

lu: Discourses on Language and Integration
Gabrielle Hogan-Brun / Clare Mar-Molinero / Patrick Stevenson (ed.)
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CHAPTER 7

Local actors in promoting multilingualism

Brigitta Busch

Although language policy formally remains a nation-state domain, in the process of globalisation other actors gain in importance. Local authorities – closer to the daily life of the citizens than the central state authorities – are only beginning to realise their role in the field of language policy. Confronted with the multilingual realities of everyday urban life, language policies in cities cannot ignore the challenges of the heterophonia and heteroglossia of urban societies. This chapter focuses on a local institution that follows a policy of linguistic diversity. The analysis of the language regime negotiated between the institution (the main public library in Vienna) and the users draws on topological approaches developed within the 'spatial turn' in cultural studies and on recent explorations in linguistics concerned with the relation between space, place and linguistic practice.

1.1 Introduction

My point of departure is the currently widely-debated argument that the migration policy of the European Union has so far been concerned with border regimes and the limitation of migration into Europe rather than with questions of integration and social cohesion. At the same time, in the process of the de-centring of the nation-state, the supra-state level and, in parallel, also the sub-state level are gaining in importance. Paradoxically, parallel to this weakening of the nation-states, there is renewed emphasis on the national language as a symbol of national unity and as an indicator of successful assimilation. Local actors are still ill-prepared and are only beginning to realise the role that they can play in language policies. In urban public spaces, first visible manifestations of an awareness that the cities were becoming increasingly multilingual were typically signs with rules and prohibitions relating to daily life, such as the warning that "fare dodging in public transport will be prosecuted" (Hinnenkamp 1990; Busch and Wakounig 1995). In a next phase there was often a rather 'naïve' policy of celebrating multiculturalism and multilingualism, which sometimes resulted in an equally ethnicising language policy by emphasizing different 'roots' while the point of reference remained 'white' and monolingual. In some cities concepts of diversity policies which aim at

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1.1 Introduction

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valorising cultural and linguistic diversity as a resource for creative and cultural industries began to appear in the 1990s. In terms of language policy it seems that this orientation results in a *laissez-faire* approach characteristic of the neo-liberal market economy rather than in conscious language planning. In the daily life of the city specific small-scale multilingual language regimes are developing in multilingual neighbourhoods with their institutions and services (Collins and Slem-brouck 2005). The analysis of such a language regime, a case study of the Vienna central library¹, is the focus of this chapter. (The appendix to this chapter, which gives an overview of the national language regime for migration and citizenship in Austria, contextualises this local regime.)

1.2 Spatial approaches in linguistics and cultural studies

In linguistics the topological perspective has so far been applied mainly in research on multilingualism in urban contexts. Referring to Goffman's (1974) interaction analysis and Halliday's (1978) social semiotic approach to language, Scollon and Scollon (2003) draft an instrument based on multimodality and discourse analysis to examine the way in which language is located in physical space. Blommaert et al. (2005a, b) draw on a spatial analysis for the understanding of multilingual interactions, power relations and hierarchisations between languages. Based on research in a multilingual neighbourhood they examine how different localities (such as shops, health care institutions, schools, cafés etc.) develop specific language regimes. Jacquemet (2005) coins the term "transidiomatic practices" for the overlapping multilingual interaction regimes that crystallise in particular localities (see section 4 below), while Scollon and Scollon (2004) conceive those intersections of different interaction practices as a "nexus of practice", in which a multitude of discursive strands and semiotic reference systems create meaning.

These spatial approaches in linguistics are based on theories that underlie the actual concepts summarized under the heading 'spatial turn' in cultural studies. Georg Simmel (1992), who explored space as a social construct at the very beginning of the 20th century, highlights the potential of this approach to reveal power relations. Equally influential is Nishida's (1999) topological work from the 1920s. Bourdieu's (1982) theory of the linguistic market also follows a space-based concept to render hierarchisations between languages and codes visible. In

1. The data were collected during the project 'Changing City Spaces' carried out in the context of the EU 5th framework programme and in a later project on 'Spaces of Linguistic Diversity' at Vienna University. I am grateful to my colleagues Martina Böse and Julia Sonnleitner who participated at different moments in the field work in the library.

anthropology too, spatial approaches increasingly play a role in the exploration of social phenomena. Augé (1995) distinguishes between traditional places with their history and globalised non-places (*non-lieux*), where specific de-territorialised social and communicative practices materialise (see 2.1 below). Massey (1993 and 1994) deals with social and territorial aspects of spaces. In the context of globalisation, spaces and places are being re-conceptualised to translocal connections. Appadurai (1998) speaks of *ethnoscapes*, of spaces where group identities are constructed, which are not territorially fixed and culturally non-homogeneous. Morley and Robins (1996) coin the term “spaces of identity” to explore belongings “beyond imagined community” (Robins 2004).

The analysis of the language regime of the Vienna library is based on a topological approach, on the ethnographic exploration of spaces, in which the library is conceived as a nexus of practice, as a symbolic space constructed through the social and linguistic practices of its users on which in turn it also has an impact. It is conceived as a node that gives access to different networks of communication, where other nexuses of practice intersect. The language order that can be observed in the library is the result of negotiations mediating between diverging interests. It consists of a series of different language regimes that develop in parallel, overlap and intersect. They can be divided schematically as follows.

On the level of communication between the institution and the users:

1. a globalised language regime that corresponds to the needs of diverse, anonymous, mobile users and a non-place dimension;
2. a language regime that corresponds to the place-dimension of the library, the top-down policy of a traditional educational institution situated in the context of national and local language policies and the current reorientation of this policy towards “edutainment”.

On the level of the users, transidiomatic practices in:

1. interaction with (globalised) media;
2. the communication between users in face-to-face interactions as well as in private mediated communication (mobile phone, text messages, chat rooms etc.).

