

Language and Identity Theories and experiences in lexicography and linguistic policies in a global world

Edited by
Ilaria Micheli,
Flavia Aiello,
Maddalena Toscano,
Amelia Pensabene

EUT

ATrA 7

Aree di transizione linguistiche e culturali in Africa



ATrA

Aree di transizione linguistiche e culturali in Africa

7



This book has been edited and published in the framework of the RICFVG 2018 programme funded by Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia



Opera sottoposta a *peer review* secondo
il protocollo UPI – University Press Italiane



EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, Trieste 2021.

ISBN 978-88-5511-267-3 (print)
ISBN 978-88-5511-268-0 (online)

EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste,
via Weiss 21 – 34128 Trieste
<http://eut.units.it>
<https://www.facebook.com/EUTEdizioniUniversitaTrieste>

Language and Identity Theories and experiences in lexicography and linguistic policies in a global world

Edited by
Ilaria Micheli
Flavia Aiello
Maddalena Toscano
Amelia Pensabene

Table of contents

Introduction - Ilaria Micheli	7
PART 1: GENERAL ISSUES	17
Linguistic identity in and out of Africa - Karsten Legère	18
Multilingualism in India and the significance of multilingual dictionaries - Suhnu Ram Sharma	35
The natural supremacy of spoken language. Orality and writing in Africa - Ilaria Micheli	43
From IPA to wildcards: a critical look at some African Latin orthographies - Mauro Tosco	56
PART 2: LEXICOGRAPHY AND DIDACTICS OF L2	85
L'italiano come seconda lingua nei CPIA (Centri Provinciali per l'istruzione degli Adulti): questioni e Prospettive - Emilio Porcaro	86

A bottom-up experience: the DiM project - Angela Mormone, Mariastella Battista, Amelia (Lia) Pensabene	98
Lexicography and language learning of Swahili L2 at UNIOR: the Swahili-Italian online dictionary project - Flavia Aiello, Maddalena Toscano, Rosanna Tramutoli	113
Unveiling oral and writing skills of low-literate learners of L2 Italian: from research to teaching - Marta Maffia	133
PART 3: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ORALITY AND WRITING IN MULTILINGUAL CONTEXTS, LINGUISTIC POLICIES AND CASE STUDIES	145
Farsi language and Iranian immigration in Europe - Adriano Valerio Rossi	146
Lingua e storia in Africa: considerazioni sul caso del tigrino (Eritrea ed Etiopia) - Gianfrancesco Lusini	157
Transcription and orthography in two endangered languages of Ethiopia: Ts'amakko and Ongota - Graziano Savà	174
Wolof language and literature: an introduction - Emiliano Minerba	202
The future of minority languages in Nigeria - Gian Claudio Batic	217
Linguistic ambiguity in Timor-Leste: local languages between pride and shame - Carolina Boldoni	231

Introduction

The spark that gave rise to the first reflections, which were then channelled into this volume, was lit on 7 November 2020, when the CPIA (Centro Provinciale per l'Istruzione degli Adulti), the Provincial Centre for Adult Education of Avellino celebrated the closure of the DiM Project, an international project involving, in addition to Italy, also Greece, Scotland and the islands of Malta and Cyprus.

Carried out in the framework of the *Erasmus plus KA204 - Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education programme*, the DiM (Dizionario Multilingue) had certainly represented a challenge for many actors at the same time, who, in the process of implementing the activities had found themselves having to come to terms with various problems relating to the complexity of the relationships between the linguistic code(s), the culture to which the migrants attending the classes belonged and, more generally, their identity and values, especially in the context of the global village.

In fact, it is well known that in the contemporary world diasporas play a major role in forcing human groups to face each other, people who only a few decades ago would never have had to meet, and it is equally well known that this encounter represents a delicate moment for the balance and the very maintenance of the social fabric where it takes place.

