



## CONVENOR'S REPORT

# INTERCULTURAL CITIES WORKSHOP ON MULTILINGUALISM AS A RESOURCE FOR CITIES

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## 1. INTRODUCTION & WORKSHOP THEMES

The Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Programme sets out to foster diversity and inclusion. Language learning, maintenance and transmission are vital aspects of social cohesion, interaction and knowledge-exchange, yet data on language speakers, learners and speech communities are often overlooked in discussions of how to manage diverse citizen communities. While the notion of language diversity as a richness seems to be common sense, it is not so simple for public authorities to work out what this means in practice. ICC workshops draw on the best of research knowledge and leading practice examples to spread ideas and know-how as well as to inspire participants to continue their own good practice in this area. The workshop was attended by participants<sup>1</sup> from existing member cities as well as new cities. The organizing team extend their thanks in particular Claudia Emmanuel and all her colleagues as well as to the staff at Alhóndiga in Bilbao, the venue for the workshop. The workshop examined the concepts of societal multilingualism and individual plurilingualism, and its programme offered examples of multilingualism and plurilingualism in practice. Its objectives were: (1) to discuss practical ways of raising awareness of the potential of language diversity for better outcomes in public services, better educational results, and business development/innovation, and (2) to explore how cities can capitalize on the language resources of all their citizens to improve education, economy, tourism, cultural life etc. Through a series of expert talks, case studies, presentations of good practice from city representatives and discussions, the participants addressed five key themes over two days.

### 1) Languages and cultural heritage

*Should encouraging multilingualism be a role for those involving in promoting cultural heritage? How can such these sites and actors promote their multilingual credentials?*

### 2) The languages we see and hear in our cities

*Which languages can we see and hear in a city, for instance in signage or in the media? Who makes these decisions? Are some languages more visible than others? Why?*

### 3) Language advocacy and activism

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<sup>1</sup> List of participants provided at the end of this report.

*Should cities have language policies? How can cities promote local regional/minority languages without excluding some citizens?*

#### **4) Languages and the economy**

*Can we measure the value of linguistic diversity in a city's economy? Are there cost-effective yet high-impact solutions to making the most all the languages spoken in a city? How do cities ensure that they are maximizing their language capital?*

#### **5) Social and informal language learning**

*Are cities responding adequately to older learners or learners who want to learn lesser-taught languages? How can a city's spaces be used for informal language learning? Is this type of language learning successful and worth fostering?*

### **KEYNOTE PRESENTATION: PROFESSOR PIET VAN AVERMAET**

Prof. Dr. Piet Van Avermaet (University of Ghent, Belgium) is Director of the university's Centre for Diversity & Learning. His expertise and research interests lie in the study of diversity and social inequality in education, educational linguistics, multilingual and multicultural education, language and integration of immigrants, sociolinguistics and language testing. His plenary presentation at the seminar explored perceptions regarding asset and deficit versions of multilingualism: a 'good' multilingualism, deemed to be advantageous for mobility, jobs and learning, and a 'bad' multilingualism, which is seen as an obstacle for second language acquisition and where parents who refuse to speak the official language at home are seen as preventing integration. By drawing on examples from Flanders, this presentation explored the distinguishing features of urban schools in linguistically diverse contexts, and foregrounded some of the pressing issues experienced by pupils and educators, including:

- Persistent ethnic segregation and inequality (in Flanders for instance, 70% of pupils from a migrant background are the secondary education vocational track)
- Restrictive educational policies regarding language use
- Denial of linguistic capital.

One particularly perplexing outcome from empirical studies indicated that a distinctly monolingual mindset was present amongst teachers in the most linguistically diverse schools investigated by researchers. Their research also indicated that monolingual attitudes amongst teaching staff correlated with decreased trust placed by teachers in their pupils. Lack of trust negatively impacts on expectations of cognitive outcomes. Good practice from the city of Ghent was presented, where teachers were trained to exploit the multilingual repertoires of their pupils as a tool for learning. A five-year study in Ghent found that: children in the experimental schools scored equally well in the Dutch reading tests as those in the control schools; self-confidence of children in the experimental schools was markedly higher; teachers with a monolingual mindset before the study developed positive attitudes to multilingualism in the classroom.

