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At the borders of languages: the role of ideologies in the integration of forced migrants in multilingual Luxembourg

This paper considers the role of language ideologies in the linguistic integration of forced migrants. It discusses the findings of an ethnographic exploration that was conducted in Luxembourg with five individuals who sought refuge there. A network of teachers and institutional representatives constituted the secondary pool of research participants. Through analysis of metalinguistic discourse and narrative episodes, the paper scrutinises the instrumental and integrative dimensions of language. In particular, it draws attention to and problematises the hegemonic ideologies that inform linguistic integration. By bringing into focus multilingual realities and mobile aspirations, this research seeks to provide a new impetus to the reconceptualisation of integration.

Keywords: forced migration, linguistic integration, multilingualism, language ideologies, Luxembourg

1. Introduction

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, there has been a shift away from multiculturalism and the politics of difference towards integration and a gradual 'thickening' of political belonging (Kostakopoulou 2010). Despite open border provisions and a growing acknowledgement of migration-driven diversity in the EU, current thinking on integration remains embedded in ethno-national discourses. Proficiency in national languages is increasingly invoked as the touchstone of social cohesion, no matter how at odds it is with present-day multilingual realities. In an attempt to reveal the contradictions inherent in forced[1] migrants' linguistic integration, the present paper adopts a language ideological approach to this topic. Conceptually, this contribution merges recent research on language ideologies with insights from border studies and the sociolinguistics of migration. The data analysed here stems from an ethnographic research that was conducted in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Characterised by institutionalised triglossia and a complex sociolinguistic reality shaped

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by massive immigration, important cross-border mobility and increasing globalisation, Luxembourg offers what might be described as an ideal 'laboratory' for linguistic integration research with respect to the following questions: If forced migrants settling in the Grand Duchy do not speak its administrative languages (French, German and Luxembourgish), how can they fully participate in its democratic processes? How can they adjust to the multilingual fabric of local life, which in the words of Guy Berg (representative of European Commission) often resembles 'a Babel of tongues from all the corners of the earth, with many ingredients mixed up and stirred like some exotic dish'? The responses to these questions are multiple, context-bound and necessarily constructed from the sociocultural experiences of individuals (Kroskrity 2004). Through scrutinising the instrumental and integrative dimensions[2] of language, this research adds to the literature on language, migration and social inclusion/marginalisation. It also problematises some of the assumptions attached to the linguistic integration of forced migrants and seeks to initiate a conceptual shift that accounts for mobile aspirations and multilingual realities.

2. Researching borders, languages and ideologies

Since the advent of the migration 'crisis', linguistic integration has become a burgeoning area of research. While globalisation has certainly caused the intensification of flows that cut across national borders, many argue that identity claims remain primarily anchored in national spaces. As Sigurdson (2000) observes, even if we have become more mobile and find it easier to cross the boundaries that previously hindered our movement, most of us retain strong ethnic or national affiliations, be they territory-focused or group affiliations. An immediate means of encoding these affiliations is language, a boundary that remains difficult to cross in the absence of 'a single, global, borderless form of communication' (Newman 2006, 148). Claims to any group

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membership are hard to sustain if one's communicative behaviour does not meet the expectations about the range of languages, dialects or accents one should possess. As Watt and Llamas (2014) argue, linguistic traits associated with populations on one or the other side of the border can override practically every other marker of belonging. The link between how one speaks, writes or signs, and how one is labelled – or chooses to be labelled – is made immediately apparent in (forced) displacement across borders.

Through the language requirements that multiple states imposed on those seeking admission, residency or citizenship in their territories (Pochon-Berger and Lenz 2014), language has re-emerged as a powerful boundary-drawing resource. According to Stevenson (2006), the contemporary manifestations of 'linguistic nationalism' operate at a more covert level than its earlier forms: discourses of language and nation have then not been abandoned but rather recontextualised in terms of an assumed relationship between language and social cohesion. Requirements for migrants to learn and use the 'legitimate' language(s) of the majority population are framed as a question of allegiance towards the new society and acceptance of the nation's core values. Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) noted a long time ago that discrimination based on language traits is often publicly acceptable where corresponding ethnic or racial discrimination is not. Baba and Jørgensen (2013, 61) also consider language a 'boundary phenomenon that is used by institutional actors (e.g. employers, the State) to discriminate among migrants': in Europe typically, the new (or renewed) language requirements do not apply equally to all groups of immigrants. Public discourses frame and constrain the ways in which individuals think and as such often 'normalise' experiences of discrimination and inequality (Cederberg 2014).

