JEZIKOSLOVLJE
13.2 (2012): 645-666

UDC 81'246.3(498.4)=111
Original scientific paper
Received on 30.03. 2012
Accepted for publication on 30.05. 2012

Zsuzsanna Dégi
Sapientia University
Miercurea-Ciuc

Types of multilingualism explored in the Transylvanian school context

Studies concerning multilingualism are abundant and multilingualism gains more and more attention from linguists, politicians, sociologists and psychologists. Despite the spread of multilingualism, scholarly research in the Eastern-European multilingual context has just recently started to develop.
The present research aims at providing insight into a specific multilingual context: the Transylvanian autochthonous minority situation. The paper proposes an exploration of the literature on the term multilingualism and its relations to bilingualism research. Moreover, it will also consider the lay-people's "definitions" or understanding of the term. The study highlights three overlapping questions around multilingualism: a) how is multilingualism perceived by foreign language learners (students); b) what are the educational stakeholders' (teachers and principals) views on multilingualism; and finally c) what types of multilingualism do schools promote?
In order to answer the questions above, research was conducted in the Transylvanian school context. Six high schools were contacted where interviews were carried out with students, teachers and the school principals. The interviews show that 'elite' multilingualism is preferred, being almost equated with English language knowledge or learning. However, according to different aims in the learners' future career, several types of multilingualism have been named. So as to say, for learners who want to stay in the country and start working as blue-collar workers, multilingualism in the mother tongue and the majority language will suffice.

Key words: multilingualism; Hungarian minority; school context; foreign language teaching.

1. Introduction

During the last decade, interest in multilingualism has increased rapidly. Commitment to diversity is now recognized as one of the key requirements for the successful future development of the European society. This development is certainly linked to the commitment of the European Union to a multilingual Europe. In 1995 the European Commission proposed that EU citizens should be proficient in three European languages, their L1 and two other community languages, to ensure multilingualism as an essential characteristic feature of European identity.[1] These ideas, which were developed on a socio-political level, do not necessarily correspond to the still existing attitudes towards bi- and multilingualism among the European population. Although, according to the Eurobarometer Report 54, the majority of parents consider it important to learn other European languages, multilingualism is still seen as an exception because it is misunderstood. Multilinguals are still seen as multiple monolinguals in one, which often results in treating multilinguals as incompetent speakers in each of their languages. The monolingual norm interprets bilingualism as a kind of double monolingualism, with the belief that a person can be called a truly bilingual if s/he is fully competent and therefore comparable to a monolingual native speaker in both languages. The misunderstanding of the phenomenon of multilingualism is rooted in the long-standing Western tradition of prejudice against bi- and multilingualism, ascribing a negative and harmful effect on the cognitive development of bi- or multilingual children (Jessner 2008:15). This attitude is also reflected in language tests used for the assessment of language skills of bilingual children since traditional tests take neither the positive consequences of bi- and multilingualism nor the characteristic features of bilingual speech into consideration.

However, the recent growth of research into multilingualism has expanded into many new areas in the last ten years and a critical mass of information and experience in research techniques is beginning to be built across this complex field. One of the characteristics of the emerging disciplines is that terms and definitions undergo a process of specification, refinement and agreement resulting in a convergence of term-usage.

[1] Proficiency in three languages is mentioned as one of the objectives of European policy in education, as stated in the European Commission's White Paper on *Teaching and Learning. Towards the Learning Society* (1995). A more recent action plan is the European Commission's *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan* (2003).

This paper presents an exploratory research conducted in the Transylvanian educational context. From this particular area, teachers, school principals and students were interviewed regarding their views on multilingualism and the learning of different languages in schools. The education of minority communities has always been a topical issue. Education plays a central role in the lives of the communities, as schools – at all levels – are the primary locations for the production and reproduction of group ideologies (cf. Heller 2001). Moreover, the attitudes of teachers and principals towards multilingualism and their beliefs concerning the instrumentality of languages largely affect language instruction in general and the languages students have access to in schools, in particular. The purpose of this paper is to explore different definitions of multilingualism and related terms, as well as to compare it with the educational stakeholders' definitions and understanding of the term in order to find out the ways the Romanian educational system (especially minority education) responds to the expectations of EU language policy and the extent to which it takes into consideration new research findings on multilingualism and language acquisition research.

2. Why should multilingualism be a problem?

Monolingualism is often regarded by people in western nation-states as the unmarked case to which bilingualism and multilingualism are compared, even though it is estimated that most of the human language users in the world speak more than one language, i.e. they are at least bilingual. The world's estimated 5,000 languages are spoken in the world's 200 sovereign states (or 25 languages per state), so that communication among the citizens of many of the world's countries clearly requires extensive bi- (if not) multilingualism. In fact, David Crystal (1997) estimates that two-thirds of the world's children grow up in a bilingual environment. Considering only bilingualism involving English, the statistics that Crystal has gathered indicate that, of the approximately 570 million people worldwide who speak English, over 41 percent or 235 million are bilingual in English and some other language. One must conclude that, far from being exceptional, as many lay people believe, bilingualism/multilingualism is currently the rule throughout the world and will become increasingly so in the future (Bhatia and Ritchie 2006: 1–2).