### **CAROUSEL 1: SHORT PARALLEL PRESENTATIONS ON LOCAL EXAMPLES**

The seminar used a carousel approach to showcase examples of good practice from city representatives. Each carousel presented local experiences in five-minute slots, followed by five minutes for questions. After ten minutes, participants moved to the next example, allowing each participant to hear about each local practice in turn in a small-group format.

WILLIAM CISILINO, UDINE: PROMOTING LANGUAGE DIVERSITY IN ROAD SIGNAGE – THE WORK OF THE REGIONAL AGENCY FOR FRIULIAN LANGUAGE

Friulia is an autonomous region in Italy with four official languages - Friulian, German, Slovenian and Italian. It is therefore home to many plurilinguals, including migrants. The city of Udine has a population of 100 000 people; Friulian is present in street signs, tourist information etc. The presentation explored competences in linguistic matters, and positive attitudes to Friulian amongst migrant parents who want their children to learn the language. William Cisilino drew attention to the work of ARLeF<sup>2</sup>, and to growing links between promoting regional languages and migrant language learning.

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AURELIE THUEZ/MAGALI ROBERT, PARIS. LE BILINGUISME EST UN CADEAU, PAS UN FARDEAU : L'ASSOCIATION DULALA – DEFIS ET BONNES PRATIQUES A PARIS.

Aurélie Thuez and Magali Robert (Montreuil) presented the work of the association DULALA (*D'une langue à l'autre*<sup>3</sup>) which sets out to support bilingual families and those involved in plurilingual education, home language maintenance and multiculturalism. Focused actions include work with kindergartens, school staff and parents, rolling out training for educators and childminders. The association promotes bilingual storytelling and multilingual resources. This presentation, supported by helpful illustrative documentation, provided some key insights into this example of best practice in the Parisian region.

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PATRICE VANDAMME, LYON: LINGUISTIC HERITAGE, POETRY AND THEATRE, LA COMPAGNIE LES ARTPENTEURS

*Les arTpenteurs* are a multidisciplinary theatre company from Lyon. Working within a diverse neighbourhood, with many returnees from north Africa, established families from migrant backgrounds and new immigrants, the theatre company approaches the languages of their area as an undervalued resource. The poetry project<sup>4</sup> described by Patrice Vandamme placed languages in a public space. *Les arTpenteurs* organised workshops with migrants where people were encouraged to find poems or other texts in their language, and helped translate them in French. Individuals were trained, and recitals filmed (recordings available online). Their mission was to ensure that all languages should be heard, even if only by one listener. French speakers also participated through recitals in French. Patrice Vandamme reflected on the links created between participants, and an increased sense of well-being and pride in the visibility of languages hitherto ignored. The website allows visitors to select poems, to hear it in its original version as well as in French, and to read both the original text and translation as well as biographical and linguistic information.

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MATTEA LACAVE, BASTIA : BILINGUISME ET PLURILINGUISME EN CORSE : VERS UNE VILLE PHARE

Recent political changes in the city of Bastia have created an impetus to develop a language policy particularly in terms of enhancing the visibility of the Corsican language. Currently, Corsican language is offered at all levels of mainstream education, but outcomes are relatively limited with most students only attaining A1 or A2 proficiency levels. Whilst bilingual education is available, Corsican has to compete with other languages and curricular options. Mattea Lacave explored the importance of providing Corsican language learning as a second language rather than as a foreign language, and pointed to the potential role of Corsican within the plurilingual repertoires of pupils, where Corsican can act as a stepping stone for further language learning. The city of Bastia is particularly interested in innovative ways of promoting Corsican within such a plurilingual model, and

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.arlef.it/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.dunelanguelautre.org/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.duchere-en-poesies.fr/>

seeks to support the use of Corsican in contexts outside of the classroom, to extend domains of language use and to draw on artistic and creative opportunities.