From the perspective of forced migration, borders are spaces of both dwelling and becoming[3]. Dwelling, because forced migrants lead their lives across and between

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borders, caught up in permanent ambiguity which stems from being neither 'there' nor 'here' (yet). Becoming, because borders as areas of contact and, to some extent, transition between languages open up opportunities to reinvent oneself as a multilingual speaker. Engaging with borders as a continuum of dwelling–becoming provides an analytical angle for capturing the complex links that exist between 'aspirations' or 'desire for mobility' (Carling and Collins 2018) and 'investment' in language learning (Darvin and Norton 2015). Both index learners' hopes for the future and thus point to linguistic repertoires. Blommaert and Backus (2011) see repertoires as 'records of mobility'; Busch (2017) goes even further in maintaining that repertoires point not only backwards 'to the past of the language biography', but also forwards, 'anticipating and projecting the future situations and events' a person is preparing to face (356). When a speaker moves from a known to an unknown place, which is particularly likely in cases of forced displacement, s/he is made (painfully) aware of the resources s/he does *not* have. According to Busch (2017), these 'become noticeable in a given situation as a gap, a threat or a desire' (356). Recognising what is absent, 'what one was refused but is still present as a desire' (Busch 2012, 509), adds an important analytical dimension. The experience that one's linguistic repertoire does not fit alters personal attitudes and the value ascribed to languages in a particular space. Hence, the nature of one's repertoire has a decisive impact on one's language ideologies and behaviour (and vice versa).

Language ideologies are mechanisms through which individuals, powerful elites, and specific social and cultural groups legitimate and further their interests (Blommaert 1999, Kroskrity 2004, Gal 2006). In this context, this paper contemplates the question of how individuals position themselves and are positioned by discourses about language(s) and ways of speaking. Jaffe (2009) proposed the term 'metasociolinguistic stance' to denote speakers' engagement with different discourses

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and their position/attitudes with respect to language ideologies: people can take up stances towards the assumed connections between language and identity, and call into question (or leave unchallenged) specific language hierarchies, sociolinguistic norms and indexicalities (17). Metasociolinguistic stances are enacted both as overt comments and subtler forms of alignment/disagreement with language ideologies such as those discussed in the following: (1) the equation of nation and language(s), and the related belief that there is an essential link between language, culture and societies (Blommaert and Verschueren 1992); (2) the mother-tongue ideology, which in combination with the one nation/one language ideology leads to controversial generalisations, as for instance 'the mother tongue of all Luxembourgers is Luxembourgish' (Weber 2009); (3) the social hierarchy of languages (Shohamy 2006), where standard varieties are looked upon as superior to dialects, sociolects and – I would add – multilingual practices, and where certain languages are also considered to have more sociolinguistic prestige than others; (4) the view that languages, above all standard forms, constitute added value and a source of profit (Duchêne and Heller 2012); and (5) the deficit model of immigrants, which assumes that [forced] migrants from third world countries have no or unsuitable language tools (Van Avermaet and Gysen 2009). Through stance-taking, individuals reproduce, evaluate and contest these ideologies.

3. Framing the language situation and integration debates in Luxembourg

Language use constitutes a central indicator of inter- and intra-group dynamics in Luxembourg. The local language environment is typically characterised as triglossic in reference to the three languages recognised by the Language Act of 1984: Luxembourgish, German and French. No regional or immigrant languages are mentioned in the law, although the country is home to large population groups

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originating from Portugal, the Cape Verde Islands, Italy and the Balkan States. In fact, Luxembourg as we know it today was built on and prospered as a result of multilingual immigration. The Grand Duchy has the highest proportion of foreign-born population in the EU: non-Luxembourgish passport holders account for 47.8 per cent of the total population of 602,005 (as of January 1, 2018; STATEC 2018a); in addition, the country employs about 177,000 cross-border workers from France, Belgium and Germany (STATEC 2016). Since 2013, Luxembourg has registered 9,663 applications for international protection (as of May 31, 2018; STATEC 2018b), including all those who 'landed' in the Grand Duchy as part of the EU relocation scheme[4]. According to a report on work and social cohesion (Allegreza et al. 2017), 85% of Luxembourg residents (25-64 years) can speak at least three languages, yielding an average of 4.3 languages for a Luxembourg national as opposed to 3.4 for a foreign passport holder. In this myriad of resources, it is the French language that is most often associated with communication in the public sphere and with immigrants[5]. Since the Language Act of 1984, Luxembourgish has been foregrounded as the symbol and expression of national identity. German[6] and French continue to serve most state-wide institutional functions, although the role of Luxembourgish in public life is increasing[7]. With the diversification of migration, English is gaining ground as *lingua franca* between individuals with different language repertoires. As de Bres (2014) argues, the speakers of the different languages have strong interests to maintain, not least because languages are a primary factor in structuring the local labour market (Pigeron-Piroth and Fehlen 2015). Individuals living and/or working in the Grand Duchy use the languages of the established triglossia to varying degrees, with one or more sometimes being virtually absent (e.g. German and Luxembourgish) and further languages potentially being highly central (e.g. English or Portuguese) (Horner 2009). In fact, most of them can shift

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effortlessly from one set of communicative resources to another.

