Laihonen, Petteri (University of Jyväskylä)

Multilingualism and Language Ideologies in the Rumanian Bánát:
Development Towards the Interactional Analysis of Interviews

Introduction

The topic of my dissertation research is multilingualism in the Rumanian Bánát in the light of linguistic ideologies. So far I have published three articles on the subject (Laihonen 2001, 2004 and forthcoming) and a Licentiate thesis (Laihonen 2005, a Finnish degree with no international equivalent). The aim of my research is to illuminate multilingualism in the Rumanian Bánát through the examination of linguistic ideologies. My basic approach has been to contrast the views from below, the local inhabitants, with the views of the writing, educated elite. My focus is on the contemporary Bánát. The views of the ordinary people are presented through interviews, whereas the views of the elite in the light of contemporary academic publications. My goal is not so much to give an "objective" inventory of multilingualism in the Bánát, but to analyse the interpretations that have been made about it.

In this paper, I will concentrate on the "folk views", which have been gathered through interviews. The goal of this writing is to give a new theoretical impetus on the analysis of language ideologies through interviews. In the oral presentation I will concentrate on the new insights gained through the developed framework.

The Bánát

The Bánát is a historical region. The peace treaty of Trianon (1920) ratified the division of the Bánát (1918) between three countries: Serbia (approx. 33 % of the territory), Romania (approx. 66 %) and Hungary (approx.1 %). It is situated between the rivers Maros, Tisza and Danube. In the east it borders the South Carpatian mountains. Main towns in the Rumanian part are Temesvár, Arad, Resiczabánya and Lugos (see map)
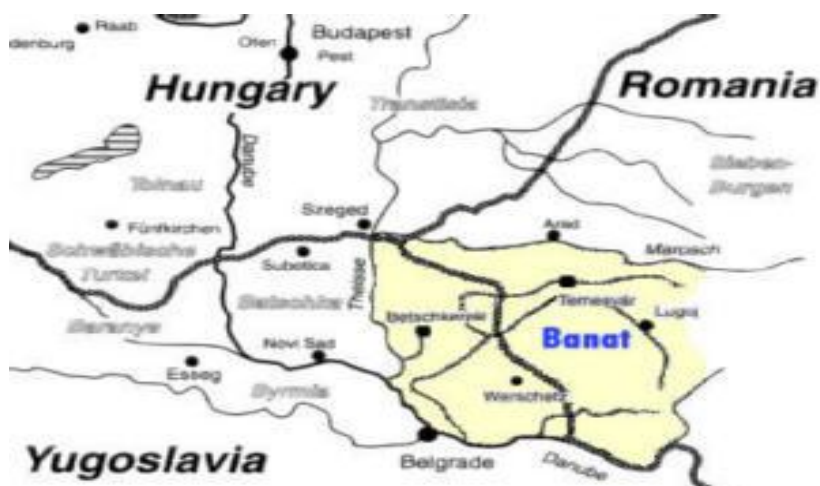
Due to its rivers and geographic situation, the Bánát has been an important gate to the East (*Porta Orientalis*) throughout history (Wolf 2004:9). However, the use of the term "the Bánát", and its existence as an independent entity can be seen to have begun only after the expulsion of the Turks from this part of Hungary (1718). For some times (1718-1778), it remained as a Chamber Province under the direct control of the central Habsburg government in Vienna. This was of great consequence to the future ethnical structure of the Bánát. The new leadership dismissed the claims

of ownership that had been lost under the Turkish rule. Instead the region became a target of colonization, organized migration, spontaneous migration and forced migration of diverse ethnic groups.

I will not deal with the history of the resettlement of the Bánát after the Turkish rule here (see Wolf 2004:28-54 for a detailed account), however the results can be seen through census information:

Census information (in thousands): The Bánát (1840 and 1910) and the Rumanian Bánát (Varga 2000, www.recensamant.ro, www.mtaki.hu.)