## EXPERT TALK: PROFESSOR JASONE CENOZ

### *MULTILINGUALISM IN THE CITY: THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE IN DONOSTIA-SAN SEBASTIÁN*

Professor Dr. Jasone Cenoz works at the Department of Research Methods in Education, Faculty of Education at the University of the Basque Country, Donostia/San Sebastian. Her research focuses on the psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic and educational aspects of bilingualism and multilingualism. Her research interests include the effect of bilingualism on third language acquisition, bilingual and multilingual education, minority languages, the age factor, the linguistic landscape, pragmatic and phonetic competence and research methods in bilingualism and multilingualism. Her presentation focussed on the multilingualism we see all around us in the cityscape: street names, shop signs, advertisements, graphics, etc., sometimes taken for granted or ignored by passers-by. Prof. Cenoz explored the sociolinguistic and policy contexts of Basque and Spanish language use in the linguistic landscape, drawing pertinent comparisons with Ljouwert-Leeuwarden, the capital of Friesland, a bilingual province in the Netherlands.

## CASE STUDY 1: VICENT CLIMENT-FERRANDO

### *MIGRANT LANGUAGES AS URBAN SOCIAL CAPITAL: BARCELONA AND LONDON COMPARED.*

Vicent Climent-Ferrando provided a comparative case study of Barcelona and London in terms of approaches to managing and exploiting linguistic diversity. In addition to comparing the linguistic profiles of both cities, the speaker drew our attention to key measures in Barcelona that seek to foster multilingualism in companies, thus taking advantage of the languages spoken by the city's inhabitants. For instance, the PromES project (Promoting Multilingualism in Exporting SMEs), funded by the EU's Lifelong Learning programme, aims at promoting communication skills and identifying language communication gaps in exporting SMEs. The project provided training on intercultural communication and practical sessions on language audits.

## CAROUSEL 2: SHORT PARALLEL PRESENTATIONS ON LOCAL EXAMPLES

### FERNANDO ALANA, BASQUE COUNTRY: LANGUNE: BOOSTING COOPERATION IN THE LANGUAGE INDUSTRY

Set up in 2010, Langune is an association of Basque Country companies from the language industry sector. It grew from the work of a team formed in 2008 within the Gipuzkoa Berritzen-Innobasque platform. It currently brings together some 35 companies in the Basque Country belonging to the fields of translation, content, teaching and language technology. Fernando Alana presented some aspects of translation, language services, language technology etc. provided by the cluster's members,

such as subtitling. Langune aims to enhance the competitiveness and visibility of the sector and members of the association. Within a context of globalization, it deals with Basque, Spanish, English and other world languages.

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#### ELISABETH ZURBRIGGEN, GENEVA: LANGUES D'ORIGINE DES ELEVES : EXEMPLE DE BONNES PRATIQUES

This presentation focused on the Story Sack project, in a context where there are some 160 nationalities represented in public schools in Geneva, and some 184 nationalities in the canton. The Story Sacks<sup>5</sup>, which grew out of a British literacy initiative, provide a portable resource for children where children's books are available in multiple languages as well as resources which support general language awareness across multiple languages through a colour-coding system. The project engendered much voluntary support, and has positively contributed to the cognitive development and reading proficiency of children. The professionalism of the Story Sack project was praised by all seminar participants, which provided a concrete example of multilingual language support in the community.

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#### TITIKA-KONSTANTINA TSINTONI, PATRAS: MIGRANT LANGUAGE LEARNING

This presentation examined some of the projects based in the city of Patras, particularly amongst immigrants from Eastern Europe and the Middle East including undocumented transit migrants. The Odysseus programme for instance provides free Greek language and culture lessons for adult migrants. There are also reception classes in Greek in primary and secondary schools, along with a programme of cultural mediation based on peer learning. An online platform is used for volunteer mediators offering help. Ms Tsintoni noted issues in the city related to lack of awareness regarding the nature and use of multilingualism. Much of the discussion following this presentation focused on the Greek language tests for long-term residence.