From a language-ideological perspective, Horner and Weber (2008) discuss the existence of a two-pronged strategy of identification among the autochthonous population of Luxembourg. The trilingual identification – which draws on the three languages recognized by the provisions of the Language Act of 1984 – usually manifests itself in official discourse(s). Luxembourg's international reputation as an inclusive and multicultural society stems largely from its multilingualism. The second, monolingual strategy of identification is rooted (solely) in the Luxembourgish language. Although, Nazi Germany's occupation of Luxembourg (1940-1944) is frequently constructed as the key historical moment solidifying the national-symbolic importance of Luxembourgish (Gilles and Moulin 2003), it was the 1970s that marked a clear trend towards the active promotion of everything that is Luxembourgish, especially the language (AL 1978:63). This shift coincided with Luxembourg's growing reliance on immigrant and cross-border labour (Beine and Souy 2016). The accompanying sociolinguistic changes, reflected in the increased use of languages other than Luxembourgish, led to substantial discontent among parts of the population. French was and still is considered too dominant in everyday linguistic practice, while German (at least in the minds of parts of the older generation) is tainted by the stigma of being the language of occupation (Gilles et al. 2011). Since the mid-1990s, the politicisation of migration in conjunction with concerns about the future of the Luxembourgish language led to the gradual introduction of language requirements for naturalisation (2001, 2008). Luxembourgish has since been given heightened importance as an element of cohesion and integration. The most recent development in this process is the Luxembourgish Nationality Act of 2017, which stipulates that applicants must pass a Luxembourgish language test (regardless of their proficiency in French and/or German) and a

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citizenship course. This promotion of Luxembourgish as the sole language of integration signals (re)bordering and a clear 'shift away from the trilingual ideal towards the national language as the sole icon of Luxembourgishness' (Horner and Weber 2010).

Forced migrants seeking refuge in Luxembourg are expected to integrate into a society that is structured around multiple languages. For the majority, 'learning the ropes' and communicating through the countless resources which are at their disposal is not a particularly time-consuming process. They are also offered state-sponsored training (mainly) in French in order to accelerate their incorporation into the labour market. Under the current legislation, however, those who learn French (or any other language besides Luxembourgish) are no longer seen as having already taken a first step towards integration. The long-term consequences of this paradoxical approach are uncertain and as such constitute an important area for future research.

4. Methodological approach

4.1. *Research context and data collection*

For a period of two years, I followed the linguistic integration trajectory of five individuals who were granted international protection in Luxembourg[8]. I will refer to them by the pseudonyms Ram, Mannan, Yazdan, Ahmad and Patrick, or jointly as 'primary' research participants. Except for Patrick, who is an Iraqi citizen, they all fled Syria after the outbreak of the armed conflict[9]. They all arrived at the Grand Duchy in the summer of 2015. In three cases, the participants' trajectories included multiple location changes and (un)intended temporary settlement prior to reaching Europe. Some of them were transferred to Luxembourg under the EU relocation schemes, others chose to seek asylum in Luxembourg. Their precarious situation is far from being settled, given that their residence permits were issued for a maximum duration of five years[10].

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Following an introductory meeting to explain what participation in the project entailed and to obtain initial consent, I conducted narrative interviews with each participant to elicit information about their repertoires, language learning goals, representations of language(s), and language use in their new sociocultural milieu. Since then, I have periodically interviewed them using on occasion mobile methods such as go-along, i.e. a walk with interviewees as they go about their (daily) routines (cf. Lamarre 2013). This yielded between two and five formal interviews per each participant. The average time between the initial and follow-up interviews was about six months. The most recent round was completed in March 2018. The analysis also builds on knowledge generated through intensive informal and interpersonal interactions between the researcher (me) and the participants[11]. Rodgers (2004) refers to similar small-scale qualitative approaches as 'hanging out', as a 'shorthand for participatory approaches but also as a reminder of the informal and everyday nature of the interactions and processes that allow us to generate information' (48).

Since the project's start in March 2016, data collection has been dictated by the research participants' movement through different educational spaces, including French, English and German language classes at various institutions/levels, mathematics courses, application and web development training, and diverse leisure activities. The network of teachers they have worked with (volunteers and employed staff) constituted the secondary pool of research participants. To this date, I have interviewed eleven teachers from five research sites. Most of them are foreign residents – French, UK and United States citizens – and cross-border commuters from France, who experienced first-hand the difficulties of adjusting to Luxembourg's language environment. Likewise, the three teachers born in the Grand Duchy gave accounts of complex migration trajectories that covered multiple places in the three neighbouring states,

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Scandinavia, and Northeast Asia, among others. The semi-structured interviews, lasting thirty to forty-five minutes, were intended to reveal teachers' beliefs and assumptions about forced migrants' language learning needs in Luxembourg (and beyond), along with the linguistic integration routes they considered plausible/advisable. All research participants were aware of my research aims, and – beyond the formal interviews – we also engaged in recorded and non-recorded informal conversations about what I observed in the classes or more broadly throughout the project. Ethnographic field notes and around fifty hours of audio-recorded classroom interactions complement the data for this paper.

