

International Conference on bilingualism with local languages:

Language Attitudes and Bi(dia)lectal Competence (LABiC 2022)

Bilingual or multilingual contexts including one or more minority languages, dialects or local varieties deserve special attention in linguistic research. This type of bilingualism is generally referred to as “bidialectalism” or, more recently, “bilectalism”(Rowe and Grohmann, 2013), in order to highlight the asymmetry between the two varieties at issue, namely the standard national language and the local variety, which might or might not belong to the same linguistic family. Such an asymmetry in terms of linguistic status has an impact on various phenomena, which range from socio-political and identity issues to dynamics of language use and contact in bi(dia)lectal grammatical and cognitive systems.

Studies on bilingualism with local languages have often dealt with the political, social and identity situation of the investigated speech communities. Special interest has been devoted to comparing language attitudes towards minority and majority languages (e.g. Woolard, 1984; Hoare, 2001; 2004; Lasagabaster & Huguët, 2007; Newman et al., 2008; Price & Tamburelli, 2020), to examining the relationships between attitudes, policies and use in asymmetrical multilingual areas (O’Rourke, 2007; 2011), as well as exploring differences in status and prestige between local vernaculars and standard varieties (e.g. Garrett et al., 2003; Miłobóg & Garrett, 2011; Vari & Tamburelli, 2020; 2021).

In the sociolinguistic field, research has also started to explore new contexts for the use of local languages and new dynamics of coexistence with standard varieties, which are related to the symbolic ways of representing languages, even orthographically (e.g. Bernini et al., 2021). Research focused on spontaneous linguistic uses, instead, has foregrounded language contact phenomena (e.g. Padovan et al., 2016) and code-switching practices (e.g. Cerruti & Regis, 2005) between national language and dialects, which also abound in identity and symbolic meanings.

The biolinguistic perspective has investigated the impact of non-standardization and language proximity on the development of bilingual competence, focusing on phenomena of inter- and intra-linguistic variation, language mixing, optionality and grammatical hybridity along the standard-dialect continuum (Cornips, 2006; Tsiplakou et al., 2006; Grohmann, 2014; Leivada & Grohmann, 2017; Leivada et al. 2017; Grohman et al. 2020).

Finally, recent work in the psycholinguistic field has explored the differences and similarities in terms of cognitive benefit between standard bilinguals and bilinguals having one or more local languages in their repertoire (i.e. Lauchlan et al., 2013; Grohmann et al., 2017; Garraffa et al., 2020).

The aim of this conference is to gather contributions that provide different outlooks (socio-political, variationist, biolinguistic or cognitive) on the study of bilingualism with local languages, both in the Italian and the international context, in order to join efforts in the understanding of this fascinating and complex phenomenon.

The conference welcomes contributions related (but not limited) to the following research questions:

- What is the relationship between language prestige, linguistic competence and use?
- How are local languages perceived, and how are attitudes towards them influenced by the social context(s)?
- In asymmetrical bilingualism, what impact do institutional language policies have on the status of local languages and their vitality?
- How are non-standard varieties (dialects and local languages) mentally represented? Are there differences from the mental representation of standard varieties?
- What are the characteristics of grammars (phonology, lexicon, morphology, syntax) in terms of inter- and intra-linguistic variation, linguistic interference, grammatical hybridity in bilinguals with local languages?
- When the bilingual speaker has more than one form available, what are the dimensions of variation and optionality that can be observed?
- Does bilingualism with local languages entail the same cognitive benefits of bilingualism as traditionally understood?

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