2.1 A non-place and a globalised language regime

In a certain sense the library is a non-place as defined by the French anthropologist Marc Augé. He derives this definition from the conception of anthropological places as “formed by individual identities, through complicities of language, local references, the unformulated rules of living know-how” (Augé 1995: 101). Non-places, in contrast, do not show these characteristics: they are “a world surrendered to

solitary individuality, to the fleeting, the temporary and ephemeral", while they "create solitary contractuality" (Augé 1995: 78, 94). Airports, train stations, highways and shopping malls are examples of such non-places. Non-places are spaces of the relative anonymity that goes with the temporary identity of a passenger, a passer-by, a customer. This anonymity can be felt as a kind of liberation, since a person entering the space of a non-place is relieved of his usual determinants (Augé 1995: 103). This establishes conditions of space in which "individuals are supposed to interact only with texts, whose proponents are not individuals but 'moral entities' or institutions". Non-places are partly defined by the texts they offer us: their "instructions for use", which may be prescriptive, prohibitive or informative (Augé 1995: 96). This abundance of mediated texts finds its counterpart in the relative absence of face-to-face communication between the users and representatives of the body administering the use of the non-place. In this language regime, a 'globalised' language regime, the main addressees are mobile and anonymous passers-by. As far as communication of the type 'user-to-user' is concerned, there is no or hardly any interference and often a multitude of different codes can be heard.

Its very location within the topography of the city gives the main public library (*Hauptbücherei*) in Vienna the character of a non-place. It is not situated in a quiet park, but on the *Gürtel*, one of the main transport axes, where cars, trams and the underground train line dominate the scene. This highway divides outer and inner districts, the centre and the periphery, that is, the districts with a high proportion of migrant populations from those with a large number of offices and administrative buildings. The library is thus located in a zone of transition, a kind of no man's land. For the then-director of the Vienna library, Alfred Pfoser (2004: 5), the new location into which the library moved in 2003 presents a challenge as "the wild dynamics of the metropolis prevail here, the red-light district and the drug scene".

The architecture of the building refers to the concept of openness, to accessibility as well as approachability: an elevator leads directly from the underground station into the ship-like building which is also accessible via a huge outdoor staircase. The director emphasises that the library "is committed one hundred per cent to the philosophy of reducing inhibitions about entering the building" (Pfoser 2004: 7). The institution nevertheless distinguishes clearly between two user groups, the anonymous passers-by and the registered members. A membership card is available on presentation of an identity card only for persons who have their permanent residence in Austria. Only members may take media out of the building and obtain a password for internet access in the building. Without a membership card one may only use the material and the facilities available on the library premises. One can read newspapers, books and magazines from the large open-shelf stock, make photocopies, go to language courses, listen to CDs at the

audio work stations and watch films. Only approximately half of the more than 3000 visitors per day are registered users.

2.2 Visitors and users in transit

The main group that uses the on-site facilities rather than the book loan service are young people from the surrounding districts outside of the *Gürtel*, among them many of the so-called second and third generations of migrants. The library staff were surprised, as the director said in our interview, by the “dramatic numbers” of young people with a migration background that began to frequent the library almost immediately after its relocation to the new building. In a focus group discussion we organised (in German, Turkish, and Serbo-Croatian) and in subsequent individual talks with young people coming regularly to the library, the participants agreed that the library was an appropriate “place to meet people”, as it was a “free and unregulated space”, “an alternative to shopping malls where security guards are everywhere and where you cannot go unless you are buying something”, “a park for bad weather”.² Also, our interview partners indicated that the library was a more acceptable place for parents than a cafe or the shopping mall. It is the non-place dimension that makes the library attractive for this user group rather than a specific aspect of the media on offer.

Another user group that mainly makes use of the on-site facilities are asylum seekers. The library is appealing to them for several reasons: unlike applicants for citizenship or long-term residence permits, asylum seekers are not entitled to state subsidised German language courses until refugee status has been granted and this usually takes years. A range of ‘teach yourself’ German courses with different departure languages (e.g. Russian, English, French) is available for free and can be used at the multimedia workstations close to the entrance hall. Although internet access in the library is relatively regulated and limited to half an hour, it is possible to connect without having to pay. One of our interview partners remembered the time when he came as a refugee some years ago. He told us that in the beginning he read anything he could get hold of, no matter what it was and in any language he could understand. Reading allowed him to get away from the war images that haunted him as well as from the stress of coping with a new life in a new language

2. (The original quotations from interview transcripts are given in this and the following notes.) Ein Ort, andere, neue Leute kennenzulernen; ein freier, weniger geregelter Platz; eine Alternative zum Einkaufszentrum, wo die Security überall ist und wo man ohne Konsumieren nicht sein kann; ein Schlechtwetterpark.

that was completely foreign to him. "The day had 48 hours"³, he said, and reading was among the very few possible pastimes.

As the library features in travel guides to Vienna as an object of architectural interest with the possibility of free internet access, there are also always a considerable number of tourists in the building. These three user groups have very different linguistic backgrounds and practices and visit the library to meet very diverse communication needs. What they have in common is that they are interested by the non-place dimension of the building, the possibility of using communication facilities without stepping out of anonymity and without being labelled.

2.3 A globalised linguistic landscape

The language regime that corresponds to the non-place dimension of the library is similar to language regimes in public buildings with a high transit frequency. Whenever possible, signs and colour schemes are employed to guide the user, such as no-smoking signs, no-mobile phone signs, signs for restrooms etc. The different media sections of the library, the children's area, the language and literature shelves etc. all have their specific colour and are labelled with internationalised denominations such as 'College 6: Know How', 'College 2: Lokal – Regional – Global' or 'College 4: Kirango Kinderplanet' (Kirango children's planet). The subtitles chosen refer to the global rather than to the local. Periodic loud-speaker announcements reminding the visitors that mobile phones must be switched off, that registering is possible only in the main entrance hall or announcing that the library will be closed soon are mostly pre-taped. They resemble in voice and intonation announcements in airport lounges or similar surroundings, and are always made in German and in English.

This aspect of the library's language policy creates the basis for a linguistic landscape that marks the building as a non-place. Gorter (2006: 2), referring to Landry and Bourhis (1997), introduces the term "linguistic landscape" to designate visible language in written form in the public space. Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) understand linguistic landscape, the array of official signs and inscriptions as well as the private and the bottom-up manifestations of written language, as constitutive in the symbolic construction of the public space determined by rational considerations, presentations of self and power relations. The signs, the 'neutralised' language based on internationalisms or on fantasy words and the use of English as a lingua franca do not address any group in particular, but aim to indicate that the library wants to be seen as a cosmopolitan institution.

