Language and Space

An International Handbook of
Linguistic Variation

Volume 1: Theories and Methods

Edited by

Peter Auer and Jürgen Erich Schmidt

Offprint

De Gruyter Mouton

26. The consequences of migration and colonialism III: New minorities

1. "Old" and "new" minorities

The concept of "minority" seems to be based on the sheer quantitative relation of "being less" than the representatives of a corresponding "majority" even though this basic definition is completely inadequate when discussing issues within the context of humanities. While statisticians continuously classify the populations into groups of greater or smaller size, only very few of the smaller groups are actually considered "minorities". The underlying reason is that this concept implies a specific sociopolitical status which is the product of public communication. Numerous factors contribute to the construction of a minority in a given society. The two extreme opposites are: imposition from above, by means of administrative implementation, without consent or even against the will of the concerned group; or minority status claimed by the group itself without being granted by the state authorities. The middle way is to create a legal framework which allows a certain number of communities to define themselves as a minority or as belonging to the majority. This compromise was chosen by Italy in 1999 when it adopted *Legge 482* regarding "norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche" ('norms in the matter of protection of the historical linguistic minorities'; <http://www.parlamento.it/leggi/99482l.htm>; cf. Orioles 2003).

It should be noted, however, that only "old" minorities are recognized by modern states (Orioles 2003: 50−57 and 2006). Often their origins predate the rise of the nation-state (e.g., the Basques, the Welsh); more specifically these minorities have existed long before a majority was established. "New" minorities, on the contrary, may be defined as groups that emerged after the formation of the nation-state, normally as the result of demographic mobility, either voluntary migration or forced displacement (as in the case of the German speaking population of the Volga region or of the Crimean Tartars who resettled in Kazakhstan and in Uzbekistan in 1941 and 1944). Occasionally, the formation of a new state can create "new" minorities without migration, simply by redefining the majority (as experienced by the numerous Russian speaking people residing in the Baltic States after 1990, especially in the large cities like Tallinn).

The political privilege of "old" minorities is not surprising; it would be impossible, for pragmatic reasons, to grant the status of a national minority immediately to the numerous groups of immigrants, increasingly attracted to countries of relative economic and/or political stability. The direction of this migration is partly conditioned by colonial and/or political history (as exhibited by immigration to France, Belgium, Great Britain or the Netherlands). There are, however, a number of other scenarios as well; some migratory move-ments have a long tradition, such as the migration from northeastern Italy (Friuli) to southern Germany which started in the middle of the nineteenth century (see Melchior 2006), while others have only developed recently. Some of these cases were not even imaginable twenty years ago. In Europe at least, many nations which for generations represented classical push areas of migration, such as Portugal, Spain or Italy since the nineteenth century, have recently become strong pull regions of mass immigration.

A systematic survey of new European minorities is not yet possible due to a lack of basic linguistic information. The three nations mentioned above, however, would suffice in order to exemplify the main linguistic interest in migratory movements, which is to observe processes of language change and language acquisition as in a laboratory. These processes occur simultaneously with the reorganization of the communicative space; they are characteristic of migratory contexts because of their frequency and density in these contexts; but of course, they may occur in other speech communities as well, particularly in regions which are undergoing rapid dialect leveling. Among others, the following two factors must be taken into account: the similarity of the varieties in contact and the circumstances of language acquisition.

1.1. The similarity of the varieties in contact

The continuum of contact varieties extends from close cognate languages to completely unrelated ones (such as Turkish and German; see Rehbein 2001). A special kind of language change is decreolization; this change takes place when creole speakers come in close contact with the original lexifier language of their creole as a consequence of immigration into the space of this language. An example is the presence of the Capverdians in Portugal (numbering around 100,000), particularly in certain neighborhoods of Lisbon (see Märzhäuser 2006); decreolization can also be observed in the case of the Haitians in the French-speaking Province of Quebec or in the case of the Caribbeans who speak English-based creoles in London. Obviously, contact phenomena are not restricted to (varieties of) the imported and the autochthonous languages; these phenomena may also lead to convergence between diverse varieties of the imported language, such as in the case of migrants from different parts of southern Italy (Sicily, Campania, Puglia or Sardinia) who live in Germany, Belgium and Australia or those Italian dialect speakers who migrated to North (see Haller 1993) or South America (such as Argentina and Brazil) during the first decades of the last century. In such language contact situations, koinéization is expected to set in with "new" varieties emerging from diverse diatopic input as has been the case in the past. This is best exemplified by the settlement of "Swabian" Germans into the middle Danube regions of southern Hungary and the northern regions of former Yugoslavia und southwestern Romania.