	Rumanians	Hungarians	Rom	Germans	Serbs	Ukraine	Slovaks	Croats	Bulgar.	Czech	Jews	other	Total
2002	1238	107	42	25	20	13	8	7	6	3	1	3	1473
1992	1280	132	36	48	27	11	10	4	8	4	1	4	1564
1966	1018	161	9	177	41	6	11	(*Serbs*)	9	(*other*)	5	10	1448
1930	779	180	23	274	41	5	25	(*Serbs*)	10	(*other*)	20	11	1367
1910	592	242	(*oth*)	388	284	(*other*)	22	5	(*other*)	(*other*)	(*oth*)	49	1582
1840	566	60	(*oth*)	208	202	(*other*)	11	(*Serbs*)	(*other*)	(*other*)	(*oth*)	36	1083

In brief, due to the resettlement and colonization process in the 18th and 19th century, the Bánát became the most multilingual area of the Habsburg monarchy. However, since the First World War, the Bánát has been losing its polyglot nature. Today the Rumanian Bánát has a majority population of 84% Rumanians and as the largest diaspora (in Hungarian: *szorvány*) 7% Hungarians as well as numerous smaller ethnic groups. Even today multilingualism continues to characterize the image of the Bánát, even though the census numbers show less and less linguistic diversity.

Background of my research project
My research was initiated by a joint Finnish-Hungarian fieldwork project, carried out between 1997 and 2000, concentrating on the Hungarian and German minorities in the northern Rumanian Bánát (the area between Arad, Timişoara [G: Temeswar, H: Temesvár] and Lipova [G,H: Lippa]). The main aim of the project was to carry out interviews on culture, language, religion, history, power and ethnic relationships among these groups. This amounted to 90 interviews by the Finish team and about 100 interviews by the Hungarian team.

In the fieldwork group, my task was to conduct research from the viewpoint of linguistics (other participants are involved in ethnology, folklore and history). Thus during fieldwork I concentrated on everything that seemed to be connected with language(s). Right from the first fieldwork trip, I became interested in the way people spoke about mastering and speaking many languages. Above all, it draw my attention how the interviewees depicted multilingualism as a natural and positive state, whereas monolingualism was described as unfortunate. This experience turned my attention towards the study of *language ideologies*. According to Susan Gal (2002:197):

Linguistic ideologies are the culturally specific notions which participants and observers bring to language, the ideas they have about what language is good for, what linguistic differences mean about the speakers who use them, why there are linguistic differences at all.

To put it simply, my focus is on the study of ideas, beliefs or (folk) theories about language (e.g. Gal 1993, 1998:318) as manifested in the data. I examine such utterances as the following:

You see here in the Bánát you should know at least three languages (Hungarian woman, 54)
Those people aren't even willing to learn Hungarian (Hungarian man, 34)
Hungarian, yes I know it, perfect Hungarian and I understand Rumanian that is normal here (German woman, 64)
Everything was German (German woman, 76)
(Translated from Hungarian or German)

These utterances can be seen as examples of language ideologies on the surface of my data. In my writings these utterances are always presented and examined in their interactional context. The examples above are rather transparent since they contain reference to language or an ethnic group or culture. I have included reference to ethnicity and nationality, since I subscribe to the basic assumption, that "all languages and linguistic features are indexes of the people who use those forms." (Gal 2002:200). Finally, all of these examples position language (or nationality) in a claim, theory, evaluation, view, belief or idea.

Results on the analysis of the interviews so far

Next, I will make some brief, general remarks on previous results concerning my analysis of the interviews. (The results have been presented in three articles: Laihonen 2001, 2004, forthcoming). To begin with, the language ideologies among the Hungarian and German inhabitants show both unity and diversity. They are rather homogenous in their ideas about multilingualism and monolingualism. In the interviews multilingualism is described as a positive feature typical for the old inhabitants of the Bánát (the 'locals'). Monolingualism is depicted as malevolent ignorance of other languages and cultures typical for the Rumanian newcomers to the region. Finally, little emphasis is given on the mother tongue in the interviews. This is notable, since a basic assumption in Eastern Central Europe is the quintessential importance of the mother tongue for identity.