3. Der Tag hat 48 Stunden gehabt.

The languages of the two biggest migrant groups in Vienna – Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and Turkish – are represented on the library website and on various leaflets in the entrance hall with instructions and guidelines. Recently Russian was added, mainly to cater for asylum seekers from the Commonwealth of Independent States. Nevertheless, these languages remain less visible when entering the library and it is necessary to take a closer look to discover that they figure in the institution's language regime.

3.1 The staircase to enlightenment: educational mission and language planning for cultural diversity

Although the non-place dimension with its semiotic and linguistic regime is omnipresent throughout the building, the traditional educational mission still plays an important role in the self-concept of the institution. The distinction between non-place and place should not be seen as a binary opposition but rather as a continuum. The library website indicates a strong feeling of continuity with the roots of the library movement in the nineteenth and twentieth century. This historical reference anchors the library as a place in the anthropological sense. The socialist movement which, in the 1920s/1930s, had a dense network of 60 libraries in Vienna and a series of adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen*) propagated the idea that education would contribute to a new social order. With the decline of working class movements and changes in the book market and the use of mass media, the management had to make efforts to address a new public. Former director Pfoser defined "the civilisation of people, the transmission of culture and education amidst the bustle of modern life" as the "original mission" of the institution. For him, the building architecturally embodies not only openness but also "the promise that the path upwards leads via education and enlightenment" (Pfoser 2004: 6f).

To address new user groups, the management employs traditional means, such as readings with authors, film presentations, workshops on cultural topics and programmes for children, and for these events no entrance fees are charged. What is specific about the programme is that there is a strong emphasis on multilingualism. The readings often feature bilingual authors or they address a multilingual public by presenting works in the original language and in translation. Especially for the programmes for children and young people (for example, software presentations or the use of the internet for job offers) care is taken to promote activities in different languages. A milestone in the series of events in the new library premises was the exhibition '*gastarbajteri*' on the history of the so-called guest worker migration in Austria, which was organised by a platform of NGOs which succeeded in involving larger groups of second and third generation youth.

3.2 The language market

In the 1980s the Vienna libraries started to build up a stock of books in Turkish and in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian. It is only in these languages and in English that the full library range (fiction and non-fiction books) is available. In 2003, when the library moved into the new premises, there were about ten languages, but today one can find media in about thirty languages. The books, audio books and CDs etc. in languages other than German are regrouped in the so-called foreign language section which describes its collection on the website in the following way:

The foreign language library encompasses the world languages English, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Portuguese in stocks above 500 items as well as the languages of Austrian minorities and migrants such as Slovene, Serbian/Bosnian/Croatian, Turkish, Polish, Czech, Slovak, Albanian, Rumanian and Hungarian. In addition there are smaller foreign language stocks in Swedish, Finnish, Dutch, Norwegian, Chinese, Arabic, Yiddish, Catalan, Ladin, Latin, classical Greek, Romany and Esperanto. Also: foreign language videos, DVDs, CD-ROMs and audio books!⁴

The spectrum of languages as well as the classification into world languages and languages of Austrian minorities and migrants seems accidental. To some extent the portfolio is a result of the impact of the global language market as by far the largest number of media in languages other than German is in English. Whereas literary works in English are kept in the language section, non-fiction books in English are distributed throughout the library thematically standing alongside the books in German. The tacit assumption that readers who borrow books in the field of, for example, social sciences or economics understand English is one reason for this policy. The other is that the library is eager to keep its stock 'cutting edge', and media in English dominate the international publishing market. Although in the number of titles published annually the German book market still ranks in third place after Chinese and English, in absolute numbers the output in English is almost three times as high (Thussu 2000: 141).

The foreign language section is well equipped with simplified versions of fiction books for learners and bilingual editions in many of the languages that form the portfolio. The language learning section is impressive, hosting 7000 media,

4. Die Fremdsprachenbibliothek umfasst die Weltsprachen Englisch, Französisch, Spanisch, Italienisch, Russisch und Portugiesisch in Beständen ab 500 Büchern sowie die Sprachen österreichischer Minderheiten und MigrantInnen wie Türkisch, Slowenisch, Albanisch, Serbisch/Kroatisch/Bosnisch, Polnisch, Tschechisch, Slowakisch und Ungarisch. Ergänzend dazu gibt es eine kleinere Fremdsprachenbibliothek in Altgriechisch, Arabisch, Bulgarisch, Chinesisch, Esperanto, Farsi (Persisch), Finnisch, Hebräisch, Jiddisch, Katalanisch, Ladinisch, Lateinisch, Niederländisch, Norwegisch, Romanes, Rumänisch und Schwedisch.

among them 1,100 language courses with manuals, cassettes, CDs and approximately 900 CD-ROM courses. While over 100 languages figure as target languages, German language courses for different age groups and levels are a specific focus. Next to the shelves is a large space with audio, audiovisual and computer work stations – one of the most populated zones in the building. The foreign language section is intended to cater for learners – students as well as middle class users with tourism interests and also for people living in the city who use languages other than German in their daily lives. According to the last census in 2001, this is the case for 24.7 per cent of the Viennese (Waldrauch and Sohler 2004: 153).

The decision to add materials in a particular language to the portfolio is taken mainly on the basis of demands expressed by readers. The policy is to introduce a new language only if a sufficient number of materials can be bought and if there is someone to look after the stock who selects, purchases and classifies new materials. If there are not enough media in the stock and if the stock is not regularly updated, the demand also stagnates. The figure of 500 items is estimated as the critical mass necessary to start with a new language. Although the internationalisation of the book market in terms of ownership and licenses for translations has already gone very far, it still seems to be very language-bound as far as retail is concerned. For Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Russian, English, French, Spanish and Portuguese there are specialised book shops in Vienna through which books can be ordered. For other languages it is more complicated and the librarians have to improvise. For Arabic the library cooperates with a book seller who studied Arabic and who has good contacts in Egypt and in Lebanon, the only two Arabic-speaking countries from which it is fairly simple to import books, but it sometimes takes more than half a year before an order reaches Vienna. The Chinese stock was built up mainly through donations, and a long-standing member of the library, a sinologist, looks after it and does the transcriptions for the catalogue. For others, the library relies on the commitment of employees:

We get [books in] some other languages from all sorts of sources, which are often quite bizarre. We have Romanian in the collection: a colleague has a girl friend who works at the Austrian embassy in Romania, she bought the books there and sent them via diplomatic luggage and we picked them up at the Westbahnhof. And the bill came via the embassy as the book trade over there is completely dilapidated so that you cannot order anything from outside the country, and the publishing industry is so under-developed. It's much the same in Bulgaria, acquiring books there is sometimes a very bizarre business. We've also had Albanian since last year. A colleague who works in a branch library is married to an

Albanian, and they go every year to the book fair in Pristina and buy books there for the central library.⁵

Hierarchies concerning different languages on the global language market are reflected in the library's difficulties in acquiring books in other languages than the few that figure as international.