1.2. The age of L2 acquisition

Restricting our definition of a migrant to the literal sense, we consider only those people who pass from a source region into a host region (i. e., the "first generation"); very often these migrants are adults and consequently gain only an elementary L2 competence of

the varieties spoken in their host society. Due to the linguistic situation at his or her place of employment, an adult migrant without any educational support or control will acquire a completely different variety of the host language – a pidgin-like interlanguage which, under certain historical circumstances, may pass from the status of an idiolect to that of a variety used by a social group. Exceptions are cases of rapid acquisition (possibly fossilization) due to the fact that the L2 belongs to the same language family as the L1. A possible example is that of the Romanian immigrants in northern Spain (see Sandu 2000; Şerban and Grigoraş 2000; Radu 2001; Lungescu 2006; Escartín and Pinos Quílez 2005); this group is particularly interesting as many immigrants have predominantly taken up residence in little villages in the Pyrenees rather than in the large cities (as done by the overwhelming majority of migrants in search of employment). In 2007, 4,389 officially registered Romanians (compared to 2,569 in 2005) were residence only in the province of Huesca. Those Romanian peasants, unlike their compatriots living in the cities, have won the acceptance of the autochthonous population because they contribute to the maintenance of the local rural traditions.

The children of immigrants, on the contrary, may acquire two L1s, the language of their parents and that of the host society. Yet even for these bilinguals, bilingual literacy is crucial for the organization of their repertoire and the development of language awareness. Without this support, these speakers will not be able to distinguish standard from non-standard forms, and sometimes it may even be unclear to them to which language a certain word belongs (for examples see Krefeld 2004: 75).

The age of L2 acquisition and the structural distance between the contact languages seem to determine the linguistics of immigration. Yet, in contemporary societies, the determination of an individual speaker is never absolute, which means that linguistic data need to be analyzed in close relation to the communicative space, in which the respective speaker is moving.

2. The static concept of space in traditional dialectology

At first glance, a spatial approach to new minorities might seem strange, as the concept of space used in traditional dialectology since the nineteenth century is extremely restrictive and naturalistic.

In fact, the disregard for migration and new minorities in the dialectological paradigm is in part a reflection of nationalist politics since the notion of space is central for the concept of the European nation-state. The fact that "old" minorities are much more readily accepted than those resulting from recent migration is furthermore grounded in the ideological value of an indigenous and resident population inhabiting its own space. The established political system of a prototypical nineteenth-century nation and its corresponding scientific traditions were founded on exactly the same ideology of space. It is no surprise, therefore, that dialectology – i.e., the modern linguistic approach to space – established itself as an academic discipline during the same period which saw the rise of the European nation-state. The conception of linguistic space applied in the research of the day was that of traditional (pre-industrial and rural) landownership. Not even the slightest attention was paid to the consequences of industrialization and urbanization which would not have been possible without mass migration. For instance,

the empirical data of the first linguistic atlas (Wenker's *Sprachatlas von Nord- und Mitteldeutschland auf Grund von systematisch mit Hülfe der Volksschullehrer gesammeltem Material* of 1881) was collected right in the area of the Ruhr during its exploding industrialization – without reflecting upon this demographic revolution (see Krefeld 2002b).

The mainstream of traditional dialectology stuck to this static, one-dimensional and highly selective conception of linguistic space. The result was a sterile and closed paradigm of geolinguistic work, which in the long run became isolated in the context of linguistics.

