

Introduction: ‘Multilingualism is lived here’

Lorna Carson and Lid King

The city blew the windows of my brain wide open. But being in a place so bright, fast and brilliant made you vertiginous with possibility: it didn't necessarily help you grasp those possibilities. I still had no idea what I was going to do. I felt directionless and lost in the crowd. I couldn't yet see how the city worked, but I began to find out.

— Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*

Investigating the city

In literature and lore, cities are viewed with varying degrees of wonder and suspicion as centres of political power, of trade and capital, of information and of consumption, of luxury and of decline. Indeed, there is nothing new in the attraction that urban life exudes: cities have always been sites of power and potential prosperity for their inhabitants. The ancient Greek city-state, *polis*, provided protected space for the religious and trading activities of citizens through an *agora* (marketplace) and an *acropolis* (citadel) located on high ground. In medieval European cities, palaces and cathedrals dominated the cityscape, along with universities, hospitals and guildhalls. Contemporary, globalised cities are focal points for flows of capital and intellectual property, and continue to attract new urbanites in search of employment, opportunities and excitement as in ancient and medieval times. The city has also long been a topic of academic, policy and development discourse (Simmel, 1903; Wirth, 1938; Sassen, 2005), investigated as a site where identities are created and recognition claims are raised. Historically dominant themes in urban studies include poverty and wealth, enlightenment and darkness, crime and revolution, inclusion and exclusion (Marcuse and van Kempen, 2002; Sibley, 1995).

We live in an increasingly urbanised world. The United Nations' Population Division (2014) estimates that 54 per cent of the world — or 3.9 billion people — lived in cities in 2014, and predicts that this figure will increase to 66 per cent by 2050. Whilst there are 28 mega-cities in the world with more than 10 million inhabitants, the most rapid population growth is in fact in small urban settlements with fewer than 500,000 inhabitants. In light of these figures, and the languages

necessarily represented, cities are therefore now the primary spaces where policy-makers engage with the multilingualism that is an inevitable consequence of a multiplicity of ethnicities and cultures. Recently, global cities have been positioned in the context of the weakening of the national as a 'spatial unit' (Sassen, 2006). In this paradigm, urban centres are viewed as sites of governance where the constraints of national policies and national discourse can be modified or overcome, not least because urban prosperity allows pressing problems to be addressed more quickly and substantially than in rural areas.

New patterns of living, working, communicating and belonging

Scholars from a wide range of disciplines have studied cities and city life through their own particular lens — as architects, urban geographers, sociologists or historians. Contemporary urbanism locates the study of the city within a social framework, where the nature of city living is scrutinised, and issues of justice, equity and well-being are at the heart of understanding what cities are and can become. In other words, cities are understood as spaces within which intense human interaction occurs, often fleeting yet always constant (Simmel, 1903: 15). This social approach to studies of urbanism can be understood in light of the substantial changes in the way we now work and live. For instance, the exponential growth in mobility patterns, both within Europe and beyond, means that we are all more than ever likely to settle somewhere new. The point of arrival for most migrants, whether elite professionals benefitting from international job markets or labourers in search of a higher wage than at home, is the city. This mobility is multidirectional in terms of destinations and occurs among all ages of people (Castles *et al.*, 2013). The impact of technology and new forms of work in which economic processes generate and depend on the exchange of information is carried out on a global scale (Castells, 2000). The phenomenon of globalisation is built on the premise that there will be a steady flow of potential workers to meet the demands of economic growth at each stage of the supply chain. Whilst international supply chains, in terms of production, distribution and sales, are geographically and linguistically diverse, two major communication phenomena affect this diversity in sometimes counter-balancing ways. English is increasingly used as a lingua franca throughout the globe, with an impact on

communication choices, language diversity and maintenance, whilst there is also a remarkable growth in new communications technologies such as voice recognition and synthesis and increasingly viable machine translation, digital networked technology and social media.