3.3 The library's language policy: bottom-up? top-down? laissez-faire?

Employees are responsible for the bigger languages and it is in fact they who really shape the language policy, which can range from a policy determined in a negotiation process with the users to a top-down approach with an explicit educational character. These two extremes were represented in our interviews by the librarian in charge of the Slavic section on the one hand and by the librarian for Turkish on the other. The librarian from the Slavic language section explains that, after cookery books, Russian books are the category with the highest lending rate in the whole library. The stock includes Russian classics, contemporary literature and, because of the lively demand, a substantial number of detective stories – novels that are well known to Russian TV viewers because of TV series. Whereas these novels are sought after mostly by “ladies living in Vienna, the typical Russian ladies, who like coming and love crime stories and can't get enough of them”⁶, it is mainly students who borrow from the collection of audio books which includes special editions like a 17-hour recording of Dostoevsky's work.

The most important user group of Russian books for her are “the many asylum seekers who make ample use of the facility”.⁷ The librarian, who occasionally works as a translator for Russian in a trauma relief service for refugees, says that the library has a cooperation agreement with the refugee centre in Trainskirchen, where

5. Und manche andere Sprachen beziehen wir über verschiedenste Quellen, die manchmal sogar sehr abenteuerlich sind. Wir haben Rumänisch im Bestand, das hat ein Kollege, der eine Freundin hat auf der österreichischen Botschaft in Rumänien, die hat die Bücher dort eingekauft mit dem Diplomatengepäck und zum Westbahnhof gebracht, wir haben sie dann dort abgeholt und die Rechnung wurde dann von der Botschaft gestellt, weil Buchhandel in Rumänien dermaßen kaputt ist, dass man eigentlich nichts von außerhalb Rumäniens beziehen kann, auch das Verlagswesen dermaßen schlecht entwickelt. In Bulgarien ist es ähnlich, also da läuft die Versorgung der Bücher manchmal auf sehr abenteuerlichem Weg. Auch Albanisch haben wir seit vorigem Jahr, das besorgt eine Kollegin aus einer Zweigstelle, die mit einem Albaner verheiratet ist, die fahren dann zur Buchmesse nach Pristina und besorgen Bücher für die Hauptbücherei.

6. Damen, die halt in Wien wohnen, die typischen Russinnen, die kommen gern und lieben dann die Krimis und können dann nicht genug haben.

7. Die sind sehr sehr viel Asylanten, die das sehr gut nutzen.

an NGO has built up a small library that receives books from the Vienna library. Equally important for the asylum seekers and refugees who come to the library are the 'teach-yourself' courses for German with Russian as source language. The 30 copies available are practically all out again as soon as they have come in.

Among the asylum seekers are, I think, about 90 per cent Chechens; many Armenians and Georgians too, only very few Russians. But Chechenian, Chechenian [books] are impossible to get hold of. There is a problem with the language too, and there is no publishing industry. But for these people it is not easy to read in Russian.⁸

The same librarian is also responsible for the other Slavic languages. As people with a migration background referring to the space of former Yugoslavia, especially from Serbia, are important in terms of numbers, the media stock comprises a large variety of fiction and non-fiction books by authors from the region as well as translations of important works from other languages, various magazines, films and video cassettes. Concerning the languages of the south-eastern European space, her language policy orientation is equally based on closely observing the needs and wishes expressed by visitors. This pragmatic approach is certainly due to the librarian's own background as an NGO activist, but it is also a possibility to escape the dominant language ideology and possible pressure exerted by the successor states of former Yugoslavia to treat Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian as three totally different languages.

The librarian responsible for the Turkish stock follows another approach. She said in the interview that it was important for her that the materials in the library contribute to sustaining Turkish identity. Therefore she only buys books directly in Turkey and not in Germany where a substantial Turkish language media industry has developed around the press house *Hürriyet*, where educational publishing houses have specialised in books and materials for children, and where a whole scene of bilingual writers has developed. She comments:

This is a guest worker culture that has emerged there, they write about the factory, about poverty, about the difficulties they have experienced. This is not Turkish, not Turkish culture like the one I grew up in, that happens in Turkey. (...) They have a culture in between.⁹

8. Bei den Asylanten ist derzeit glaub ich 90 Prozent Tschetschenen. [...] Sehr viele Armenier und Georgier, kaum Russen aber ich hab eh schon gesagt Tschetschenisch, aber Tschetschenisch ist irgendwie nichts aufzutreiben. Ist ja auch mit der Sprache schwierig, es gibt ja nicht einmal ein Verlagswesen. Weil es für die gerade schwierig ist, russisch zu lesen.

9. Das ist eine Gastarbeiterkultur, die dort entstanden ist, die schreiben, was die in Fabrik, welche Armut, welche Schwierigkeiten, die erlebt haben. Das ist nicht türkisch, nicht türkische Kultur, so wie ich aufgewachsen bin, was von in der Türkei geschehen ist. (...) Die haben eine Zwischenkultur.

