

Theoretical approaches and frameworks to language maintenance and shift research: A critical review

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This article presents a critical overview of theoretical approaches and frameworks to language maintenance and shift research in the area of immigrant languages. It covers the underlying principles of these frameworks and assesses their advantages and shortcomings. The article argues that the field's theoretical orientations have shifted recently, with a greater emphasis on understanding language maintenance and shift as a dynamic process involving complex interrelationships between space and time. These new trends and new areas of research in relation to language maintenance and shift are highlighted and discussed in different parts of the article. The article concludes by calling on the significance of refining established language maintenance and shift models in ways that correspond to current developments in communities and in migration itself.

Keywords: language maintenance and shift, domain, ethnolinguistic vitality, core value, attitudes, identity, spatiotemporality

1 Introduction

Although notions of language maintenance and shift are universal, research has shown that there are differences across immigrant groups in the rate of maintenance or shift (e.g., Dweik, 1980; Holmes, Roberts, Verivaki, & 'Aipolo, 1993; Kloss, 1966). Different theoretical models of language maintenance and language shift (LMLS) have been proposed and widely used by researchers in their studies of immigrant communities. Fishman's (1965) theory of domains of language use is widely used and is interested in identifying the domains where the majority/minority languages are used. Other authors (Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977) have identified a number of objective and subjective ethnolinguistic vitality factors that are argued to promote maintenance or shift. However, a number of models have argued for the significance of considering cultural values for group continuity and LM (Smolicz, 1981, 1984), as well as exploring the influence of attitude (Karan, 2011) and identity (Hatoss, 2013) on LMLS. In the following sections, I provide a review of these theories and their contribution to LMLS research worldwide while detailing criticism levelled against these theories. I also highlight recent trends in the field where the incorporation of spatio-

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temporal dimensions (e.g., pre migration attitudes and experiences) is becoming central to the investigation of language maintenance.

2 Theoretical approaches and frameworks to LMLS

2.1 Sociology of language

The sociology of language approach was introduced by Fishman (1964, 1965, 1972b), who posits that an overall picture of LMLS can be obtained by investigating the domains of language use. A domain is defined as:

[A] socio-cultural construct abstracted from topics of communication, relationships between communicators, and locales of communication, in accord with the institutions of a society and the spheres of activity of a culture, in such a way that *individual behaviour and social patterns can be distinguished from each other and yet related to each other.* (Fishman, 2000, p. 94)

This definition recognises that language choices are influenced by a number of variables that contribute to domain analysis (see Dorian, 1981; Ervin-Tripp, 1968; Fishman, 1964, 2000; Gal, 1979; Holmes, 2001). Research has shown that setting, interlocutor and topic have the most influence on language choices. For example, individuals may associate certain languages with particular topics. Blom and Gumperz (1972) found that in Hemnesberget, a Norwegian fishing village, Ranamal, the local dialect, was used by a group of young educated people when discussing local activities. When they talked about nonlocal and national activities, they marked this change by switching to Bokmal, the standard language.

Within this paradigm, scholars are interested in identifying the domains where immigrant/minority languages are frequently used, and “the different ways in which the process of language maintenance occurs in the various migrant communities” (Rubino, 2010, p. 4). A reduction in the domains of minority language use and the discontinuity of intergenerational language transmission are indicators that speakers are shifting to the dominant language (Fishman, 1991; Holmes, 2001; Pauwels, 2004; Potowski, 2013). According to Fishman (1972a, 2000, p. 101), bilingualism can stabilise if there is a domain separation where “each language is associated with a number of important but distinct domains”.

Major contributions of domain analysis include its help in identifying domains that seem more resistant to shift (e.g., the family domain) (see Fishman, 2000) and describing any intergenerational differences in language choices in different domains (Rubino, 2010).

Most LMLS efforts are based on domain-analysis, where predominately quantitative information is gathered on “who speaks what language, when and where” (Starks, 2005, p. 243). While the usefulness of quantitative data in identifying general language patterns in a community at the macro level cannot be denied (see Holmes, 1997; Rubino, 2010), quantitative analysis of language use patterns using survey methods or censuses raises a number of concerns. First, much of this research focuses on the macro-level without looking at the dynamics of LMLS “occurring at the micro-level where language is used and negotiated” (Revis, 2015, p. 23). For example, Holmes (1997) raises concern about relying mainly on survey methods which may negatively impact the future health of the minority language. She writes:

Because survey methods focus on general trends and conceal data, a predominance of survey research may unwittingly hasten the demise of community languages. By reporting the overall direction of change, and confirming the apparent inevitability of the displacement of community languages, we may unintentionally reinforce and hasten the rate of language shift. (Holmes, 1997, p. 33)

Another concern raised by a number of scholars (e.g., Holmes, 1997; Pauwels, 2004) is surveys' reliance on self-reported data. For example, people may overestimate or underestimate their language abilities or practices. In addition, their language attitudes may not necessarily impact their language practices (Garrett, 2010). Indeed, the interrelationship between aspects of attitude (i.e., cognitive, affective, conative) does not necessarily go hand in hand (cf. Fasold, 1984, p. 184; see also Kristiansen, Garrett, & Coupland, 2005, for a discussion of the correspondence between overt/covert attitudes and language change). Shameem (1998) investigated LM among Wellington Indo-Fijians using language tests to assess the participants' actual language aptitude and validate their self-reported language proficiency. She found that the respondents often reported their oral Fiji Hindi ability at a higher level than their judged level of performance.

