

RESEARCH OUTPUTS / RÉSULTATS DE RECHERCHE

Paths to Language Revitalization

Darquennes, Jeroen

Published in:

Contact Linguistics and Language Minorities / Kontaktlinguistik und Sprachminderheiten / Linguistique de Contact et Minorités Linguistiques

Publication date:

2007

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for pulished version (HARVARD):

Darquennes, J 2007, Paths to Language Revitalization. in J Darquennes (ed.), *Contact Linguistics and Language Minorities / Kontaktlinguistik und Sprachminderheiten / Linguistique de Contact et Minorités Linguistiques*. Plurilingua, vol. XXX, Asgard, St. Augustin, pp. 61-76.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal ?

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Paths to Language Revitalization

Jeroen Darquennes¹ (Brussels)

1. Introduction

For the 21st century Michael Krauss (1992) has predicted the loss of more than half of the estimated 6.000 languages of the world. Largely affected are the native languages and cultures of Africa, North and South America, Asia and the Pacific. Despite the EU's support for minority language communities the diversity of the European language mosaic is also threatened. For many years linguists have tried to develop methods and to identify factors that could contribute to the maintenance or even the revitalisation of threatened languages (cf. Kloss 1966 & Ellis/Mac a Ghobhainn 1971). This article wants to contribute to the design of methodological means towards language revitalisation. After questioning some parts of Fishman's well-known theory on Reversing Language Shift (abbr. RLS in what follows), this article illustrates the *Catherine Wheel* model developed by the Catalan sociolinguist and psychologist Miquel Strubell and links it to the socioprofile method as developed at the Brussels *Research Centre on Multilingualism*. In doing so, an attempt is made to develop an alternative language revitalisation framework that, at least from a theoretical point of view, could help contact linguists in their challenging task as consultants in solving the problems of language minorities.

2. Fishman's RLS theory

2.1. The aims of RLS

Language revitalisation as a linguistic topic was introduced in the 1970s (Ellis/Mac a Ghobhainn 1971). Until the late 1980s the topic only featured marginally in socio- and contact linguistics. The situation changed with the publication of Joshua Fishman's monograph *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages* (1991). Since the appearance of this book, language revitalisation has been one of the favourite topics treated especially by linguists interested in endangered languages and/or language minorities (cf. Wölck 2007).

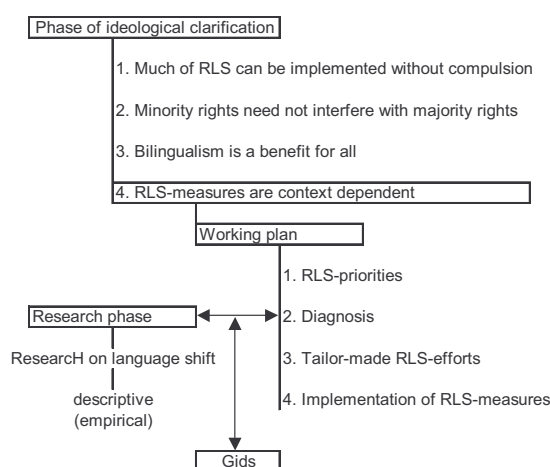
With his RLS theory Joshua Fishman aims at offering both language activists and linguists a rational and systematic approach "to what has often hitherto been a primarily emotionladen, 'let's try everything we possibly can and perhaps something will work' type of dedication" (Fishman 1991, 1). Although Fishman does not really present his 'theory' in a schematic way in his 1991 monograph, it is possible to distinguish a few clear RLS phases. The following paragraphs attempt to systematically present these phases and to visualise them in a provisional scheme.

¹ I would like to express my gratitude to Carolyn and Wolf Wölck for their valuable comments on an earlier version of this contribution. Any remaining mistakes are mine.

2.2. Different steps in the RLS process

The first step on Fishman’s path to language revitalisation implies that all actors engaged in a language revitalisation process should first go through a phase of ‘ideological clarification’. They should recognize that (1) much of RLS can be implemented without compulsion, (2) minority rights need not interfere with majority rights, (3) bilingualism is a benefit for all, and (4) RLS measures must vary according to problems faced and opportunities encountered (ibid., 82-87). The phase of ‘ideological clarification’ is necessary to create a “prior value consensus among those who advocate, implement and evaluate” RLS (ibid., 82).