She regrets that many of “the Turkish children who were born here” do not speak Turkish in public: “As Turks they are looked down upon by the general public and in the library they don’t want to admit that they are Turks and try to speak German. When I say something in Turkish to them, they are afraid.”¹⁰

The library staff are aware that not all children who have Turkish as their family language also attend Turkish classes in school. The library is often the place where they first encounter the written form of their language in print. Therefore playgroup activities and readings in Turkish are organized on a weekly basis. Also in this context the librarian consciously follows an educational mission:

I corrected hundreds of children – one letter, it worked. They learnt it the wrong way in the family. One letter only [illustrates the sound] ‘h-h-h’ they pronounce, we don’t have a ‘ch’, but a ‘k’. And I repeat this to them and they learn and it sticks.¹¹

Apart from the events she organises in the library she tells us that she is not very close to the Turkish community in Vienna: “I don’t speak their language. I speak a high language from Istanbul. (...) And as soon as I open my mouth, it is/ there is a distance with these people.”¹² She explains that in her perception most of those who came as so-called ‘guest workers’ in the 1970s and 1980s came from rural areas and do not read. Their children learn German in school and cannot read Turkish. However, she also wants to cater for them and buys CDs and DVDs. The well-assorted stock of music from Turkey and beyond also encompasses music in other Turkic languages as well as in the languages of the minorities in Turkey.

In the context of the library, the librarian’s purist attitude towards the Turkish language leads to a conservative acquisition policy that excludes ‘impure’ linguistic practices reflected not only in youth talk and popular music but also in contemporary literary works.

10. Gibt’s türkische Kinder, da sind die geboren. (...) Von der Umgebung werden die nur als Türke irgendwie klein gesehen und manche wollen nicht sagen in Bücherein, dass sie Türken sind. Die bemühen sich, Deutsch zu sprechen nur, wenn ich denen türkisch was sage, hm so haben die Angst.

11. Ich habe schon Hunderte Kinder – ein Buchstabe korrigiert hat, hats gewirkt. Was die falsch gelernt haben in der Familie. Eine Buchstabe genug [macht fauchende Geräusche] h-h-h sprechen die, bei uns gibt’s nicht ch, sondern k. Und das wiederhole ich und sie lernen, das bleibt.

12. Ich spreche die Sprache nicht von denen. Ich spreche aus Istanbul eine Hochsprache. (Und in der Türkei nur in dieser Stadt hat man Hochsprache gesprochen so wie ich spreche.) Und es ist kaum mache ich meinen Mund auf, es ist/ die sind/ Distanz habe ich mit diese Menschen.

3.4 Edutainment, children and youth

In the children's media centre as well as in the section named 'Scene', the shelves for popular music and film, and the multimedia work stations are a central element. At almost every computer screen there is more than one child, many watch films or play computer games together. With the different language options on the DVDs it is easy to keep up with a multilingual film stock. From the selection of audio material and of learner software available it is possible to conclude that children with a linguistic background other than German are definitely a target audience and that early foreign language learning is a focus. The director wanted the library to be seen as "a place of concretely experienced 'edutainment' (...) a machine for knowledge and leisure time activity that is a delight to use and experience" (Pfoser 2004: 8). The well-assorted book section with books in German, English, French, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Turkish and Italian, as well as the spacious rummage tables with comics in all of these languages and more, underlines the edutainment concept. Especially attractive for young visitors are the numerous music, auto, sports, computer, animal, girls' and other magazines, the fanzines and photo stories – print products that, traditionally, did not fill the library shelves and were not seen as suitable material. The director hoped "that we can drag them in this way into the civilizing maelstrom of the library. Which actually also happens, I would say, because sooner or later a large number of them also uses the library for reading." (interview with Alfred Pfoser 2004)

Since the publication of the first results of the PISA study in Austria, the Programme for International Student Assessment of the OECD, there has been an ongoing public debate on literacy and on language skills of children with a migration background. In the heated debate – often fuelled by populist politicians with simplifying arguments – the reasoning is often heard that the family language can hinder the learning of German. As a response to this debate the library has intensified its cooperation with schools and education institutions as it aims at being a centre for the promotion of reading literacy. Many school classes with a high percentage of migrants come for guided tours, and some of the visitors come back on their own and stay as users, as readers. The fact that children find their own languages represented and accessible materials in their languages facilitates appropriation.

3.5 Imagining the audience: the user as a discursive construct

In our interviews the library staff emphasised the importance attached to feedback from the users. The website also hosts a forum for communication with users and for suggestions concerning the acquisition of new media. Regular statistics on the

number of visitors and members and the book loans by category are produced, but no in-depth studies about the library audience have been done so far. In fact the audience is – as in other media enterprises – the ‘big unknown’, not only in terms of its social structure but also concerning the kinds of media they borrow. In particular, very little is known about on-site use of the library for about half of all visitors. The idea of a multi-layered, diversified public was expressed by most of the interview partners among the librarians. They also expressed the feeling that they are experiencing a transformation from a more homogeneous public to a heterogeneous audience with (sometimes conflicting) interests.

The idea of main target groups within the audience relies in fact mainly on prefabricated categories, on discursive constructs that go hand in hand with interests and modes of appropriation ascribed to these groups. And it is by imagining the audience that the relationship with the audience is structured and concepts for language policies are defined (Busch 2006). The orientation towards an ‘educational mission’ as represented, for example, by the librarian of the Turkish language section results in an emphasis on ‘pure’ language, on understanding reading to a large extent as a means for language maintenance. Understanding reading more as an activity for enjoyment or a leisure time activity favours a conception of the user as a consumer and the library as a service provider. On the level of language policy this translates into a rather unregulated growth of the language portfolio, into a media purchasing policy that is driven more by users’ demands.

4. Transidiomatic practices and modes of appropriation

Taking the perspective of the users reveals the fact that social and linguistic practices that have developed in the building transcend the traditional function of a library. It is not only the non-place dimension of the location that represents a challenge for the staff but also the shift in media reception from the primacy of the printed word towards an increasing importance of media foregrounding other modes of communication. The book is a form of communication that allows reception independent of location and technical apparatus (the book can be read anywhere) and its reception is also not limited to a particular moment in time (it can be read at any time). Contrary to other print media, books were also traditionally made ‘to last’ and to transmit ideas and (canonical) knowledge to posterity. Historically the municipal libraries functioned mainly as lending libraries and thus had hardly any facilities that invited readers to stay on the library premises for any length of time. The professional image of the librarian was close to that of an educator; she/he should be able to suggest good books and enlarge the stock in an appropriate manner. Audio and audiovisual media, such as CDs, DVDs, cassettes

etc. share with the book the property of being storage media: that is, they can be consulted anywhere and at any time, the only limitation being that technical equipment is needed. This is even more so with internet resources and communication possibilities that can only be made use of at the point where they are 'wired'. The decision to open the library shelves for multimodal media in the 1970s meant that work stations had to be arranged and that the traditional lending library gradually became a place to spend time in. The means of appropriation of multimodal media have contributed to transforming the private space (Morley 2000) and they have also contributed to transforming the profile of the library.

