

MULTIPLE VOICES: AN INTRODUCTION TO BILINGUALISM

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Bilingualism, the fastest growing subject in linguistics, is the most happening phenomenon in South Asia in general and in India and Pakistan in particular. This reading not only helps us understand why Urdu language, which is spoken by majority of Karachiites as native language, has pushed its boundaries as national language of Pakistan across the country by endangering over 300 regional languages or dialects but also reminds us why these languages need immediate protection from language attrition or language death. From a Pakistani point of view, *Multiple Voices* is worth-reading for those interested in understanding the rich linguistic tapestry of Pakistan. It educates us as to how and why bilingualism or multilingualism is deeply entrenched in our communities and to make language policies for the welfare of nations.

Multiple Voices: An Introduction to Bilingualism is written by Carol Myers-Scotton, who has contributed to the study of bilingualism over a long period of time. With a sociopolitical focus, this easy-to-understand book consisting of 449 pages provides detailed discussions of the grammatical and cognitive aspects of bilingualism. Owing to its coverage of multiple perspectives on bilingualism, the book is expected to serve students of linguistics and scholars in a variety of disciplines. Carol proposes it as a textbook for upper-level undergraduates or beginning-level Master's degree students (p. x).

Chapter one introduces terms and concepts, which are used for the passionately discussed phenomenon of

bilingualism in the chapters to follow. The author also addresses questions that are likely to interest the reader. She argues that the study of bilingualism is warranted because it investigates the competence of humans, i.e. their "genetic potential" (p. 12), to become bilingual and the human experience of living with two or more languages.

In chapter two, she begins by answering some basic questions about what language is and how it is perceived. In the course of answering these questions, the author discusses mutual intelligibility and sociopolitical factor as criteria generally used to identify two languages as the same or different and cites a lot of actual examples from all over the world to illustrate her discussion. She also exemplifies the role of religion in the creation of two languages in South Asia: Urdu and Hindi. The rest of the chapter examines various questions about dialects, including how standard dialects are identified, how the term dialect is understood and used, how dialects differ from one another, and how regional and social dialects are identified.

The next chapter identifies social factors that motivate bilingualism and highlights various considerations that go into assessing a speaker's proficiency in bilingualism. The author defines bilingualism as "the ability to use two or more languages sufficiently to carry on a limited casual conversation" (p. 44) and identifies and explains two sets of conditions under which bilingualism is promoted, namely close proximity and displacement conditions.

In chapter four, three models of community organization are discussed, which the author uses to explain various contexts of multiculturalism in which speakers either maintain their L1 or shift to L2. In the context of horizontal multiculturalism, in which speakers are generally monolingual and "live in their own geographic spaces" (p. 71), they are likely to keep their L1 and even "resist bilingualism" (p. 72). On the other hand, in communities with vertical multiculturalism, in which people come in contact with speakers of other languages, they are likely to shift to L2 or become "very proficient" in it if it is the "urban lingua franca" (p. 72). In communities that are organized in terms of social networks, horizontal multilingualism is a possible outcome if people have "strong ties within their home network" (p. 73). In networks with weak ties, people tend to learn L2 in order to connect with L2 speakers. Similarly, in communities where ethnolinguistic vitality is high, speakers are likely to maintain their L1. In the rest of the chapter, the author discusses in detail the notion of diglossia, the domains in which the languages of a bilingual community are distributed, actual cases of language maintenance and shift all around the world, language shift by young speakers to a dominant language, and the separation of cultural maintenance and language maintenance.

The next chapter, which may be pertinent to the divisions of India and Pakistan, discusses how ideologies and attitudes are relevant to the decisions that individuals and nation states make about whether they want to be bilingual or monolingual. While both attitudes and language ideologies are viewed as "assessments" that are held unconsciously, the latter are generally constructed and are more likely to be brought to consciousness because of their reference to group interests. In her discussion of the link that language attitudes and language ideologies have with nationalities, the author views language as "an important part of the collective awareness of a group" (p. 111). Because of its status as a visible language and its instrumental basis, language users as well as nation states can "mobilize to protect or advance their language" (p. 112). The author explains that the existence of a separate language does not necessarily mean that it will be used to claim a separate nation state.

