

## THE TERMINOLOGY OF BABEL - A SUGGESTION

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In the recent 'summa sociolinguistica' - the international handbook on Sociolinguistics by Ammon, Dittman, Mattheier (1987), the definition of concepts takes pride of place in the first volume, whilst the descriptive applications are in the second. Among leading concepts are those expressing the use of more than one language by the same individual or the same society, which are discussed in two separate articles by Georg Kremnitz on 'Diglossie/Polyglossie' (article 33 - in German), and by the doyen of bi-linguists, William F. Mackey, on 'Bilingualism and Multilingualism' (article 82 - in English).

The sequence is interesting in itself, inasmuch as the more recent, Greek-based term is felt to be of wider application than the older Latin-based diad: the former being predominantly on societal use, the latter on the individual use of more than one language - though there is necessarily a certain amount of overlap in the two presentations.

It is interesting that the article on individual use comes from the new world (one might have expected it from Europe), whereas the one on societal use comes from the old world (one might have expected an exponent of the American school to have written it), resulting possibly in a wider coverage of the components of the concepts than would have been the case, if the 'natural' order had been followed. To these two voices, it is proposed to add that of the multilingual 'Third World', without, however, going into the complexities of concept formation - which has been done in such masterly fashion by the two above-named scholars.

To sociolinguists working in the multilingual developing countries of Africa and Asia, the many country profiles offered and typologies of situations elaborated, render it necessary to add to the terminological framework of bilingualism/ multilingualism and diglossia/polyglossia, with a 'tertium quid'. This is attempted by placing the terms for the 'forked tongue' into three series: the first denoting individual, the second societal/institutional and the third political/official language use, corresponding to the historical development of these concepts in the Old World (Europe), the New World (America) and the Third World (Asia/Africa). For the first series, the customary Latin-derived '-lingualism' and compounds has been maintained; for the second, the Greek-derived '-glossia' series has been defined and expanded; and for the third, the Latin-derived, truncated '-linguism' series has been adopted and amplified.

### A. TERMS FOR INDIVIDUAL BILINGUALISM

Deriving from 19th century philology and 20th century psycholinguistics, the term has denoted the habitual use by individuals of one or more languages; this has been gradually expanded into the series uni-lingualism, bi-lingualism, tri-lingualism, quadri-lingualism, quin-lingualism... multi-lingualism, with the usual adjectival forms in -al, e.g. unilingual, bilingual, trilingual. To these correspond romanised series in the Romance languages, i.e. French unilinguisme, bilinguisme, trilinguisme... multi-linguisme, whereas the Germanic and Slavonic languages generally nativise the forms e.g. the German 'Einsprachigkeit, Zweisprachigkeit... Mehrsprachigkeit'. In order to distinguish between 'habitual' and 'balanced' individual use of two codes, the term 'ambilingualism' has been accepted by psycholinguists, whilst 'semi-lingualism' has

been used to describe the imperfect use of both (or more) codes. We suggest the addition of 'mixilingualism' to cover both 'code-switching' and 'code-mixing', as individual habits. On the other hand, it has been found necessary to transfer the term 'schizoglossia' to the Greek, or societal series (*infra*), for the sake of order and clarity (Haugen, 1962).

#### B. TERMS FOR SOCIETAL/INSTITUTIONAL DIGLOSSIA

It has frequently been pointed out that whereas the Fergusonian term 'diglossia' (Ferguson, 1959) and its 19th century antecedents referred to the concurrent use of an *acrolect* and a *basilect* of the same language (i.e. high and low forms) within the same society, Joshua Fishman (1967) extended the meaning to the concurrent use of different languages for separate domains of incidence in the same society - so common in the multilingual countries of Africa. Taking, therefore, the Greek 'glossa' (language) we propose a series for the exclusive description of societal/institutional use in 'monoglossia', 'diglossia', 'triglossia', 'tetraglossia', 'pentaglossia'... 'polyglossia', with the adjective in '-ot/tic' (in English, i.e. 'monoglot/tic' 'diglot/tic'... 'polyglot/tic' societies or institutions. For instance, the writer has for some years worked on the Nigerian, or African, 'triglottic configuration', in which societies habitually use an official (mostly exogenous) language, a *lingua franca* for wider public (mainly oral) communication, and an ethnic or familiar language (= mother tongue, other tongue and further tongue, Brann 1980). This series would be identical in the Romance, Germanic and the Slavonic languages, with appropriately modified endings.

However, in sub-Saharan African states a dichotomy between the written/recorded, official exogenous language and the oral, rarely written indigenous languages is quite common. There is thus a complementary distribution between the H and L functions common to diglossia (*sensu* Ferguson), but here extended to types of language modes/functions, for which we propose the term 'schizoglossia'. This 'schizoglossia' was, of course, common in Europe until the Renaissance, as between 'ancient and modern', between Latin and the European vernaculars, until the standardisation and development of 'national' languages. It can be extended to the dichotomous language use by social classes (cf. Saxons + Normans in medieval England) or sexes (as in some African and Asian societies).

For the frequent condition of language contact in multilingual societies, we propose the term 'mixoglossia' (*mixo* being both Latin and Greek in usage), whilst 'isoglossia' and 'heteroglossia' can be used for congruent and separate social language use, in situations of language contact.

#### C. TERMS FOR POLITICAL/OFFICIAL LINGUISTICISM

With the spate of independencies of post-WW2 years, the ensuing national 'language question' called for new ways of language treatment variously called 'language planning', 'language engineering' and 'language management' - all dealing with the public, political and official function of language, for which even a new branch of sociolinguistics has been formed in 'politolinguistics' (by some scholars termed 'politicolinguistics'). For the description of the political use of language in polyglottic societies, a new set of terms is proposed with the ending in '-linguism'.

The term 'linguism' by itself has been used in India, for the doctrine that every constituent state of the Union should have its own official language, which generally includes a distinctive script as well. Hence the term 'linguistic states', with the overall policy denoted (not always positively) as 'linguism'. This can be seen as a

development of the 19th century European doctrine of the language-nation-state, according to which each polity is identified with one national language, often enshrined in the constitution.

However, recently, the term co-linguism ('colinguisme' in French) was coined by Renee Balibar (1988), meaning that one 'official' or 'national' language was either tacitly accepted, or constitutionally recognised alongside another, or others.

Deriving from these concepts, we propose the series 'unilinguism' (rather than the frequent hybrid 'monolinguisim'), 'bilinguism', 'trilinguism', 'quadrilinguism', 'quinlinguism'... 'multilinguism' etc., to denote the official acceptance of one or more languages in a given polity, with the adjective ending in 'istic'. Canada would thus be a bilinguistic state, in which the doctrine of federal bilinguism on a partitarian basis for English and French is watched over by a Commissioner for Official Languages, with ministerial status. Similarly, Switzerland has for a long time practised official trilinguism with German, French and Italian, whilst admitting of colinguism for an additional national language - Rheto-Romance. Nigeria has recently paved the way for quadrilinguism, by designating three 'national' languages - Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba - in addition to the official language - English. All four languages are scheduled to be used equally in the forthcoming federal legislature in 1992.

By taking existing terms for individual, societal and statal multiple language use, placing them into discrete categories and by filling gaps and extending the series, we have tried to put a certain order into the terminological Babel. The proof of the offering lies in its acceptability and subsequent usage by fellow scholars in the expanding field of sociolinguistics.

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