicated among themselves in the local European vernaculars, which they learned by immersion. Attrition must have kicked in as time went by, especially among those that hardly came across other slaves with whom they shared a language.

As the Europeans dispersed around the world, the Natives accepted Portuguese or English as a lingua franca of trade and diplomacy. After converting to Christianity, King Dom Afonso I of the Kongo (*aka* Mvemba a Nzinga, 1460-1542) learned to read and write in Portuguese in order to correspond with the Pope and with his "brother" King Dom Manuel I of Portugal. The presence of Portuguese missionaries and the training of the first indigenous priests contributed to making Portuguese an important language in the Kongo Kingdom. In Dahomey, now Benin, Portuguese remained the only language authorized for trade with Europeans until the late 19th century, when the French exploitation colonization of the land started.

⁵ I discuss the emergence of Indian and Chinese diasporas below.

Generally, the exploitation colonization of Africa toward the end of the 19th century instituted the language stratification explained in Part 2, which has maintained to date in most of the former colonies. Only in a small number of countries, including the Arabic-speaking North Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, and South Africa are the European official languages now in competition with an indigenous language, sometimes nominally.

The 19th century also contributed to the emergence of new diasporas, through intra- and transnational labor migrations, actuated by especially the British, who relocated several non-Europeans to distant places. These labor migrations account, for instance, for Indian and Chinese diasporas around the world, though their languages have typically not survived, certainly not as communal vernaculars. How long they survived depended significantly on how long the diasporic people formed their own separate communities, before assimilating to the populations that preceded them or simply adopting the latter's vernaculars. For instance, most Chinese in Malaysia and Singapore gradually shifted to Malay. Although they became the new majorities, the Indians in Trinidad and Mauritius shifted to the local Creole, just like those in Guyana and Guadeloupe. The Indians also adopted English as their vernacular in South Africa.

Multilingualism among the Indians themselves is probably a factor that worked against the retention of their ancestral languages, just like in the case of African slaves in the Americas and the Indian Ocean. However, one should not underestimate the pressure of local dynamics that caused them to shift not to the most prestigious language, English or French, depending on the colony, but to the demographically dominant Creole vernacular of the local labor force they were joining. It is with speakers of Creole that the Indian contract laborers worked together and could socialize, not with the members of the affluent class who employed them. Therefore they

learned the language that met their more common communication needs. Communication between them and their employers was initially mediated by the foreman, until they learned the local creole.

Overall, the nature and social distribution of multilingualism in the settlement colonies of the Americas and Australia also changed as these territories adopted new socioeconomic world orders that favored the European language that was economically more advantageous over its European competitors and the indigenous languages. The speed of the process reflected that of socioeconomic integration (Clyne 2003). The immigrants that were legally the least protected and economically the most destitute, viz., the slaves and European indentured servants, were absorbed the earliest, albeit as part of the economic machinery; and they were indeed the first to shift to the dominant European vernacular (Mufwene 2009).

Then, as time went by, the other European immigrants started shifting to the language of the politically and economically dominant population, for instance, Portuguese in Brazil and English in non-Hispanic North America and in Australia. The speed of language shift was inversely correlated with the extent to which the parochial economic system of the relevant European group was still sustainable relative to the competition. German was among the last to survive in North America and Brazil all the way into the mid-20th century. We may also speak of the miracle of French in North America, although it is now moribund outside Quebec. The Québécois have done for French precisely what the Afrikaners did for Afrikaans at the end of the 19th century, when they perceived it as endangered by English (Broeder *et al.* 2002), viz. mobilizing the economic system to function in and thus sustain the language. To be sure, the

vitality of Afrikaans was also further boosted during the apartheid regime, when it functioned as the primary language of administration and formal economy.

The above observations help us make better sense of the endangerment and loss of Native American languages, which have been caused by diverse factors. The first wave of their loss was a concomitant of Native Americans dying from the germs brought from the Old World and of their genocide (especially in Spanish colonies). The second and current wave can be associated with cultural assimilation, with the indigenous populations being the last to be integrated in the new socioeconomic world order, especially as they leave the reservations, which are no longer sustainable economically, for city life. In the case of Latin America, one must also mention extensive miscegenation, which has contributed to reducing the proportion of pure Native Americans to negligible percentiles, such as 2%-4%, of the national populations of many countries. In a new socioeconomic world order which has promoted the European languages and other cultural practices over indigenous ones, the Mestizos had every practical reason to become (dominant) Spanish speakers. As life on the reservations becomes economically less and less sustainable and attractive, there has been increasing exodus to the city. A concomitant of this migration is the shift to the European language as the dominant vernacular. Native American languages are now dying by demographic attrition, through language shift, triggered by the lure of the Western-style socioeconomic world order outside the reservations.