A review of recent LMLS research shows that research methods which grasp the complexities of language use in micro-level interactions and the multifaceted relationship between language and identity, and which complement macro level analysis, are drawing attention. Kim and Starks (2010) and Revis (2015) have shown how analysing interactional recorded data in the home domain provides deeper understanding of the dynamics underlying LMLS and illustrates the range of factors influencing parents' decisions in maintaining an ethnic language. Indeed, an increasing number of studies are using more innovative methods which might yield more 'thick' descriptions of language use patterns and provide deeper explanations of the factors influencing LMLS. Methods such as collecting narratives (Barkhuizen, 2013; Kim & Starks, 2005), participant observation (Lee, 2013), and conducting in-depth interviews (Al-Sahafi, 2010) have been used recently in LMLS research.

Domain analysis approach has been criticised for its theoretical and methodological applications and scope. A major criticism levelled against domain analysis is a terminological one with implications for LMLS research. Hatoss (2013) argues that the concept of 'domain' does not capture the dynamics of language use in our globalised world, where "localities are interconnected on multiple levels" (p. 127) and language use "is changing by the minute as different interactants enter and enact different identities" (p. 128). Hatoss clarifies that, for instance, the private domain of the family home might become somewhat transnational when family members communicate with their relatives through the Internet. The author suggests that the concept of spaces/scales allows for a more dynamic analysis and understanding of language use than the traditional concept of domains (spaces and scales are discussed in detail in section 2.7).

In terms of the application of domain-based analysis, recent research has argued the need to include domains that have been ignored by traditional research but reflect the complexity of our modern societies (see Hatoss, 2013; Kuiper, 2005; Rubino, 2010). Domains such as media, sports and immigrants' clubs/restaurants/churches are attracting some research interest (see Aipolo & Holmes, 1990; De Fina, 2007; Hatoss, 2013; Kuiper, 2005; Verivaki, 1990; Wu, 1995). For instance, as early as the 1990s, Aipolo and Holmes (1990) highlight the importance of contact with co-ethnic work colleagues in Tongan maintenance.

While exploring the relationship between code-switching and identity construction in an Italian male card playing club, De Fina (2007) found that the participants frequently used Italian terms for Italian dishes and expressions related to the game to index their 'Italianness'. Similarly, in his study of the Christchurch Dutch community, Kuiper (2005) showed how the analysis of 'sanctuary domains' (i.e. domains which typically act as locations for cultural and linguistic continuity, such as churches and clubs) can identify an ethnic group's attitudes towards LM and the members' identity perception.

An important area that is still under-researched in traditional domain-based analysis is media language use and its impact on LM (Hatoss, 2013; Jamaï, 2008; Rubino, 2010). Visual media such as television programs and videos can be used to promote the ethnic language at home (e.g. among Arabic-speaking immigrants in Britain (Othman, 2006) and Australia (Clyne & Kipp, 1999)) and keep immigrants informed of recent developments in their home country (e.g. among Moroccans in Britain (Jamaï, 2008), Arab Americans (Rizkallah and Razzouk, 2006) and Somalis in Australia (Clyne & Kipp, 1999)). Furthermore, the widespread use of Internet communications and social media applications (e.g. Facebook, Viber) has created a 'borderless world' (Ohmae, 1991) in which immigrants feel close to their countries of origin and other immigrants in the diaspora. This has forced "sociolinguistics to unthink its classic distinctions [...] and to rethink itself as a sociolinguistics of mobile resources, framed in terms of trans-contextual networks, flows and movements" (Blommaert, 2010, p. 1). Thus, these translocal spaces/networks need to be investigated to determine their impact on immigrants' language use and maintenance (e.g., De Klerk & Barkhuizen, 2005; Hatoss, 2013). Hatoss's (2013) work appears to be very influential in this regard. She investigated how the Internet diaspora – what she terms 'cyberspora' – allows Australian Sudanese refugees to connect with other Sudanese communities to maintain their culture and language. Hatoss provides a number of examples, including the Agola Kapuk association, which connects Sudanese people across the globe using their mother tongue (i.e. Acholi). All of this suggests that assessing the contribution of media to LM in various immigrant communities is worthwhile.

2.2 *Ethnolinguistic vitality*

The 'ethnolinguistic vitality model' was outlined by Giles et al. (1977) who argue for the importance of considering socio-structural factors in influencing the vitality of an ethnolinguistic group in a contact situation. Vitality is defined as "that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in inter-group situations" (Giles et al., 1977, p. 308). They posit that demographic, institutional support and status factors are three objective variables that make up the ethnolinguistic group's vitality. The model is useful in providing insights into the variables and mechanisms involved in the maintenance and shift of a minority language in a language-contact setting (Yagmur & Ehala, 2011, p. 103).

A number of studies have been carried out in line with the assumptions of the objective vitality theory (e.g. Mirvahedi, 2014; Wang and Chong, 2011; Yagmur, 2004; Yagmur and Akinci, 2003). As far as demographic factors are concerned, it has been shown that groups who are numerically strong and highly concentrated in certain areas are more likely to maintain their language than those who are numerically weak and non-adjointing (see Al-Khatib & Alzoubi, 2009; Kipp & Clyne, 2003; Kloss, 1966; Othman, 2006; Pütz, 1991). Strength in number "can

sometimes be used as a legitimising tool to ‘empower’ groups with the ‘institutional control’ they need to shape their own collective destiny within the intergroup structure” (Harwood, Giles, & Bourhis, 1994, p. 168). Residential concentration can provide more opportunities for practising the language and facilitating cultural maintenance of the group (Holmes, 2001). In addition, higher rates of LM tend to be among groups with tendencies towards endogamous marriages (cf. Davis & Starks, 2005, p. 300; Kipp & Clyne, 2003).