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#### CONCEPCIÓN JIMENO-CALDERÓN, MADRID : THE SPANISH PARLA NETWORK

This presentation reported on the city of Parla's network for Spanish language learning. The International Cooperation and Intercultural Department promote and coordinate the network which involves local associations working together to provide free Spanish lessons for newcomers. The network sets out to promote the integration of citizens of all foreign-born individuals who live in Parla; to encourage the knowledge of the city: history, geography, customs, festivals, cultural activities, municipal, educational, health, associative services etc.; to facilitate contacts and mutual understanding between different groups as part of this network, participating in cultural weeks and other events.

### CASE STUDY 2: NORA DE BUSTURIA, BILBAO

#### *IDIOMAS DEL MUNDO*

Nora De Busturia reported on innovative activities provided by the "languages of the world" project, including the "English on Tuesdays" initiative which promotes informal language learning. The focus on English arose from a very high demand for the language. In partnership with the university, the initiative involves international groups of young people, often Erasmus students. Groups of learners take part in carousels, different activities in small groups where they move from one activity to

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<sup>5</sup> See [http://www.forumlecture.ch/myUploadData/files/2010\\_3\\_Froidevaux.pdf](http://www.forumlecture.ch/myUploadData/files/2010_3_Froidevaux.pdf) for an account of the use of Story Sacks.

another. Many intercultural networks and friendships have been created as a result. The presentation drew our attention to the important role played by informal, social language learning in addition to formal classroom contexts.

### CASE STUDY 3: SARAH MCMONAGLE, HAMBURG

#### *THE LUCIDE NETWORK OF MULTILINGUAL CITIES IN EUROPE*

LUCIDE is a network seeks to develop ideas about how to manage multilingual citizen communities. Through building up a picture of how communication occurs in multilingual settings across the EU and beyond, it aims to help institutions (councils, schools, hospitals) and local and national economies make better productive use of diversity as an economic resource and to strengthen social cohesion by fostering better communication and mutual understanding. The LUCIDE network has conducted extensive primary and secondary research on multilingualism in Europe's cities, as well as running seminars and workshops. It has published a series of city reports and toolkits on multilingualism which are available to download<sup>6</sup>. The toolkits are designed for use by all stakeholders in multilingual cities, and provide tips and examples of good practice in a variety of sectors of city life (e.g. health, education, economy).

### CASE STUDY 4: ASIER LARRINAGA, BILBAO

#### *BASQUE BROADCASTING COMPANY (EIKEN AUDIO-VISUAL CLUSTER)*

The Eiken Audiovisual Cluster<sup>7</sup> is composed of members from the entire value chain of the audiovisual industry, from content generation to its distribution and exhibition, including the development and use of new technologies for their application in both conventional and digital environments. Asier Larrinaga, from the Basque Broadcasting Company, presented a challenge for broadcasting that could be labelled as "from dual to bilingual". The Basque Broadcasting Company was created in 1982 to promote Basque language and culture and to provide information in Basque and encourage citizen participation. One channel is provided in Basque, with a second channel provided in Spanish, along with radio and a bilingual web site. This dual model was not considered adequate, lacking opportunities for exchange. The introduction of a new bilingual model bilingual aims at making Basque visible in Spanish media. The company now provides cultural and children's content in Basque on Spanish radio, and they would like to include political speeches and interviews with citizens and advertising in Basque in the Spanish channels. One noteworthy aspect of this talk was regarding a decision to abandon subtitling, based on feedback that these hampered the viewing experience. New technology allows for the provision of subtitles that can be hidden. The company is also exploring whether subtitling in other languages is a possibility, including English and other language, thus embracing a multilingual approach to broadcasting.