The marginal role research on multilingualism has played within linguistics until some decades ago is a result of the monolingual bias of (particularly)

European thinking about language, which came into being during a phase of European history when the nation states defined themselves by the one language which was chosen to be the symbolic expression of their unity. The European (standard) languages were seen to naturally belong to and justify the existence of the European nations in a one-to-one relationship. Being part of a nation was equated with being a native speaker of its language. Seen from this perspective, multilingualism deviated from the norm (Auer and Wei 2007: 1–2).

Multilingualism was considered to be the consequence of some kind of disturbance in the language order, such as migration or conquest, which brought language systems into some kind of unexpected and 'unnatural' contact with one another, often leading to structural simplification. What I perceive as the problems surrounding multilingualism today are to a large degree a consequence of the monolingualism demanded, fostered and cherished by the nation states in Europe. The idea that multilingualism is detrimental to a person's cognitive and emotional development can be traced back to this ideology. Language purism is nothing than a symbolic battlefield for social conflicts (Auer and Wei 2007: 3).

3. The way from the double monolingualism hypothesis to the holistic multicompetence

Early restrictive definitions of bilingualism view bilingual speakers as people who have "native-like control of two languages" (Bloomfield 1935: 56) or, in order to qualify as a bilingual, an individual needs to master two languages, both acquired as mother tongues, and needs to speak them "perfectly well" (Ducrot and Todorov 1972: 83). On the basis of this monolingual view bilinguals were seen as the sum of two monolinguals in one person with two separate language competences and consequently bilingual proficiency has generally been measured against monolingual proficiency. At the same time in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research, it was initially held that bilingualism would have a detrimental effect not only on the language development as such but also on cognitive development in general. Several studies in SLA concentrated on transfer as an explanation of linguistic deficiency of bilinguals. Interference or negative transfer has been defined by Weinreich (1953: 1) as "those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language". The frequency of transfer was thought to be proportional to the dominance of one language system over the other. Thus transfer presupposes the existence of two or

more separate language systems, which leads back to the reduction of language competence measured in monolingual terms. In 1972 Selinker introduced the concept of interlanguage to refer to the transitional stage in the SLA process. This theoretical construct is still used to identify the stages of development in language learners on their way to native language proficiency in the target language. The term interlanguage has been widely used as a cover term for incomplete or transitional processes of language learning.

Although this double monolingualism hypothesis has been used as a prevailing concept in studies on bilingualism and SLA, there have been several attempts to explain contradictory results. One among the first studies which had an impact on bilingualism research is the study of Peal and Lambert (1962), who found a positive relationship between bilingualism and intelligence in ten-year-old, middle class French-Canadian bilinguals. However, the greatest change was brought about by Grosjean (1982), who introduced the bilingual or holistic view of bilingualism which focuses on the bilingual as a competent but specific speaker-hearer. Also, contact between the bilingual's languages is not seen as a detrimental cognitive effect, but it is considered as being characteristic of a bilingual's speech. According to Grosjean's perspective, the bilingual is a human communicator who has developed a communicative competence sufficient for everyday life. The bilingual is not the sum of two complete or incomplete monolinguals; s/he rather has a specific linguistic configuration characterized by the constant interaction and coexistence of the two languages involved (Herdina and Jessner 2002: 59). In contrast to early research which showed bilinguals to be greatly disadvantaged in comparison to monolinguals, many studies in the last 35 years or so have shown that bilingualism can result in advantages not only in terms of language competences, but also in terms of cognitive and social development.

Grosjean's attempt to present the bilingual speaker in a holistic approach has decisively influenced the scientific debate on multilingualism. Etymologically, bilingual means a person knowing two languages. However, it has been indiscriminately used to refer to any individual knowing more than one language, and any language acquired after the first one could be labelled L2, meaning that one could possess several L2s. Multilingualism in general terms can be defined as the command and/or use of two or more languages by the respective speaker (Herdina and Jessner 2002: 52). Most researchers in language research use the term bilingual for users of two languages and multilingual for three or more, but this is not universal. Some definitions of multilingualism do not use a numeric

scale, but make a binary distinction between monolinguals and multilinguals (e.g. Saville-Troike 2006).

A need for finer distinction and recategorization emerged with the onset of trilingualism research (Cenoz and Jessner 2000; De Angelis 2005). Trilingualism researchers proposed to investigate whether there are any differences between trilinguals and bilinguals. Multilinguals have been found to differ indeed from bilinguals in that they suffer less from communicative anxiety (Dewaele 2002; Dewaele, Pertides and Furnham 2008) and develop higher levels of metapragmatic awareness. In their study Herdina and Jessner (2002) construct a dynamic model of multilingualism, where bilingualism is considered as "a particular variant of multilingualism", or the "simplest form of multilingualism". However, they also argue that essential changes take place in the learner or speaker as soon as the number of languages exceeds two. They attribute this change to the fact that acquiring two languages leads to the development of specific metaskills that will certainly have an effect on further language learning processes (Herdina and Jessner 2002: 132).

As multilingualism has gained more and more attention, and studies concerning multilingualism have become abundant, several definitions of multilingualism can be found in today's language research. The main idea that can be found throughout the literature is that the term multilingualism is the capacity of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage on a regular basis with more than one language in everyday life. Several authors also emphasize that the different languages are used for different purposes and that multilinguals may not have equal proficiency in all the languages they know (Edwards 1994; Kemp 2009; Franceschini 2009). Each language in the multilingual's repertoire is a part of a complete system and not equivalent in representation or processing to the language of a monolingual speaker (Kemp 2009: 19).