Institutional support factors are other significant objective indicators of vitality which “relate to the kind of recognition and use given to a language or variety in education, media, government, religion, and other societal institutions” (Lewis, 2000, p. 92). Previous research has emphasised the effect of formal and informal support variables on a group’s vitality and LM (see Clyne, 2001; Holmes, 2001; Mirvahedi, 2014; Paulston, 1994), as well as shaping group members’ attitudes of their ethnolinguistic vitality (Giles et al., 1977, p. 316). For example, the assimilationist government policies in Iraq have had a negative effect on Assyrians’ acquisition of their ethnic language, restricting the use/learning of oral language to home and a few churches (see Tawalbeh, 2017). Other ethnic minorities such as Chaldeans favour Arabic over Chaldean and as a result have encouraged their children to speak Arabic at home (Petrosian, 2006; see Mirvahedi, 2014 on Azeri in Iran). Indeed, when language is not used in media, education, or receives no government support, it is less likely to be maintained. Mirvahedi (2014) has shown how a Farsi-only education/media in Iran facilitated the permeation of Farsi into Azeris’ homes in Tabriz. By contrast, the use of language in media and education has been seen to promote its use and maintenance and increase the vitality of the group. For example, Arabic is institutionally supported in the U.S., Britain and Australia through the Arabic/Islamic schools which function as key resources for its maintenance (Dweik, 1980; Ferguson, 2013; Rubino, 2010; Sawaie & Fishman, 1985). In their surveys on Arabic in 14 American states, Sawaie and Fishman (1985) found 12 schools where Arabic is used exclusively or extensively and 38 religious programs teaching Arabic (see, for example, Seymour-Jorn’s (2004) discussion of Arabic teaching in the Salaam school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin). More recently, Bale (2010, p. 141) discusses the government funding available for Arabic language programs in the U.S. He mentions that between the academic years 2001–2002 and 2003–2004, there were between 17 and 19 National Resource Centres that offered teachings in Standard Arabic in U.S. universities.

Status factors are the third objective indicators of the group’s vitality which refer to economic, social, sociohistorical and language status factors. It is argued that LM is likely to take place if a minority group is of equal economic status to the dominant group or when their language is connected to better economic opportunities (Paulston, 1994). In addition, when members of a minority language are socially accepted and regarded equal to members of the outgroup, they are more likely to maintain their language (Kuiper, 2005). Furthermore, the history of the group which might be associated with the group’s struggle for their rights affects the vitality of the group. De Klerk and Barkhuizen (2005, p. 138) suggest that one of the factors that facilitates language shift among Afrikaans in New Zealand “is its association with South Africa’s apartheid history which brings with it feelings of inferiority” (see also Kamwangamalu, 2006). In other cases, historical events “can be used as mobilizing symbols [which] inspire individuals to bind together as group members in the present” (Giles et al., 1977, pp. 310–311). McClure (2001) asserts that Assyrians’ oppression in their homeland and their

sense of threat resulted in a strong link between language and identity among them. This is in line with Smolicz (1981) and Miller (2000, p. 170) who argue that status of a language is enhanced when it is perceived as a 'core value' by its speakers.

In spite of its wide application, the ethnolinguistic vitality theory has received theoretical and methodological criticism (for a recent review of the theory and its theoretical aspects see the special issue on ethnolinguistic vitality, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 2011). Lewis (2000, p. 97) notes that the analysis of the vitality of a group is based on a limited set of variables. While these are useful, the author argues that they are not sufficient by themselves to categorise groups as 'low', 'medium' or 'high' vitality. Other factors such as age, gender, length of residence, people's aspiration for the future or the emotional attachment to the group, may actually be indicators of the group's vitality and thus should be analysed (Ehala, 2011; Husband & Khan, 1982; Lewis, 2000). Husband and Khan (1982) also argue that the ethnolinguistic vitality variables are not independent of each other; they are interrelated and their interaction with each other should be understood as context-dependent.

Another criticism leveled against ethnolinguistic vitality theory is its "underestimation of the actual vitality of some minority groups" (Yagmur, 2011, p. 112). In presenting research results on Turkish immigrants in Australia, France, Germany and the Netherlands, Yagmur (2011) states that perceptions of vitality were found to be low. Nevertheless, high rates of Turkish LM have been found in these contexts as a result of the role played by Turkish organisations (e.g. mosques, cultural institutions) "in creating a rich social network in which Turkish language maintenance is promoted" (Yagmur, 2011, p. 117). Yagmur concludes that overlooking the influence of minority institutions may provide a deceptive picture of the actual vitality of the group.

Methodologically, the theory has been criticised for its main reliance on quantitative methods such as questionnaires to measure the vitality of the group (see Ehala & Zabrodska, 2011; Lewis, 2000; McEntee-Atalianis, 2011). It is suggested that EV can be effectively measured using quantitative and qualitative methods such as ethnographic approaches. As Lewis (2000) suggests, sociolinguistic surveys can provide only part of the picture, but an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of LMLS and the character of ethnolinguistic vitality require other methods such as participant observation where researchers are engaged in a continuous assessment of the vitality of the group.

The ethnolinguistic vitality theory has been expanded to include subjective vitality factors (Bourhis, Giles, & Rosenthal, 1981), thus enhancing its capability of providing a fuller profile of the ethnic group being considered (Yagmur & Ehala, 2011, p. 103).