Figure 1: Provisional scheme of Fishman’s approach to language revitalisation



The contextual variation of RLS measures (point 4 of the ‘ideological clarification’) indicates that there is no fixed formula on how to reverse language shift. This openness is also reflected in the ‘working plan’ that Fishman proposes as a way to try and shape RLS measures. This plan first of all aims at the development of context-dependent RLS priorities. A well-founded diagnosis of the actual minority language situation should subsequently shed light on the feasibility of the RLS priorities and should provide the impetus to develop tailor-made efforts that should enable the implementation of measures leading to the actual realisation of the chosen language revitalisation priorities. The working plan rests on a research phase that – if possible and/or desirable – combines desk research on language shift with empirical research. Individual researchers are free to choose their own concrete research approach. Still, they need to bear in mind that both the research phase and the workplan interact with the *GIDS* (i.e. *Graded inter-generational disruption² scale*) as shown in Figure 1.

2.3. The GIDS

Fishman developed the GIDS (cf. Fig. 2) guided by his lifelong experience with and his insights into the functioning of language minorities. The GIDS has 8 stages resembling those of the Richter scale, i.e.: the higher the

² The word ‘disruption’ (Fishman 1991, 87) is sometimes replaced by ‘dislocation’ (Fishman 1996, 903).

number of the stage a language minority finds itself on, the stronger the disruption.

The relevance of the GIDS for the above-mentioned phase of descriptive and empirical research is that it offers the opportunity to classify each language minority with the help of the 8 stages and enables a comparison with other language minorities. Besides a classification of a language minority the GIDS also offers the opportunity to work out possible strategies of language revitalisation based on the position occupied by that language minority on the GIDS.

Figure 2: Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS)

STAGES OF REVERSING LANGUAGE SHIFT SEVERITY OF INTERGENERATIONAL DISLOCATION (read from the bottom up)	
1.	Education, work sphere, mass media and governmental operations at higher and nationwide levels
2.	Local/regional mass media and governmental services
3.	The local/regional (i.e. non-neighbourhood) work sphere, both among Xmen and among Ymen
4b.	Public schools for Xish children, offering some instruction via Xish, but substantially under Yish curricular and staffing control
4a.	Schools in lieu of compulsory education and substantially under Xish curricular and staffing control
<i>II. RLS to transcend diglossia, subsequent to its attainment</i>	
5.	Schools for literacy acquisition, for the old and for the young, and not in lieu of compulsory education
6.	The intergenerational and demographically concentrated home-family-neighbourhood: the basis of mother tongue transmission
7.	Cultural interaction in Xish primarily involving the community-based older generation
8.	Reconstructing Xish and adult acquisition of XSL.
<i>I. RLS to attain diglossia (assuming prior ideological clarification)</i>	

Toward a theory of reversing language shift (Fishman 1991, 395)

[Xmen = member of the language minority; Ymen = member of the majority; Xish = minority language; Yish = majority language; XSL = Xish as a Second Language]

When considering possible strategies of language revitalisation based on the GIDS it is important to realise that the GIDS is presented as a quasi-implicational scale. This implies that the reversal of language shift can best be achieved by a step-by-step approach whereby it is hard to reach a higher stage without first tackling the previous stage. The most prominent stage is stage 6, which represents intergenerational mother-tongue continuity.

For Fishman, stages 8 to 5 are ‘the minimal basis’ for RLS. It depends on the readiness of the endangered language community whether these stages will be reached and whether it will be possible to establish such a diglossic situation in which the endangered minority language (Xish) controls certain more traditional domains and the majority language (Yish) keeps control of more modern domains as, e.g., the new media. To his description of stages 4 to 1 Fishman adds a few caveats. His confidence in schools (especially schools of type 4b) as actors in the RLS process is not particularly great. Fishman (*ibid.*, 368-373) convincingly argues that there are limitations to school effectiveness in reversing language shift. According to Fishman schools can only contribute positively to the situation of an endangered language when this language is (to be) intergenerationally embedded in the language community (cf. stage 6 of the GIDS) (*ibid.*, 375). Fishman further notes that either getting to or aiming for stages 3, 2 and 1 is by no means

obvious. He argues that the energy put in aiming at stages 3 to 1 should not be spent at the cost of efforts put in trying to establish a firm basis of intergenerational mother tongue continuity in the family and its close surroundings (stage 6), which clearly provide the key to language revitalisation.

3. RLS: Echo and criticism

Leanne Hinton (2003, 49) rightly claims that Joshua Fishman is „the first and continuing leader in research on language revitalisation“ and once again succeeded in giving sociolinguistics a decisive thrust. Many researchers refer to Fishman’s RLS approach in their case studies³. The RLS theory is enforced through its coverage in such standard works as *Contact Linguistics. An International Handbook of Contemporary Research* (Goebel et al. 1996), *The Encyclopedia of Bilingualism* (Baker/Prys Jones 1998) and *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice* (Hinton/Hale 2001). In the SMiLE-report (*Support for Minority Language in Europe*; Grin/Moring 2002) that was written upon request of the European Commission Fishman’s RLS theory and especially the GIDS are taken as a basis for the development of measures to support minority languages. The high coverage of the RLS theory does, however, not imply that it is always ‘epigonically’ adopted. More and more articles and volumes appear that question (parts of) the RLS theory.