To sum up, this kind of dialectology was not an appropriate paradigm for facilitating and encouraging research on more dynamic types of linguistic space or on spatial dynamics itself. For this reason, new minorities have been excluded from traditional space-oriented linguistics. Nonetheless, the linguistic relevance of space is evident in their case. It may even be said that the linguistic investigation of new minorities generally suggests a new framework of communicative space for the description of linguistic variation as will now be shown.

3. Towards a multidimensional and dynamic model of migrants' communicative space

The basic challenge is to deal with scenarios of complex linguistic variation in unconventional constellations of varieties. As a typical example consider the German speaking territory of northern and eastern Switzerland, where dialects of different (partly cognate) migrant languages come in contact with one another as well as with various Swiss German dialects and Swiss standard German. Among speakers of southern Italian dialects, Portuguese, Galician (a Portuguese dialect spoken in Spain), Serbian varieties, Greek or Turkish sharing a common workplace with indigenous Swiss citizens evidence shows that not only German, but also more or less simplified varieties of Italian are used as an interethnic *lingua franca* (cf. Berruto, Moretti and Schmid 1990; Schmid 1994: 26–36). Note that all migrant contact varieties depicted thus far are spoken in "roofless" situations, i.e., in situations where the standard variety they belong to (e.g., standard Italian) is not implemented and is scarcely present. On the other hand, the relevance of a lacking standard roof has diminished over the last years: the extensive availability of digital media (internet) in large parts of the world in connection with informal writing (sms), and the transnational reach of satellite TV, has increased the spatially unbounded validity of standard varieties and varieties close to the standard. (And in a certain way it is true that the whole history of the media since the invention of writing can be seen as a process of emancipation of communication from the spatial conditions of interaction.) It is therefore necessary to resort to concepts such as language contact, diatopics, diastratics, pragmatics, orality and media use for the description of these minorities and their language.

None of these terms, however, can exhaustively cover the situation due to the extremely heterogeneous (and unpredictable) linguistic behavior in the communities concerned. The term "minority" suggests elementary homogeneity and is thus misleading. Even speakers sharing an ethnic-linguistic background and living in largely similar social and regional contexts may behave in completely different ways. In migratory contexts,

the "imported" identity may be weakened or, on the contrary, strengthened in reaction to the acceptance or rejection of the migrants by the host society (see Melchior 2006, 2009). Any attempt to hypothesize a simple match of minority membership and linguistic variation patterns would be naïve.

The consequence of this reasoning, however, cannot be to restrict linguistic description to individual migrants' speech production; the data should rather represent a reliable empirical base for reconstructing patterns or at least prototypes of variation while bearing in mind that the communicative space in which those data were produced must be systematically taken into consideration. Firstly, one will have to consider the data in the narrow context of the informant's egocentric networks (see Tempesta 2000), secondly in the wider area and territory in which these networks are embedded. In any case, the description must include:

(1) the repertoire of the central informants (original space of speaker [= S]);

(2) the varieties dominantly used in everyday networks (non-distant speaking space [= N]);

(3) a. the varieties used by the indigenous population of the place of residence (space of the autochthonous idiom [= A]);

     b. the official (standard) language and varieties near to the standard of the nation or region the speaker lives in ("territoriality" or space of the standard language [= T]).
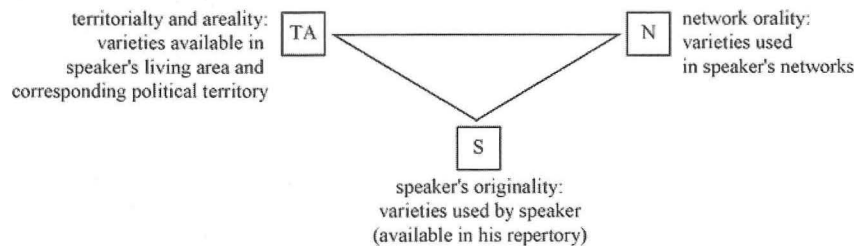

Fig. 26.1: The three basic dimensions of the individual communicative space

These three "objective" factors are necessary but not sufficient neither for classifying the communicative spaces, nor for understanding the particular dynamics they generate, which is the main interest of a linguistic description. It is also important to reconstruct on a second "subjective" level how the speech is perceived by the speakers themselves. With regard to the individual space we have to distinguish:

(4) a. the auto-perception of the speaker's own production and

     b. the corresponding hetero-perceptions.