Chapter six is on the social motivations for language use in interpersonal interactions. The fundamental claim

supported in this chapter is that by using a certain linguistic variety, speakers indicate "both their view of themselves and their relationships with other participants in the conversation" (p. 143). The author talks about the indexical nature of linguistic choices that speakers make and explains that such choices are pragmatically significant since they are based on "the social and psychological features or attributes" (p. 149) that are associated with the language speakers choose to speak. The author also points out that the social meaning of linguistic choices that speakers make generally comes from the situation of language use. In the next three sections of this chapter, the author discusses various findings from studies associated with the Matched Guise Test, the Accommodation Theory, and the Markedness Model to show that speakers communicate social meanings when they switch from one dialect or language to another. The author concludes by contrasting the Accommodation Theory and Markedness Model with Conversation Analysis. While the first two use a deductive method of analysis, the third uses an inductive one. Analysts who work within the first two frameworks bring to their analyses speaker motives and intentions whereas those who work within the third framework reject them. The author raises the question of how Conversation Analysts "view cognitive resources" (p. 174).

Chapter seven deals with the issue of how cultural differences affect intercultural communication in bilingual and multilingual contexts. The author discusses with real examples from studies of Asian and African cultures that classify societies on the basis of whether they are predominantly individualistic or collectivistic, whether they are high- or low-context cultures, and whether people form relationships of equality or structure hierarchy. Collectivistic and high-context cultures both favor indirectness in speech as a way to maintain harmony whereas individualistic and low-context cultures favor directness in speech as it allows individuals to express their opinions. Cultures are also classified in terms of how much equality or hierarchy individuals emphasize in their relationships. Culturally induced language behavior also involves politeness, which is conceptualized differently in different cultures. To show how culturally defined politeness affects one's language behavior, the author explains how requests are made differently in Western and non-Western cultures. The author also

discusses how the power differential is differently viewed and used in language and how cross-cultural conflicts are managed in different cultural groups.

Chapter eight focuses on lexical borrowing in bilingual contexts. The author defines lexical borrowing as "incorporating words from one language (the donor language) in another (the recipient language)" (p. 211) and talks about two categories of borrowings, namely cultural and core. When a language borrows words for objects and concepts that do not exist in it, such words are viewed as cultural borrowings. Core borrowings take place when a language borrows words whose equivalents already exist in the language. The author identifies and explains three types of indirect borrowings: calques (loan translation), loanshifts (borrowed words that are given a different meaning in the recipient language), and loanblends (words that are created by blending words from the donor and recipient languages). The author then discusses the phonological and morphological integration of borrowed words into the recipient language and various hypotheses of why nouns are the most frequently borrowed category. Finally, the author makes the point that borrowed words are "evidence of earlier cultural contacts" (p. 230).

Chapter nine addresses the question of what happens to grammars in bilingual contacts. After defining and illustrating several technical terms, the author discusses codeswitching. She defines codeswitching as "the use of two languages in the same conversation" (p. 239). The author then introduces the Matrix Language Frame (MLF) as a model for classic codeswitching, a bilingual phenomenon which involves "elements from two (or more) language varieties in the same clause, but only one of the varieties is the source of the morphosyntactic frame for the clause" (p. 241). Classic codeswitching is contrasted with composite codeswitching, a bilingual phenomenon "in which even though most of the morphosyntactic structure comes from one of the participating languages, the other language contributes some of the abstract structure underlying surface forms of the clause" (p. 242). Crucial to the MLF model is the distinction between content morphemes and system morphemes. Content morphemes are words that assign thematic roles; verbs and nouns are identified as "prototypical content morphemes" (p. 245). System morphemes are words that do not assign thematic roles;

prototypical system morphemes are "all affixes and function words that stand alone (e.g. determiners and clitics)" (p. 245). It also discusses about two groups of researchers wanting to investigate bilingualism.

Chapter ten surveys bilingualism from the psycholinguistic perspective. Carol points out that, while the question of "how the bilingual's languages are organized in the mind" (p. 197) remains unsettled, the more current position holds that "bilinguals have two distinct memories and semantic systems" (p. 297). On the theme of bilingual activation, she states that, while in the past it was viewed that a bilingual's languages were not activated simultaneously, a generally agreed-upon view now is that both languages are always activated to varying degrees. The author also points out that findings from lexical decision tasks suggest that bilinguals have simultaneous, rather than selective, access to their languages. The author discusses how various models of language production vary in their answer to the question, "At what level is the phonological form of a word... in place?" She finally discusses the effects of aphasia on bilinguals and the patterns of language recovery.