3.1. Repeated criticism: weight of stage 6

Fishman himself has stimulated the critical evaluation of his theory. In his miscellany *Can threatened languages be saved?* (2001) he invited researchers to critically apply his RLS theory to language minorities familiar to them. Hornberger/King (2001, 186), e.g., especially criticise the apparently unquestionable position of stage 6 in the GIDS and argue that the intergenerational transmission of the endangered language within the nucleus of the family is not the only short-term mechanism needed for an endangered minority language to survive. Strubell (2001, 261) and Clyne (2001, 388 & 2003, 64) also question the sequencing of the GIDS stages and the particular weight of stage 6 in the GIDS. Both authors refer to the underestimated importance of, e.g., (new) media in the RLS process as depicted by Fishman (cf. also Darquennes/Weber 1999). Above all they stress the importance of socio-economic mobility as a factor that influences the life cycle of an endangered language.

It is recognised by an increasing number of linguists (e.g. Grin 1997; Grin/Vaillancourt 1997a&b; Henrion 1996 & Nelde 1997) that especially the economic revaluation of the minority language could play a decisive role in overcoming the everyday situation in many language minorities in which parents, while still identifying themselves strongly with the language minority through the minority language, stop using the endangered language

³ In the field of language revitalisation case studies still outweigh theoretical approaches and such approaches that combine theory with a case study. Huss (1999: 32-33) and Haarmann (2001) provide an overview of case studies on language revitalisation. A well-balanced interplay of theory and practice (case study) can be found in Hinton/Hale (2001) and King (2001).

and start using the majority language with their children when they no longer experience a socio-economic value attached to the endangered language. Led by a desired upward socio-economic mobility for their children, parents are sometimes ‘schizoglossically’ torn between the use of the endangered language among themselves and the use of the majority language with their children. If no efforts are made to raise the societal status and the functional societal range of the endangered language, it might be very hard to convince parents to start using the endangered language in a spontaneous way with their offspring. As Jeremy Evas (2000, 298) argues, it might therefore well be the case that in endangered language environments supply creates demand rather than its axiomatic converse. As a consequence, language minorities interested in reversing language shift should at least devote as much attention to the active quest for family-external mechanisms or devices that could trigger an increased use of the endangered language as to its intergenerational transmission within the intimate nucleus of the family and its close surroundings.

3.2. Fishman’s reply

Confronted with the critical remarks in his own miscellany *Can threatened languages be saved?* Fishman tries to clarify a few possible misunderstandings. First of all he agrees that “any RLS theory must realise that many languages (not all, as some claim) function across several stages simultaneously”. He adds that “some even stage-jump and develop a pattern that ignores a particular stage (e.g. stage 5 or stage 4a)” and further points out that stages are linear but human lives and societal functioning are not (Fishman 2001b, 476). Secondly he understands the criticism of the heavy weight that he put on stage 6 that apparently would fail to recognise the “major modernity related disruptions of family functioning” and would seem to assume that “any long-term meaningful relationship in Xish” would be “sufficient to establish an intergenerational mother tongue transition” (ibid., 470). He also recognises the necessity for “*intra*-Stage 6 sociofunctional differentiation” (ibid., 469) in order to be able to highlight the heterogeneity of the family in language minority settings as well as the context-dependent necessity of the interrelation of stage 6 with other GIDS-stages⁴.

With the exception of the suggestion for intra-stage differentiation Fishman repeats parts of his 1991 monograph. He stresses the need for contextual variation that is guaranteed by the GIDS as a *quasi*-implicational scale, i.e. a scale that does not exclude the possibility to jump or combine stages of the

⁴ The argument Fishman uses is rather strange. He writes: “As a sociologist primarily oriented towards the study of urban and national societies, I was insufficiently aware of *intra*-Stage 6 sociofunctional differentiation in connection with *inter*-generational mother tongue transmission” (Fishman 2001b, 469). Yet it was Fishman who, like John J. Gumperz, criticised the lacking interest of linguistics in *intra*-group phenomena (Fishman 1968, 1029-1030). That does, however, not affect the value of his suggestion to develop “*intra*-stage differentiations” (Fishman 2001b, 469) in the GIDS, or, alternatively put, to complement the vertical dimension of the GIDS with an horizontal dimension. In the SMiLE-report (Grin/Moring 2002, 175-186) a first attempt is made to combine the vertical dimension of the GIDS with a horizontal dimension that is based on the scaling method used in the Euromosaic-report (Nelde/Strubell/Williams, 1996).

GIDS⁵. Still, it would be inappropriate to consider the critique of Fishman's RLS approach as undeserved and/or based on a false interpretation of his 1991 monograph.

