Introduction

> I wish to place before the reader some of the usual descriptions
> of the Taj, and ask him to take note of the impressions left in his
> mind. These descriptions do really state the truth – as nearly as the
> limitations of languages will allow. But language is a treacherous
> thing, a most unsure vehicle, and it can seldom arrange descriptive
> words in such a way that they will not inflate the facts – by help of
> the reader's imagination, which is always ready to take a hand and
> work for nothing, and do the bulk of it at that.
>
> Mark Twain, Following the Equator, Ch. LIX

Our collaboration on this book began, fittingly, in the Basque country, when we were invited to talk about trilingualism. It is probably not accidental that this meeting should have encouraged us to embark on a project about multilingualism: we found ourselves in a bilingual country, were giving our papers in a third language, English, and we were drawing on our experiences of multilingual family environments.

For over half a century now, 'bilingualism' (the use of two languages) has become the subject of systematic scholarly investigation. Bilingualism has been scientifically reported on as an alternative to (sometimes as a divergence from) monolingualism. In this sense, the study of bilingualism encompassed any language situation in individuals or societies that involved more than *one* language. Mostly it covered contact situations between two languages but it also subsumed other contexts involving trilingualism or multilingualism. In this book we propose to look at 'trilingualism' (the use of three languages) and multilingualism (the use of more than two languages) as distinct from bilingualism because we feel that the subject merits separate treatment, both when looking at individuals who acquire and use three (or more) languages and when taking a wider sociolinguistic perspective. Naturally, it is not always possible to draw a clear line between the number of languages present in certain contact situations, especially in sociolinguistic contexts, and our use of the term multilingualism takes cognisance of that.

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It is likely that many readers of this book are bilingual or multilingual themselves. It is for them, as well for those who have an incipient or established interest in the subject, that we put together our insights into this unique language condition, gained both from personal experience and in the course of our academic careers. It may therefore be relevant to introduce a personal note on each of the authors. Charlotte Hoffmann grew up with two mother tongues and later studied foreign languages as part of her education. When she moved to the UK to teach languages she added a third language to her repertoire and also gained a fourth one owing to family connections with speakers of yet another language. The use of her different languages has been dictated by social, professional and family considerations. Anat Stavans became multilingual because she was born to immigrant parents who spoke the same mother tongue but for ideological reasons raised their children in a different language. She had the opportunity to travel and live in several countries in different continents, acquiring various languages along the way. She had the privilege of a true multilingual to use and manipulate languages as needed. Eventually she made a home and social life with people who themselves are mostly multilingual, and she lives in a country where multilingualism is the rule rather than the exception. In similar ways, and yet in different geographical regions and temporal frames, both authors have had a comparable upbringing in and around multilingualism. In fact, be it in England or in Israel, our use of all languages throughout our daily routines is similar, and we share the experience of having raised our children with three languages and accommodating different cultures. This should explain why we have developed an enduring interest in all things multilingual and multicultural.

Our stories are replicated many times over all over the world, for it is factors relating to birth, upbringing and education, travel, marriage, personal contacts and occupation, and to the cultural and sociopolitical context in which one finds oneself, that clearly have a bearing on the development and maintenance of bilingualism and multilingualism. Multilingual issues are fascinating because, beyond their ubiquity and partial similarity, they always have an intimate personal dimension. We hope that what we say will reflect both our experience of researching and teaching the subject, as well as our own involvement with the reality of being multilingual – and will thus stimulate the reader's curiosity.

In this book, therefore, the term multilingualism is taken in its literal meaning: the presence of more than two languages either in individuals or in society. Our underlying thesis is that bilingualism is

not the sum of two monolingualisms, and that trilingualism/multi-lingualism does not equal bilingualism with the addition of (an)other language(s). The difference is more substantial. Sometimes the term 'plurilingualism' is used in contrast to 'multilingualism' (for instance, by the Council of Europe) to emphasise the idea that learning and using other languages is not just additive but that individuals and communities are enriched both linguistically and culturally through the interaction of different languages. However, the 'multilingual-ism–plurilingualism' terminological distinction is not widely made, and it is not observed in this book. We tend to use 'multilingualism' to refer to both sociolinguistic and personal aspects, and 'trilingual-ism' when discussing individuals with three languages; most of the extant literature covers subjects using three languages, not more. To account for the multidimensionality of trilingualism/multilingualism a multidisciplinary approach needs to be taken, whether the focus is on individuals or groups and larger sociopolitical entities.