Special attention must therefore be paid to language, or languages, as the privileged instruments of the encounter, since there are aspects imbricated in inter-linguistic and inter-cultural dynamics that go beyond and accompany the mere grammatical dimension and are equally important in building solid bridges between native and non-native communities.

These aspects range from the habit of Western speakers to lead an almost monolingual life and their consequent difficulty in fully grasping what a language code represents for those who were born and live in a strongly multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-cultural environment, to a whole series of other apparently trivial factors, but which, when considered in their natural habitat, that of lived life and not that of theoretical thinking, turn out to be so intertwined that they cannot be focused on or considered independently and autonomously.

Among these, there are certainly education, the prestige reserved to written languages as privileged instruments for “high” and institutional interactions, the deep feeling of homesickness for one’s mother tongue, often transmitted from one generation to the next only in oral form and spoken by minority groups that already in their homeland do not enjoy any consideration and that during migration end up being diluted and identified simplistically according to their geographical area of origin.

All this is accompanied by the fact that there are often few people in the country of arrival who show the slightest interest in learning more about the subject and its implications, even if only with a view to improving co-existence between citizens and encouraging mutual encounters, exchanges and the integral promotion of people in an environment that is at first sight unknown.

Unravelling these issues is no easy task and involves various scientific approaches, including at least the linguistic, cognitive, psycho-pedagogical, sociological and anthropological ones.

This book, far from offering answers, is intended as a contribution to the currently lively discussions on the theme of intercultural encounter and the teaching of L2 as a means of facilitating it.

The first to enthusiastically join the initiative were those colleagues who had participated as speakers in the closing day of the DiM project on 7 November 2020 and who, in most cases, had followed closely, as consultants and reviewers, the work of compiling and producing the multilingual and multimedia dictionary that can now be consulted free of charge online at www.dimproject.net.

They were then joined by other experts, who are also often personally involved in projects concerning diasporas, minority people and/or orally transmitted and endangered languages.

As the reader will see, the majority of the papers refers to Africa, since the concept note of the work developed from a brainstorming among africanist

friends, but we are sure that all the papers presented will be helpful to all those who are interested in the dynamics connecting language - identity - linguistic policies, above all in multilingual contexts all around the world.

Before starting our trip in the pages of the book, we would like to express our sincere thanks to all the contributors.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTENTS

This book is a collective work featuring three different types of contributions.

More theoretical chapters that introduce the reader to some thorny issues such as endangered languages, multilingualism and the eternal dichotomy between orality and writing - Legère on the UNESCO policies and the (ab) use of the (derogatory) term *indigenous* referring to minority languages and peoples; Sharma on Multilingualism in India; Micheli on the dynamics at play in the relations between oral and written languages in Sub-Saharan Africa and Tosco on the provocative issue of graphic systems for African national or minority languages that do not have a consolidated written tradition - alternate with more descriptive chapters focused on specific case studies - Rossi on the Farsi diaspora; Lusini on Tigrinya; Savà on two endangered languages of Southern Ethiopia (Ts'amakko and Ongota); Minerba on Wolof; Batic on the future of minority languages in Nigeria and Boldoni on the situation of local languages in Timor Leste -, all derived from fieldwork experiences.

Finally, in order to offer a glance at the present-day huge movements of people from Low and Middle Income Countries towards the western world, some applicative chapters relate more specifically to L2 teaching and learning, with a focus on inclusive projects for diasporas in Europe, and Italy in particular as the place of arrival of people coming from the Middle East, South East Asia and, mainly, Africa - the DiM project that inspired the whole volume (Mormone, Battista, Pensabene); the papers by Porcaro on the experience of Italian CPIAs; Aiello, Toscano and Tramutoli on the implementation of the UWAZO project, a tool designed to facilitate the learning of Swahili by Italian-speaking students and, last but not least Maffia on teaching techniques for courses aimed at non-literate adults.