Grosjean's contribution can be considered a turning point in multilingualism research arguing that the double monolingualism view is inadequate in the attempt to develop a realistic model of multilingualism. Thus, starting with Grosjean's redefinition of bilingualism, several alternative theories have been developed in quest for a more realistic model. All approaches apply a holistic view on multilingualism and argue against comparing the bilingual's competence to L1 competence (see Cook 1991, Herdina and Jessner 2002).

Cook's model of multicompetence (1991) is by the author's own definition a holistic one. The language systems as such do not represent separate systems but one system. The dynamic model of multilingualism, introduced by Herdina and Jessner (2002), also takes a holistic approach to multilingualism. Besides claiming that multilinguals cannot be measured by monolingual standards they also interpret multilingual systems to be characterized by continuous change and non-linear growth (Herdina and Jessner 2002: 151).

On the basis of the brief literature review above, we can draw the conclusion that a shift in norms is characterizing the current research on linguistics. Among them is the move from the previously dominating monolingual norm to another paradigm that sets multilingual speakers as the norm. The language learner is a person who is able to communicate in the additional languages and is not a copy of a native speaker. This, in turn, has led to a need to restructure language learning/teaching practices, strategies, aims and materials (Aronin and Hufeisen 2009: 109–110).

4. Research questions

The present study intends to present a specific multilingual community's perspective on multilingualism, and to find out how these existing views on multilingualism affect foreign language education, a key factor in achieving multilingualism. This specific micro-region represents a special case in multilingualism research due to its multinational character. Mureş county, with almost 40 percent of Hungarian minority population offers a fertile ground to explore the issue of multilingualism and multilingual learning. Romania having one official language (Romanian), bi-/multilingualism has always been a rule for the minority population, exceptions being a few regions where the national minority represent the majority of the population (e.g. Szeklerland).

According to the curriculum framework for compulsory education, multilingualism is ensured by the introduction of two foreign languages as compulsory school subjects. However, during primary education (grades 5–8), there is a distinction between Romanian and minority students. Romanian students learn two foreign languages beside their mother tongue, while Hungarian students learn Romanian, a foreign language and optionally a second foreign language beside their mother tongue.

Bearing in mind the different trends and understandings of multilingualism presented within the previous section of this paper, the study focuses on three overlapping questions around individual and societal multilingualism, namely:

a) How is multilingualism perceived by the foreign language learners (students)?
b) What are the educational stakeholders' (teachers and principals) views on multilingualism?

and finally, based on the answers to the previous two research questions, the paper will try to answer

c) What types of multilingualism do schools promote?

5. Subjects/Setting

In order to answer the research questions above, an exploratory empirical research was conducted in the Transylvanian school context. Transylvania can be considered to represent one of the autochthonous Hungarian minority regions, if we accept the definition that "old" or "autochthonous" regions are those which at one point had their own language(s), but later joined or were forced to join a nation state which had had a different national standard variety (Auer and Wei 2007:10). If we accept multilingualism to mean the ability of individuals or groups of individuals to use more than one language in their everyday life, then Transylvania is a strongly multilingual region.

The Hungarian minority of Romania is the largest ethnic minority in Romania, making up 6.6 percent of the total population, according to the 2002 census. Hungarians form a large majority of the population in Harghita (84.61 percent) and Covasna (73.79 percent) counties and a very significant proportion in Mureş county (39.30 percent). The official language of Romania is Romanian. However, persons belonging to national minorities have the right to learn and receive instruction in their mother tongue. Hungarian minority students learn their mother tongue and the state language from kindergarten, foreign languages being introduced from the third grade (if not in kindergarten already). Romanian, the state language, is taught from textbooks designed for minority students at primary level (grades 1–4), later being taught according to the norms and requirements designed for native speakers. Students learn at least two foreign languages, the first being introduced usually from the third grade, while they start learning a second foreign language in the 5th or 6th grade. As it was mentioned earlier, it is not compulsory for Hungarian students to start learning a second

foreign language in the 6th grade, the matter being decided by the schools. However, they can learn a second foreign language as an optional course. Consequently, by the time students reach their school-leaving exam at the age of 18–19 they have already knowledge in at least three or four languages.

In Transylvania[2] there are mainly three types of schools: a) Hungarian schools where there are exclusively Hungarian sections and the language of instruction is that of the minority. However, this does not entail that the students do not learn Romanian, as it is compulsory to learn the official language of the state at all levels of instruction. Furthermore, until recently (2010) Romanian History and Geography of Romania were also taught in Romanian and from the same textbooks as for Romanian native-speaker students. b) Romanian schools and c) the so-called "mixed-type" schools, meaning one institution with two separate sections, one Romanian and one Hungarian. Usually both sections have their own teaching staff, except when for economic reasons subjects as sports, arts or languages are taught by the same teacher in both sections. In these classes Romanian and Hungarian students are not mixed, one exception being the vocational schools where certain fields are taught only in Romanian, thus only a certain percentage of the students in a class is Hungarian.