4.2. *Narratives and metalinguistic discourse*

Narrative analysis as a methodological tool has proved extremely fruitful in migration-related studies on experiences of border-crossing, identity construction and integration (e.g. Cederberg 2014). As shown by De Fina and Tseng (2017), narratives provide a voice to minorities and other underrepresented/socially isolated communities, such as forced migrants, to author their own versions of their experiences. In the present study, narrative episodes – i.e. recapitulations of past or ongoing events, hypothetical and generic narratives, and small stories – emerged in classroom contexts and, in more elaborate forms, during interviews and informal face-to-face discussions. As enactments of language ideologies, narrative structures constituted an excellent tool for uncovering multiple and shifting ideological stances in (meta)discourses surrounding language, identity, and group membership. Furthermore, narrative analysis enabled – in my view – a more nuanced understanding of foreign- and cross-language interviews/discussions. This methodological advantage should certainly be considered when conducting research in multilingual contexts such as the one discussed here[12]. The proposed framework allowed the research participants to engage in conscious reflections about

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Luxembourg's complex sociolinguistic reality. Part of the analysis thus draws on explicit metalinguistic discourse elicited through interviews and/or informal exchanges. Given this paper's focus on language ideologies, I narrowed down the larger corpus of data to those 74 sequences/narrative episodes that explicitly revolved around the instrumental and integrative dimensions of language(s). The main findings are discussed in the following sections.

5. Language ideologies in between borders

5.1. *Institutional discourses on language and integration*

Prior to engaging in ethnographic fieldwork, I contacted the representatives of the main institutions involved in integration processes, i.e. OLAI (*Office luxembourgeois de l'Accueil et de l'Intégration*), ASTI (*Association de Soutien aux Travailleurs Immigrés*), the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training, the Red Cross and Caritas Luxembourg. These exchanges – which included interviews, visits and email communication – served as a basis for re-constructing the institutional discourses on forced migrant's (expected) trajectories in Luxembourg. Language training which is offered in one or more of the three administrative languages is considered one of the cornerstones of local integration policy (see Nienaber et al. 2015). Forced migrants can enrol in diverse courses authorised by the ministry: these are typically offered by the municipalities, various associations or the National Institute for Languages. Language courses were also set-up by groups of volunteers who want to support forced migrants in establishing social contacts in their new milieu while equipping them with language resources equivalent to CEFR A1 level (mainly in French). There was a consensus among the institutional actors I approached regarding the role of French as the main medium of communication: learning French was viewed as a fundamental aspect of forced migrants' economic and social advancement. The interviews as well as the

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government's (2018) initiative of the *Parcours d'Intégration Accompagné*, i.e. supported integration route, corroborate this position[13]. Nonetheless, the concept of integration as such was not linked to the French language but rather to Luxembourgish: statements framing the Luxembourgish language as central to the process of integration abounded in the dataset. This may not be all that surprising considering the recent changes to naturalisation procedures (2008, 2017). References to the Grand Duchy's third administrative language, minority or immigrant languages – as resources or instruments for integration – were rare if not absent in this context. The one exception was perhaps English, which has of late gained some ground in the integration debate.

How this (at best) ambiguous policy shapes forced migrants' language learning trajectories is well illustrated by an anecdote told by Patrick (17/09/2016)[14]. After filing his application for protection status in the summer/autumn of 2015, Patrick was entitled to a voucher for a language training course of his choice. He wanted to redeem the voucher for a German course, but the social worker helping him dismissed the idea, claiming that Patrick should start with French to gain access to employment. He kept insisting, however, asking for an opportunity to study Luxembourgish this time, which was denied to him as well:

01 She said you don't have papers we cannot give you *bon* for Luxembourgish because
02 maybe they give you a rejection and you will go back to your country
03 we don't know. So that's the state of refugees […]

This narrative sequence exemplifies the main ideological underpinnings of the institutional discourse as well as the widely held belief that French facilitates economic integration better than any other language in the local labour market. It also conveys how forced migrants' lives are structured around borders. Patrick's investment in German and Luxembourgish can be regarded as a voice from across the border claiming a wider range of symbolic and material resources associated with these languages:

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through the Luxembourgish language, Patrick hopes to fulfil his Luxembourgish (and EU) citizenship aspirations; his simultaneous interest in the German language derives from associations linking the language to Germany and its pro-refugee policy[15].

5.2. *Voices of forced migrants*

Prior to arriving in Luxembourg, the specifics of the local language environment were mostly unknown to the (primary) research participants. Most of them expected the Grand Duchy to be a German-speaking country or, as Ram explained, a state with one national language where English would rank second (14/02/2017). After their first interactions with the local community, these expectations fell to pieces. In their descriptions of local sites and networks, they all alluded to rich multilingual practices and a number of languages – in addition to German, French and Luxembourgish – that were embedded in the social fabric of everyday life.

Puzzled by this linguistic heterogeneity, all five project participants set themselves ambitious language learning goals. The language combinations they opted for (French-Luxembourgish, French-English-German, French-German-Luxembourgish, French-English-Luxembourgish) imply a wish to fit into the mould of the 'prescribed' multilingual ideal (see Horner 2009). Furthermore, the directions of their learning trajectories suggest that as new arrivals they subscribed to the view that French opens up more employment opportunities than any other language. However, after two years of residing in the Grand Duchy, language still seems to be one of the main barriers to their incorporation into the labour market. For instance, Ahmad's application for apprenticeship in vocational skills was formally rejected due to his insufficient competence in Luxembourgish; as a former teacher, Yazdan would need to master at least two if not all three languages of schooling to be considered for a post; and Patrick saw his chances of succeeding in the private sector as minimal after participating in a

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mobile application development training sponsored by the local employment agency (07/04/2017):

01 You know we need to tell the truth, if you want to get a job ehm most people here
02 are from Luxembourg, originally, they speak English and they have French and
03 German, and frankly they have difficulties, they have also additional qualifications
04 and they couldn't get a job, so it's not easy when we talk about a refugee who
05 doesn't speak German and French very well.