The big picture emerging from the European settlement colonies is that of increased, TRANSITIONAL MULTILINGUALISM followed by its contraction. This is different from the evolution of things in the former exploitation colonies, where, with a handful of exceptions, the European

languages did not compete among themselves (as the colonizers were generally sent from the same metropole with one official language⁶) and where the minority of Natives who acquired the colonizers' languages generally did not adopt them as vernaculars. An important reason for this difference between the settlement and exploitation colonies lies in the ways the new socioeconomic world orders were instituted. These were culturally assimilationist in the former but exclusionary in the latter. Also, the Europeans became dominant majority populations in the settlement colonies, whereas the Natives remained the overwhelming, excluded majorities in the exploitation colonies. Maintaining their traditional life styles in the rural areas, they also remained multilingual. As shown above, the surviving Natives in the settlement colonies followed the trajectory of several European immigrants in gradually shifting to the dominant European language and becoming monolingual.

Another noteworthy difference is the following: the urban Natives in the former exploitation colonies have generally remained in contact with their relatives in the rural areas, feeling obligated to the extended family still living there. Loyal to their cultural heritage, a significant proportion of the adult urbanites speak to their rural relatives in their ethnic languages and often also within the family. Although their children are more fluent in the indigenous urban vernaculars, they typically develop at least some passive competence in relevant ethnic language, which becomes handy when they visit their relatives in the village (Bokamba 2008). Even the ruling elite follow this sociolinguistic *modus operandi*. Thus, the

⁶ Exceptions include South Africa, where English coexists with Afrikaans, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (known as Belgian Congo until 1960), where French competed with Flemish but French prevailed. Also, although the Christian missionaries came from more diverse countries than the colonizing metropole, they were obliged to use the official colonial language in school. They used this same language in their interactions with the indigenous colonial auxiliaries when they did not have to speak the indigenous *lingua franca* or vernacular.

socioeconomic structure inherited from the exploitation colonial rule still favors multilingualism, especially as the economies are collapsing. Large proportions of the populations survive thanks to informal/vernacular economic practices (Vigouroux (2013). Knowledge of ethnic languages can make a lot of difference for the buyer at the market.

4. The new face of multilingualism in Western European metropolises

World War II constituted an important turning point regarding migrations across the world. It increased the volume of human traffic from the colonies to the metropolises, not only with the troops that had gone to fight for the Western European metropolises but also with the labor force that was needed to rebuild Europe. Students selected for better tertiary education also joined in the migrations to Europe. The volume of this traffic has increased since the Independence of former exploitation colonies, fueled by political conflicts and collapsing economies. The migrants have typically traveled with their languages, which lack of social integration within the host population has usually enabled them to maintain, although their school-age children have typically adopted the host countries' languages as their (dominant) vernaculars.

The break in the transmission of the immigrants' heritage languages has typically been fostered by the fact that, unlike Europeans in exploitation colonies, the immigrants from the Global South have hardly lived in neighborhoods that are exclusively theirs. Their children have attended the local schools and have developed their social relations with their autochthonous peers in the host countries' vernaculars. Also, the migrants have mixed ethnolinguistic backgrounds, despite the identification of some host neighborhoods with names that suggest their origins, for instance, *Matonge* in Brussels (from the name of a neighborhood in Kinshasa),

Little India in London, *Little Haiti* in Miami, *Little Senegal* (within the Harlem neighborhood) in New York City, and *China Town* in several Western countries. This linguistically-mixed-background resettlement has exerted another pressure on the children, in addition to that emanating from the host population at large, to socialize in the host countries' and local neighborhood vernaculars.

These facts provide part of the explanation for the emergence of varieties characterized as “les parlers des banlieues” (‘suburban language varieties’) in French working-class suburbs, which have been associated with the migrants’ children. However, it is not evident that most of the linguistic features in these varieties that have been decried by the affluent members of the host populations are of foreign origins. What is obviously foreign is the range of languages that the immigrants have brought from the Global South. Despite its ideology of monolingual nation-states, Western Europe has thus experienced increased multilingualism, now characterized by some scholars as “super-diversity,” to which I return below. We must also note in the same vein the stronger voice of its surviving autochthonous minority languages, which have now benefited from the support of the European Union. The monolingualism of European nation-states appears to have been an evolutionary trajectory toward a likely outcome rather than a *fait accompli*.

