

## Unsettling Language: Communicational concerns of minorities

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A vast literature over the past few decades has charted the decline of the nation-state and, with it, the diminished influence of official policies that couple language and national belonging (Cf. Heller 2011). Simultaneously, a renewed focus on Foucauldian governmentality – together with its role in determining linguistic capital within a politically defined territory – suggests the sustained pull of the nation even within the post-modern era (Pujolar 2015). In this way, the monolingual, standard-language ideologies that stem from individuals' positionality within a state persist, affecting community language practices, especially those of non-dominant ethno-linguistic groups (Walsh in press). Set against this backdrop, discourses of ethno-cultural essentialism have largely retained their prominence (Muehlmann and Duchêne 2007), influencing identity construction among members of both dominant and minority groups.

The cases presented in this symposium – Arbanasi in Croatia, Yiddish in the U.S., Csángó Hungarian in Romanian Moldova, and Kurdish-accented Turkish in Turkey – profile the different ways in which members of these minority groups grapple with such discourses and their underlying ideologies. Central to these cases is the capacity for heritage languages to index belonging to a shared, distinct cultural history. Strategies for managing such ethno-linguistic attachments with assimilationist pressures rely on, among other considerations, group cohesiveness, language attitudes, and stance practices. Dual, intermediate, and, at times, seemingly conflicting affiliations may emerge (Cf. Mayoma and Williams 2020), giving rise, for example, to the oversized in-group symbolic importance of a heritage language variety despite sharp declines in proficiency levels (Avineri 2019). Such push and pull factors help to contextualize the holistic perspective of the panel's final paper, which surveys the vitality of multilingualism across different urban centers. Together, the panel's five papers present different portraits of multilingualism that attest to its default status in many settings, presenting an unsettling challenge to persistent monolingual, standard-language norms.

**Keywords:** minority language, language attitudes, vitality, post-nationalism, belonging

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## 1. Shining a light on power and erasure: Unpacking attitudes toward Kurdish-accented regional varieties of Turkish under the influence of standard language ideology

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Discursively constructed as a tool for unifying a linguistically and ethnically diverse citizenry, Turkey's monolingual Turkish language policy has a long history of promoting linguistic essentialism and purity (Cf. Karaosmanoğlu 2013). As with other cases of nation-state promotion through language, strong orientations to standard language ideology have resulted, fostering the perception of the monolingual speaker as the default (Cf. Cooke and Simpson 2012), a phenomenon that diminishes the status of the non-standard varieties of peripherally positioned populations, including linguistic minorities (Gal 2009; McLelland 2021; Vogl 2012). In the case of Turkey, systemic efforts to assimilate its Kurdish residents have exacerbated this effect (Cf. Çoşkun, Derince, and Uçarlar 2012 ). Previous research has highlighted efforts by Kurdish students (Polat and Schallert 2013) and restaurant managers (Schluter 2020) to project a Turkish monolingual identity in front of Turkish peers and customers, respectively, to avoid the negative effects of perceived linguistic profiling. As a means of exploring these perceptions from Turkish perspectives, the current study used the matched guise technique to compare Turkish university students' language attitudes toward standard-like vs. Kurdish-accented regional guises. Illustrating the stigma of Kurdish-accented Turkish from Turkish perspectives, the standard-like Turkish guises were perceived as significantly younger, more attractive, and more successful than the Kurdish-accented regional guises across all intra-speaker comparisons. Linguistic adaptation to suit diverse scales, a finding that has emerged in other migrant and minority language contexts (Canagarajah 2016), is especially pronounced in this case, rendering the multilingual, multidialectal repertoires of Kurdish-Turkish bilinguals largely invisible within Turkish-dominant settings. These results, thus, draw attention to the power structures that perpetuate the invisibility of Kurdish-accented varieties of Turkish in Turkey.