Together, these factors have a significant impact not just on how we work, but also on how our identities and communities are formed, our patterns of belonging. It is now possible to be based in one location, and to work for a company elsewhere, or to live in one city whilst maintaining a close social and familial network via communication technology and social media. One of the stakeholders interviewed by the Hamburg research team during preparation of their City Report described how ‘[i]n the house where the Turkish community of Hamburg is located there is also a meeting point for Italians and sometimes we all meet on the first level at the bar, drink Italian espresso together and chat in German.’ This context represents a new paradigm for understanding multilingualism, what Aronin and Singleton (2012: 1) describe as the new global linguistic dispensation — a qualitatively different version of multilingualism that permeates all aspects of contemporary life. This book is not a paean to linguistic diversity, but rather starts from the assumption that urban multilingualism is an under-exploited and under-researched reality.

[Insert Figure 0.1: London newspapers]

The study of urban multilingualism

This book is motivated therefore by our belief that the multilingual aspect of city life and urbanism, in terms of intense interaction between citizens from multiple backgrounds, has not been sufficiently explored. Research on urbanism, urban politics and urban planning by sociologists, geographers and political scientists tends either to overlook multilingualism or to focus on aspects of identity/ethnicity without mentioning how inextricably languages are bound up with these concepts. Language matters may be addressed under the headings of migration and cultural or ethnic diversity (see e.g. Gottdiener and Budd, 2005; Cochrane, 2006;), but usually rather cursorily and often as a problem to be addressed. While state and institutional responses to the ethnic and cultural mix of cities are discussed extensively, the linguistic mix of cities is rarely mentioned (Mac Giolla Chríost and Thomas, 2008). The *Encyclopedia of Urban Studies* (Hutchinson, 2010), for example, has no entries for ‘multilingualism’ or ‘language’, and its article on ‘ethnic enclaves’ discusses the

formation of transnational and diasporic neighbourhoods in global cities without referring to the crucial role that language plays in their development. In other words, there is a lack of serious and sustained research on the relationship between the languages spoken by citizens and the city itself.

Kraus (2011: 25) points out that even when researchers analyse cultural diversity, they do not devote much attention to the effects of linguistic diversity in urban contexts. Some recent studies do indeed focus on the multilingual character of today's cities and add to the recognition of the topic as worth exploring, but they are relatively few in number (Extra and Yağmur, 2004, 2011; Kraus, 2011; Clément and Andrew, 2012). In the context of such research, older essentialist notions of bounded languages linked to stable national or ethnic communities have been challenged and a dynamic picture is emerging of ubiquitous, everyday multilingualism which resists clear-cut classifications and have become part of (post)modern city life (Cadier and Mar-Molinero, 2012; Otsuji and Pennycook, 2010).

In non-academic public debates and discourses, urban linguistic diversity is often viewed from a multilingual skills perspective that stresses the underused 'linguistic capital' of urban populations and the importance of the multilingual repertoires of individuals in terms of employability (Butter, 2013). Alternatively, it is problematised in terms of integration or cost when politicians and mainstream media focus on a perceived lack of proficiency in majority national languages amongst linguistic minorities or play off the acquisition of majority national languages against the maintenance of minority languages and criticise public spending on translation and interpreting (Collins, 2010; Schäffner, 2008).

The multilingual city provides a test bed for understanding social diversity and complexity. It is not that multilingualism does not exist elsewhere — many rural areas are affected by immigration and mobility — but the city is a particularly concentrated version of this new dispensation, so the LUCIDE cities represent a valuable, distributed 'laboratory space' to help us understand how the needs and wants of diverse communities may interrelate. This convergence of globalisation, technology and urbanism means that, in the words of one of the LUCIDE stakeholders from Hamburg, '[m]ultilingualism is lived here'.

Stories from the LUCIDE cities

As outlined in the preface, the LUCIDE consortium comprises a network of 18 cities in Europe, Canada and Australia, used as a laboratory to investigate the new paradigm of urban multilingualism. Ranging from Dublin to Varna, from Oslo to Limassol and from Vancouver to Melbourne, this international network of cities includes cities where many national groups have traditionally co-existed as well as places where multilingualism is a relatively recent phenomenon.