These are just a few examples which all confirm that the inability to perform certain combinations of French, English and German/Luxembourgish severely limits one's options on the employment market (see Pigeron-Piroth and Fehlen 2015). Investment in French for its social integrative functions is not without its tensions either. Yazdan summarised his year-long observations regarding the ambivalent role of French as follows (15/08/2016):

01 Everybody speaks English here, Luxembourgish people all Luxembourgers basically
02 speak English, when they see a person who speaks English they don't switch to
03 French, I'm talking about Luxembourgers, they don't switch to French they switch
04 immediately to English probably because they are bored or sick of those who only
05 speak French and they want just a change, ok se here is a stranger we can speak
06 another language with. So yes Luxembourgers basically speak French with strangers
07 because whenever they see another Luxembourger they don't have any reason to
08 speak with this person in any other language but Luxembourgish.

A number of affirmations embedded in this sequence are relevant for our discussion. Firstly, Yazdan depicts both French and English as instrumental resources that are necessary – from the perspective of Luxembourgers – for dealing with people considered strangers (lines 05-06). If his learning efforts remain limited to these auxiliary languages, he will be continuously labelled as an outsider. Secondly, quite a few members of the local community appear reluctant to speak French, not least because of the strong presence of Francophone cross-border workers who are often construed as threat to the traditional shape of multilingualism in Luxembourg (de Bres 2014). Yazdan's remark about people being 'bored or sick of those who only speak

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French' (line 04) hints at how this growing resentment might impact forced migrants who seek to settle in Luxembourg. French does not come 'naturally' to all Luxembourgers and residents of the Grand Duchy; at times, starting a conversation in a different language or opting for a multilingual mode of communication might help to defuse potential tensions. Thirdly, Yazdan singled out Luxembourgish as the sole medium of communication between Luxembourgers (lines 07-08): as he claims, there is no domain in which Luxembourgers meeting among themselves would not speak Luxembourgish. His understanding of group membership clearly rests on language criteria that exclude, for instance, the many Luxembourgish passport holders who (also) use languages other than Luxembourgish in their homes and everyday trajectories.

The previous paragraphs already included a brief mention of the Luxembourgish language gaining more instrumental value: in numerous domains, the command of Luxembourgish is a condition for well-paid and secure jobs (Ehrhart and Fehlen 2011). This explains the high demand for classes with Luxembourgish as a foreign language. Yet, the arguments of forced migrants in support of learning Luxembourgish rest principally on its symbolic value. This is apparent in the next sequence, which reproduces an exchange in a 9th grade classroom[16] between a French teacher (T) and Mannan (M) about the importance of Luxembourg's main languages (09/03/2017):

01 T: ***Mannan, pourquoi est-ce que tu as besoin d'apprendre le luxembourgeois?***
Mannan, why do you need to learn Luxembourgish?
02 M: ***Parce que j'habite au Luxembourg.***
Because I live in Luxembourg.
03 ((group is laughing))
04 T: ***Okay*** (0.2) ***Mannan tu es plus nationaliste que moi*** ((laughing))
Okay (0.2) Mannan I think you are more nationalist than I am ((laughing))
05 ***Je pense que le luxembourgeois c'est pas important parce que***
I don't think Luxembourgish is important because
06 ***j'habite au Luxembourg*** ((imitating Mannan's voice))
I live in Luxembourg ((imitating Mannan's voice)).

The teacher, who is a Luxembourger himself, amicably mocks the idea of taking up Luxembourgish simply because one resides in the Grand Duchy and immediately

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associates this stance with nationalist ideologies (line 4). Undoubtedly, Mannan's position derives from the equation of state, nation, people and language: learning the one language that was granted the status of 'national language' in the place where he resides appears to him a logical step along his integration path. Many similar affirmations were found throughout the corpus. Oddly, (forced) migrants' interest in Luxembourgish often caused a great deal of astonishment among the locals. After all, no formal language requirements – much less in Luxembourgish – are imposed on EU passport holders who account for the largest part of Luxembourg's immigrant population. We return here to Yazdan's observations (15/08/2016):

01 Luxembourgish is the language that almost everybody speaks and still they say
02 no you don't need it, it is not important. Everybody says you just have to learn
03 French, no Luxembourgish, Luxembourgish is just ehm it's just a dialect that
04 Luxembourgers speak between each other, but you have to learn only French,
05 you have English so it's perfect, English and French is ok, you can survive.
06 And then they end their sentence and they turn to each other and they continue their
07 conversation in Luxembourgish and I would sit and just watch them all night.