2.3 Subjective ethnolinguistic vitality

The subjective ethnolinguistic vitality approach to LMLS has particularly focused on perceptions of ethnolinguistic vitality and language attitudes (Rubino, 2010, p. 11). It is argued that a group's beliefs of its own vitality are crucial to LMLS (Bourhis et al., 1981; Tajfel, 1974). Man (2006, p. 233) argues that personal subjective assessments of vitality (Bourhis et al., 1981) could be more illuminating than objective assessments, as "individuals often behave in response to their perceptions of reality rather than to objective vitality".

Subjective ethnolinguistic vitality has been traditionally approached quantitatively using Bourhis et al.'s (1981) Subjective Ethnolinguistic Vitality Questionnaire (SEVQ). SEVQ measures how group members perceive their own group and outgroups along strength, power and status dimensions (Yagmur 2011, p. 112). It is claimed that groups who evaluate their ethnolinguistic vitality as 'high' are more likely to maintain their languages than those with 'low' ethnolinguistic vitality perceptions (Bourhis & Sachdev, 1984; Giles & Johnson, 1987).

The subjective ethnolinguistic vitality theory has been heavily criticised for its methodological and theoretical orientation. Methodologically, perceptions of vitality are complex and not adequately addressed quantitatively only. Qualitative methods or a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods can better capture the complexity of vitality perceptions (Hatoss, 2013; Lewis, 2000; McEntee-Atalianis, 2011). Theoretically, SEVQ has been criticised for measuring the outgroups vitality in respect to strength, power and status perceptions only, ignoring that there might be other factors affecting vitality such as motivation (Karan, 2011), ethnolinguistic identification (Hogg and Rigoli, 1996) or intergroup distance (Ehala, 2010; Ehala & Zabrodska, 2011). For example, Allard and Landry (1994) argued that individual networks of linguistic contacts (INLC) are fundamental indicators of a group's SEV and of the person's language competence and use. They write:

[T]hese networks determine the quantity and quality of a person's ethnolinguistic experiences [which] give rise to perceptions of the relative vitalities of the ethnolinguistic groups with which he/she is in contact...In an interethnic group context, the language behaviour of individuals may reflect a strong sense of belonging to an ethnic group or an equally strong desire to integrate [into] another ethnic group. (Allard & Landry, 1994, pp. 121-123).

That is, as individuals participate in their INLC, they develop beliefs about their EV and attitudes towards LM and use. Language is more likely to survive if individuals regard it as an integral element of their culture (Smolicz, 1981, 1984).

2.4 Core value theory

The core value theory was proposed by Smolicz (1981, 1984) and his colleagues, who argue that each immigrant group subscribes to particular values which "are regarded as forming the most fundamental components or heartland of a group's culture [which] act as identifying values which are symbolic of the group and its membership" (Smolicz & Secombe, 1985, p. 11). Smolicz argues that these core values are essential for the survival of the group. A group is prone to internal and external pressures, and the abandonment of these core values, whether voluntarily or by force, may result in the group's collapse (Smolicz & Secombe, 1989). In addition, such values vary among groups. Regarding language, Smolicz and Lean (1979, p. 235) distinguish between 'language-centred cultures' whose native tongue constitutes a core value, and other cultures "which are based upon family, religion, or some other ideals, be they political, historical or structural". Testing the theory among different immigrant groups in Australia, Smolicz (1981) and Smolicz and Secombe (1985, 1989) found higher rates of LM among groups for which language is a core value (e.g. Polish, Greek, Chinese) and higher rates

of LS among groups whose language is of peripheral importance (e.g. Dutch, Italians). They also indicated that groups with higher rates of LM are culturally distant from the majority group (cf. Clyne & Kipp, 1999, on Muslim Arabic speakers vs. Christian Arabic speakers in Australia; Gogonas, 2012, on Egyptian Muslims vs. Coptics in Greece).

Research in some communities has shown that other core values (e.g. religion, familism) may contribute to LM when they necessitate the use of the language for particular purposes. Guardado (2008) reports that familism tends to facilitate LM among Latino families because they value communication with their extended families (cf. Tannenbaum, 2009, p. 977, regarding Ethiopian immigrants).

Overall, the core value theory can explain why certain languages are maintained or lost in a contact situation; nevertheless, it has received some criticism. First, Clyne (1991) and Kipp, Clyne, & Pauwels (1995) point out that core values have been represented as static and resistant to change, which contradicts the dynamicity of immigrant communities. Perceptions of core values may in fact vary over time and across generations. Second, the theory cannot explain why in some cases valuing language may not necessarily translate into LM. Third, it cannot account for multi-group membership and group definition. For example, speakers of pluricentric languages such as Spanish and Arabic may come from various countries and differ in their cultural, religious and political affiliations (Woods, 2004, p. 9; see also Tawalbeh, 2017, for a discussion on Wellington Assyrians' churches language practices).

One fundamental concept generated from the discussion of core value theory is attitude. Speakers who positively view their mother tongue as a core value are more willing to maintain it and pass it on to the next generation (Smolicz, 1981). The following section overview and evaluate the major theories of attitudes and the different approaches used in measuring language attitudes.

2.5 *Language attitudes*

2.5.1 **Theoretical treatment of language attitudes**

Although the term 'attitude' has been extensively used in the literature, it "is not one about which there has been universal agreement" (Edwards, 1994, p. 97; see also Vandermeeren, 1996). Attitudes have typically been the domain of social psychologists and contact linguists have adapted theoretical and methodological concepts for language attitude research (Broermann 2007, p. 131). Yet, as the subsequent discussions explain, sociolinguists have profoundly contributed to the field as early as the 1960s (e.g. Labov, 1966; Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner, & Fillenbaum, 1960) and have used innovative approaches for the treatment of language attitudes.