Multilingualism and multiculturalism have a long history. They are phenomena that change as political, economic, social, cultural and personal circumstances of speakers evolve. Some trends appear to be working against lesser-spoken languages and, therefore, lin-guistic diversity, but at the same time, other developments such as internationalisation, migration and revived interest in minority languages have the effect of stimulating multilingualism and chal-lenging traditional attitudes that favour one-language-only constella-tions. In many societies, education is increasingly assigned a pivotal role in helping to promote or maintain multilingual language com-petence in pupils. It is clear that language plays an important role in the emergence of group identification and personal identity, and it is equally clear that new forms of multilingualism are emerging that include the presence of a lingua franca, predominantly English, in our increasingly interdependent world. We examine some of the many ways in which contemporary developments can have an impact on language-contact situations. Reference is made to differ-ent languages and locations, but the focus always remains on how societies as well as individuals react to, and are affected by, contact with and use of different languages. To this end, we approach our study of multilingualism not just as a language phenomenon but as a condition that involves culture, ethnicity and identity at the micro- and macro-levels of society (Lo 1999).

In recent years, the study of multilingualism – and more specif-ically trilingualism – has expanded in volume, disciplinary perspec-tives, methodology, theoretical scope and descriptive coverage. In

addition to a number of journals that are solely devoted to the topic, other more general periodicals have also made room for this field of enquiry. Equally, a growing number of books and collections are providing a deeper understanding of contemporary trilingualism and multilingualism from different perspectives: for instance, publications focusing on psycholinguistic issues of multilingual competence and development (Herdina and Jessner 2002) and the educational system (Cenoz and Genesee 1998; in the Basque Country, Cenoz 2009); or books that provide insights on what people – embedded in different cultural practices – do when they read and write in different languages (Blackledge and Creese 2010; Martin-Jones and Jones 2000); or compilations that gather studies on trilingualism in the family and in the community as well as within the educational system, as family, community and schools are the main sources that enable the birth and growth of a multilingual individual (Hoffmann and Ytsma 2004). Other scholars have taken up a more psycho-socio-linguistic approach to multilingualism, and they see it through the impact of power relations (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004) or through language use and attitudes towards three languages within the European bilingual context (Lasagabaster and Huguet 2007). There is also a recent comprehensive account of multilingual communication which maps different issues from different perspectives on the process of becoming, acting, staying and living multilingual(ly) (Auer and Li 2009).

In this book we try to present multilingualism as an evolving field of inquiry in its own right, and we highlight the multiple facets of trilingualism as a new 'lingualism order' in an era of globalisation. The choice of topics and the way they are developed were driven by the wish to bring together existing research as well as the need to analyse contemporary trends that promote multilingualism. These trends represent opposing forces and throw up issues that require special accommodation to the new multilingual realities worldwide and across the lifespan of multilingual individuals and societies.

The book is arranged into two main parts. The first four chapters focus on societal and global issues, and they provide a historical and theoretical backdrop to the discussion of contemporary developments. The second part describes individual trilingualism through an examination of what constitutes being, maintaining and developing into a multilingual individual in different contexts; it includes a review of the uses of – and attitudes to – the multilingual's languages, the way multilingualism is accommodated and, finally, the educational means that foster, preserve and encourage multilingualism.

Chapter 1 takes a broad sweep at multilingualism through history and introduces a number of multilingual contexts that have yielded early records of language contact; for instance, conquest and colonisation, both military and religious. Other topics covered concern intellectual revolutions such as the expanding role of reading, writing and education, migratory movements of populations and other geopolitical events leading to the emergence of multilingual territories.

A number of basic concepts relating to multilingual organisation are discussed and exemplified in Chapter 2. The aim of the chapter is to outline terms drawn from various disciplines that are used in the description of contemporary sociolinguistic trends leading to multilingualism. This entails looking at forces behind language spread and at the emergence of new patterns of multilingualism in society today. Certain contemporary developments (notably immigration) keep society and its sociolinguistic constellations in constant flux, as do the recognition of linguistic minorities and language spread that is accelerated by schooling and modern communication. Some multilingual states are guided by certain ideologies; others have elaborated language policies which they pursue consistently over a long period of time, while yet others respond to language issues if and when the need arises. A number of examples from diverse sociolinguistic settings and one longer case study are presented to illustrate the different patterns and developments.

The focus of Chapter 3 is linguistic minorities in multiple language-contact contexts. Sometimes the members of such speech communities are bilingual in their own language and the country's majority language; in other cases, linguistic-minority members are trilingual (or learn even more languages) because they need to use a regional or local minority language (or more than one) in addition to their own and the majority language. A number of issues specifically related to linguistic minorities such as questions of official legal status, language use and language survival are given prominence here, as well as some general factors that shape the particular character of linguistic minorities. The discussion of four case studies of minorities in two different multilingual contexts takes into account historical aspects, the territorial and social distribution of speakers, the sociopolitical status of the minority in relation to the majority language and the relationship of the three languages involved with each other.