The volume is thus organized into three distinct parts reflecting this kaleidoscopic amalgama:

Part 1 contains all the papers related to the more general issues, i. e. multilingualism, minority languages and the dichotomy between orality and writing;

Part 2 is a collection of all the papers focused on lexicography and L2 teaching;

Part 3 gathers all case studies on different linguistic policies adopted (or that we hope can be adopted) in particularly complex multilingual contexts in order to allow the full and correct educational and personal development of speakers of languages not recognised as official and excluded from institutional communication.

As it is evident from the table of contents, most of the essays relate to African case studies, but the editor's wish is that they may also serve as a tool for reflection or as comparative material for other scholars working in similar contexts in other parts of the world.

THE CONTRIBUTORS' PROFILES

The editors and the contributors to this volume are not all from the same background. Many of them are colleagues, lecturers and researchers from Italian and foreign universities, while others are school managers or teachers engaged in the front line of teaching L2 to adult students, often illiterate and sometimes struggling to navigate with ease in the educational system of the host country.

Below are their biographical profiles in alphabetical order according to their family name.

Flavia Aiello is Associate Professor at the University of Naples "L'Orientale"¹ (Department of Asian, African and Mediterranean Studies), where she teaches Swahili Language and Literature at BA and MA level. She is the author of numerous publications on Swahili language and contemporary literature (both oral and written genres, including children's literature) and of translations of Swahili literary works. Between 2015 -2019 she participated in the e-learning project "Progetto formazione a distanza dell'Università degli Studi di Napoli L'Orientale" as responsible and coordinator for the realisation of resources and activities for Swahili language (with M. Toscano, R. Tramutoli and other collaborators), available on the UNIOR Moodle platform (<https://elearning.unior.it/>). She is presently developing, with M. Toscano and R. Tramutoli, a new Swahili-Italian online dictionary, which will be freely accessible from the UNIOR website.

Gian Claudio Batic is Senior Researcher in African languages and literatures at UNIOR. His research focuses on the description and documentation of Chadic languages. He has been visiting scholar at LLACAN-CNRS (Langage, langue et

¹ From now on UNIOR.

cultures d'Afrique - Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique - Villejuif), J. W. Goethe University (Frankfurt am Main), and Bayero University, Kano. He is currently documenting Kushi, a minority language of northeast Nigeria.

Maria Stella Battista has been School Principal of the CPIA Avellino (Provincial Centre for Adult Education) since 2017, previously from 2015 she was school manager of CPIA Avellino-Benevento. She holds a degree in Geological Sciences from the Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, awarded in 1989, and subsequently worked as a freelance geologist from 1990 to 2015. Alongside this, she taught mathematics, chemistry, physics and natural sciences in a number of secondary schools from 1996 to 2015. She has attended masters courses on the management function in schools and on the organisation and management of educational institutions in multicultural contexts.

Carolina Boldoni is a Postdoctoral Research Associate of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, in Lisbon (Portugal). Her research interests are intangible cultural heritage and the national formation of East Timor, where she conducted a 15-months fieldwork between 2017 and 2018. She is currently involved in the formation of a museum in the area of Trafaria, Lisbon, where she is conducting an ethnographic analysis regarding the tangible and intangible memories of the area.

Karsten Legère is Emeritus Professor of African languages, University of Gothenburg, Sweden. He studied African and General Linguistics (M. A. courses) at the Karl Marx University (of Leipzig, then German Democratic Republic) 1964-1968. The same year Sept. 1 he started his academic career as a Lecturer (focus on [Ki-] Swahili and Bantu languages), teaching in Leipzig 1968-1975, 1979-1983 (Senior Lecturer) and 1986-1994 (Associate Professor of Bantu languages), at the University of Dar es Salaam, Kiswahili Dept. 1975-1979 (as Lecturer) and 1983-1986 (Senior Lecturer), University of Namibia, Dept. of African Languages 1994-2000 (Professor), in Gothenburg 2001-Nov. 2010 (Professor, African Languages). After retirement, in Sweden Honorary/Visiting Professor at the University of Vienna until 2018. Academic degrees PhD. (1974), Dr sc. phil. (1982), Dr phil. habil (1991). He is honorary member of the Linguistic Association of SADC Universities (2001). His research interests include language policy and implementation, sociolinguistics, linguistic landscape, documentation of African languages, description of Kavango languages (Namibia), Tanzanian languages (Bantu, Cushitic, Southern Nilotic), orature and more.