In other words, we must know whether the migrant speaker is categorized as such or as an autochthonous speaker and whether this categorization is in accordance with his or her own perception. In addition, the question arises of how non-migrant speakers of the

migrant's L1 perceive their production: does it sound authentic or "strange", maybe having a specific accent? (For instance, Italians living in Germany are sometimes called *germanesi* by Italians living in Italy as their Italian pronunciation appears to show a sort of German "accent".)

Above all, however, it is essential to know how the migrant perceives the way in which the autochthonous population speaks as well as the way in which the members of his or her networks speak. Without taking this factor into account, it is impossible to understand in which direction the speakers will adapt their repertoire: by acquiring new varieties or by changing the varieties they already use. This adaptive impact of perception is nevertheless an indirect one; perceptions are filtered by complex mental representations which are partly based on objective language phenomena, and partly reproduce cultural and social stereotypes projected onto linguistic features or varieties (see Pustka 2007: 9−11, 2008). Note that a common language does not guarantee social cohesion. This is illustrated in the numerous groups of Italians who live in Munich (about 22,000 people), yet are socially deeply split according to their origins (whether they come from northern and southern Italy). Some of them do not even consider themselves migrants because they think they left their home country on their own accord.
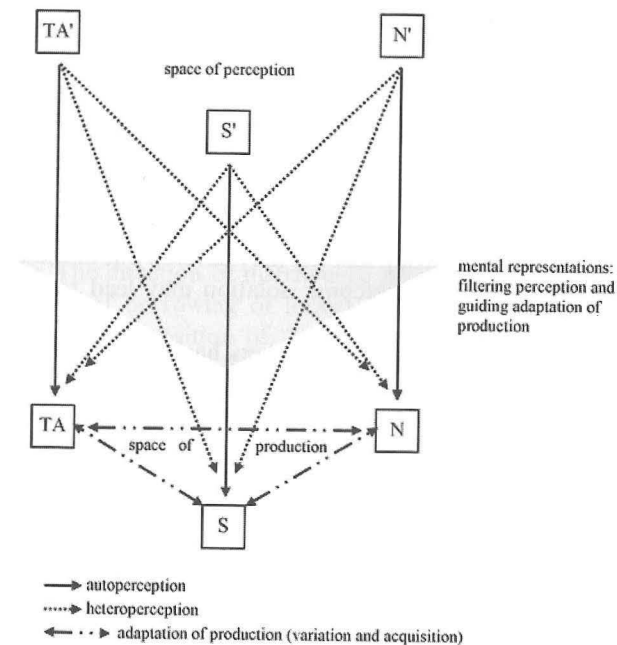

Fig. 26.2: Dynamic frame of communicative space

The empirical application of the model allows us to position each individual migrant's speech and to profile his or her communicative space. Dimensions 1−3 (S-repertory, N-varieties, TA-varieties) are closely interrelated while the dimension 4 (perception) is key to understanding these interrelations.

The communicative spaces of migrants are always more or less dissociated (Krefeld 2002a) as the individual repertoire is normally congruent neither with that of the speaker's communicative networks nor with that of the indigenous speakers. Dimensions 1 and 2 prove to be crucial in sketching the dissociated migrant spaces.