For many people, a ‘multilingual city’ refers to a metropolis such as New York, Paris or Berlin, where people of many different ethnic and national backgrounds live. But this is not necessarily the case. Utrecht is a relatively small city and yet very multilingual; one in three of the city’s population comes from a non-Dutch background, and the city strives to be a European hotspot and laboratory for multilingualism. Although linguistic diversity may be limited or reduced by the ‘language regime’ in which cities function (the ‘public face’ of the city which may be officially monolingual in the case of London and Varna, or bilingual in Dublin or Montreal), the availability of different and diverse languages form an environment in which a particular role can be ascribed to each language in the expression and formation of individual’s identity. Mac Giolla Chríost (2007: 202–203) describes how ‘the city and language shape and are shaped by one another’ and how multilingual repertoires have become central to ‘the multiple, everyday social practices that are necessary to the mundane negotiation of being in the city’ (*ibid.*). Together the research conducted in these LUCIDE cities demonstrates that the city is becoming part of networked new identity spaces where the meaning of ‘here’ is changing because it relates less to national hinterlands and more to preference networks, where the meaning of ‘neighbour’ has expanded from a pre-industrial definition of the next village and a twentieth century definition of the bordering country to a global definition determined by air routes, migration patterns and digital communication tools. As we will explore in Chapters Two and Three, multilingual language use is simply part of the social fabric of everyday life in the city environment.

The aims of the LUCIDE consortium

The LUCIDE consortium set out to examine the realities of the multilingual city in terms of city policies and the attitudes and behaviour of citizens. This publication draws together three years of research into a single narrative and explores

some of the real-life complexities faced in various spheres and aspects of multilingual city life. Given LUCIDE's concern with contemporary European multilingualism, much of this book shares stories from LUCIDE's European partner cities, although the inclusion of external partners from Australia and Canada allowed us to locate our research within a wider network of global cities. Nevertheless, much of this volume relates specifically to mobility, migration and multilingualism in Europe.

In order to ensure a comprehensive and systematic exploration of how languages are encountered, used and learned, the project focused on five spheres of city life. These spheres — which are not mutually exclusive and inevitably overlap in some ways — comprised the public sphere, education, economic life, the private lives of citizens, and urban spaces or the 'cityscape'. The educational sphere embraces education and language learning for children and adults: language diversity across education systems and sectors (primary, secondary and tertiary, public, private and complementary/voluntary), language learning for immigrants (host languages and home languages), foreign and heritage language learning, bilingual and multilingual education.

The public sphere refers to measures taken by public authorities and city actors (for instance, municipalities, public transport, the media) regarding the management of diverse citizen communities, in relation to interpretation/translation, arrangements in healthcare and the law, how social inclusion is supported by linguistic measures, and what kind of training and provision is seen as desirable or necessary in these areas of city life.

Our research on multilingualism in the economic life of a city examined the role of language skills in different parts of the labour market, the types of jobs (or job shortages) linked to language skills, measures to support and provide language learning, whether language policies are in place in companies, and whether economic competitiveness is perceived by stakeholders in this sphere to be strengthened through language learning.

We also turned our attention to multilingualism in the everyday lives of citizens, the 'private' sphere. City partners recorded the various migrant support organisations and local neighbourhood associations as well as types of city-wide or neighbourhood festivals and celebrations. In this sphere, we also examined the role of language in arts and cultural organisations and language clubs, and multilingualism in religious life and places of worship.

The final sphere of interest was ‘urban spaces’, which included the publicly visible and audible languages of a city’s shared spaces: public signage, shop-fronts, and the particularities of certain districts as well as official and unofficial street. In this sphere, LUCIDE’s research teams focussed on what locals and tourists notice about the cityscape, and recorded how the cultures of city communities are celebrated in common spaces.

LUCIDE’s research on urban multilingualism

LUCIDE’s research activities occurred in two stages: a phase of secondary data collection, followed by primary data collection. These two phases were designed to feed into LUCIDE’s events (seminars, workshops and a conference) and publications (City Reports, toolkits and this book). The first phase of data collection involved meta-surveys of recent secondary data on multilingualism in the network’s cities. As well as academic or policy documents on multilingualism, research teams collected practical examples of multilingual practices. These varied in each sphere, but included artefacts (printed/visual/digital) which illustrated the multilingual reality of the city, such as websites, advertising campaigns, public or private documents (biographies, diaries, official correspondence). The secondary research phase yielded a considerable quantity of data which allowed the consortium to generate hypotheses regarding language visibility and audibility), affordances and challenges:

- Visibility/audibility: that some languages are more visible/audible than others in city life, and that this visibility (invisibility)/audibility (inaudibility) is meaningful; that sometimes, when languages are visible/audible, the visibility/audibility operates at a symbolic level.
- Affordances at the level of governance/policy: that when cities want to encourage multilingualism, meaningful linguistic diversity (projects, examples of languages in use) will emerge.
- Challenges/obstacles: that costs/inconvenience/lack of political will/prejudices can inhibit good communication between people in multilingual cities; that there is sometimes a mismatch between policy and practice in daily reality; that language is sometimes understood to represent only cultural/economic capital.