Chapter 4 examines the linguistic repercussions of sociopolitical developments such as postcolonialism and globalisation, and also the general mechanisms involved in the spreading of a dominant colonial language, often accompanied by commercial exploitation

and sometimes fuelled by religious or cultural motivations. A situation of competition and/or conflict between colonial and indigenous languages may continue even after political domination has ceased. Colonisation affected not only the political and economic structure of the colonised territories, but also their very cultural fabric. Postcolonialism brought a rearrangement of sociolinguistic patterns, and it left behind a linguistic legacy still visible today: three such new patterns of multilingualism are outlined in case studies from three continents. More recently, multilingualism has been discussed in the light of phenomena of internationalisation and globalisation that gathered momentum in the economic sphere; their linguistic concomitant, the spread of English, has touched the sociolinguistic situation of every continent. A consideration of three different types of multilingualism with English found in Asia, Africa and Europe ends this chapter.

The second part of the book surveys studies on multilingualism with a focus on trilingualism at the individual level, and it explores the main theme of how individuals acquire and negotiate their multilingualism as they go through their lives. We frame this part in relation to psycholinguistic topics such as competence, processing and language use, including code-switching. At the interface between individual multilinguals and their multilingual societies arise issues stemming from the influence of family and community, such as language choice and the negotiation of identities. To conclude, we look at certain educational issues involved in supporting, fostering and maintaining individual multilingualism.

Chapter 5 starts by looking at general concepts used in the study of child and adult bilingualism and multilingualism, and it then considers some of the similarities and differences between these two phenomena. An overview of case studies into individual multilingualism traces a number of different ways of becoming and staying multilingual. This leads to a discussion of factors that can have an impact on language development and subsequent use, such as the frequency and type of contact, the need to use the languages, and attitudes and emotional attachments towards them. A classification of multilinguals on the basis of age and manner of acquisition is attempted – and illustrated by reference to published case studies.

Individual multilingualism, as explored in Chapter 6, is driven by the need to use one's languages depending on why, where, how and with whom one is communicating. Seen from this perspective, multilingualism is all about making choices. Some are made by the language users and are based on knowledge and awareness; other

choices seem to be made by cognitive mechanisms when processing the systems we have at our command. Children and adults differ in the way they develop multilingual competence, process multiple linguistic systems and put these to use. We argue that multilingualism is dynamic, not only at its inception but across the lifespan of multilinguals, depending on their linguistic needs and opportunities within social and personal circumstances. Considerable complexities are involved in the language behaviour of multilinguals, and their exploration requires broader, multidisciplinary analytical frameworks.

Chapter 7 deals with the question of how multilingualism is accommodated at different levels. The socioeconomic and geopolitical forces that are present in our lives and influence our interaction require that languages be accommodated at the micro- and macro-levels of human routines. This means that individuals, communities and nations must juggle a multitude of linguistic codes with social needs and economic and political changes. We try to look for answers to questions such as: How and where do multilinguals learn different strategies for organising the use of their languages and meeting the social, cultural and psychological requirements of the context in which they find themselves? What influences are brought to bear? What is the role of different beliefs, customs and cultural practices and how are multilinguals able to navigate such a plethora of considerations? Do they have multiple identities or one kaleidoscopic one?

Chapter 8 provides a further perspective to the formation of individual multilingualism, which is now looked at from the perspective of the established educational frameworks that provide tools, support and opportunities for its evolution and maintenance. As multilingualism all over the world becomes more widespread, institutionalised mechanisms and organisations have to respond so as to cater for the education needs emerging from new linguistic realities. Advances in technology and growing international mobility have led to the need to command more than one language. Literacy and communicative skills are changing as communication across geographic borders in real and virtual space generates more and more transnational multilingualism. This final chapter explores multilingual education in terms of contemporary perspectives on teaching and learning, and it discusses the consequences of multilingual education with regard to literacy. Depending on the specific context, multilingualism may characterise either underprivileged immigrant populations or privileged educated populations, i.e. it may be a necessity or an asset for different speakers. Multiliteracy, on the other hand, is not a natural concomitant of multilingualism, but it provides opportunities for

those who have achieved it as it fosters the ability to communicate in multiple social spheres.

Throughout this book we bring together our own research on trilingualism and multilingualism as we weave our interests into a greater scheme of things related not just to language, individuals and societies, but also to the consequences and benefits of being multilingual. We try to make a clear case for the advantages of trilingualism and multilingualism as they offer opportunities to both individuals and societies that outweigh their inherent complexities or the alleged simplicity of monolingualism. Trilingualism and multilingualism build bridges between people, countries and cultures and, irrespective of whether these bridges are built top-down (global to individual) or bottom-up (individual to global), they contribute to the achievement of much-needed changes in polarised perceptions regarding the relative merits of uniformity and diversity within a society. We believe that cultural and linguistic pluralism are positive forces for social harmony, just as being able to handle several languages and operate in different cultural climates enriches the life of individuals.

Part I

Global and societal issues in multilingualism and trilingualism