Gianfrancesco Lusini (born 1962, PhD 1991), formerly Assistant (1995) and Associate Professor (2006), since 2019 is Professor for Gə'əz and Amharic

languages and literatures at the Dipartimento Asia, Africa e Mediterraneo of UNIOR. He is the editor of the journal *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* and of the series *Studi Africanistici. Serie Etiopica*. “Alexander von Humboldt” Fellow in 2001-2002 (Hamburg University), and Visiting Professor at the Addis Ababa University (since 2014), he is the director of the “Centro di Studi sull’Africa”, and currently he leads the national research project CaNaMEI (Catalogo Nazionale dei manoscritti etiopici in Italia).

Marta Maffia is Junior Assistant Professor (RTD-A) at UNIOR, where she received her PhD in Linguistics in 2015. She has been an L2 Italian teacher in voluntary associations and in reception centres for refugees and asylum seekers. Her main current research interests encompass second language acquisition and second language teaching, particularly in the case of illiterate or low-literate learners; sociolinguistics of migration; prosodic aspects of emotional and pathological speech in L1 and L2.

Ilaria Micheli is Associate Professor in African linguistics at the University of Trieste. Her main interests encompass descriptive linguistics, endangered and orally transmitted languages of sub-Saharan Africa, applied ethnolinguistics and ethnomedicine for cooperation. Among her publications, worthy of attention are the books *Profilo Grammaticale e Vocabolario della Lingua Kulango (Côte d’Ivoire)* (Ed. Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale” - Dissertations vol. VI - 2007), *Figlio della Radice: Djedoua Yao Kouman - Guaritore e Cacciatore Kulango* (EUT - 2011 and 2017 in English) and *Grammatical Sketch and Short Vocabulary of the Ogiek Language of Mariashoni* (EUT - 2019).

Emiliano Minerba graduated at UNIOR. He is currently working at his PhD research, a comparative historical analysis of Swahili and Wolof metrical systems. Besides Swahili and Wolof prosodies and classical literatures, one of his other research interests is modern Swahili literature, particularly theatre.

Angela Mormone holds a degree in Business Economics from the Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, and has enriched her CV with a master degree and advanced courses in the management of complex organisations. Currently working at the Direzione Generale dell’USR (Ufficio Scolastico Regionale) per la Campania (General Directorate of the USR for Regione Campania), pursuant to Law 448/1998. Angela is the regional contact person for adult education, and is engaged in implementing practices to tackle educational poverty with particular reference to the inclusion of foreign school-children and those with socio-economic difficulties. She has participated in numerous round tables and steering committees at both regional and national level on issues relating to social hardship, unaccompanied foreign minors, adult education, system evaluation and guidance. She coordinates innova-

tion and educational research initiatives for USR Campania, paying particular attention to the implementation and application of project management techniques. She is a trainer and lecturer employed by universities as well as private institutions.