In the second phase of data collection, LUCIDE's research teams in each partner city recruited a sample of stakeholders from the five key spheres of city life, and interviewed them about the reality of multilingualism in their city. A series of semi-structured interviews were organised, using a semi-standardised interview template adapted to local circumstances. Stakeholders were asked about the visibility of different languages, about the challenges involved in creating and managing multilingualism in an urban context, and about some of the difficulties faced by individual city-dwellers. As well as underpinning the individual City Reports, the outcomes from the secondary and primary data collection phases contributed to a set of toolkits designed to promote multilingualism and provided a springboard for discussions with city stakeholders about pressing local issues.

The City Reports form the basis of the present volume. Designed for a general readership and reporting on contemporary multilingualism in the cities under scrutiny, the reports are freely available on the LUCIDE website. Authored by the research teams named at the end of this volume, they offer unique insights into how national governments, local policymakers, civic institutions, groups of activists, and individuals are engaging in the development and implementation of language policy in urban multilingual settings. Most give examples of language diversity that existed prior to recent incoming populations. Whilst the languages represented might be different from today, the City Reports confirm that urban multilingualism is not a new phenomenon but has always been a reality, only now intensified by the effects of large-scale mobility and globalisation. Some of the City Reports demonstrate how power is exerted through language policy, for instance the rise and fall of German in Osijek before and after World War II, and the attempts to render Croatian and Serbian as a single language variety. In many cities, language proficiency in the majority language for second-generation migrants is often comparable to that of native speakers of the majority language. This belies the general idea that people from migrant backgrounds fail to learn the majority language adequately. Yet support for majority language learning in cities varies considerably from city to city. It is evident from the City Reports that 'foreign' (German, French, Spanish) languages enjoy higher status than migrant languages, and that the role of English can be described as 'hypercentral' (de Swaan, 2001).

Defining the parameters of this volume

This volume draws the City Reports together and explores issues and challenges common to the European, Australian and Canadian partner cities as well as locating the outcomes of the LUCIDE consortium's research within an overarching framework of multilingual vitality. We note that in such a large consortium, composed of many researchers from different traditions spread over three continents, problems inevitably arise when data collected by different teams under different circumstances (e.g. variations in the numbers of interviewees and the type of stakeholders) are subjected to comparative analysis. For instance, collecting reliable information on the population diversity in multilingual cities is not easy. Whilst some comparative information can be found within the European Union, it is difficult to compare cities in Canada and Australia. Reliable and comparable demographic information on immigrant minority groups is almost impossible to obtain. In some cities, no demolinguistic data were included, often because they were not available — posing questions about ethnicity in a survey, for instance, is prohibited in some contexts. Nevertheless, the data from these reports depict a rich variety of multilingual contexts and practices. This book picks out some of the most salient themes that help us understand the vitality of contemporary urban multilingualism from a variety of disciplinary perspectives.

It is important to address two key points that arise in our study of urban multilingualism. One is terminological, the other contextual, and both must be considered before attempting to draw any meaningful comparisons between cities. Firstly, in order to investigate multilingualism in any serious way, its parameters have to be pinned down. It is an extraordinarily complex notion to capture, not least because there are many competing lay and academic understandings of what it means to be multilingual. At the very least, multilingualism can be generally understood in everyday life as the inclusion of, or the ability to use, several languages. It can be used to describe both the capacities of speakers and the languages that co-exist in a geographical location; in other words, it refers to both speakers and communities that use a number of languages. The LUCIDE consortium adopted a distinction made in the work of the Council of Europe between 'multilingualism' as the co-existence of many languages in a society and 'plurilingualism' as the capacity of an individual to communicate in two or more languages. It is important to note that plurilingual

individuals may not demonstrate a balanced or native-like proficiency in all the languages in their repertoire, and language proficiency and use vary greatly according to the background and context of the speaker.