The architecture of the new Vienna library includes niches with spacious work tables throughout the building. There are about 150 computer work stations with internet access and about 40 audio and video places. In the afternoons and during holiday time these places are usually almost all occupied. Looking closer at the communicative and linguistic practices of users that stay in the building reveals that many of the users are engaged in what Jacquemet (2005: 265) defined as transidiomatic practices:

Transidiomatic practices are the result of the co-presence of multilingual talk (exercised by de/reterritorialized speakers) and electronic media, in contexts heavily structured by social indexicalities and semiotic codes. Anyone present in transnational environments, whose talk is mediated by deterritorialized technologies, and who interacts with both present and distant people, will find herself producing transidiomatic practices.

On the days that we spent at the library on our fieldwork, we repeatedly observed a certain number of types of scenes. In several of the niches with computers, there were always pairs or small groups of 15- to 18-year-olds doing their homework. Two girls who agreed to give an interview explained that they attended a commercial school and were in their last year. They come to learn in the library especially before tests and exams as they can learn together, consult other colleagues and books, and it was much quieter than at home with younger brothers and sisters around. While working on their maths, when talking to one another, they switched between German and Turkish. Although it was forbidden, they both had their mobile phones switched on and answered text messages or even whispered responses to a telephone call. These messages and calls were also in German or Turkish or a mix. At the same time the girl who sat at the computer surfed the websites of different radio stations for the top ten in the pop charts – partly in German, partly in English. After finishing their maths they gathered around the screen and looked for interesting events on Viennese websites. A theatre play announced at the Intercult theatre triggered a longer phase of 'googling' Turkey-based websites. Within the short period of time of doing their maths homework they had been

engaged in a range of interpersonal and mass media communication acts in different local and translocal networks. They had originally entered the library as a non-place, a location where they could "hang around and meet people". Gradually they have transformed their ways of being in the building and have developed their modes of appropriation and the linguistic practices linked with them. For them it has now become a place where they can meet friends, spend time and fulfil communication needs.

Another focal point is the large internet gallery with its 30 computers. A student who works in the gallery estimated that about 40 per cent of the users were Austrians with a Turkish background. Other users were refugees and migrants from Chechnya and from Iran who were waiting for a visa for the US or another country, Africans, and elderly people who do not have internet at home. The student explains: "For some it is the centre of their life, they spend up to eight hours here. They skip school to be in the library. A schoolboy once forged a medical certificate and ran around with crutches to be able to spend the day in the library." He speaks German and English with the internet users. "Some don't speak German and only broken English."¹³ The internet facilities can be used for half an hour at a time, and many people come to use email and keep in touch with their friends and family. Consulting websites with news from different countries in different languages is another frequent activity. The regular visitors also often have a particular site they are connected to. One of our interview partners, who came from Bosnia during the war and has recently been naturalised as an Austrian citizen, comes at least once a week. He can look into his mail account at his workplace but for longer mails and especially for visiting his favourite website he comes to the library in his leisure time. This website is one of several initiated by former inhabitants of particular towns or villages in Bosnia, creating a platform for migrants scattered around the whole world. The web master of this particular site has been living in a Scandinavian country for many years; other such sites are hosted in the US or in other European countries. These sites create a virtual space; they bring together people with a common reference to a physical location as it existed before the outbreak of the war in 1991.

In its function as a node where different media practices intersect, where access to web resources is possible, the library has a clear translocal dimension, which is in turn linked with access to the linguistic resources present on the web and to the possibility of (inter-)actively participating in media creation.

13. Für einige ist es eine Art Lebensmittelpunkt. Einige sind bis zu acht Stunden am Tag da und schwänzen sogar die Schule, um in der Stadtbücherei zu sein. Ein Schüler hat sogar ein ärztliches Attest gefälscht und ist mit Krücken herumgelaufen, um den ganzen Tag in der Stadtbücherei zu sein. [...] Manche können kein Deutsch und nur gebrochenes Englisch.

5. Conflict mediation and the negotiation of language regimes

After having moved to the new building the library staff was at first overwhelmed by the unexpected interest from young people with a migration background. The original target audience for the stock in the languages of migrants had mainly been the intellectual elite among migrants and the learners of these languages. The debate on whether the policy of having an open house should not be replaced by a policy of limiting access to registered members comes up periodically among users (as is visible in postings on the website). For the library staff the decision has been taken that this open house policy, although it can also be a burden, is a guiding principle. Efforts were made to enlarge the media stock and to propose specific courses and events to cater for the new user groups. Among the librarians people with a migration background are still under-represented, but significantly the security guard is Turkish-speaking.

What might look at first sight like a conflict between different user groups with diverging interests is possibly more a transformation of modes of appropriation, of changing social and linguistic practices in connection with the use of a library that has become a multimedia facility. The library, like other institutions, has beside its written rules also its unwritten rules, its “covert imperatives and tacit calls for order” (Bourdieu 1997: 162), that seem inherent to the building as social power relations ‘inscribed’ into the space. Patterns of thought and social practices are linked to these power relations as well as aspects of social and linguistic capital which, in their ‘subtlest form’, often remain unnoticed. Traditionally knowledge was a privilege and access to knowledge reserved for distinct social classes, and in the ‘halls of wisdom’ speaking loudly, laughing, eating and drinking and so forth were taboo. One of the struggles that the historic library movement was committed to was that for the access to knowledge embodied by the image of a staircase – a path to climb upwards. But the struggle for broader access was not linked to changes in the rules. The workers’ movement libraries as well as the classrooms in the *Volkshochschulen* adopted the rules of the ‘bourgeois’ institutions. In terms of language policy this meant a regime based on the (national) standard language, an ‘elaborated’ code, the language of education or rather the language of the educated. Other languages came in as foreign languages that opened access to education and to cosmopolitanism – represented, among others, by Esperanto. The language(s) of the street had to be left outside.