Amelia (Lia) Pensabene is a teacher at the CPIA Avellino where she teaches English at the prison school of the Casa Circondariale in Ariano Irpino and Italian L2 within asylum seekers' host structures. She has previously taught adults in the CTPs (Centri Territoriali Permanenti) both in a prison setting and in evening schools. Lia has a degree in Modern Languages and Literatures (Hindi, Urdu, Sanskrit, English) from the Istituto Universitario Orientale Napoli (IUO)² in Naples, with a thesis on Indian Linguistics. Lia spent several years in India, first in 1989 with a scholarship from the IUO, where she carried out research at the Delhi University and Banaras Hindu University Libraries and field research on the Bhojpuri language. She was subsequently awarded a three-year scholarship by the Indian Government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and from 1990 to 1993 she was enrolled at the Deccan College Postgraduate and Research Institute Pune, where she carried out postgraduate research studies in sociolinguistics and lexicography. Her current interests are in language teaching in multilingual and multicultural contexts. She was responsible for the design and overall coordination of the DiM Project and is currently the contact person for CPIA Avellino within the CRRSeS (Centro Regionale di Ricerca, Sperimentazione e Sviluppo sull'Istruzione degli Adulti) for Regione Campania.

Emilio Porcaro, head teacher of the CPIA in Bologna, has devoted the last twenty-five years to various spheres of work ranging from adult education and adult learning to issues relating to teaching Italian to foreigners, to focusing on competency evaluation and certification, and schooling in a prison setting. Since 2012, he has been president of RIDAP (Rete Italiana Educazione degli Adulti), the Italian adult education network. His published works include: *Il riconoscimento dei crediti per l'Istruzione degli Adulti. Metodi, procedure e strumenti* (with R. Sibilio e P. Buonanno, Loescher, Torino, 2020); *Il ruolo del Centro provinciale per l'istruzione degli adulti (CPIA) dentro e fuori dal carcere nella formazione scolastica degli adulti*, in "Adultità fragili, fine pena e percorsi inclusivi. Teorie e pratiche di reinserimento sociale" (edited by Luca Decembrotto), Franco Angeli, Milano, 2020; *Istruzione degli Adulti e religioni*, in "Diritti Doveri Solidarietà" - Religioni per la cittadinanza", Garante delle persone sottoposte a misure restrittive della libertà personale, Emilia Romagna, 2019; *Il ruolo dei CPIA nel processo di integrazione lin-*

² IUO (Istituto Universitario Orientale) is the former name of the current UNIOR (Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale").

guistica dei migranti con un focus sui MSNA in *Sguardi Simmetrici*, Collana “I quaderni dell’Ufficio Scolastico Regionale per l’Emilia Romagna”, n. 41, February 2018, Tecnodid Editrice); *Minori stranieri non accompagnati* (in *Atti del Convegno “Le attuali emergenze pedagogiche: i minori stranieri non accompagnati nelle scuole della Toscana”*, Regione Toscana, 2015).

Adriano V. Rossi is Emeritus Professor of Iranian Philology and History of Ancient and Late-Ancient Iran at UNIOR. He studied languages, history and civilizations of the ancient and modern Near East at University of Sapienza (Rome), and directed for decades the Center for Asian Lexicography, (IsIAO - Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente, now IsMEO - Associazione Internazionale di Studi sul Mediterraneo e L’Oriente). He was director of the Department of Asian Studies (1987-1988), Dean of the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy (1990-1992), Pro-Rector (1987-1988) and Rector (1992-1998) at UNIOR. He is a member of scientific councils as well as numerous academies/societies, including Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei and Balochi Academy, Quetta (Honorary). He represented Italy in the Asia-Europe Foundation (1997-2004); since 2016 he is president of IsMEO-The International Association for Mediterranean and Oriental Studies, Rome.

Graziano Savà. Italian (Sicilian) linguist, Graziano Savà is specialised in the documentation and description of minority and endangered languages of Ethiopia. He is the author of the only grammar of the Cushitic endangered language Ts’amakko (Savà 2005) and has documented other little-known languages of Ethiopia such as Ongota, Bayso and Haro. He is also the author of studies concerning historical linguistics and code-switching. He is presently a Postdoctoral Fellow at UNIOR, Italy, carrying a research on the Nilo-Saharan language Nara (Eritrea).