For the purposes of this research, fieldwork was conducted in six high schools from Târgu Mureş and its surrounding localities. Four vocational high schools and two grammar-schools were visited. In each school the principal (who is her/himself a teacher) and two other teachers were asked to participate in the study. Thus, the research includes a total number of 20 (6 principals) teachers out of which 7 have Romanian and 13 Hungarian ethnic origins. Moreover, data from 6 student (12th grade, 18–19 years old) participants are also included in the analysis in order to gain a different perspective on the issue under discussion. All students who offered to participate in the study are ethnic Hungarian. The data provided consist of semi-structured individual interviews that were carried out with the aforementioned participants. The interviews were conducted either in Hungarian or Romanian according to the interviewee's preferences and the length of the recordings ranges from 30 to 60 minutes.

[2] The three types of schools refer only to education in the Romanian-Hungarian relation, as there are also a few schools with other minority language education, such as German, Serbian or Ukrainian.

The data collected for the purpose of the present study belong to a larger European FP6 research project called LINEE[3] (Languages In a Network of European Excellence). LINEE was a project that started in 2006, coordinated by the University of Bern and involved 9 European universities. It addressed linguistic diversity in Europe in four thematic areas, one of which being: Multilingualism and Education. The data presented in this study is based on the work performed within two work packages, namely: WP9 (Inter-)regional case studies of multilingual education and WP9a Language use and language values in minority school settings.

6. Results and discussion

In what follows I will try to give an account of students' and teachers' beliefs about multilingualism and make connections with the trends found in the literature about this concept. It has become obvious that the complex, heterogeneous societies of Europe today can no longer function in linguistically homogeneous terms. It is the multilingual competencies of citizens which serve as the most appropriate means of engaging with the new challenges facing Europe's linguistically and culturally complex societies. Being considered a multilingual speaker is becoming more and more popular, especially among young people.

However, there is no consensus among the respondents regarding the extent to which an individual should be able to speak or use each of her languages in order to be considered multilingual. One frequently encountered opinion is that a multilingual is *one who has more mother tongues or speaks more languages at a mother tongue proficiency.* At the same time, the opinion that *Hungarians should first of all deepen their proficiency in their own culture and know the rest of the languages only at a user level* is also widely shared.

6.1. *Multilingualism perceived by foreign language learners*

In order to answer the first research question, a presentation of students' perceptions on multilingualism will follow. Students' future career prospects, their attitudes towards language learning and languages in general represent key factors in motivation and language learning effort.

[3] Grant no. 028388, www.linee.info.

Student interview-data can be characterized by a positive light concerning multilingualism. All students consider multilingualism as being important, often mentioning the phrase: *the more languages you know, the more of a person you are*. The general definition for multilingualism provided by the students is: *multilingualism means knowing/speaking more languages*. However, if we take a closer look at the data, we can see that certain ideas appear that are common in the literature on multilingualism, as well.

(1) *Zs: What do you think multilingualism means?*
N: Well, that I am more persons, that I am three kinds of person, because I know three languages, and that I can easier to whatever country I go to, I can orient myself more easily, not only here in Romania, and that in more languages, you can understand people better, what they want (...)
Zs: Then, do you consider yourself as being a multilingual person?
N: Yes. (stSDMs)[4]

In the interview extract above we can see that the student considers multilingualism to be practical and to be an asset in international communication and contact with other people. In the case of another student, however, the benefits of multilingualism are placed on a more abstract ground – being *wiser* and having *greater culture.*

(2) *RK: Multilingualism means that somebody speaks more languages, I think, I only don't know on what level should the other languages, because I think it would normally mean that somebody has more mother tongues, or at least speaks the language on a mother tongue level.* (stRKollMs)

This second extract provides a nice example of the issue concerning levels of proficiency in *other* languages, i.e. languages besides the mother tongue. And the student reflects the well-known monolingual perspective (see Bloomfield 1935), according to which the multilingual person is required to have a native-like control in all his/her languages. Thus, the student later hesitates calling herself multilingual, and answers my question on whether she considers herself a multilingual person saying: *Maybe yes, but I am not satisfied with my Romanian and English knowledge.* This perception of incomplete multilingualism appears at another student as well, in the sense that he considers himself *partly multilin-*

[4] Each interview excerpt is followed by the author's coding for a more efficient identification of the source.

gual because he/she *could learn more languages.* This incomplete or partial multilingualism view suggests that students view multilingualism as being an end-state, an endpoint that should be achieved and those who have not reached the ideal multiple-monolingual-in-one-person goal are not worth to be considered true or full multilinguals.

On the basis of the interviews we can point out that students have a double position towards multilingualism. On the one hand, they consider multilingualism to be a benefit; on the other hand, their understanding of multilingualism is rooted in the monolingualist perspective and it is thought to be complete if and only if perfect language knowledge is achieved.

6.2. *The educational stakeholders' views on multilingualism*

Teachers' and school principals' perception of multilingualism is again crucial in language teaching and education in general. As previously mentioned, the Transylvanian region is multilingual by nature. Local languages, environmental or state language and the existence of other European languages constitute a *de facto* multilingual situation. In the present-day multilingual situation there is a clear desire in communities to maintain not only their local, vernacular languages, i.e. linguistic diversity, but also the acquired multilingual competence as well, with the local schools managing this task. Moreover, schools constitute the preparatory institutions for multilingualism and for future employment in which language knowledge gains more and more importance.