**Keywords:** Kurdish, language attitudes, power, monolingual standard ideologies

## **2. (Linguistic) integration, language maintenance and use in historical migrant settings: The case of Arbanasi**

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Migration has been shown to have long-term and profound consequences on language. Since they often depend on very specific local circumstances, neither the communication patterns nor the degree of language maintenance can be easily predicted. In order to get an insight into factors that may influence language maintenance and use in migratory contexts, the study focuses on the analysis of language use in two groups of Arbanasi – one of the smallest linguistic minorities in Croatia and Europe. Arbanasi are speakers (or their descendants) of the northern Gheg variety of Albanian as spoken in the Skadar lake region in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when they arrived in Zadar as refugees. Most Arbanasi who remained in Zadar today identify as Croats; their identification has nonetheless been much more complex than their prevalent identification may suggest. As migrants and largely stigmatized for much of their history, the Arbanasi tended to identify with various national and political options at different times in the region of Dalmatia, which underwent turbulent shifts of foreign rulers. However, the identification of some Arbanasi with what was later interpreted as a wrong side led to a large post-WWII emigration of Arbanasi to Italy and other overseas countries. Although both the initial migration to Zadar as well as the 20<sup>th</sup> century one were caused mainly by political factors, the sociolinguistic study of Arbanasi in Zadar shows that language may have been maintained better in the overseas communities, and that Arbanasi diaspora may even function as an important factor in language maintenance for the Arbanasi speakers in Zadar. The present study is based on the narratives of Arbanasi emigrants, which are then compared to the accounts provided by the Arbanasi still living in Zadar who have been experiencing intense language shift in the last several decades.

**Keywords:** Croatia, integration, language maintenance, migration, identity

### 3. “Not really nostalgia because I didn’t have it the first time”: Contested Stance Practices in Secular Yiddish Metalinguistic Communities

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This paper examines language socialization practices and language ideologies in secular Yiddish “metalinguistic communities,” based on a three-year multi-sited ethnography examining secular Yiddish classrooms, programs, and events in California and New York, and interviews and written texts. “Metalinguistic community”, a community of positioned social actors shaped by practices that view language as an object, is a framework for diverse participants who can experience both distance from and closeness to the language and its users, due to historical, personal, and/or communal circumstances. The model therefore ‘unsettles’ traditional conceptualizations of both language and community.

The five dimensions of “metalinguistic community” are:

1. socialization into language ideologies as a priority (not always including socialization into language competence and use);
2. conflation of language and culture;
3. age and corresponding knowledge as salient features;
4. use and discussion of the code are primarily pedagogical; and
5. use of code in specific interactional and textual contexts (e.g., greetings/closings, assessments, response cries, religious and cultural lexical items)

Through an examination of classroom interactions in California, this paper demonstrates how simultaneous distancing and closeness manifest in “contested stance practices,” public demonstrations of language ideologies that reveal both internal and external tensions. Contested stance practices uncover how members’ perceptions of language are shaped by their personal histories and those of their imagined communities; these practices become a fertile means through which individuals negotiate their relationships with language as symbol of identity, ideology, and community.

This study highlights the role of nostalgia socialization, a public attention to and affective appreciation of the past as a way to understand one’s place in the present, and diasporic language ideologies, in which features of the language become emblematic of speakers’ mobile and ‘unsettled’ histories.

**Keywords:** Metalinguistic Community, Yiddish, contested stance practices

#### **4. Unsettling language revitalisation: Between conflicting ideologies and practices of linguistic homogenisation**

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Language revitalisation is thought to be the restoration of a previous state of language practices, thus settling a situation unsettled by processes of linguistic homogenisation. On a closer look, however, participants in language revitalisation find themselves in controversial, messy, complex and contested terrains of language ideologies. These issues are discussed in connection with the language revitalisation programme of the Hungarian (Csángó) language in North-Eastern Romanian Moldavia. Based on a linguistic ethnographic study of the programme, we focus on how participants attempt to navigate between the Scylla of Romanian nation-building monolingualism and the Charybdis of Hungarian language regimentation aiming at producing new speakers of the Moldavian Csángó Hungarian language community. Our analysis points out that participation in language revitalisation is embedded in a complex web of power relations and conflicting ideologies; nevertheless, it can also result in productive practices and counter-narratives to linguistic homogenisation and the ideology of monolingualism.

**Keywords:** Language revitalization, Csángó Hungarian, power, language ideologies

## 5. Responses to unsettling language: Towards a vitality of urban multilingualism

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Multilingualism is not a new phenomenon; it was a common feature of the empires and cities of ancient times. Very often such multilingualism was regarded as normal and non-controversial, and this remained so until the growth of modern nationalism when the link between nation and language came to be a guiding principle, challenging extant multilingualism. Exponential increases in mobility, especially to urban centres, over the last few decades has helped refocus attention on urban multilingualism. This presentation focuses on the notion of Vitality of Urban Multilingualism (VUM), defined as the degree to which societal multilingualism and individual plurilingualism are able to thrive and flourish in an urban conglomeration. Factors underlying VUM may be described under three main headings: demography, status and institutional support. Data on multilingualism in reports from the LUCIDE project are overviewed with this framework. Interestingly, these data suggest that a more explicit intergroup analysis may be warranted given the “us” vs “them” perceptions concerning VUM obtained in some of the contexts.

**Keywords:** ethnolinguistic vitality, multilingualism, identity, intergroup, urban