In attitudes and human behaviour research, there is generally a distinction between two opposing theories which have been used by psychologists: the "behaviourist" and the "mentalist". Behaviourists (e.g. Hull, 1974; Watson, 1919) claim that 'language choices of individual communities (as a response) are directly affected or brought about by some objectively observable external effects' (Maitz, 2011, p. 161). This kind of overt behaviour is easy to observe because it does not require self-reports or indirect inferences (Fasold, 1984). Behaviourists hypothesise that attitudes can be directly measured by observing the responses

people make in social interaction to certain languages (Appel & Muysken, 1987, p. 16).

The behaviourist theory was heavily criticised by mentalists (e.g. Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Allport, 1935) who operate with the assumption that “human behaviour is controlled by directly unobservable, internal, mental processes” (Vandermeeren, 1996, p. 692). Attitudes are viewed as “an internal state aroused by stimulation of some type and which may mediate the organism’s subsequent response” (Williams, 1974, p. 21; see also Ryan, Giles, & Sebastian, 1982, p. 7). Thus, language attitude is a mediating variable which can be *inferred* from behaviour (Vandermeeren, 1996, p. 158). According to mentalists, attitudes comprise three components: the cognitive element (thoughts and knowledge about a language or its speakers), the affective aspect (feelings towards a language or its speakers), and the conative component (behaviours towards the attitudinal object) (Edwards, 1994, p. 97).

In response to the mentalists’ assumptions of attitudes as static thoughts and beliefs in people’s minds about language and/or speakers of that language, recently social constructionists (e.g. Dailey-O’Cain & Liebscher, 2011; Liebscher & Dailey-O’Cain, 2009) argue that attitudes are “variable, inconsistent and change over time” (Hatoss, 2013, p. 35). Thus, notions of stability and durability held by traditional theories are disregarded and the emphasis is placed on the dynamic, contextualised nature of the notion of attitudes. Liebscher and Dailey-O’Cain (2009, p. 201) write that “the expression of language attitudes is a social practice that needs to be seen as embedded within particular contexts”. What stems from this, as suggested by Hatoss (2013, p. 35), is a focus on contextualised language use and attitudes and an analysis of the ways attitudes are constructed as well as the purposes they achieve in discourse.

The above-mentioned theoretical assumptions on attitudes have contributed to the complexity of methodological treatment of language attitudes in LMLS research and created “disagreement about the best way to assess language attitudes empirically” (Albirini, 2016, p. 63). In the following section, I outline and discuss the four major methods (i.e. direct, indirect, societal treatment, discourse-based) that have been used in language attitudes research.

2.5.2 Methods of assessing language attitudes

Language attitudes research has developed different methods and elicitation techniques to assess language attitudes (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. The main approaches to assessing attitudes, their advantages and shortcomings (based on Garrett, 2010).

Approach	<i>Direct</i>	<i>Indirect</i>	<i>Societal treatment</i>
Methods	Questionnaires, interviews, social constructionist ¹	Matched and verbal guise techniques	Participant observation, ethnographic studies, studies of sources in the public domain
Strategy	Straight questions to directly elicit participants’ attitudes to various language phenomena	Guised techniques to uncover participants’ private emotional and conceptual reactions to language phenomena	Researchers rely on different sources such as observations, letters to editor, media texts

Advantages	Researchers can employ a wide variety of techniques and methods	Respondents do not know that their attitudes are being investigated	- The least obtrusive - Excellent for gaining historical insights into attitudes
Disadvantages	- Some questions may contain relatively 'loaded' words that tend to push people into answering one way - Social desirability bias - Acquiescence bias - Interviewer's paradox	- Limited to the use of guise and verbal techniques - Language variations may be much more salient than they would normally be outside the experimental environment - Voice recordings may normally co-vary with accent varieties - Mimicking accents may produce many inaccuracies	- Sometimes viewed as somewhat informal - Does not lend itself to the rigour of statistical analysis and generalisation to broader or specific populations

Direct methods are the most widely used in language attitudes research (Garrett 2010, p. 159) where "respondents are directly asked about their attitudes to a language and they are aware of the purpose of the questions" (Hatoss, 2013, p. 33). Researchers usually rely on questionnaires or interviews to directly elicit attitudinal data from the respondents. Fasold (1984, p. 152) and Garrett (2010) have offered a detailed explanation of the advantages and shortcomings associated with the elicitation tools used in direct methods. The authors pointed out that questionnaires are useful for accessing large numbers of respondents or when the researcher aims to make generalisations about the group or make comparisons between different groups. Interviews are valuable for eliciting open responses "and the interviewer can guide the conversation if the subject tends to stray from the point" (Fasold, 1984, p. 152).

While these direct methods can provide valuable insights into language attitudes, they often lead respondents to agree positively with the statements (i.e. acquiescence bias) and to answer questions in a way that will be viewed favourably by others (i.e. social desirability bias) (see Garrett, 2010). The criticism of direct methods has led to the development of the indirect method "the matched-guise technique" (Lambert et al., 1960). In this approach, unlike the direct method, participants are not aware that their attitudes to language are being investigated. A typical method is to listen to recordings by apparently different speakers representing 'guises' in different languages/dialects and then to be asked to rate speakers on a semantic differential scale based on different traits, such as friendliness, intelligence, religiousness, etc. If the same person is evaluated differently in different guises, it is hypothesised that it is the language/dialect which influences participants' evaluations (e.g. Lambert, Anisfeld, Yeni-Komshian, & Katz, 1965). The matched-guise technique has proven to be useful in eliciting private attitudes; nonetheless, it has attracted a great deal of disagreement (Garrett, 2010, p. 57) (see the summary table above).