For the purpose of this research, I interviewed teachers and school principals about the languages that are offered to students in schools and about the importance/reason of teaching these languages. What resulted from the interviews with educational stakeholders is that schools are dominated by certain languages and only certain foreign languages are accepted or promoted in schools, while other languages simply do not play a role in the 'market' of the school. The general trend is that in Romania students learn at least two foreign languages, the first being introduced at primary level (2nd or 3rd grade), while in grade 5 or high school they start learning another foreign language. Usually, the languages learnt in elementary schools are the ones continued in high schools. Unfortunately, the rigidity of the educational system and the bad economic status hardly allows for any change in the type of languages to be learnt. Thus, children learn foreign languages that were provided by the school at the time they were 8 years

old, or the languages that were chosen by their parents. In this way, the types of languages that are offered by schools depend, on the one hand, on parental needs or preferences, which are influenced by the parents' attitudes towards languages. On the other hand, teachers' attitudes towards certain languages influence both parents and students. The foreign languages offered by schools are English, German and French in the first place and occasionally Italian or Spanish were also mentioned.

(3) *(...) French and even German are pushed aside because of English, at least in this region. On the demand of the parents every child starts with English and then in the 5th grade comes mostly German. Less and less choose French.* (teGhSMs)

As we can see the teaching of English is encouraged the most. English is considered as the preferred option for linguistic unity, allowing people from different first language backgrounds to communicate. Transylvanian schools offer these languages obviously to satisfy the parents' demand on the one hand and on the other hand, to adjust to the global language teaching trends where English is considered to be the most required for future employment.

Considering German and French language education, it is interesting to note how these languages differ according to the mother tongue of the students. Although schools offer three foreign languages, Hungarian students are usually taught German and Romanian students are mostly taught French. The choice of a second foreign language cannot be attributed to any official rule or language policy. Rather, it is an implied norm, most probably tied to the history of both ethnic groups. It is also worth mentioning that some schools offer only one foreign language – English – to Hungarian minority students with reference to their overload caused by learning their mother tongue (Dégi 2009: 515–516).

Looking at the answers given to questions about the reasons for choosing to teach these languages and their importance we can observe how these attitudes are closely related to the perceived instrumentality of the languages, and there is only one case when a respondent talks about English as being *not a beautiful language.* The general usefulness of English is undoubted: it is connected to the international sphere, being *widely spread in the world* and *spoken everywhere,* so *who wants to succeed beyond our borders, then s/he has to learn English* (teTVMs). On a national level, the state language, Romanian, is the most important language and the general assumption is that minority Hungarian students

have to know it if they plan to stay and work in the country. Especially, in vocational schools teachers spend time or even extra lessons to teach the technical terminology in both languages, Hungarian and Romanian.

(4) *It (i.e. Romanian) should be acquired on a level to have the basics for living and for work. On the other hand, there are many opinions that it (i.e. learning Romanian) is not so important as there is Europe, so English or French is more important, but in my opinion, I think this refers to those who want to continue their studies, in the first place, to be successful there at the universities, and is less important for those who go to lay bricks in construction.* (prBFMs)

Attitudes towards foreign languages can be shortly described by the dominance of English. English is thought to be the language that leads to success, a language with which you can make yourself understood in all other countries worldwide. English is usually followed by German and French, but while English is important for practical reasons, learning French is good only for the sake of learning languages.

(5) *I told children that English is on the first place anyway. We can think about French as a good thing that we can learn another language.* (teBFMs)

Clearly, the steady growth of English as a *lingua franca* plays an important role in the development of multilingualism; nevertheless some teachers regard this rapid spread of English as unfair and incorrect.

(6a) *(...) I am sorry for French being so pushed aside. I have colleagues who had taught French for ages then he had to turn to English simply because he didn't have enough classes to teach.* (tehischLd)

(6b) *English is the language that leads to success, but perhaps it is unfair to other languages, especially French, and I do not think this is right.* (teGhSMs)

The aforementioned beliefs of the respondents are shared by some researchers who also fear that the spread of English is a threat for cultural diversity and a threat towards plurilingualism. Still, according to House (2002), if we accept the distinction between language for communication and language for identification

(Hüllen 1992), an increasing linguistic unity is not a threat for cultural diversity because English functions as a language for communication not as a language for identification.

In line with Cenoz and Jessner (2000) and Hoffmann (2000), I believe that the spread of English in Europe will not be a threat towards plurilingualism, if it is understood within the framework of the hybridity hypothesis. This means that in communicative situations what we have is a process of language choice at different levels which enables speakers to maintain their native language and cultural identity, but at the same time being able to use a different language as an instrument to understand each other. The increased acquisition of English in Europe does not counteract multilingualism but leads to the development of "multilingualism with English" (Hoffman 2000) on a societal and individual level.

6.3. *Types of multilingualism identified*

The objective of the last research question was to identify the patterns or types of multilingualism that are promoted by the schools. In this final section of the paper, I will address this question, building on the insights gained so far from the answers to the previous two questions.