The diversity in the local language ideologies is mainly visible in the difference between the folk theories presented by German villagers and town dwellers. That is the villagers display ideologies stressing the German past, whereas town dwellers stress multicultural and multilingual ideas. The interviewed Hungarians present a more homogenous group. Here diversity is most apparent in the beliefs about mother tongue. Typically, the view about Hungarian language among the Hungarians is pragmatic, no special value is denoted to the mother tongue. However, some informants give Hungarian a special value, thus promoting it with all available means. A basic difference of the Hungarian and German informants is that for the Hungarians there is little nostalgia towards the Hungarian culture or institutions from the past. Rather, also among the Hungarians, German is presented as a high prestige language and culture.

The *Language Ideologies* Approach

The study of language ideologies is practised mainly by American researchers involved in linguistic anthropology (e.g. Woolard & Schieffelin 1994; Gal & Woolard 1995; Woolard 1998; Silvestein 1998, Gal 1998, 2002). The term *language ideologies* does not aim to designate new, rigid, or even a homogenous set of phenomena. Rather as Gal (1998:317, cf. Woolard & Schieffelin 1994:58) stresses, the various phenomena covered by language ideologies have already been noticed before by anthropologists, linguists and historians. However, bringing together various, so far taken as unrelated or even marginal phenomena under the umbrella of language ideologies will allow us to study neglected topics, such as cultural conceptions of the role of language in social life, the role

and character of metalanguage, the connection of language choice to commonsense convictions about the linkage of language and identity and the historical impact of linguistic theories on social movements, to mention just a few.

What is ideology?

In her attempt to theoretically scrutinize the term *language ideologies*, Woolard (1998:5-9, cf. Silverstein 1998) connects the term *ideology* to four traditions:

> 1) Ideology as representations, beliefs, conceptions and ideas
> 2) Ideology as connected to a particular social position
> 3) Ideology as discourse patterns in the service of maintaining and acquiring power
> 4) Ideology as distortions of reality

Among these approaches to ideology, there are some basic differences from a largely neutral view in the first interpretation towards a more critical stance represented in the latter three versions. To begin with the notion of *ideology[1]* there is no agreement whether e.g. beliefs and representations are primarily subjective and mental phenomena or rather situational practises of signification. Furthermore, it is disputed whether they should be considered basically coherent or typically internally contradictory. (Woolard 1998:5-6.) For the purposes of this study, I would argue for the latter versions.

In the study of language ideologies it is a basic assumption that no idea or view about language comes from nowhere or is "neutral or only scientific" (Gal 2002:198). That is, the examination of ideas about language (*ideology[1]*) should always be combined with other interpretation(s) of the term ideology (*ideology[2,3,4]*). In this study the first three interpretations get more attention. The point is to make ideologies – which are often naturalized and taken for granted – transparent, not to discredit or correct them (cf. Gal & Woolard 1995:131).

Language and ideology?

According to Woolard (1998:4), a main argument for the investigation of ideology and language intertwined is the argument that ideology of language should not be distinguished from ideology in other domains of human activity. Furthermore, the significance of the, sometimes unavoidable and inherent, ideological dimension of language use and linguistic phenomena in general should be given deserved attention. Finally, the disciplinary goal, she argues, is to provide a firmer linguistic ground for the study of ideology and discourse in general.

How is *language* understood and connected to ideology in the theoretical writings? In Woolard's words (1998:9, emphasis as original): "Ideology is variously discovered in linguistic practice itself; in explicit talk about language, that is, metalinguistic or metapragmatic *discourse*; and the regimentation of language use through more implicit metapragmatics.". From these different interpretations, the concept of implicit metapragmatics and language structure being inherently ideological (see especially Lucy 1993), have been interpreted as a contemporary extension of the linguistic relativity (or "Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis") debate (Duranti 2001:15-17). However, more important to my study is the examination of explicit or implicit talk or discourse about language (or explicit metalanguage).

The theoretical accounts on discourse about language all find relevant the topic of languages in contact and the resulting ideologies of for instance "purism" and "standardization". A related line of inquiry examines the influence that linguistic theories and social movements have had on each other (e.g. Woolard 1998, Gal 2001). Here the aim is to specify the social location and historical context of different linguistic ideas (Gal & Woolard 1995:131). In my research, I focus on the contemporary discourses about languages and multilingualism in the Bánát, the language ideologies of the past are given less attention.