A third approach to studying language attitudes is 'the societal treatment method'. In this approach, researchers infer attitudes by 'analysing the content of various sources in the public domain, such as perspective (or proscriptive) texts, language policy documents, media texts, and various kinds of advertisements' (Garrett, 2010, p. 51). Examples of this approach include Kramer's (1974) study of language use in cartoons and Schmied's (1991) study of attitudes towards English in Africa by examining letters to the editor in African newspapers. Garrett (2010)

highlights the pros and cons of this approach which can be summarised in the following quote:

Societal treatment research [...] is useful in obtaining insights into the social meanings and stereotypical associations of language varieties and languages [...] It is the least obtrusive overall, in that it generally works from texts or observations of various kinds rather than through eliciting responses [...] This approach is sometimes viewed [...] as somewhat informal, and not lending itself to the rigour of statistical analysis and generalisation to broader or a specific population. (Garrett, 2010, p. 52)

This suggests that societal treatment approach is significant in identifying ideologies held towards language or varieties of language and their relative status. While this approach limits itself to qualitative interpretation, it can validate data collected from quantitative-based methods.

Influenced by the social constructionists' assumptions of attitudes as dynamically constructed and variable (Dailey-O'Cain & Liebscher, 2011; Hatoss, 2013; Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009), a more recent approach to studying attitudes is discourse-based methods (e.g. Dailey-O'Cain & Liebscher, 2011; Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009).). In problematising language attitudes methods, Dailey-O'Cain and Liebscher (2011) and Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain (2009) argue that traditionally language attitudes research has heavily relied on quantitative-based methods (i.e. matched-guise technique and questionnaires based on statistics-based methods of analysis) to studying attitudes. While acknowledging some of the advantages of these methods, they nevertheless point out that they have several limitations, including:

- the difficulty in applying the findings to real-life situations
- the suppression of variability in the findings
- the separation of the attitude from the language and its speakers
- the pressure on participants to respond along a scale that has been worked out by researchers
- and finally the fact that different participants may well mean different things by, for example, checking off a point along a semantic-differential scale (Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009, p. 195)

Proponents of discourse-based methods (e.g. Hatoss, 2013; Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998; Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009) propose that:

By studying language attitudes as they occur in conversations, we are able to see how they are made relevant in everyday life in conjunction with other people, and through this, we can view them in their most contextualized and least abstracted form (Dailey-O'Cain & Liebscher, 2011, p. 93).

The analysis of conversations and interviews takes into consideration features of discourse that can reveal covert attitudes such as presupposition, entailment, assertions, laughter, interruptions, pauses, stance, etc. (see Cortazzi & Jin, 2000, p. 108; Dailey-O'Cain & Liebscher, 2011, p. 93).

If we survey recent books on language and attitudes such as Garrett's (2010), we notice that they do not allocate significant discussion of the social constructionist approach or the discourse-based methods. In fact, Garrett does not devote a separate chapter discussing this approach – as he does when discussing in detail other methods such as the matched-guise technique – but discusses it

under the ‘direct approach’. He claims that the social constructionist approach “has not featured much at all in the main body of language attitudes literature [...] As more social constructivist work on language attitudes evolves, it may well require more detailed treatment under a heading of its own” (Garrett, 2010, p. 160).

Furthermore, in responding to the criticisms social constructionists hold against the quantitative-based approaches like the direct approach and the matched-guise technique, Garrett (2010) argues that “the notion of durability in attitudes need not exclude the notion of variability [...] and the examination of how social evaluations are constructed through linguistic resources and repertoires can open richer interpretations of traditional data” (p. 163). He also argues that it is very restrictive to confine research only to the qualitative analysis of individuals’ talk in interaction (p. 30). Garrett (2010) elucidates as follows:

There is much to be gained from taking an open view of research methods and interpretation and to allow approaches that aim at reaching generalisations about community-level phenomena...Social evaluations may indeed vary across or within social situations, and, some attitudes may indeed also be less stable. But this does not mean that the variation is not normally bounded in some way or that there can be no stable subjective trends at higher levels. A degree of ‘systematic variation’ (Potter and Wetherell 1987: 45) need not be seen as entirely contradictory to the idea of durability. (p. 30)

When reading through Garrett’s argument, we need to be cautious and not caught in the assumption that discourse-based methods reject other methods. In fact, Garrett’s position in calling for diversity in research methods has been echoed in the writings of social constructionists themselves. While seeing discourse-based methods as fundamental to language attitude research, these authors nevertheless argue for diversity of methods and elucidate that quantitative methods can complement and support qualitative methods and are often needed especially when the researchers’ aim is to identify patterns and make generalisations about groups (see Hatoss, 2013; Liebscher & Dailey-O’Cain, 2009). This suggests that choosing an approach to studying attitudes is often bound by the objectives of the research and the types of data the researcher is aiming at.

A related concept to speakers’ attitudes towards languages is the attitude they construct between languages and identity. Social constructionists have also refined our understanding of identity and developed a great theoretical discussion on the topic.

2.6 Identity

Identity is a complex notion that has been central to different fields, including LMLS studies. It is not a monolithic entity but involves multiple layers including for example national, ethnic, religious, gender or personal identities (Albirini, 2016; Hatoss, 2013; Holmes, 2001). Theoretically, identity has been approached from two perspectives: essentialist and social constructionist. From the essentialist perspective, identity is static and natural (Joireman, 2003). That is, individuals possess a fixed identity from birth and carry that identity with them until death (Christ, 2003, p. 27). This suggests that identities are unchangeable as they are biologically and historically rooted.