The isolated migrant speaker is below the threshold of a minority: s/he is only loosely, if at all, integrated in networks, in which varieties are used that correspond to badly spoken L2, L3 or L4 varieties in his or her own repertory. In addition, the network varieties do not necessarily belong to the autochthonous language.

speaker's repertory is very little congruent
with the repertories in his network as well
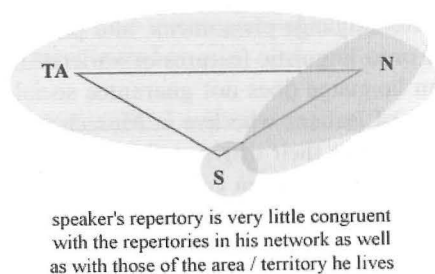as with those of the area / territory he lives

Fig. 26.3: Communicative space of an isolated migrant

Even though this specific case of double dissociation is somewhat extreme, it is nevertheless characteristic for contemporary societies, and perhaps not only in the context of a metropolis. Little is known about how communication works in networks of isolated speakers of different linguistic backgrounds. These networks offer good conditions for the formation and stabilization of local pidgin varieties as they are used in certain neighborhoods of the large cities; a common group identity may develop out of these networks and in that case the conscious effort to overcome isolation may lead to an emergent "new minority".

The other extreme of the range is marked by speakers having acquired only a very basic, perhaps only passive, competence of the L1 of their parents. Their communicative networks are largely or exclusively dominated by the L1 varieties of the autochthonous speakers. The awareness of belonging to a minority may outlast the use of the original language and manifest itself in the emergence and maintenance of ethnolectal varieties within the autochthonous dialect and/or the standard language of the respective territory.

The prototypical representatives of "new minorities" operate in communicative spaces which are at least partially bilingual; such communicative spaces are based on networks which maintain the allochthonous varieties brought from the countries of origin.

Nevertheless, these groups normally consist of individual speakers whose repertoires depend on age (first or later generations), on the professional career, quite often on gender and on biographical and individual contingencies. Even within a single network heterogeneous speakers are often united:

i.   monolinguals with their "imported" L1, mostly of the first generation; these are usually women who do not work;

speaker's repertory is almost congruent with the repertories in his network,
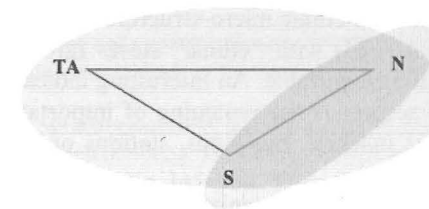based in a large part on identical, not authochthonous varieties

Fig. 26.4: Communicative space of a migrant in an "ethnic" community

ii.   bilinguals with their "imported" L1 and a more or less advanced oral L2 competence; the spoken L2 variety can also be the local dialect of the place, acquired at the work place;
iii. perfect bilinguals with two L1s;
iv.   bilinguals with the L1 of the country/region of residence and a more or less advanced competence of the "imported" L2 (which can also be dialect);
v.   quasi-monolinguals with an L1 of the country/region of residence and a certain passive knowledge of the dominant "imported" variety of their parents or siblings; note that the first child of migrant families is very often bilingual whereas the following ones may belong to this latter, quasi-monolingual type.

With regard to this complex situation, we can then define minority networks as intersections of different individual communicative spaces. It is important to observe that the members of such networks, apart from those of the balanced type (iii), represent opposite scenarios of language contact. Speakers of the types (i) and (ii) tend to impose phonetic and morphosyntactic structures of the "imported" language on the L2-varieties of the host society. The direction of interference is inverted for speakers of the types (iv) and (v). The preferred borrowing of lexical elements from L2 to L1 will show the same inversion (for the opposition of "imposition" versus "borrowing" see Thomason and Kaufmann 1988; Guy 1990; Thomason 1997, 2001).

4. Conclusion

Although the term "new minority" is frequently used, it should have become clear that this term is misleading as it suggests the existence of a consistent social unity. In reality, however, we are dealing with a multitude of more or less instable social groups in a permanent state of restructuring. Most of these groups, and especially the most dynamic ones, are located in the cities. The approach outlined above allows us to integrate urban dialectology and urban sociolinguistics into a common model of multidimensional communicative spaces, which are far from "metaphorical", considering how migrants organize themselves in their own manner by choosing or at least accepting certain spatial structures. In their area of residence, migrants may constitute the majority within certain neighborhoods (such that cities resemble ethnic mosaics with a Chinatown, a Little Italy, a German quarter, etc.). Even when cities or states take measure to hinder the formation

of such ghettos (see Krefeld 2006), local ethnic micro-structures, such as preferred housing areas, marketplaces or special roads with "ethnic" stores (groceries, hairdressers, laundries, restaurants, etc.) are still recognizable. An interesting indicator of the "appropriation" of public space in this respect is the renaming of important and highly frequented points of interest, such as markets, bus stops, stations or churches (Amoruso 2002, 2008; D'Agostino 2006).