Secondly, within the geographical spread of LUCIDE cities, most are located within a centralised legislative framework where decisions are made nationally rather than locally, excluding city governments from the formulation of policy. In fact, there are only few cities or city-states in the world with a plenipotentiary governance structure; most urban governments are subject to higher tiers of regional or national governance. In the LUCIDE consortium, a city such as Hamburg, a federal state in its own right with absolute control of educational policy and its implementation, evidently has a much greater level of self-governance than the city of Strasbourg, subject to France's centralised policy framework. Hamburg can therefore adapt more quickly and flexibly to the changing needs of its citizens, for instance with regard to the provision of public services, the subject of the fourth chapter of this volume, or multilingual education policy, explored in Chapter Five.

The vitality of multilingualism

In this volume, we take the notion of ethnolinguistic vitality, usually applied to individual languages and speech communities as an indicator of their long-term viability, and extend it to the complex interrelationships between languages and speakers: visibility and demographic features, status, and aspects which support or control societal multilingualism. Despite surface indicators that may seem to point to a densely multilingual environment, some city spaces may in fact be populated by speech communities composed of speakers from a multilingual background but who are *de facto* monolingual speakers in their daily lives. In this type of situation, the vitality of multilingualism is threatened, leading towards what Joshua Fishman describes as language shift (1991), towards monolingualism in the dominant language of the city, usually the national language variety. When the many languages of a city are equally accepted, valued and welcomed, and indeed recognised as apt for use in all kinds of situations with other speakers of the same languages, we recognise something of the European ideal of 'unity in diversity'. We argue that these are the cities that succeed in capturing and distilling the social and linguistic capital, creativity and culture embodied by vital multilingualism. Therefore, we are not so

much interested in the number of languages present in a city, because these figures are constantly shifting, but in how the many languages of citizens interrelate in city contexts, and how these languages are learned, used and maintained in their daily lives.

[Insert Figure 0.2: Vancouver Chinese Lutheran Church]

We also focus on the diagnostic aspect: ‘the social, cultural and political *structures*’ (Blommaert, 2013: 3, original italics) that allow multilingualism to survive and flourish, and any evidence which may point to its future viability. As explored in Chapters Three and Four, the visibility of a city’s languages in various spheres of city life and the self-image of a city point not just to the relative health of the languages themselves, but also to the status of their citizens: included or excluded, empowered or disempowered. Blommaert (2013: 7) describes the physical space of the city as:

also social, cultural and political space: a space that offers, enables, triggers, invites, prescribes, proscribes, policies or enforces certain patterns of social behaviour; a space that is never no-man’s-land, but always, somebody’s space; a *historical* space, therefore, full of codes, expectations, norms and traditions; and a space of *power* controlled by, as well as controlling, people.

For Plato, the ideal *polis* or city-state in *The Republic* was founded on justice and virtue. Its power structures were designed to allow individuals to maximise their potential through specific functions, to serve others through duty, and to display wisdom, courage, temperance and justice. Injustice and inequity form a counterpoint in the dialogue: the same city-state could be a site of tyranny, corruption and exploitation. In our multidisciplinary examination of contemporary cities, power structures and policies can create conditions where multilingualism is controlled and excluded — both explicitly and implicitly, or where individual and societal language diversity is encouraged and integrated in the various functions of city life.

In the following chapters, our common point of departure is that multilingualism in its many forms is a resource to be cultivated, rather than a deficit to addressed or a hurdle to be cleared. However, the data of the LUCIDE consortium suggests that in each of the cities investigated, some languages are much less visible than others, and therefore less valued according to Blommaert’s argument. And whilst the authors of the LUCIDE City Reports describe, in various ways, accepted attitudes

to what can be described as prestigious versions of multilingualism, typically comprising a constellation of powerful world languages, they also share vivid stories from speakers whose languages are hidden, unrecognised or stigmatised.