Today the new user groups enter the building as a non-place; they are not primarily interested in the fact that the space is a library, but more in the fact that it is a place to be and which happens to have an (interesting) range of media on offer. The on-site use of infrastructures has become as important as the book lending. Symbolically and literally speaking the staircase has become a meeting place

where young people sit and chat. With the new user groups other linguistic practices have made their way into the institution. The heteroglossia of the street and the transidiomatic practices that derive from the simultaneity of personal and mediated (translocal) communication meet the top-down educational policies and contribute to a new language regime which is subject to constant contestations and negotiations.

Following Massey (1994), the specific characteristic of a place is not determined by its delineation from other places or its specific history, but by the social relations and connections between people, and between them and institutions locally as well as beyond the local. This applies equally to language regimes, in particular spaces and places. All the intersecting strands of communication and exchange practices, the conflicts that arise from differences in modes of appropriation and struggle for the symbolic ownership of the place, define the place as a site in the struggle for meaning.

6. Conclusions

From the perspective of the library the then-director summarised: "A middle class institution, confronted with the diversity of the metropolis, attempts to react with the diversity of its assets" (Pfoser 2004: 6). In terms of language policy the present compromise tolerates the heteroglossic practices and begins to react not only by enlarging the language portfolio but also by diversifying the media range available to popular genres with their 'impure' language practices. The public library network, and in particular the new central library in Vienna, has been successful in attracting large numbers of young people with a migration background and in negotiating a language policy that can foster social cohesion:

1. The staff engages in an open space policy, there is practically no access barrier (no membership card control at the entrance), and different groups can appropriate the space and make use of the resources in their own way with no pressure to conform to a particular pattern of behaviour, as long as the basic rules are observed. The public that frequents the space reflects the heteroglossic reality of the city.
2. Linguistic diversity is valued, no difference is made between foreign language learning and migrant languages; that is, linguistic hierarchies are mitigated, and ethnicising language policies are avoided. A tribute to the institution's embeddedness into the larger language market is the uncontested position of English as a *lingua franca* in certain areas.
3. Language policy is seen as a negotiation process between the users and the staff of the library. The aim is to see all visitors as clients, who participate in

making suggestions for the acquisition of new materials (no matter in which language, media or genre) and to mediate between the interests of different user groups.

The example of the Vienna library shows that initiatives which provide open access to spaces in which communication between linguistically and culturally diverse groups can take place publicly can contribute substantially towards inclusive language policies. The example discussed here is not unique. Similar developments can be observed in other locations: for example, the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the central city library in Stockholm, and the members of the association of so-called intercultural libraries in Switzerland. We expect to find the heteroglossia of urban life represented in places like youth centres or specific clubs, but less so in places like libraries, traditionally dedicated to the preservation and spreading of a 'pure' standard language. What makes such places like the library particularly interesting is that they provide space in which traditional and new user groups interact, and that they supply a platform for the negotiation of a language regime that respects the needs of people with very diverse social and linguistic backgrounds. By multiplying the possibilities where such encounters and negotiations can take place, cities can engage in a real language policy from below which counteracts restrictive, monolingually oriented national language policy and hierarchisations due to the global language market.

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spouses and other family members of Austrian citizens, although exemptions are granted for children under nine years of age as well as for medical reasons.

Critics of this legislation acknowledge the importance of promoting the acquisition of German language skills but contest the circumstances in which this is to be done. Although the number of course hours was increased in the 2005 amendment from 100 to 300, language specialists still consider it insufficient for attaining level A2. With the suggested 300 course hours Austria is still below other European countries like Sweden or the Netherlands, which also offer language courses free of charge. Furthermore, it is argued that coercion and the threat of sanctions are not factors likely to create a positive learning atmosphere. In the design of the German language courses, models of good practice for tailor-made language courses, which met the needs of specific groups and which existed before the laws were passed, were not taken sufficiently into consideration.

Amendment to the laws on citizenship: testing German language skills and knowledge about Austria

Traditionally Austria's citizenship policy has been based on the *jus sanguinis* principle, and with the required minimum of ten years of permanent residence in the country as a starting point for the naturalisation process, Austria is one of the most restrictive countries in Europe. The 2006 amendment to the citizenship laws introduced the obligation to prove a sufficient knowledge of German and to complete a written multiple choice test on Austrian history and culture.¹⁵ The level of knowledge relevant to the test corresponds to the history and social science curriculum for the 8th school year in Austria. Formally citizenship is granted by the different *Länder* (federal states) and not by the national authorities, and there are also considerable differences between practices in the different *Länder*.

Language testing for pre-school children

In the school year 2005–6 the Austrian Ministry of Education launched the 'early language development' programme (*Frühe Sprachförderung*). Children must now be enrolled in a particular school one year before school entry, and on this occasion the school authorities assess the capacity of the children to express themselves in the German language. If a child's level of proficiency in German is considered insufficient, parents are urged to send the child to kindergarten where special language support amounting to a total of 120 hours is offered. Although early language learning is, in principle, a meaningful approach, in practice this measure is problematic in some respects: in some regions places in kindergarten are difficult to obtain and expensive – 120 isolated hours of language learning do not have a sufficiently sustainable impact – and the kindergarten staff are often not sufficient-

15. Staatsbürgerschaftsprüfungs-Verordnung, BGBl. II 2006/138.

ly prepared for this kind of work. Aiming exclusively at improving children's knowledge of German, the measure ignores the importance of the home language(s) and approaches that are designed to develop the language repertoire as a whole. However, the Austrian school system has been providing the possibility of additional mother-tongue teaching in a range of different languages for almost two decades.

Challenging the national, monolingually oriented policy

On a sub-state level a number of municipalities as well as NGOs have been proposing German courses tailor-made to the needs of specific groups for several years. For example, the city of Vienna has developed a special set of courses, such as German courses for owners of small business enterprises (shops, takeaways, internet and telephone shops etc.), or the scheme for mothers of schoolchildren called '*Mama lernt Deutsch*' (Mummy Learns German). These courses usually take place during school time in the schools the children attend, child care for younger children is provided, and the fee amounts to a symbolic contribution of €1 per person and class. These courses have so far attracted a high number of participants.