Multilingualism in the broad sense, i.e. speaking/knowing more languages, has gained a definitely positive view both on the students' and teacher's part. Although, multilingualism as such is considered to be highly functional, several patterns of social and individual multilingualism can be traced along the interviews. The school curriculum does not include a language policy naming the languages to be taught in schools. The only specifically named language that is compulsory for all students is Romanian Language and Literature, the other languages being generally mentioned under the names of Mother Tongue and Literature, Foreign Language (1) and Foreign Language (2), the latter one being marked as optional for minority students during primary (grades 5–8) education. Consequently, language choice is determined by the school board decision. Bearing this in mind, teachers' attitudes and preferences towards the languages they mentioned are key factors in promoting different languages in schools. In the figure below I tried to concisely organize the types of multilingualism promoted by schools on the basis of what languages are already offered and the beliefs teachers have regarding these languages.

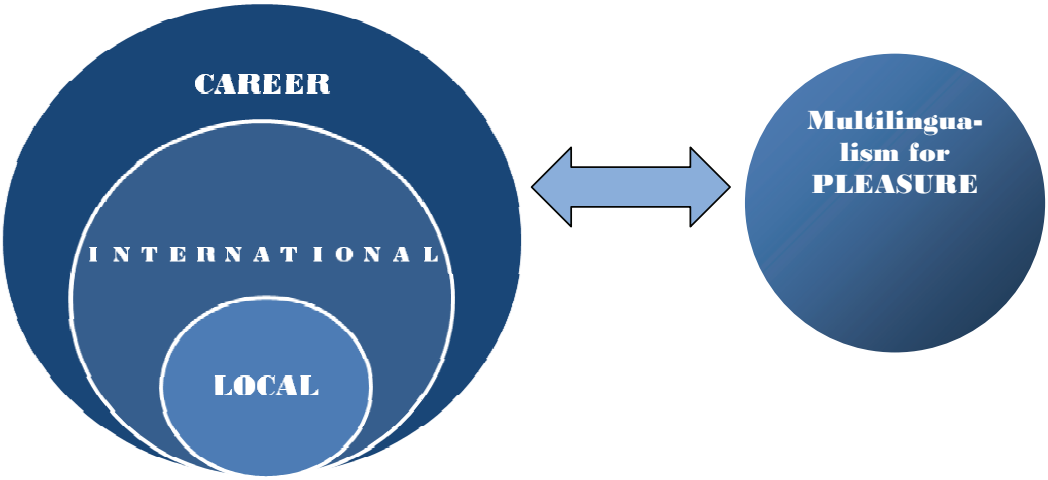

Figure 1. Types of multilingualism promoted in/by schools in Transylvania.

The main perspective on the basis of which types of multilingualism are categorized is motivation. As Figure 1 shows, subjects differentiate between learning languages for pleasure and learning languages in order to advance in career. In second language motivation research, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009:26) suggest the terms integrative and instrumental orientation, where integrative orientation refers to the positive attitudes and feelings towards the target language group, whereas instrumental orientation means the potential utilitarian gains of language proficiency, such as getting a better job or a higher salary. Borrowing the terminology from SLA research, we can adjust these terms for motivation towards language learning in general, where integrative orientation would mean positive attitudes and feeling towards learning languages. We can even consider learning languages for pleasure as a kind of multilingualism for multilingualism's sake, something similar to *l'art pour l'art.* At the same time, instrumental orientation means learning languages with some kind of practical or functional purpose. However, throughout the interview data clear distinctions can be found about the type of languages that can fall into the instrumental or career orientation. While English is considered to be *useful*, *the most important language, widely spread in Europe* and to be *on the first place anyway*; French is only *a good thing that we can learn another language.* In this way, career-multilingualism described by the dominance of English is equated with multilingualism with English. As it was mentioned previously, English is thought to be the language that leads to success, a language used for international, worldwide communication. Although the general usefulness of English is undoubted, we can find another distinction within career-multilingualism concerning future

mobility. English, as the language of success, is always connected to other European countries or the USA, conveying a cross-border – "beyond our borders" – significance. Thus, within career-multilingualism we can further distinguish between local/national multilingualism and international-multilingualism. According to the respondents' opinions, English is important for language learners who intend to study further or to travel and work abroad. English, a language seen as connected to future mobility prospects, becomes equal with international-multilingualism. Whereas, for language learners who plan to stay and work in the country, the state language is the most important language in achieving success in career. According to this, local/national-multilingualism means multilingualism with Romanian.

7. Conclusion and limitations

The section of the present paper expanding on the development in the literature on multilingualism has brought evidence to the fact that the present situation concerning multilingualism is strongly characterized by a period of change. These changes in linguistic, political and public discourses on multilingualism are linked to the European Union and its role in promoting a multilingual Europe. The intensification of mobility within and outside the Union are opening the borders between the European countries, and the new policies concerning language revitalization and language teaching that were implemented have brought about some shifts in linguistic needs. In the Romanian nation-state the bilingualism of the minority population was and still is a rule, knowledge of the state language being required at a native-like level. Yet, the new European identity calls for multilingualism and language diversity moving away from nation-states with one state-one language perspective. Multilingualism gains more and more ground and tends to overcome monolingualist views.

The data upon which the present paper is based bring about evidence that schools and language education favor and promote multilingualism by offering modern language instruction in schools. However, the numerical growth of language subjects does not necessarily mean a change concerning the monolingualist view. As it has been stated before, native-like competence in Romanian continues to be required from Hungarian minority students proving that the monolingual norm still persists.

