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Crossing or maintaining language boundaries: analyzing languaging and heterogeneous language corpora.

Isabelle Léglise, CNRS (French National Centre for Scientific Research), SeDyL Research Unit

Although we know multilingualism, linguistic profusion and linguistic bricolage are far from being uncommon, linguistic heterogeneity is not gaining visibility in corpus linguistics nor in contact linguistics. Heterogeneous and hard to classify, language practices are due to, and at the same time reveal, diversity or what Vertovec (2007) or Blommaert & Rampton (2011) call superdiversity. On one hand, research on language contact tends to examine isolated (elicited) sample sentences and describes contact-induced language changes (Thomason 2001; Heine & Kuteva 2005). On the other hand, research on codeswitching, focusing either on its linguistic structure (Myers-Scotton & Bolonyai 2001) or on its social meaning (Auer 1999), deals with synchronic spontaneous speech recordings but traditionally mostly assumes bounded languages or repertoires (see notions as matrix language or code-alternation for example). All these studies presuppose the identification of specific languages in bilingual (sometimes plurilingual) corpora. Similarly, language annotation in corpus linguistics (following TEI standards) is based on the principle of univocity of items belonging to specific languages (Léglise & Alby 2013). In the last years, in a try to get rid of referring to bounded languages, a lot of terms have been coined in sociolinguistics or anthropological linguistics – as *transidiomatic practices*, *heteroglossia*, *polylanguaging*, *translanguaging*, *languaging* or *pratiques langagières hétérogènes* (heterogeneous language practices).

In this talk, I will address the notion of language boundaries, constructed both by linguists and by languagers. I will show how ambivalence or a play on boundaries is a common characteristics of languaging in multilingual contexts. I will draw on a project we developed in Paris (CLAPOTY project, 2009-2014) which aims was to reveal heterogeneity in language practices through a careful methodology to annotate and analyze spontaneous multilingual corpora.

I will first show how languagers make use of all kinds of linguistic resources in order to communicate, and how, in endolingual settings (Lüdi 1987), when languagers share more or less the same language(s) background, they sometimes choose ambivalent elements, attributable to various languages or varieties. In doing so, they choose, in a way, not to perform language boundaries but to 'float' instead in mid-water. It is particularly obvious in postcolonial contexts (involving for example close language varieties (Migge & Léglise 2013), or a Creole and its lexifier in decreolization contexts (Ledegen 2012)). Then, I will focus on exolingual settings, when speakers of different languages interact and see what happens when they install, cross or maintain, language boundaries. I will show how it relates to issues of power. Interactions in a hospital or a school in French Guiana will be cases in point.

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Bio

Isabelle Léglise is a senior researcher at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS, Paris) where she heads the SeDyL-CNRS (*Structure et Dynamique des Langues*) Research Unit and programmes on Multilingualism and Language Contact. She has been engaged for the last 15 years in research projects in French Guiana, Suriname and Brazil with a special focus on multilingualism related to migration and educational issues. She published widely on language variation and contact-induced changes, languaging and heterogeneous corpora, discourse analysis and language policy

related to education and health. Her last publications include *Exploring Language in a Multilingual Context: Variation, Interaction and Ideology in language documentation* (2013, Cambridge University Press) with Bettina Migge (Dublin), and the co-edition of books such as *The Interplay of Variation and Change in Contact Settings* (2013, John Benjamins) or *In and out of Suriname: language, mobility and identity* (2015, Brill).