This sequence sheds light on another metasociolinguistic stance, which is rather likely to manifest in relation to the Luxembourgish language. Part of the population presents Luxembourgish as a minority language that is not necessary or adequate in speaking to strangers like Yazdan (lines 03-04). However, on this occasion, an identical line of thinking transformed this resource into a visible means of exclusion (lines 06-07). I will return to this idea later, but for now I would like to draw attention to the word 'survive' (05). This notion and related concepts kept (re)appearing in the interviews that I conducted with the eleven teachers who had agreed to participate in the project. Seemingly, forced migrants' language learning needs are not assessed through the lenses of inclusion but rather survival.

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5.3. *Discourses of employability, language deficiency and survival*

The secondary pool of participants was recruited from among the teachers who had worked with one or several of the five forced migrants participating in the research project. Each of them showed utmost sensitivity towards the learners while engaging in critical reflections about the possibilities and complexities inherent in the process of language learning in multilingual societies. They all agreed that French best enables the advancement of newcomers in the local society. Opinions about the relative importance of the other languages varied, including but not limited to points of view such as 'they cannot learn all the languages because I think it's too much information so we have to set priorities' (09/03/2017), 'German would probably be more useful to them in this part of the world' (19/05/2016), 'it's a toss-up between Luxembourgish and English' (08/03/2017) or 'I don't know if it would be better to learn German or Luxembourgish, depends on what they want to do' (06/03/2017). Most teachers were in favour of forced migrants studying one language in addition to French. As the principal point of reference for determining the right language combination for each individual, the teachers almost unanimously pointed to employment aspirations. Hence, ideologies which invest language(s) with value as a source of profit (see Duchêne and Heller 2012) prevailed in these interviews. The many discussions revolving around language learning needs also made apparent that, even within the different bi- or multilingual schema, there was room solely for the valuable 'foreign' languages (French, English and German) and Luxembourgish. Bearing in mind that Ahmad, Mannan and Ram all live in predominantly lusophone neighbourhoods, this is undoubtedly of major significance. Although most forced migrants – and presumably teachers as well – regularly interact with people whose preferred medium of communication is Portuguese, both groups implicitly distanced themselves from learning this or other immigrant/minority

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languages with strong presence in the Grand Duchy. Similar stances clearly signal an alignment with the dominant language hierarchies. On the contrary, classroom practices continuously contested these rigid structures: in my observations, teachers and learners drew on all the codes and resources accessible to them to support the process of learning (Kalocsányiová 2017).

A closer look at the data also revealed that most teachers and institutional representatives did not consider forced migrants' language resources suitable for functioning successfully in Luxembourg. All individuals participating in the project were plurilingual, having learnt or even mastered various languages and language varieties, including the standard language of their country of origin. Furthermore, both language teachers and volunteers confirmed that most if not all asylum applicants who had arrived in the Grand Duchy at approximately the same time as the project participants had some knowledge of English, accumulated through formal schooling and/or informal channels of learning. As maintained by all five focus participants, the combination of their old and newly acquired resources allowed them to establish new friendships and accomplish day-to-day tasks fairly easily in their new sociolinguistic milieu. And yet, they were often denied the ownership of prestige languages such as English or French, as illustrated by the following interview excerpt (13/03/2017):

> 01 […] they are not very good at grammar because I don't think they really learnt
> 02 grammar as such so they give the impression of speaking English but they don't
> 03 actually speak you know they can communicate but they can't speak properly.

The teacher – a French *frontalier* who gave courses for both English and French in a ministry-run adult education programme – evaluated forced migrants' language production from the perspective of a standard language ideology. Today, the emergence of English as a global lingua franca has left somehow unclear what its standard reference point is, especially in terms of spoken language use, where such a standard

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seems to have lost relevance altogether in many situations. In my observations, this delegitimation of knowledge has led some research participants to see more deficiencies in their language skills; the implications for their language practices and long-term learning constitute a field for future research. The significance of 'the standard' is strongly endorsed in the following sequence as well (13/03/2017):

01 If their objective is to survive in the country and to know a bit of this and
02 a bit of that you know fair enough but then if this person wants to keep studying
03 wants to go to the university this person will have to reach at least a B2 level in
04 French or if the person wants to work in a specific sector let's say the person wants
05 to work as a waiter or as a hairdresser the person will have to master French
06 language and maybe you know Luxembourgish […]

While the use of multiple languages within a single speech event is common in various domains of local life (see de Bres and Franziskus 2013; Franziskus 2016), multilingual practices drawing on 'a bit of this and a bit of that' (lines 01-02) are here depicted as inferior to mastering one single language. Multilingual language use is considered acceptable as long as it serves survival, but – in the respondent's view – it is not fit for educational or workplace settings. The (presumed) connection between languages and selected educational/employment paths is emphasised once more here (lines 03-06). A somewhat different stance to linguistic integration was constructed by another English teacher working at the same research site (10/03/2017):

01 […] when it comes to Luxembourg I think French is very useful,
02 French is a very useful language although I would say English is as useful because
03 you can still survive very well here in Luxembourg without speaking any other
04 language or without speaking French or German or Luxembourgish you can still
05 survive with English only, I have quite a few friends who speak English only,
06 so Luxembourg in that respect is quite flexible, but if I would come to Luxembourg
07 I would focus on French and Luxembourgish maybe. Luxembourgish people don't
08 ask immigrants to speak fluent Luxembourgish but they appreciate when you say
09 *wann ech gelift*, *Merci*, *wéi geet et lech*, *Moien*. Nobody demands you to speak
10 fluently Luxembourgish […] I would prioritise English and French and then
11 Luxembourgish because you need the language ehm you need to survive also when
12 you go to France, when you go to Belgium, when you go to Germany you cannot
13 survive with Luxembourgish alone.