On the basis of the interviews we can point out that students have a double position towards multilingualism. On the one hand, they consider multilingualism to be a benefit and important most probably due to the public and political discourse around today's multilingual Europe (increased mobility, easier access to information, knowledge economy etc.). On the other hand, their understanding of multilingualism is rooted in the monolingualist perspective and it is thought to be complete if and only if perfect language knowledge is achieved. This second point of view may have its roots in the traditional foreign language teaching practices the students may have experienced, where the goal was achieving native-like competence and there was a demand for perfect and ideal comprehension and production. Another explanation might be that the methods used for teaching both Romanian and Hungarian are traditional. In addition, the Romanian school curriculum has not made any distinctions between the targeted Romanian language proficiency of Romanian and Hungarian students. Romanian language education is based on the assumption that the required and adequate environment is given for minorities to use this language, and teachers, as in the case of mother tongue education, teach grammar and literature (Dégi 2008: 181) instead of language use and communication. Clearly, the attitude of the state towards Romanian language teaching, in the case of minorities, reveals a double monolingualism view, requiring native-like proficiency. It can be presumed then, that students encountering such demands in relation to their first language to be taught beside their mother tongue may generalize this view on the learning of further languages, too. Similarly, there are no differences in the teaching methods used for English as a first or second foreign language. Though differences have been observed between Romanian and Hungarian students learning English, the curriculum "has never made any distinctions in teaching pupils from the minorities who live in our country" (Iatcu 2000: 243).

Even if this monolingual view has an effect on students' perception regarding language proficiency in a given language, they still consider themselves multilinguals to a greater or lesser degree. After all, national career development is still linked to a proficiency in Romanian. As it could be seen from the interviews with teachers, students need to learn Romanian if they wish to get employed in the country, Yet the belief that their proficiency should be at a user and not a native-speaker level is also widely shared. Their proficiency should be at a user and not a native-speaker level is also widely shared.

Foreign language education is characterized by the dominance of English. Some examples stress that other foreign languages (e.g. French) tend to lose

their ground, English being considered almost as a threat to them. In this way, these other foreign languages remain important or relevant for those who want to learn languages for the sake of learning languages, while English stands to represent career-multilingualism important for students who wish to have a successful career. Multilingualism with English is perceived as a key factor in future international career prospects. These beliefs around English as having the highest instrumentality are in line with the attitudes of the rest of the European population mentioned in the report on multilingualism of the European Commission in 2007:

> 90 percent of all pupils in secondary education in the EU are now learning English […] it confirms earlier findings, according to which 71.1 percent of those questioned believed that EU citizens should be able to speak a language in addition to their mother tongue, and roughly the same percentage – 69.4 percent – thought that this language should be English. (CoE 2007: 7)

> The appeal English holds for young people is a well-researched topic. However, what is perhaps even more important is that for a variety of reasons many policy-makers and decision-makers – including parents – firmly believe that all that children at the beginning of the 21st century need to acquire is a good command of English. (CoE 2007:8–9)

While the present study has shed light on important and interesting aspects related to multilingualism and the attitudes towards it, there are certain limitations that need to be taken into account when considering the results and their contribution to the literature. The paper has focused on a phenomenon that is a very extensive and major one, i.e. multilingualism, yet, this complex phenomenon could be studied only from a rather narrow empirical perspective here. The selection of a particular setting and the low number of interviews naturally bring forth many limitations as far as the generalization of the results is concerned. The most important avenue for the future obviously lies in continuing research on this topic involving more educational sites and a larger number of subjects, including interviews with students of Romanian ethnicity as well.

References

Aronin, Larissa, Britta Hufeisen (2009). Methods of research in multilingualism studies. Reaching a comprehensive perspective. Aronin, Larissa and Britta Hufeisen, eds. *The Exploration of Multilingualism. Development of Research on L3, Multilingualism and Multiple Language Acquisition.* Amsterdam – Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 103–120.

Auer, Peter and Li Wei (2007). Introduction: Multilingualism as a problem? Monolingualism as a problem? Auer, Peter, Li Wei, eds. *Handbook of Multilingualism and Multilingual Communication.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1–12.

Bhatia, Tej K., William C. Ritchie (2006). Introduction. Bhatia, Tej K., William C. Ritchie, eds. *The Handbook of Bilingualism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1–2.

Bloomfield, Leonard (1935). *Language.* London: George Allen and Unwin.

Cenoz, Jasone, Ulrike Jessner (2000). *English in Europe: The Acquisition of a Third Language.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Commision of the European Communities (2007). Final Report. High level group on multilingualism. Luxembourg. Retrieved 13.10.2011. http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/doc/multireport_en.pdf

Cook, Vivian (1991). *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching*. London: Arnold.

Crystal, David (1997). *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

De Angelis, Gessica (2005). Multilingualism and non-native lexical transfer: an identification problem. *International Journal of Multilingualism* 2.1: 1–25.

Dewaele, Jean-Marc, Dino Petrides, Adrian Furnham (2008). The effects of trait emotional intelligence and sociobiographical variables on communicative anxiety and foreign language anxiety among adult multilinguals: A review and empirical investigation. *Language Learning* 58.4: 911–960.

Dewaele, Jean-Marc (2002). The effect of multilingualism and socio-situational factors on-communicative anxiety of mature language learners. Ytsma, Jehannes, Marc Hooghiemstra, eds. *Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Trilingualism.* Leeuwarden: Fryske Akademie.