### CASE STUDY 5: TOBIAS SCHROEDLER, DUBLIN

#### *A VALUE ASSESSMENT OF MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS FOR THE IRISH ECONOMY AND ITS RESULTING IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICIES*

This presentation brought the employers' perspective to the seminar. From an economic viewpoint, Ireland stands in an unprecedented and unique position. The rapid changes in its economy and society over the last few decades have led the country from a mostly agricultural production economy

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<sup>6</sup> [www.urbanlanguages.eu](http://www.urbanlanguages.eu)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.eikencluster.com/en/basque-audiovisual>

to one of the most service-reliant and IT-reliant economies in Europe. With the onset of recession and deteriorating economic conditions in the late 2000s, the country has been left with a number of problems, including open jobs in the service industry which require foreign language skills, emigration patterns among young professionals, and lack of general business opportunities for Irish companies who seek to expand their exports. The doctoral research project described by Mr Schroedler sets out to make concrete suggestions for foreign language education policy-making, based on market developments and economic circumstances. He described the language needs of business and trade in Ireland before discussing their implications on a policy level. His talk drew on data from eight interviews carried out with experts on international business and trade, national and international business representation and some of the leading language and culture representations in Ireland, as well as a quantitative survey of the labour market in Ireland.

## CONCLUSION

The venue for the seminar, the Alhóndiga, provided an ideal setting for discussions on language policy, diversity and migration. The multi-purpose location, providing extensive municipal cultural and sporting facilities, was an excellent choice of venue and showcased the city's commitment to facilitating citizen participation and lifelong learning. The seminar brought together representatives from ICC partner cities as well as several representatives from cities who are not formal members of the ICC programme. The involvement of elected officials, civil partners, cultural actors, academic representatives, the volunteer sector and the language industry led to rich discussions throughout the two days. Some of the main points from these emergent themes are drawn together below, followed by the questions, actions and suggestions which arose from the final moderated reflective session.

Multilingualism is not only educationally, socially and economically desirable but it contributes to shaping an open, pluralistic identity of the local community. It represents an intrinsic as well as an economic value. It is important to stimulate municipalities to develop specific city language policies which mobilise both the socio-cultural and economic dimensions of language. Participants noted that it is no longer useful to approach language learning in a compartmentalized fashion (first/second/foreign languages etc.), within a native speaker model which aims at full proficiency, but rather to foster transculturality, partial competences and pragmatic multilingualism in addition to specialist language learning.

Language policies are never neutral, they often legitimise ideological choices and power relations. It can be difficult to convince people of the educational and economic power of exploring and valuing multilingual repertoires, especially in contexts where a monolingual mindset is dominant and where some versions of multilingualism continue to be viewed as a deficit rather than an asset. Cities should contest ineffective monolingual policies and reconstruct monolingual beliefs from grassroots examples of projects which make clear links between the languages spoken by citizens: home languages, host languages, regional and minority languages and foreign/world languages. Whilst it can be difficult to 'sell' multilingualism as a resource outside of prestigious, employer-oriented contexts, it can often start by a commitment to effective host language learning for newcomers, and, once acquired, to use this basis as a means of exploiting the plurilingual repertoires of adults and children.

## KEY QUESTIONS:

- Which municipalities have a (multilingual) language policy?
- Where will the money come from to conduct research? Cities have very restricted budgets, but research is clearly needed on language attitudes, on appropriate training & awareness-raising activities.
- What does 'reality' (i.e. the social reality or the issues that cities encounter on a daily basis) become 'the accepted reality' - embodied in policy, supported, funded etc.?
- How do we translate the 'realities' we have uncovered for those who can't/won't see them?
- Need to improve and increasing the involvement of immigrants & minority language speakers themselves in linguistic policies

- How do we maximize the opportunities represented by good practices? How do we extend these good practices beyond the local, to the regional or international?
- How can we bring 'prestigious' versions of multilingualism and less 'prestigious' versions together?
- How to articulate the relationship between promoting regional languages and promoting multilingualism in local language policy development?
- Can city policy-makers help increase the economic value of languages spoken locally?
- How to use the first languages of adults as a resource when they come to learning the host language?
- How to involve politicians in terms of helping understand the importance of promoting language learning in schools? Especially in terms of promoting plurilingualism (not just English only).
- To know more about initiatives which mobilize employees' language skills
- How to approach local municipalities to make them value the resources represented by their multilingual citizens? And take actions?
- How can we manage linguistic diversity - state languages, regional languages and migrant languages in an equitable manner?