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In addition to encapsulating some shifting positions with regard to Luxembourg's main languages and their hierarchical ordering, this sequence also allows an exploration into an alternative English-only model (lines 03-05). In Luxembourg, English is the lingua franca of the large international community employed by the European institutions as well as the financial and business sectors. Immigrants belonging to this globalised elite are seldom (if ever) obliged to demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the Grand Duchy's administrative languages. 'Luxembourg in that respect is quite flexible' (06), as the teacher asserts. Hence, the language deficiency argument (Van Avermaet and Gysen 2009) – based here on the assumption that proficiency in French and/or Luxembourgish is a prerequisite for societal participation – is selective in the sense that it only applies to certain categories of migrants. As a result, language is turned into an instrument of discrimination among migrants (see Baba and Jørgensen 2013). In addition, this excerpt demonstrates how forced migrants' language learning needs are looked at from the perspective of 'survival' (lines 03-05 and 11). The word 'survival' itself implies a deficit model of learning and integration: presumably, it refers to getting around without suitable language tools. It is also of interest how forced migrants and others are encouraged to learn a little of the in-group language, Luxembourgish (08-10). The research participant articulates a clear stance in which mastering some elementary phrases is sufficient proof of one's commitment to integration (line 09). Although far from being the case here, similar views could be indicative of exclusionary practices aimed at creating a sense of distinction to maintain group boundaries. As stated earlier, the dominant strategies of identification depend – partially or entirely – on mastering the Luxembourgish language. Through becoming proficient in Luxembourgish, foreigners could contest the existing group affiliations and thus unsettle the linguistic and related social hierarchies. Having said that, it is important to mention that, in the

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current state of affairs, forced migrants will have to demonstrate fluency in Luxembourgish (note, however, the counter-stance presented in lines 07-08), if they wish to fully participate in the society of which they are now a part. Moreover, in lines 11-13 the teacher points to the significance of considering forced migrants' learning needs from a cross-border perspective, which takes us to our next topic.

5.4. *Mobile aspirations*

At the time of writing, none of the participants had formulated clear intentions to remain in Luxembourg or to move to successive destinations. Furthermore, under the current system, beneficiaries of international protection are expected to reside and work (exclusively) in their country of asylum. Nevertheless, there were some indications that the participants might move on to fulfil their integration aspirations across multiple locations/countries. Language(s), access to employment and affordable housing were among the factors indicated by Ahmad, Patrick and Mannan for remigration within Europe and/or for their engagement in cross-border mobility. However, in order to become mobile again, Ahmad and his peers will have to take on the challenge of demonstrating their competence in the Luxembourgish language, which as discussed earlier is a major criterion for naturalisation and the contingent right to free movement.

5.5. *Crossing boundaries through languages?*

Finally, let me turn to one of Ahmad's narratives, which brings to the fore how group affiliations and boundaries are challenged through enhancing/erasing parts of one's repertoire. When Ahmad called to enquire about a room for rent in Luxembourg City, he presented himself as an English–French speaker (30/09/2017):

01 The first time I talked with this girl she asked me what languages do I speak.
02 I told her I speak English and French and I forget to tell her that I speak Arabic.

I asked him later whether concealing his knowledge of Arabic and Kurdish (Kurmanji) was a deliberate act, to which he jokingly replied: 'No, I forget, I swear'. The fact

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remains that Ahmad's linguistic traits gave him away, and once the person letting the apartment discovered that he was a refugee from Syria, she became reluctant to let the place. How and which languages Ahmad spoke was the yardstick by which he was judged. As he recounts, the proprietor's arguments for withdrawing her offer rested on a stereotypical representation of Syrians as immigrants who do not work and take advantage of the country's social benefits. However, by demonstrating a sufficient knowledge of French, he called this essentialist categorisation into question:

03 Yes because she saw I understand and I gave her good answers and with respect,
04 and after that she respected me more, because some of the people she talked with to
05 rent her home ehm: they didn't know how to speak French

In this sequence, it becomes apparent how language-identity links are made iconic through the kinds of values that are ascribed to the two languages: Arabic is associated with refugees, who in turn are labelled as a burden on the state, while competence in French is believed to signal alignment with local norms and values. Thus, language is turned into an essential means for crossing boundaries and prejudices.