Dégi, Zsuzsanna (2008). Predarea limbii statului în Târgu-Mureş şi în zonele sale limitrofe. Horváth, István, Erika Mária Tódor, eds. *O Evaluare a Politicilor de Producere a Bilingvismului*. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Limes, 173–182.

Dégi, Zsuzsanna (2009). „A született magyarnak a saját kultúrájában kellene mélyre hatni, a többit meg felhasználói szinten tudni...” (Idegennyelv-oktatáshoz fűződő attitűdök a kisebbségi magyarok körében). Borbély, Anna, Vancone, Ildikó Kremmer, Helga Hattyár, eds. *Nyelvideológiák, attitűdök és sztereotípiák*. Budapest: Tinta Könyvkiadó, 513–519.

Dörnyei, Zoltán, Ema Ushioda (2009). *Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Ducrot, Oswald, Tzvetan Todorov (1972). *Dictionnaire Encyclopedique des Sciences du Langage.* Paris: Seuil.

Edwards, John (1994). *Multilingualism*. London: Routledge.

Franceschini, Rita (2009). The genesis and development of research in multilingualism. Perspectives for further research. Aronin, Larissa and Britta Hufeisen, eds. *The Exploration of Multilingualism. Development of Research on L3, Multilingualism and Multiple Language Acquisition.* Amsterdam – Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 27–61.

Grosjean, François (1982). *Life with Two Languages*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Heller, Monica (2001). Legitimate language in a multilingual school. Heller, Monica, Marylin Martin-Jones, eds. *Voices of authority: Education and linguistic difference*. Westport: Ablex, 381–402.

Herdina, Philip and Ulrike Jessner (2002). *A Dynamic Model of Multilingualism. Perspectives of Change in Psycholinguistics.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Hoffman, Charlotte (2000). The spread of English and the growth of multilingualism with English in Europe. Cenoz, Jasone, Ulrike Jessner, eds. *English in Europe. The Acquisition of a Third Language.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1–21.

House, Juliane (2002). Developing pragmatic competence in English as a lingua franca. Knapp, Karlfried, Christiane Meierkord, eds. *Lingua Franca Communication*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 245–267.

Hüllen, Werner (1992). Identifikationssprachen und Kommunikationssprachen. *Zeitschrift für Germanistische Linguistik* 20.3: 298–317.

Iaţcu, Tatiana (2000). Teaching English as a third language to Hungarian-Romanian bilinguals. Cenoz, Jason, Ulrike Jessner eds. *English in Europe. The Acquisition of a Third Language.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 236–248.

Jessner, Ulrike (2008). Teaching third languages: findings, trends and challenges. *Language Teaching* 41.1: 15–56.

Kemp, Charlotte (2009). Defining multilingualism. Aronin, Larissa and Britta Hufeisen, eds. *The Exploration of Multilingualism. Development of Research on L3, Multilingualism and Multiple Language Acquisition.* Amsterdam – Philadelphia: John Benjamins,11–26.

Peal, Elizabeth, Wallace E. Lambert (1962). The relation of bilingualism to intelligence. *Psychological Monographs* 76: 1–23.

Saville-Troike, Muriel (2006). *Introducing Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Selinker, Larry (1972). Interlanguage. *International Review of Applied Linguistics* 10.3: 209–231.

Weinreich, Uriel (1953). *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*. The Hague: Mouton.

Author's address:

P-ţa Libertăţii nr. 1
530104, Miercurea Ciuc
Harghita
Romania
e-mail: zsiged@yahoo.com

VRSTE VIŠEJEZIČNOSTI U TRANSILVANIJSKOM ŠKOLSKOM KONTEKSTU

Istraživanja višejezičnosti su brojna i sve više zaokupljaju pozornost lingvista, političara, sociologa i psihologa. Unatoč širenju višejezičnosti, znanstvena istraživanja istočnoeuropskog višejezičnog konteksta počela su se razvijati tek u novije vrijeme.
Ovo istraživanje ima za cilj ponuditi uvid u specifičan višejezični kontekst: situaciju u transilvanijskoj autohtonoj manjini. U radu se kreće od istraživanja pojma višejezičnost i njegovog odnosa prema istraživanjima bilingvizma. Nadalje, razmatraju se definicije i laičko poimanje ovog pojma. U istraživanju se naglašavaju tri glavna pitanja koja se tiču višejezičnosti: a) na koji način učenici stranih jezika poimaju višejezičnost; b) koji su stavovi dionika u obrazovanju (nastavnika i ravnatelja) o višejezičnosti; i na kraju c) koju vrstu višejezičnosti promoviraju škole?
Kako bi odgovorili na ta pitanja provedeno je istraživanje transilvanijskog školskog konteksta. Intervjuirani su studenti, nastavnici i ravnatelji šest srednjih škola. Intervjui su pokazali da je preferirani oblik "elitna višejezičnost", koja se izjednačava s učenjem ili poznavanjem engleskog jezika. Međutim, prema različitim ciljevima vezanim uz buduću karijeru učenika, navedeno je nekoliko vidova višejezičnosti. Oni učenici koji žele ostati u matičnoj zemlji i raditi u administraciji moći će se zadovoljiti poznavanjem materinskog jezika i većinskog jezika.

Ključne riječi: višejezičnost; mađarska manjina; školski kontekst; poučavanje stranog jezika.