An essentialist view of identity has been widely rejected by social constructionists who argue that identity is “constructed rather than essential, and

performed rather than possessed” (Joseph, 2010, p. 14). Identity is multiple, dynamic and fluid (De Fina, 2003; Hall, 1995; Kroskrity, 2000; Omoniyi & White, 2006). A person may enact multiple identities or ‘repertoires of identities’ (Kroskrity, 2000) “which may be complementary to or in conflict with other identities present in the same moment” (Omoniyi & White, 2006, p. 3). Certain identities can be strong under certain circumstances and completely disappear in other contexts (Joireman, 2003, p. 31; see also Joseph, 2004). Fishman (1999) reports how he felt more Orthodox Jew in Stanford University than in Yeshiva University where he could interact with many people in Yiddish, and how he felt more American in a conference abroad where English is the lingua franca among the participants. Similarly, Joseph (2004) shows how Lebanese use linguistic resources to enact certain religious identities at the time of sectarian conflicts. This suggests that individuals “may construct and reconstruct various identity forms based on changing contextual factors” (Albirini, 2016, p. 65).

In an immigrant context, research has elucidated the influence of identity perceptions on immigrants’ language behaviour and their efforts to maintain their languages. It is suggested that those who strongly express pride in their ethnic culture and view language as an inseparable of their identity are more likely to maintain their languages than those who lack positive attitudes towards their languages (e.g., Gibbons & Ramírez, 2004; Guardado, 2002; Hatoss, 2013; Revis, 2015). For example, Holmes et al. (1993, p. 17) concluded that one of the factors that facilitated LM among the Greek and Chinese communities in Wellington was their attitudes towards their languages as inextricably related to their ethnic identity.

Likewise, members of the third generation in three Arabic-speaking families in southern Turkey were shown to invest in the maintenance of Arabic “as a way to preserve their cultural identity” (Sofu, 2009, p. 256). This is in line with Extra and Yagmur (2010) who found that higher levels of Turkish proficiency among Turkish teenagers in the Netherlands were correlated with strong ethnic identification. Positive evaluation of the language-identity link may thus exert a strong influence on immigrants’ investment in maintaining and transmitting their languages.

Recent trend in sociolinguistic theorisation in relation to LMLS is the emphasis on the role of scales and spatiotemporal variables in the linguistic development and attitudes of individuals and groups. This has resulted in research incorporating pre migration and transit experiences in the analysis of LMLS dynamics (see Hatoss, 2013; Tawalbeh, 2017, 2018; Valentine, Sporton, & Bang Nielsen, 2009). The next section covers the relevance of spatiotemporality framework to LMLS research.

2.7 Spatiotemporality

With the expansion of the theoretical and methodological scope of sociolinguistics, important constructs have been introduced and adopted that can provide significant insights into complex sociolinguistic phenomena and topics. Spatiotemporality is a theoretical concept that is relevant to LMLS research. Within this framework, LMLS can be viewed as a dynamic process that involves complex interrelationships between space and time. These frames are proven to interact with each other and influence immigrants’ patterns of language use, attitudes and identities (see Dailey-O’Cain & Liebscher, 2011; Hatoss, 2013; Tawalbeh, 2017, 2018). Blommaert (2006, 2010) defines spatio-temporality in terms of scales – a spatial scale and a time scale. The term ‘space/spatial scale’ is not

identical to 'place/domain'. 'Place' suggests a geographical location characterised by static and fixed language use (see Dailey-O'Cain & Liebscher, 2011; Hatoss 2013; Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2013). 'Space', by contrast, is 'a "practiced place" (De Certeau, 1988, p. 118) that only results through the practices associated with it' (Dailey-O'Cain & Liebscher, 2011, p. 94). Spaces are always filled with "orders of indexicality" (Blommaert, 2010, p. 6) – norms and expectations that organise distinctions between 'acceptable' and 'improper' language use (Blommaert, 2010, p. 6). These norms shape and regulate communicative practices (Blommaert, 2006, 2010; Hatoss, 2013; Tawalbeh, 2018; Valentine et al., 2009).

Recent research has started to explore immigrants' language use, attitude and identity within a spatiotemporal framework (De Klerk & Barkhuizen, 2004, 2005; Hatoss, 2013; Tawalbeh, 2017, 2018; Valentine et al., 2009) that incorporates the past, present and future into the analysis and their interaction with space whether geographic (physical) or symbolic. This research has argued for the influence of transit routes on immigrants'/refugees' language proficiency, patterns of language use and attitudes and the significance of pre-migration attitudes in identifying the possible factors that could enhance or hinder immigrants'/refugees' language use and maintenance in the host country. For example, Tawalbeh (2017, 2018) has shown how the routes Iraqi refugees transit in before they arrive in New Zealand can impact on individuals' abilities in, preferences and attitudes towards different languages. A consideration of pre-migration attitudes can also identify significant factors that could strengthen Iraqis' commitment towards maintaining their languages. The significance of this current research is that it provides seldom seen views of the 'in between' experience that immigrants/refugees experience, and highlight the linguistic outcomes of this.

Overall, spatiotemporality seeks to establish a new understanding of LM that captures the dynamic nature of modern-day communities in our globalised world. The incorporation of the 'transit' experiences and of pre migration attitudes can allow researchers to assess both the impact of past and present experience in the linguistic behaviour and attitudes of members of different communities.

3 Future directions

As shown by the discussion above, models of language maintenance and shift have made significant contributions to the study of immigrant languages. They have enhanced our understanding of language maintenance dynamics in immigrant context and highlighted the factors that play a role in the maintenance of minority languages. Yet, these models have to be continuously re-evaluated and refined in order for them to advance LMLS research in ways that address the fluidity and mobility of modern-day communities and account for the complexity and heterogeneity within and across communities.