6. Conclusion

This paper has discussed the results of an ethnographic exploration that looked into forced migrants' integration efforts in Luxembourg from a language ideological perspective. In most instances, the research participants adopted ideologies in which language was positioned primarily as a resource for economic advancement. This was construed as a prerequisite for integration which, however, was often equated with mere survival in the new sociolinguistic milieu. A language deficiency argument, i.e. a presumed lack of suitable language resources, was reflected in the language learning goals that had been set for and by the forced migrants participating in the project. Most of them subscribed to the view that (standard) French opens up more employment opportunities than any other language in Luxembourg; at the same time, however, they

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all expressed a strong interest in learning Luxembourgish and potentially German/English. This signalled a clear alignment with the dominant language hierarchies, in addition to being indicative of forced migrants' wish to fit into the mould of a state-endorsed multilingual ideal. The above observations led me to agree with Cederberg (2014, 48) that 'marginal voices are not necessarily counter-hegemonic'. Thus, more consideration needs to be given to the discourses (and experiences) that shape forced migrants' accounts.

For the most part, linguistic traits played a central role in how the research participants portrayed themselves and others: by making (in)visible parts of their repertoires forced migrants affirmed and (re)positioned themselves in their new sociocultural environment. Interestingly, the national-symbolic importance of Luxembourgish along with its integrative potential was embraced by most research participants (both primary and secondary), although to varying extents: proficiency in the national language was at times foregrounded as an absolute necessity for social participation, while at other times 'a bit' of Luxembourgish was considered sufficient proof of one's commitment to integration. All these competing positions reproduce different fractions of an ideological conflict that might open up new avenues of thinking about (forced) migrants' linguistic integration.

Finally, the findings cast light on additional complexities that characterise integration efforts in multilingual societies. As shown, the requirements imposed by the state could not fully explain forced migrants' language choices; the participants' learning trajectories have been influenced to a large extent by other circumstances – ranging from local to global ones – which go unnoticed far too often. The aspiration and wish for future mobility was one of them. Current thinking about linguistic integration seldom addresses the needs of those forced migrants who do not intend to or cannot

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settle permanently in their country of asylum and/or would profit from trans-border labour markets and/or live and operate in superdiverse neighbourhoods in which multiple minorities or a single immigrant group constitute the majority. It is not difficult to see how these gaps can have the effect of undermining forced migrants' efforts at all stages of their integration journey. This paper was by no means intended to provide a formula for linguistic integration. However, I hope to have offered new perspectives that can prompt a move towards an enhanced paradigm that is cognisant of multilingual realities.

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1 Following DeWind's (2007) reasoning, I adopt the concept of 'forced migration', which encompasses refugees as well as others displaced people – internally or across recognised borders – as a result of conflicts, natural or environmental disasters, famine, broader human rights violations and/or development projects.

2 Gardner and Lambert (1972) discussed two main kinds of motivation involved in language acquisition: instrumental and integrative. This distinction provides a useful framework for the examination of language ideologies. For Ager (2001), the first

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assumes that individuals are interested in accumulating new language resources to satisfy specific goals, usually economic targets, while the second is based on the desire of individuals to associate themselves with [imagined] target communities. From my standpoint, most learning experiences discussed in this paper showed overlaps and fell somewhere in the blurry middle of this instrumental–integrative range.

3 See Radu (2010).

4 Asylum seekers cannot choose the relocation country.

5 For example, Lusophones are expected to speak French (rather than German or Luxembourgish) to people from outside their community.

6 In state schools, basic literacy skills are taught in standard German. In secondary education, French gradually replaces German as the main medium of instructions.

7 See "Strategie fir d'Promotioun vun der Lëtzebuerger Sprooch" (Strategy for the promotion of the Luxembourgish language).

8 All research activities were approved by the Ethics Review Panel of the University of Luxembourg, the National Commission for Data Protection of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the research sites. Informed consent was obtained from each research participant.

9 Participants were approached in a French language classroom where I was conducting ethnographic observations in 2016. Two of them were suggested on referral through other participants.

10 Including possible renewal, but excluding permanent residence permits and permits granted after application for citizenship (administrative practice).

11 Having shared some of the participants' experiences (e.g. the hardship of adjusting to a new and complex sociolinguistic environment) positioned me at times as an insider; however, I was still studying the unfamiliar in many respects. I migrated to Luxembourg from another EU member state shortly before the project's start, therefore I had no immediate points of identification/direct experience with the researched areas. This led me to adopt a stance of not-knowing, which in turn allowed the participants to take on expert positions and author with more ease their own versions of their experiences.

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12 Interviews and informal discussions took place principally in English, with French and Arabic being used as auxiliary language resources. For the data collection, transcription and analysis process, I collaborated with two native speakers of Arabic with experience in qualitative research. During the fieldwork, I also relied on approximate translations offered by the participants. The excerpts included in this paper are the research participants' wordings and/or formulations of the person interpreting. Upon the participants' request, filler words, false starts and irregular grammatical features have been removed.

13 By way of illustration, the initiative foresees a first contact with the Luxembourgish language, but it is limited to 16 hours as compared to the 80-120 hours of French training made available to applicants for international protection.

14 The date indicates the day/month/year when the recording took place.

15 In 2015, Angela Merkel's open-door policy was an important point of reference for forced migrants attempting to reach Europe.

16 The 9th grade is decisive for accessing future education and vocational training in Luxembourg, especially for those (forced) migrants who do not have a recognised level of education or the required language skills for entering the local training system.

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Disclosure statement

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