In 2003 the *Netzwerk SprachenRechte* (Language Rights Network) was founded by specialists from different disciplines (including linguistics, law, political science and sociology) and by staff in NGOs and various other institutions to ensure a constant exchange of information and to intervene in the public debate with grounded arguments that can counterbalance populist discourses (see www.sprachenrechte.at). The interventions made by this platform aim at valorising linguistic diversity as a resource for the successful development of a functioning language repertoire that encompasses German as well as other languages.

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Appendix 7.1

Legislation on language, migration and citizenship in Austria

Around the turn of the millennium, particularly after the national elections in 2000 which brought a centre-right wing coalition to power, the debate on immigration in Austria gained momentum. A new element in this debate was the role attributed to the acquisition of the German language, seen as an indicator of the 'willingness to integrate' into Austrian society. This debate led to a first revision of the so-called Aliens Act (*Fremdengesetz*) in 2002. Since then the question of language and migration has been on the political agenda in Austria, resulting in further amendments to the legislation concerning residence permits and the acquisition of citizenship as well as new regulations concerning school enrolment. The debate on school language policy was fuelled by the publication of the results of the international PISA study (the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment) and the subsequent politically motivated interpretation that attributed the responsibility for the meagre results in this test, among other things, to the 'insufficient knowledge of German' among children with a migration background. The restrictive national policy has been criticized mainly for its exclusive focus on the German language and for its coercive character.

The 'Integration Agreement'¹⁴: knowledge of German as a precondition for long-term residence permits

Since the amendments to the migration legislation in 2002 and 2005, under the terms of the so-called Integration Agreement individuals applying for a long-term residence permit in Austria have had to enrol on a 'German integration course' within a year of their arrival in the country. This course encompasses 300 hours of German lessons. For applicants who cannot read and write, or who have been socialised in an environment with a different writing system, an additional literacy course comprising 75 units is provided. At the end of the German course a standardised test certifying that the learner has reached the level A2 of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework has to be passed. This test must be successfully completed within a period of five years. If an applicant cannot meet these obligations, sanctions come into force which can ultimately lead to a refusal of the residence permit. 50 per cent of the costs of the German language course (up to a total limit of €375) are refunded by the federal authorities if the learner successfully completes the course within two years. The course must also be taken by

14. Integrationsvereinbarung 2002, FrG-Novelle 2002, §§ 50a-50d and Verordnung 2005, BGBl. II 2005/449.

spouses and other family members of Austrian citizens, although exemptions are granted for children under nine years of age as well as for medical reasons.

Critics of this legislation acknowledge the importance of promoting the acquisition of German language skills but contest the circumstances in which this is to be done. Although the number of course hours was increased in the 2005 amendment from 100 to 300, language specialists still consider it insufficient for attaining level A2. With the suggested 300 course hours Austria is still below other European countries like Sweden or the Netherlands, which also offer language courses free of charge. Furthermore, it is argued that coercion and the threat of sanctions are not factors likely to create a positive learning atmosphere. In the design of the German language courses, models of good practice for tailor-made language courses, which met the needs of specific groups and which existed before the laws were passed, were not taken sufficiently into consideration.

Amendment to the laws on citizenship: testing German language skills and knowledge about Austria

Traditionally Austria's citizenship policy has been based on the *jus sanguinis* principle, and with the required minimum of ten years of permanent residence in the country as a starting point for the naturalisation process, Austria is one of the most restrictive countries in Europe. The 2006 amendment to the citizenship laws introduced the obligation to prove a sufficient knowledge of German and to complete a written multiple choice test on Austrian history and culture.¹⁵ The level of knowledge relevant to the test corresponds to the history and social science curriculum for the 8th school year in Austria. Formally citizenship is granted by the different *Länder* (federal states) and not by the national authorities, and there are also considerable differences between practices in the different *Länder*.

Language testing for pre-school children

In the school year 2005–6 the Austrian Ministry of Education launched the 'early language development' programme (*Frühe Sprachförderung*). Children must now be enrolled in a particular school one year before school entry, and on this occasion the school authorities assess the capacity of the children to express themselves in the German language. If a child's level of proficiency in German is considered insufficient, parents are urged to send the child to kindergarten where special language support amounting to a total of 120 hours is offered. Although early language learning is, in principle, a meaningful approach, in practice this measure is problematic in some respects: in some regions places in kindergarten are difficult to obtain and expensive – 120 isolated hours of language learning do not have a sufficiently sustainable impact – and the kindergarten staff are often not sufficient-

15. Staatsbürgerschaftsprüfungs-Verordnung, BGBl. II 2006/138.

ly prepared for this kind of work. Aiming exclusively at improving children's knowledge of German, the measure ignores the importance of the home language(s) and approaches that are designed to develop the language repertoire as a whole. However, the Austrian school system has been providing the possibility of additional mother-tongue teaching in a range of different languages for almost two decades.

Challenging the national, monolingually oriented policy

On a sub-state level a number of municipalities as well as NGOs have been proposing German courses tailor-made to the needs of specific groups for several years. For example, the city of Vienna has developed a special set of courses, such as German courses for owners of small business enterprises (shops, takeaways, internet and telephone shops etc.), or the scheme for mothers of schoolchildren called '*Mama lernt Deutsch*' (Mummy Learns German). These courses usually take place during school time in the schools the children attend, child care for younger children is provided, and the fee amounts to a symbolic contribution of €1 per person and class. These courses have so far attracted a high number of participants.

In 2003 the *Netzwerk SprachenRechte* (Language Rights Network) was founded by specialists from different disciplines (including linguistics, law, political science and sociology) and by staff in NGOs and various other institutions to ensure a constant exchange of information and to intervene in the public debate with grounded arguments that can counterbalance populist discourses (see www.sprachenrechte.at). The interventions made by this platform aim at valorising linguistic diversity as a resource for the successful development of a functioning language repertoire that encompasses German as well as other languages.

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