Curiously, the literature on superdiversity has typically overlooked migrations to Europe from its former settlement colonies. Aside from the presence of American soldiers on NATO military bases, one must also acknowledge the steady flow of students who sometimes spend several years in Europe, as well as scholars, businessmen, and spouses who have simply relocated there. They have brought with them their New World’s varieties of European

languages, which they continue to speak when they socialize among themselves. These immigrants' children often grow up bilingual, such as when Americans relocate to France or Germany, where the dominant vernacular of the host country is different from that of the country of origin. Literacy and modern telecommunication technology have made it harder for these immigrants to give up their heritage languages, as they use them to communicate regularly with relatives in the homeland.⁷ They have thus also contributed to the so-called "super-diversity" in Western European cities.

We shouldn't of course overlook migrations within Europe itself both from the less affluent to the more affluent countries and from the more affluent Nordic countries to places with warmer climates in Southerly countries. The first case is that of Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, and Greek workers to especially Germany and France, where they have been joined by North Africans and Turks. An important outcome of this has also been the emergence of pidgin-like foreign workers' varieties of especially French and German. Although some of these migrant workers are quite mobile, moving from one country to another, the flow has been steady enough to characterize Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, and Greek as contributing to the new faces of multilingualism in France and Germany in particular. Migrations from Central Europe since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Iron Curtain, as well as the subsequent integration of many of the relevant countries in the European Union, have reshaped the linguistic landscape of Western Europe.

⁷ This is a luxury that several European immigrants to the New World could hardly afford up to the early 20th century, although life in segregated communities helped them keep their heritage languages for a couple of generations before shifting to the dominant vernaculars of their new homes.

The second case is that of affluent Nordic Europeans who buy vacation homes or decide to retire in the warmer climates of southern Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece while sticking to their heritage languages, although they learn to communicate with the locals in the indigenous languages. The exclusive focus on allochthonous populations from the Global South and their languages in the literature on “super-diversity” has not produced an accurate picture of the resurgence of multilingualism in Western Europe. The characterization of the cities as *heteroglossic* reflects the extent to which the autochthons feel alienated and excluded by them in their own lands (Crul *et al.* 2013). The preference for the terms *autochthon(ous)* and *allochthon(ous)* to the opposition between *indigen(ous)* and *non-indigen(ous)* used about other parts of the world may also reflect the same sentiment.

5. Making sense of claims of “super-diversity” in Nordic European cities

The term *super-diversity* was coined by Vertovec (2007) to “underline a level and kind of complexity [in recently emergent demographic and social patterns in Britain and other European countries] surpassing anything the countr[ies have] previously experienced.” While linguists such as Blommaert & Rampton (2011), Arnault (2012), and Blommaert (2014) focus on the changing linguascapes of neighborhoods in the relevant cities, as is evident from the multitude of “heteroglossic” notices and other signages identified as “semiographs” by Ivkovic (2015), Crul *et al.* (2013) underscore the fact that speakers of the relevant languages are becoming collectively the new demographic majorities, albeit unintegrated ones. They also note the “fear of foreigners” experienced by the autochthons about the dual cultural identities claimed by new citizens, the children of the immigrants.

On account of the history of changing faces of multilingualism around the world as outlined above, Silverstein (2015) and Pavlenko (to appear) are not mistaken in asking whether the so-called “super-diversity” is such a new phenomenon. Although I generally agree with them, I highlight below some important differences that may both justify the emergence of linguistic “super-diversity” as a research area and support Crul *et al.*'s comment that much of the reaction of Western Europeans to the changing demographics of their urban centers amounts to fear of the new neighbor, so to speak.

The Europeans who migrated to the colonies were in a position of economic and/or political power relative to the Natives, whereas the immigrants to Western Europe have brought no such power, not even the African *tirailleurs* (‘infantrymen’) in the French colonial army who fought along French infantrymen during World War II. Also, the Europeans in the colonies imposed their language in the new socioeconomic world order they set in place. By contrast, the immigrants to Europe have no such economic power and can use their languages only when they socialize among themselves or practice small-scale businesses in some neighborhoods where they can cater to people of the same ethnic backgrounds. The economic power associated with such businesses is not strong enough to endanger the vitality of the autochthonous language of the economy. The owners of such businesses also serve their autochthonous customers in the local European vernacular.