## SUGGESTIONS:

- Plurilinguals possess resources that can be used for knowledge creation, acquisition and sharing. It's important to articulate the activities of local associations to promote multilingualism. Share good practice examples, but we need to find ways of communicating them in ways that support disseminate, not just long lists or broken web links. Create contacts and synergies between municipalities and civil society, making connections between politicians, media, and individuals who are ready to share their time, skills, passion and knowledge. We have to explicitly communicate about what we do with politicians and media.
- Multilingual speakers (including children) bring vital linguistic resources. We need to learn how to share these resources and move away from the assumption that the teacher 'has' to be in 100% control. Raise language awareness in mainstream classrooms. Create peer teaching and buddy schemes to support language learners. Involvement of parents is crucial for intergenerational language transmission. It is vital to communicate to immigrant communities the necessity and importance of maintaining, learning and using home languages. Giving visibility to immigrants' mother tongues helps achieve this. Languages are the biggest step to ensuring integration and engagement. Lack of language competences poses serious difficulties for integration.
- How can we make progress in promoting multilingualism as an asset - bottom-up approaches in addition to top-down measures are needed. We need to use accounts of good practice, which media can relay, e.g. by asking enterprises, cultural organisations for success stories. International co-operation based on the competences and connections of citizens with linguistic skills creates a compelling story where multilingualism is seen as an asset for local companies. Gathering data on languages and cultures is important for evidence-based policies. Cities should recognise the reality of data of linguistic diversity, and allow the various services to access and use these data. Enhance cooperation between associations and local authorities. Try to hire staff with migrant languages; maintain a language database of employees. Encourage libraries to stock resources in multiple languages; Celebrate world and European heritage days. The Auberbabel<sup>8</sup> association in Aubervilliers offers 'language dinners' where people buy together products using the medium of a shared language, cook and eat together;

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<sup>8</sup> <http://auberbabel.org/>

the Souffleurs collective<sup>9</sup> has developed opportunities to create poetic linguistic heritage to the community. **Progress comes when political will and resources are present.**



## SOME RESOURCES MENTIONED DURING THE SEMINAR:

### BOOKS:

[“Managing Diversity in Education: Languages, Policies, Pedagogies”](#), published by Multilingual Matters (2013) edited by David Little, Constant Leung & Piet Van Avermaet.

[“Language Testing, Migration and Citizenship: Cross-National Perspectives on Integration Regimes”](#), published by Multilingual Matters (2011), edited by Piet Van Avermaet & Guus Extra

[“Linguistic Landscape in the City”](#), published by Multilingual Matters (2010), edited by Elana Shohamy, Eliezer Ben-Rafael & Monica Barni.

[“Towards Multilingual Education: Basque Educational Research from an International Perspective”](#), published by Multilingual Matters (2009), by Jasone Cenoz.

### SHORT FILMS:

*Yu Ming is Airm Dom*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqYtG9BNhfM>

*Hetain Patel: Who Am I, Think Again*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPhHHtn8On8>

### OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

[Linguistic Landscape: An International Journal.](#)

[International Association of Multilingualism](#)

LUCIDE website: [www.urbanlanguages.eu](http://www.urbanlanguages.eu) (including link to City Reports on Multilingualism, and [Toolkits](#))

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<sup>9</sup> [http://www.les-souffleurs.fr/Press\\_review.pdf](http://www.les-souffleurs.fr/Press_review.pdf)

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FURTHER USEFUL ACADEMIC READINGS:

Aronin, L., & Singleton, D. (2012). *Multilingualism*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

De Angelis, G. (2007). *Third or Additional Language Acquisition*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Weber, J.-J., & Horner, K. (2012). *Introducing Multilingualism: A Social Approach*. New York: Routledge.

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