Methodology

There is no homogenous method for the study of language ideologies. Case studies on language ideologies use accounts of language structure combined with ethnographic studies of local conceptions of language use. Beyond this, textual and interactional analysis of sociolinguistic interviews, newspaper articles and conversations is carried out. Finally also descriptions of language ideologies based on ethnographic observations or even quantitative data have been used. In brief, apparently many forms of data or previous empirical studies can be used to 1) describe linguistic structuring or a linguistic phenomenon *and/or* 2) to describe a (local, folk, elite, dominant, contradicted etc.) language ideology, which typically consists of ideas and representations about linguistic phenomena combined with dimensions of social position and power.

Methodological solutions in my previous research

The examination of interviews in my work has been carried in the following manner: Many excerpts from the transcriptions are presented in order to give the reader a chance to evaluate my claims based on the interviews. My focus is in the language on language, or metalanguage. However, I have been at pains to notify the importance of the sequential context, too. That is, I find it of importance whether a given interviewee turn presents, for instance, an answer to a question of some kind, a summary of our previous discussion, a story narrative or a question to the interviewer. This serves the basic need to ground the ideas about language in the situational social context, rather than in some mental category. Furthermore, the goal is to show how these statements are constructed for the needs of the interaction taking place in the interviews. For instance (Laihonen 2004, example 1) I explicate the sequential location of a statement: "so here in the Bánát you should know at least three languages" as a conclusion to the preceding talk. Nevertheless, this kind of analysis of interaction remains more or less unelaborated in my previous research.

An analytical framework for interaction

A focused analysis on the situational (interactional/textual) linguistic characteristics of talk/writing about language related issues will provide a deeper understanding of the discursive/interactional construction of language ideologies. This will enable the investigation of linguistic devices in the discourses on multilingualism. For this purpose new, more specific, methodological tools should be used. In the case of interviews, I will focus on methodology based on the study of interaction, particularly on applications of conversation analysis.

Conversation analysis (CA hereafter) focuses on the study of the characteristics of interaction through the empirical analysis of interaction in its own terms. In practice this means the qualitative analysis of sequential patterns of turn-formation, turn-taking, sequential patterns, timing and so on. Basic analytic questions include such as 'what is the participant doing in this turn and how'. A possible goal of the analysis is to find out how turn-formation, turn-taking or sequential patterns form the social roles, relationships and identities of the speakers. (for literature, see Laihonen 2000:chapter 2.)

The CA approach will enable me to focus on the linguistic means of bringing up ideologies (or discourses about language, i.e. metalanguage) and to analyse the focal interactional functions of such expressions or other more or less explicit manifestations of language ideologies in the data. In my study systematic attention will be paid to connect the content of an utterance to its interactional context. For instance, in what kind of sequential context is multi- or monolingualism discussed? How are speakers of different languages categorised in the interaction? In general how is the talk about languages structured in the interviews?

One central tool for analysing interviews, is the recognition of *discourse identities*, such as teller or answerer (see Zimmerman 1998). If for instance the interviewer takes the initiative in the conversation (e.g. by posing a question), he will put forward a certain set of expectations,

which the interviewee will confirm or contest in the next turn. Furthermore, the interviewee can also take an active discourse role through posing questions, telling apparently spontaneous stories and so on. Another useful notion for interactional analysis is *categorization* work in interaction. Hester and Housley (2002:9) stress the importance of examining how the speakers themselves build and interpret different categories in interaction. This enables us to explore the situational character of labelling something as for instance Hungarian, German or Romanian (cf. Day 1998).

Conclusions

In my research so far, I have answered the research question: *What kind of language ideologies are typical for the interviews?* In the forthcoming oral presentation my goal is to answer the question: *how are these language ideologies discursively (linguistically and sequentially) constructed in the data.* Further, I will explore the extent to which my previous results have been influenced through the interactional practices of an interview. In this manner, my goal is to both develop the methodology of analysing language ideologies through interviews and to improve the validity of my research.