Economic power inequalities still favor European languages in the Western European urban centers, though limited social integration or resistance to assimilation helps the immigrants maintain their languages, bearing in mind that the locally-born children should not count as immigrants. It is perhaps also the limited social integration that has helped the

immigrants stick to their cultural practices. On the other hand, the literature on “crossing” (e.g., Rampton 1995, Kerswill 2006, Cheshire *et al.* 2013) suggests that at least some children socialize across the autochthonous-vs.-allochthonous social divide, although their parents typically do not. Perhaps the interest that some autochthonous children express in allochthonous linguistic features is part of the justifications for the label *super-diversity*. However, note that the literature on “crossing” only makes salient, in the speech of autochthonous youth, an otherwise negligible proportion of allochthonous features. The language in which the relevant youth socialize is autochthonous.

As noted above, the “super-diversity” phenomenon is also sustained by more affordable modern transportation and telecommunication today. It has not only enabled the current volume of immigration to Western Europe but also helped the immigrants maintain regular communication with family members in their homelands. Both kinds of technologies have reduced the rate of attrition in one’s heritage language, as the immigrants do not depend on local socialization to practice their heritage languages. Living sometimes with grandparents, who may not know the autochthonous European language, also exerts some pressure on the locally born children to develop some competence in their parents’ languages and thus be bilingual, though many, if not most, of them are more competent in the autochthonous language. In addition, most of the working age immigrants are literate, unlike many of the colonists in English American and Caribbean colonies up to the 18th century, which accounts for the bilingual and “heteroglossic” signages discussed by linguists interested in the changing European linguascapes.

This reality has produced the impression that the allochthonous languages have come to stay, at least as ethnic identity markers among the immigrants. Yet, there is another dynamic that tends to be overlooked. Economic segregation, which keeps a large proportion of the children most of the time in their disadvantaged neighborhoods, in which they interact with and learn the host territory's vernacular from their autochthonous schoolmates and neighbors, makes them fluent speakers of socially stigmatized vernaculars that the autochthons who can afford housing in more affluent neighborhoods leave behind. As the neighborhoods become associated almost exclusively with allochthons, these working class varieties, influenced by some substrate features, have also been associated with them, as in the case of the so-called "parlers des banlieues" in France.

There have been similar evolutions elsewhere outside Europe! For instance, one may speak of a Hispanic English in some North American urban neighborhoods, which is structurally close not only to African American Vernacular English (AAVE) but also to White working class nonstandard vernaculars. It is also the case that the Hispanic children who speak it natively often feel pressure to communicate with their immigrant relatives in English-influenced Spanish. Part of this practice has produced what is called Spanglish, which the youth also used among themselves and adds to diversity in the American linguascape. Interestingly, the emergence of Hispanic English and Spanglish have happened at a time when Italian English, German English, Yiddish English, and the like have been disappearing.⁸

⁸ Equally noteworthy is the fact that AAVE has not disappeared along with the other ethnolects. This difference appears to underscore the role of POPULATION STRUCTURE as an ecological factor that either sustains linguistic diversity, when the subgroups are segregated residentially, or fosters assimilation to the economically and/or politically dominant group, when there is social integration. The current fear, among some Americans, that Hispanics in the USA are sticking to Spanish and not learning English is a reaction to the conspicuousness of the language in Hispanic neighborhoods, segregated spaces where all the factors discussed above help Hispanics

An important difference from Europe is that North America is a land of immigrants, where the non-indigenous populations are now the overwhelming majority and have marginalized the indigenous ones. It is also a territory where the faces of national or ethnic newness have changed several times over. Today the focus is on Hispanics, whereas a century ago it was on Central Europeans and Asians, and before that it was on Scandinavians and Mediterranean populations, or others. There have been changes in the faces or patterns of multilingualism in the New World over the centuries, which Europe appears to have been spared until the wake of World War II, because of its commitment to the political ideology of national monolingualism since the 19th century and the concurrent institution of closed and well-guarded national borders. The increase since the 1990s both in the numbers of allochthons and in the diversity of their languages appears to have prompted the term *super-diversity* in Europe. However, the phenomenon could also have been claimed about, for instance, Anglophone North America, which has experienced migrations from diverse places around the world for much longer time and has had its share of “heteroglossic” signages too.