The social and cultural changes represented by population diversity bring tensions and prompt questions about how best to manage city life. Large-scale mobility — and, more specifically, immigration — is a major area of political controversy in Europe and beyond. Discussions regarding integration and multiculturalism have become politically embroiled, arguing for a strong assimilationist approach to belonging and citizenship. Many accepted liberal consensual views about multiculturalism — the co-existence of multiple cultures and the possibility of adhering to more than one set of cultural norms or allowing room for overlapping identities — are being called into question. For instance, access to education which provides support for learning ‘mother tongues’ is no longer the norm in countries where this was previously a tradition, and together the LUCIDE City Reports suggest that there has been a move at both national and European levels away from valuing, respecting and supporting immigrant languages towards more single-minded concentration on learning the national language of the various states (King *et al.*, 2011: 29). Many governments are leaning towards policies based on the assumption that diversity represents a threat to social cohesion rather than a means of allowing citizens to flourish in their private and public lives, to maintain and develop their personal language repertoires, and to fulfil their full potential as citizens in the complex, heterogeneous space that is the multilingual city.

[Insert Figure 0.3: Oslo restaurant]

The structure of this volume

In the following six chapters, we use the LUCIDE City Reports as a way of sharing stories about some specific aspects of multilingual city life. The authors of our volume approach multilingualism from diverse academic disciplines (applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, psychology, philosophy, education, language teaching, policy), bringing distinct but often interlocking perspectives on the multilingual city. Chapter One explores some of the historical aspects of multilingual cities, where linguistic diversity was regarded as a norm. Against this backdrop, the authors provide an overview of the data from the LUCIDE City reports, framed in this chapter

by the notion of the vitality of multilingualism. This construct can be understood as the conditions within which both individual and societal multilingualism can thrive and flourish in an urban setting, particularly in terms of demography, status, institutional support and control. In Chapter Two we explore some of the physical evidence of multilingualism, indeed the new varieties that seem to be emerging in cities as a result of close language contact. The written languages visible in a city are all indicators of its diverse speech communities and visitors. However, it is important to note that most city-dwellers do not pay much attention to the languages they see and hear around them, and the chapter argues that the languages we see (or do not see) reflect the power and social relations in a city, inclusion or exclusion, solidarity and belonging. Chapter Three moves on from the sights and sounds of the multilingual city to the image and representations of the city, including how people position themselves vis-à-vis the urban multilingual environment in terms of affiliation and new identities. It offers thoughts on how we can read city multilingualism in relation to the shifting identities of ‘city-zens’. Chapter Four focuses on language policies and the politics of multilingualism, especially in terms of how civic institutions respond to the challenges of governing increasingly multilingual urban communities. The reality of urban multilingualism is shaped by a variety of political and institutional instruments from above as well as by activism and initiatives from below. This chapter explores the public use and status of languages, including policies designed to facilitate language learning and maintain languages as well as the use of public service translation and interpreting. In Chapter Five, we turn to the specific case of multilingualism and education. Whilst many policies designed to respond to multilingualism are determined by national or regional governments, cities often have a direct impact on the provision of public education. The chapter addresses key dimensions of language education from the perspective of plurilingual repertoires, taking into account the languages of schooling, home languages and foreign language learning. The concluding chapter provides a recapitulation of the book’s key themes, and explores the possible future of the multilingual city.

This has been a collective endeavour, but one which we have hoped to shape into a coherent narrative. The editors are grateful to the many contributors who have made this possible. Most obviously these are the chapter authors whose ideas were sharpened through our debates and discussions, in Sofia, and later in Dublin where the main arguments were refined. We are grateful in this context to the Jean Monnet

Chair Programme which supported our work in Sofia. Many other individuals have also participated in the narrative — the LUCIDE partners, in particular the writers of the City Reports, who are listed at the end of this book, the many stakeholders with whom we discussed in each of our cities and in the LUCIDE workshops, seminars and conference, events which took place in nine countries. We are grateful to them all, unfortunately too numerous to name here individually. Particular mention should however be made of Ingrid Gogolin, Richard Clément and Joe LoBianco who have commented critically on our ideas and texts and inspired us with their experience and insights. Of course in the final analysis none of this would have happened without the meticulous work of Sarah McMonagle and Philip Harding-Esch in checking texts, references and illustrations.

[Insert Figure 0.4: Rome sign]

King, Lid & Lorna Carson (2016). Multilingualism is Lived Here. In King, Lid & Lorna Carson (Eds.) (2016). *The Multilingual City: Vitality, Conflict and Change*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, pp. 1-15.