Chapter eleven begins by addressing two questions about "the relation between childhood language acquisition and later L2 acquisition" (p. 324). The author views as normal those bilinguals who learn to speak two or more languages when they are young because children are genetically predisposed to "acquire human languages" (p. 325). She supports the argument that humans are equipped with an innate ability to acquire language by alluding to the evidence that shows that "children all over the world go through similar stages when they acquire the grammatical systems of their specific languages" and that both monolinguals and young bilinguals "go through similar stages of acquisition" (p. 326). The author states that "actual exposure to a language in use" (p. 326) is necessary for children to acquire the language and that bilinguals may face a different socio-cultural context of language acquisition from that faced by monolinguals. The author also discusses the questions of whether being an early bilingual is an advantage or a disadvantage and whether early acquisition affects some systems the most.

Chapter twelve is on language policy and globalization. In the introductory section, the author discusses the

rise of the nation state and the problems resulting from fixing national borders. She also addresses the question of who plans language policies and discusses the problems faced by language planners. The author identifies four main sociopolitical developments today that relate to language policy: immigration, education for immigrants and indigenous minorities, the rise of English as an international lingua franca, and the formation of the European Union. She points out that the issues of language rights and endangered languages come up within the context of these four sociopolitical developments. In the succeeding sections, she discusses status planning, corpus planning, and acquisition planning. The discussion of status planning includes problematic language situations in Canada, Australia, Cameroon, India, and South Africa. Similarly, the discussion of corpus planning includes examples of language reform carried out in Asia and Turkey. In discussing acquisition planning, the author points out two potentially contradictory situations that acquisition planners can face. First, they are aware of the link between national economic development and literacy rate and of a commonly held belief among educators that it is easier to make children literate through their L1. Second, language planners are also aware that education in the official language promotes in minority children a sense of belonging in the nation. In the last section of this chapter, the author places English, French, and German in a diglossic relationship with other European languages within the context of the European Union.

Chapter thirteen is very brief, and it reminds the reader of the main themes covered in the book. The author concludes by listing "five most important points" (p. 414) that the reader is expected to take away from the book.

There are several features that add to the value of *Multiple Voices*. One of them is that each chapter begins with a real story of a person from a different part of the world whose life is linked to bilingualism or multilingualism. These stories not only serve as an interesting beginning of a chapter but also help to show that bilingualism is a real human phenomenon with socio-cultural and socio-political consequences. Another feature, which is valuable to students in particular, is that important concepts and terms are put in bold so

that the reader would pay attention to them. Another feature that I view as helpful is that each chapter ends with a summary and a list of terms and concepts that readers, particularly students, would do well to remember. In addition, I found the use of rather informal tone of voice interesting, as illustrated by these examples: "Just for your information, there are two sets of signs that are relevant to your life." (p. 145); "That is, for each of you, unmarked choices would be considered not only expected, but also appropriate, for certain interaction types in your community and marked choices would be unexpected, given the interaction type" (p. 179); "Your author (Meyers-Scotton, 2001; 2000) offers another explanation for creole formation..." (p. 285). The use of pronoun 'you' and pronominal adjective 'your' in these sentences can create a friendly image of the author, which may foster learning particularly in beginning-level readers. In addition, the writer provides in easy-to-understand language detailed discussions of various topics and issues in bilingualism with abundant citations from past and latest studies.

While these features add to the value of the book, a few more would have enhanced its usefulness as a textbook. A set of study questions at the end of each chapter would be good particularly for beginning-level students. Also, a list of further studies would benefit particularly those who wish to acquire a further and more detailed knowledge of certain aspects of bilingualism. In addition, it would be useful to have a glossary of important terms and concepts covered in the book. Perhaps, the author would consider these suggestions for the second edition of the book, which I hope will come out soon given its high value both as a text and resource book.

To conclude, I view *Multiple Voices: An Introduction to Bilingualism* as a very valuable addition to the pool of books on the study of bilingualism. Given its multidisciplinary approach, the sufficiently elaborated discussions of bilingual topics and issues, and the inclusion in these discussions of many relevant and up-to-date studies, this book is an excellent choice as a textbook for a bilingualism course. This book will also serve well students, instructors and scholars who are interested in any of the many aspects of bilingualism.