In conclusion, the spatial distribution and organization of individual migrants and of groups belonging to the "new minorities" are of great diagnostic value. A respective map reveals how society (or at least parts of it) integrates these extremely divergent individual communicative spaces. And this exactly should be the future task of "new minority" linguistics: the representation of complex multilingual areas in an atlas of communicative ecology. A first, purely sociological and very schematic attempt at such a map of "human" ecology was made by Ernest Burgess [1925] of the Chicago School of sociology. Unfortunately, however, this approach did not find any linguistic echo, although it merits reconsideration and systematic elaboration (Krefeld 2006).

5. References

Amoruso, Chiara
   2002   La comunità ivoriana a Palermo. Frammenti stranieri di una immagine urbana. In: D'Agostino (ed.): 111–133.
Amoruso, Chiara
   2008   Tunisians in Sicily and migration dynamics. Urban settings in comparison In: Krefeld (ed.): 127–144.
Berruto, Gaetano, Bruno Moretti and Stephan Schmid
   1990   Interlingue italiane nella Svizzera tedesca. Osservazioni generali e note sul sistema dell'articolo. In: Emanuele Banfi and Patrizia Cordin (eds.), *Storia dell'italiano e Forme dell'italianizzazione*, 203–228. (Atti del XXIII Congresso Internazionale di Studi, Trento, Rovereto 18–20 maggio 1989.) Rome: Bulzoni.
Burgess, Ernest W.
   1967 [1925]   The growth of the city. In: Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess and Roderick D. McKenzie (eds.), *The City*, 47–62. Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press.
D'Agostino, Mari
   2006   Segni, parole, nomi. Immagini della Palermo plurietnica. In: De Blasi and Marcato (eds.), 207–222.
D'Agostino, Mari (ed.)
   2002   *Percezione dello Spazio e Spazio della Percezione. La Variazione Linguistica fra Nuovi e Vecchi Strumenti di Analisi*. Palermo: Centro di Studi Filologici e Linguistici Siciliani.
De Blasi, Nicola and Carla Marcato (eds.)
   2006   *La città e le sue lingue. Repertori linguistici urbani*. (Domini: Quaderni del bollettino linguistico campano 3.) Naples: Liguori.
Escartín Sesé, Javier and Manuel Pinos Quílez
   2005   *Encuentro en el Espejo. Inmigrantes y Emigrantes en Aragón. Historias de Vida*. Zaragoza: Fundación Seminario de Investigación para la Paz.
Guy, Gregory R.
   1990   The sociolinguistic types of language change. *Diachronica* 7: 47–67.
Haller, Hermann W.
   1993   *Una Lingua Perduta e Ritrovata: L'Italiano degli Italo-Americani*. (Biblioteca di italiano e oltre 14.) Scandicci, Florence: La Nuova Italia.