Some LMLS models have either dealt with communities as one single entity (homogenous), generating generalisations about groups and communities, or have sometimes inadequately categorised individuals into various groups (e.g. gender, age groups), assuming that all individuals in the same group would go through the same process of LMLS, downplaying individual differences and the conditions pertaining to these distinctions. These models can usefully engage more with discourse analysis and identity theories. For example, analysing

interactional recorded data in the home can provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics underlying LMLS and grasps the multifaceted relationship between language and identity. Also, by drawing more on the identity theories, LMLS studies can highlight how identities and languages are practised and performed in different immigrant contexts.

LMLS models are being continuously re-assessed, thus, opening the space for new theoretical frameworks that provide new insights related to LM dynamics. For example, Ehala (2010) proposes a useful update to the model of ethnolinguistic vitality which maintains that the vitality of both subordinate and dominant groups is based on four social and psychological factors: perceived strength differential, intergroup distance, utilitarianism, and intergroup discordance. According to Ehala (2010), factors such as emotional attachment of speakers to their group and motivations might have more influence on the ethnolinguistic behaviour than the group's subjective vitality. By the same token, Karan (2011) argues that individuals' language choice decisions are based on a limited and fairly standard set of motivations. Motivations are important in Karan's model as he postulates that a common factor in studies on language shift and studies on dynamics of language change was the motivation of the speakers to achieve their perceived goal in their language related choices. Although Karan presents language choice motivations on taxonomy, he emphasises that they are seldom discrete items and they are often complex and combined. This suggests that future research on language use can benefit more from these theories and therefore assess the impact of motivations on LMLS. It can also usefully uncover, for example, the relationship between a number of factors, such as religion and language use and attitudes.

Finally, as a result of globalisation, LMLS research needs to advance theoretically in ways that address the fluidity and mobility of modern-day communities and account for the heterogeneity within and across communities. The impact of the interaction between spatio-temporal frames on immigrants' language use and attitudes requires reconsidering the way LMLS has been traditionally approached. While research has frequently tackled LM from a 'here and now' frame, it has ignored an important additional frame, which is the pre-migration experiences and attitudes. This can be particularly relevant for refugees, who in their journeys come across different spaces full of linguistic and cultural norms that influence their language abilities, attitudes, practices and identities. These experiences can arguably help explain the variations in language proficiency and preference in different languages and any conflicting attitudes that older and younger generations have toward their language. In addition, pre-migration attitudes can enrich our understanding of the possible factors which might influence the linguistic future of immigrants. This suggests that spatio-temporality framework deserves more attention. Future research could focus on exploring in more detail the influence of transition on the linguistic competencies and preferences among immigrants as well as on their sense of identity.

4 Conclusion

This article has critically overviewed the main approaches and frameworks to LMLS and highlighted the significance of redefining key issues and concepts in LMLS. It has also argued for the importance of refining established LMLS models

in ways that correspond to current developments in communities and in migration itself (Blommaert, 2010; Hatoss, 2013; Rubino, 2010; Tawalbeh, 2017, 2018). Communities are no longer fixed or isolated; they are “interconnected on multiple levels” (Hatoss, 2013, p. 128). For example, immigrants can maintain transnational contact with their relatives all over the world through the use of media. Indeed, media can be employed as a facilitating tool for language use and maintenance. Therefore, new ‘spaces’ (e.g. media, translocal) need to be incorporated in the analysis of patterns of language use (Albirini, 2016; Hatoss, 2013; Rubino, 2010). This supports Hatoss’s (2013) argument that Fishman’s (1965) concept of ‘domain’ may not be as useful as the concept of ‘space’ in allowing for a more dynamic analysis of language use. By the same token, geographical proximity, which has often been considered as facilitating shift to the majority language (Kloss, 1966), is no longer as meaningful, because immigrants can create transnational spaces that help them preserve elements of their cultural identity. These theoretical insights are valuable for future research on LMLS.

In addition, the article has argued for the need to develop tools of linguistic analysis that will allow for an appreciation of the complexity of phenomena and variables that have an impact on LM and LS in different migrant communities. The use of a variety of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and analysis can produce rich data, emerging from it a very complex image of the language practices of members of an immigrant community and of their identity construction and ideological stances. Furthermore, traditional LM analysis, where language is seen as static in both space and time, has been criticised, and it is now recognised that language is in fact mobile in these dimensions (Blommaert, 2010). The complexities of LM can be better captured by analysing the interaction between ‘here and now’ and ‘there and then’. Immigrants cannot be regarded as monolithic entities whose language abilities, attitudes, practices and sense of identity are separate from the spaces they occupy at different times. This recent trend in sociolinguistic theorisation towards the emphasis on spatiotemporality has resulted into incorporating ‘transit’ experiences and pre-migration attitudes – areas which are often given little to no attention – in the analysis of LM dynamics among few immigrant/refugee communities (De Klerk & Barkhuizen, 2005; Hatoss, 2013; Tawalbeh, 2017, 2018). Therefore, further research can benefit from these developments and start looking at immigrants’ language practices, attitudes and identity construction through the lens of the spatiotemporality.

Overall, LMLS frameworks and approaches have continued to develop and address the complexity of communities, thus, guiding the researchers in data analysis and interpretation, and establishing solid links between theory and methodology.

Endnote

¹ Garrett classifies social constructionist under the 'direct approach' on the justification that social constructionist approach has not featured much in language attitude research and that data is generated from consciously formulated attitudinal responses (p. 160, but see my discussion of social constructionist approach later in the section).

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