References
Day, Dennis 1998. Being Ascribed, and Resisting, Membership of an Ethnic Group. *Identities in Talk*. Eds. Charles Antaki & Sue Widdicombe. London: Sage, 151-190.
Duranti, Alessandro 2001. Linguistic Anthropology: History, Ideas, and Issues. *Linguistic Anthropology*: *A Reader*. Alessandro Duranti (ed.). Oxford: Blackwell, 1-38.
Gal, Susan & Kathryn Woolard 1995. Constructing languages and publics: Authority and representation. *Pragmatics* vol. 5, no. 2: 129–138.
Gal, Susan 1993. Diversity and Contestation in Linguistic Ideologies: German Speakers in Hungary. *Language in Society* 22: 337–359.
Gal, Susan 1998. Multiplicity and Contention among Language Ideologies: A Commentary. *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*. Schieffelin, Bambi, Kathryn Woolard & Paul Kroskrity eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 317-332.
Gal, Susan 2002. Language Ideologies and Linguistic Diversity: Where Culture Meets Power. *A magyar nyelv idegenben*. Keresztes, László & Sándor Maticsák (eds.). Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetem, 197-204.
Hester, Stephen & William Housley 2002. Ethnomethodology and National Identity. *Language, Interaction and National Identity*. Eds. Stephen Hester & William Housley. Cardiff Papers in Qualitative Research. Ashgate: Hants, 1-15.
Laihonen, Petteri 2000. Self-deprecations in American and Hungarian Everyday Conversations. A pro-gradu thesis. University of Jyväskylä, Department of English. Available at: selene.lib.jyu.fi:8080/gradu/f/plaihonen.pdf.
Laihonen, Petteri 2001. Multilingualism in the Banat: Elite and Everyday Language Ideologies. *Ethnic Minorities and Power*. Eds. Pasi Hannonen, Bo Lönnqvist & Gábor Barna. Fonda Publishing: Helsinki, 11–45.
Laihonen, Petteri 2004. A romániai bánsági (bánáti) tolerancia és többnyelvűség a nyelvi ideológiák tükrében. *Tér és terep. Tanulmányok az etnicitás és az identitás kérdésköréből III*. Az MTA etnikai-nemzeti kisebbségkutató intézetének évkönyve. Edited by Kovács, Nóra, Anna Osvát & László Szarka. Akadémiai Kiadó: Budapest, 81-97.
Laihonen, Petteri 2005. *Multilingualism and Language Ideologies in the Rumanian Bánát*. Licentiate Thesis, University of Jyväskylä, Hungarian Studies.

Laihonen, Petteri, forthcoming. Die Banater Schwaben und Ideologien über die Mehrsprachigkeit. *Ungarn-Jahrbuch*, Band 27, 2005.

Lucy, John 1993 (ed.). *Reflexive Language*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Silverstein, Michael 1998. The Uses and Utility of Ideology: A Commentary. *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*. Schieffelin, Bambi, Kathryn Woolard & Paul Kroskrity eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 123-148.

Varga E. Árpád 2000. *Erdély etnikai és felekezeti statisztikája*. III. Arad, Krassó-Szörény és Temes megye. Népszámlálási adatok 1869-1992 között. Csíkszereda, 2000. (http://www.kia.hu/konyvtar/erdely/vallas.htm)

Wolf, Josef 2004. *Development of Ethnic Structure in the Banat 1890-1992*. Österreichisches Ost- und Südosteuropa-Institut: Wien.

Woolard, Kathryn 1998. Introduction: Language Ideology as a Field of Inquiry. *Language Ideologies*: Practice and Theory. Eds. Bambi B. Schieffelin, Kathryn A. Woolard & Paul V. Kroskrity. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 3-47.

Woolard, Kathryn & Schieffelin Bambi 1994. Language ideology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23: 55-82.

Zimmerman, David 1998. Identity, context and interaction. *Identities in Talk*. Eds. Charles Antaki & Sue Widdicombe. London: Sage, 87-106.