Krefeld, Thomas
   2002a   La dissociazione dello spazio comunicativo in ambito migratorio (e come viene percepita dai parlanti): i meridionali in Baviera. In: D'Agostino (ed.): 157–172.
Krefeld, Thomas
   2002b   Migration, Sprachbewußtsein und Wissenschaftsideologie: Über dynamische Räume und ihre statische Beschreibung. In: Konrad Ehlich and Venanz Schubert (eds.), *Sprachen und Sprachpolitik in Europa*, 145–170. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.
Krefeld, Thomas
   2004   *Einführung in die Migrationslinguistik: Von der Germania italiana in die Romania multipla*. Tübingen: Narr.
Krefeld, Thomas
   2006   *Baviera di Chicago? – Repertori, reti e spazio urbano*. In: De Blasi and Marcato (eds.), 223–243.
Krefeld, Thomas (ed.)
   2008   *Sprachen und Sprechen im städtischen Raum*. (Spazi comunicativi – Kommunikative Räume 4.) Frankfurt am Main: Lang.
Lungescu, Oana
   2006   A tale of two European villages. Aguaviva and Peretu. Available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6217889.stm>; last accessed 29 December 2006.
Märzhäuser, Christina
   2006   Entre Kriolu e Português. A situação de migrantes Caboverdianos em Grande Lisboa – Um estudio de caso em Alta Cova da Moura. In: Thomas Krefeld (ed.), *Modellando lo spazio in prospettiva linguistica*, 173–194. (Spazi comunicativi – Kommunikative Räume 1.) Frankfurt am Main: Lang.
Melchior, Luca
   2006   Lingua, integrazione e spazi comunicativi in ambito migratorio: Una ricerca sui friulani in Baviera. *Lingue e idiomi d'Italia (LIDI)* I(2): 67–103.
Melchior, Luca
   2009   *"Sù pes Gjermaniis". Zwischen Dissoziation und Integration: Kommunikationräume friaulischer Einwanderer in Bayern*. (Spazi comunicativi – Kommunikative Räume 6.) Frankfurt: Lang.
Orioles, Vincenzo
   2003   *Le Minoranze Linguistiche. Profili Sociolinguistici e Quadro dei Documenti di Tutela*. Rome: Il Calamo.
Orioles, Vincenzo
   2006   Nuove identità negli agglomerati urbani: Verso il riconoscimento? In: De Blasi and Marcato (eds.), 69–81.
Pustka, Elissa
   2007   *Phonologie et Variétés en Contact. Aveyronnais et Guadeloupéens à Paris*. (Romanica Monacensia 75.) Tübingen: Narr.
Pustka, Elissa
   2008   *Accent(s) Parisien(s)* – Auto- und Heterorepräsentationen stadtsprachlicher Merkmale. In: Krefeld (ed.): 213–245.
Radu, Cosmin
   2001   De la Crângeni-Teleorman spre Spania: antreprenoriat, adventism și migrație circolatorie [From Crângeni-Teleorman to Spain: Management, adventism and circular migration]. *Sociologie Românească* 1(4): 215–231.
Rehbein, Jochen
   2001   Turkish in European Societies. Arbeiten zur Mehrsprachigkeit = *Working Papers* Series B, No. 25 SFB 583, Universität Hamburg.
Sandu, Dumitru
   2000   Migrația transnațională a românilor din perspectiva unui recensământ comunitar [The Romanians transnational migration from a communitarian survey's perspective)]. *Sociologie Românească* 3(4): 5–52.

Schmid, Stephan
  1994   *L'Italiano degli Spagnoli. Interlingue di Immigrati Nella Svizzera Tedesca.* Milan: Angeli.
Şerban, Monica and Grigoraş, Vlad
  2000   Dogenii din Teleorman în ţară şi în străintate. Un studiu asupra migraţiei circulatorii în
          Spania [The Dogeni from Teleorman in Romania and abroad. A study on circular migra-
          tion to Spain]. *Sociologie Românească* 2: 30−54.
Tempesta, Immacolata
  2000   *Varietà della Lingua e Rete Sociale.* Milan: Franco Angeli.
Thomason, Sarah Grey
  1997   A typology of contact languages. In: Arthur K. Spears and Donald Winford (eds.), *Pid-
          gins and Creoles: Structure and Status*, 71−88. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
Thomason, Sarah Grey
  2001   *Language Contact.* Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.
Thomason, Sarah Grey and Terrence Kaufmann
  1988   *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics.* Berkeley: University of Cali-
          fornia Press.
Wenker, Georg
  1881   *Sprachatlas von Nord- und Mitteldeutschland auf Grund von systematisch mit Hülfe der
          Volksschullehrer gesammeltem Material aus ca. 30 000 Orten.* Straßburg: Trübner.

Thomas Krefeld, Munich (Germany)