In linguistics, *super-diversity* has also applied to the way individuals manage communication in their “heteroglossic” universe. Deumert (2014) captures this well in her discussion of the literature, as she highlights the interpretation that underscores “mobility, complexity, and unpredictability.” For anybody familiar with the science of complexity, unpredictability is one of the features of COMPLEXITY, which arises in part as the agents of a

maintain their language. However, similar fears were voiced before, in the 19th and early 20th centuries, about European immigrants, when White Americans also lived then in nationally segregated neighborhoods. We can thus assume that the vitality of Spanish in the USA may be transitional. Many Hispanic parents are actually concerned that their children are not learning Spanish (Douzet 2004). According to Garcia & Mason (2008), even the Spanish-English bilingualism observed among 89% of Hispanics in the USA suggests evolution towards monolingualism in English.

system respond individually and non-uniformly to changing ecological conditions. One must manage their linguistic repertoire according to where they are, who they interact with and about what, whether they want their speech/writing to index their ethnicity, etc. (Deumert 2014, Ivkovic 2015). On the other hand, in the spirit of Pavlenko (to appear), one may also note that this is all a heightened awareness and extended articulation of what Hymes (1974) intended with SPEAKING.

One may argue that the Global South has experienced “super-diversity” at least since the European colonization. An important difference is that its people have accepted the superposition of the colonial languages as the High varieties over their indigenous communal repertoires? Unlike them, Europeans appear to be horrified by the recent concurrent immigration of multitudes of allochthonous vernaculars that disturb their dominant monolingual ideologies, although the burden of plurilingualism is assumed by the allochthons. Some European governments are even incurring the extra economic burden of setting up, among other things, programs for teaching the autochthonous languages to the immigrants that do not know them, assuming disputably that an important condition for success in the host socioeconomic system remains fluency in the host country’s dominant language. We should not ignore the fact that having a foreign accent has often been used against immigrants on the job market.

6. Conclusions

Multilingualism appears to date from far back in the history of mankind. It arises from migrations that result in the coexistence of populations of different ethnolinguistic backgrounds sharing the same locality. It generates plurilingualism when individuals interested in

communicating across their ethnolinguistic boundaries learn the other population's language and thus become bridges between their respective groups. Migrations are of diverse kinds, including colonization, relocation of contract laborers or enslaved populations to foreign territories, and the exodus of exiles or refugees escaping hardship or persecution in their homelands to foreign destinations.

Multilingualism evolves differentially in different ecologies, depending largely on the interactional dynamics generated by the local socioeconomic structure, which can either be assimilationist or exclusionary. It is sustainable in some but not in others, where various ecological pressures, notably to partake in the advantages of the economically or politically dominant population or to assimilate culturally to it, can drive the other language(s) to extinction. Even when multilingualism appears to be sustainable, the balance of power between the coexistent populations and their respective languages may not be equal. In some places, a social stratification emerges or is imposed that privileges one of the languages as the national or official language and subordinates the others for non-official, domestic, or traditional functions. Languages demoted to such communicative functions may thus be marginalized from the public sphere or more prestigious domains.

The structure of multilingualism varies indeed from one polity to another. For instance, there are important differences between Western Europe and its former settlement colonies and between the Global North and the Global South. It appears therefore that the notions of DOMINANT LANGUAGE and MARGINAL(IZATION) are not easily applicable in multiethnic polities of the Global South, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where even the choice of an indigenous official language can be interpreted as favoring a particular ethnolinguistic group. Although there are

several small ethnolinguistic communities in such polities, there are also several major ones, which are, on the other hand, not necessarily united in relation to the small groups. When they owe their major-language status to their function as a lingua franca, therefore used by people from diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds, they often cannot be associated with a dominant ethnic group.

The political dynamics that since the 19th century have sought to unify European nation-states around a common national language have not worked the same way in countries of the Global South, owing largely to the non-emergence of an expanding and integrated formal economic system that would offer employment to the large majority of the national population and incite them to become monolingual in the language it operates in, rendering knowledge of ethnic languages superfluous. Associated with the white collar, the official languages of these former European exploitation colonies still remain the privilege of a minority (about 20%) of the overall multiethnic population, despite over half a century of their adoption as subjects in elementary school and as media of education later, since Independence in the 1960s and 1970s.

The topic of SUPER-DIVERSITY appears to be politically loaded and to reflect inequalities of expectations about the direction of migrations around the world and the impacts that population contacts exert on the autochthonous political and socioeconomic structures. Even the preference of the terms *autochthon(ous)* and *allochthon(ous)* over *(non-)indigenous* in the relevant political literature reflects the power inequalities between the immigrants and the host populations. Interestingly, the linguistics literature on the subject matter reveals the

extent to which academic research can be influenced by the political ideologies in which the scholars are embedded.

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