Suhnu Ram Sharma had his MA and PhD in Linguistics from the university of Kurukshetra, (1970, 1975 respectively). Joined Anthropological Survey of India in 1974 as a Research Associate and worked on the tribal languages of Arunachal Pradesh, Andaman Islands, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh. In 1980 Dr Sharma joined Deccan College, Post-graduate and Research Institute, Deemed to be university, Pune as Associate Professor and retired in 2006 as Professor of Tibeto-Burman Linguistics. He has published more than thirty research papers and three books on the description of tribal languages. He taught MA M. Phil courses in sociolinguistics, morphology, semantics and second language teaching methods. He guided 12 PhD students in different subjects related to language descriptions. Dr Sharma has been associated with the Himalayan Languages Project first at Leiden university, Netherlands and now in Bern, Switzerland. He attended several national and international conferences and seminars in

Europe, USA and China. Dr Sharma was a Gonda Fellow at IIAS (International Institute for Asian Studies) Leiden twice during 2005 and 2007 and Senior Fellow at the Himalayan Languages Project in 1997, 1995. Currently he is working towards the completion of Manchad Grammar.

Maddalena Toscano is a former researcher and teacher at UNIOR. She worked in the field of Bantu languages and literatures, mainly dealing with Swahili and Zulu languages, with special attention to applications of computational linguistics to digitalized text analysis. She wrote about Swahili lexicography and Zulu morphological structures. Results of her research activities were also included in her advanced course about the use of application of corpus linguistics in the teaching of Swahili language.

She had experiences in various Socrates projects. She coordinated the 'CAMEEL' (Computer Applications to Modern Extra European Languages) project, the results of which were included in the chapter 'European studies on computing for non-European languages' (<http://korpus.uib.no/hum-fak/AcoHum/book/NEL-chapter-final.html>) of the ACO-HUM (Advanced COmputing in HUmanities) publication. Among the results of these activities is UWAZO, a Swahili-Italian online dictionary, which is now being updated, thanks to the fundings from IsMEO and UNIOR. She was also the main coordinator of the Comenius project 'TIME for Teachers' (Tools in Multicultural Education), the final result of which is available in pdf format from the UNIOR Open Archives (<http://opar.unior.it/179>). She was the local coordinator of the 'EVLang' project (EVeils aux Langues), which aims at introducing a multicultural and multilingual awareness in the language teaching in primary school.

Mauro Tosco is Professor of African Linguistics at the University of Turin. His main area of research is the Horn of Africa, where he has been working on the analysis and description of Cushitic languages in an areal and typological perspective. Among his books: *A Grammatical Sketch of Dahalo, including texts and a glossary* (Hamburg, 1991), *Tunni: Grammar, Texts and Vocabulary of a Southern Somali Dialect* (Köln, 1997), *The Dhaasanac Language* (Köln, 2001); *A Grammar of Gawwada* and *A Gawwada Dictionary* (Köln, forthcoming).

A native speaker of Piedmontese, an endangered language of NW Italy, he works on the expansion and revitalization of minority languages, language policy and ideology.

Pidgins, creoles and language contact (*Pidgin and Creole Languages: A Basic Introduction*; München, 2001; with Alan S. Kaye) are his third main area of research.

Rosanna Tramutoli is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at UNIOR. Her research focus is Bantu lexical analysis and a comparison of Swahili and Zulu body terminology. She holds a PhD in Swahili linguistics (2018) from UNIOR and

the University of Bayreuth. From 2013 to 2017 she was Swahili lecturer at the University of Bayreuth. Among her main research interests are cognitive linguistics, anthropological linguistics, semantic analysis, and lexicography. She has published contributions on international journals, such as *RAL (Research in African Literatures)*, *Kervan (International Journal of Afro-Asiatic Studies)*, *Africa and Swahili Forum*. She has recently published a monograph entitled *Encoding Emotions in Swahili. A Cognitive Linguistic Analysis with a Consideration of the Socio-cultural Context* (Köppe, 2020).