3.3. Fishman's worldview

The major problem with Fishman's 1991 monograph is that the core of his RLS approach (i.e. the contextual variation of RLS measures, the 'open approach' in the working plan, the quasi-implicationality of the GIDS) is distorted by the accompanying description of a particular worldview.

In his book *Sociolinguistics. A Sociological Critique* (1992) the Welsh sociologist Glyn Williams portrayed Fishman's worldview as conservative and his view of social change as gradual, mechanical, evolutionary and cumulative. Fishman's RLS approach in his 1991 monograph seems to confirm this portrayal. Although Fishman realises that the position of the family as the cornerstone of society is losing ground and he himself describes the "peripheralization of the family" in the process of child socialisation, the increase of one-parent families, the growing unmarried parent rate, etc.⁶ (Fishman 1991, 375-376), this does not keep him from arguing that people belonging to a language minority in which the minority language is endangered "must marry their ideological counterparts and raise their children from birth in Xish" (ibid., 378). This strongly resembles a plea for increasing endogamy in language minority surroundings and stresses Fishman's focus on the family as the core of any RLS enterprise. As pointed out above Fishman is inclined to reconsider his view on the position of the family in the RLS process after facing some critique. He recognises the necessity for an interplay between stage 6 and other stages and as such tones down the sharpness of his statement that "all else can amount to little more than biding time" if stage 6 is not satisfied (Fishman 1991, 399). Still he puts forward that, although "post-Stage 6 interactions may be linked to Stage 6 in a mutually reinforcing way, ... they cannot be substituted for that stage due to their lesser affective, more time and place boundedness and more encapsulated or narrowly compartmentalized functional natures" (Fishman 2001, 470). The family as the fulcrum of RLS (ibid., 467) is maintained and so is the preference for a step-by-step approach (i.e., "taking the right step at the right time"; ibid., 474). The view in which the intimacy of the family and its close surroundings (neighbourhood, community) are at the centre and in which the well-being of a language community heavily relies on the well-

⁵ One could criticise the schematic representation of the GIDS for suggesting linearity through the numbering of the stages that have to be read from the bottom up. Fishman defends using numbers and scales by writing that "scalability may be more attractive because of its conceptual elegance than because of any enhanced predictive or explanatory validity that it attains or provides" (1991, 416). Perhaps future schematic representations of the GIDS should try to emphasize that scaling is used because of its conceptual elegance but that it does not alter the fact that the GIDS is a *quasi*-implicational scale and does not render stage-jumping or the interrelation of stages impossible. As it is now presented the GIDS easily creates the illusion that RLS is relatively easily plannable provided that one has enough patience to run through all stages in a consecutive way (Baker/Prys Jones 1998, 194).

⁶ Cf. the website of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (www.oecd.org) for up-to-date statistics on this subject.

being of the family is a core element of Fishman's writings on ethnicity that clearly form the 'ideological background' of the RLS theory.

3.4. Stressing Localisation instead of Glocalisation

Fishman's views on ethnicity are strongly influenced by the writings of Benjamin Whorf. Reading Whorf, Fishman not only distinguishes Whorf's two common theories, i.e., Whorf1 (linguistic determinism) and Whorf2 (linguistic relativism), but also a Whorfianism of the third kind (Whorf3) seeing "ethnolinguistic diversity as a worldwide societal asset" (Fishman 1989, 565). This Whorfianism of the third kind or the "advocacy of a linguistically pluralistic world that would be safe for and sympathetic towards small languages" (Fishman 1991, 37) forms the backbone of the RLS theory. Seeing linguistic pluralism or linguistic diversity threatened by the process of globalisation Fishman turns to localisation as the appropriate defense mechanism (Fishman 2001b, 455). Fishman considers RLS above all to be concerned with "the recovery, recreation and retention of a *complete way of life*" (2001, 452), or, to put it alternatively, with "returning communities, neighbourhoods and families to the values, norms and behaviors that have preferential historical validity for them" (1991, 410). In the eyes of Fishman (ibid., 28) "the two most common ingredients of programmatic definitions of the cultural goals of RLS movements are (i) mining the past for inspiration to meet the challenges of the future and (ii) strengthening cultural boundaries so as to foster greater intergenerational continuity". What Fishman (2001b, 459) pleads for is the (re-)establishment of the Weberian 'Gemeinschaft' (i.e. the "intimate community whose members are related to one another via bonds of kinship, affection and communality of purpose and interest") as "the real secret weapon of RLS". From the point of view of modern sociology Fishman's proposal on how to counteract the negative forces of globalisation⁷ is questionable.

One of the most fundamental concomitant phenomena of globalisation has been the interconnectedness of global and local social relationships that has made the idea of societies as discrete, bounded entities a problematic one. A common history, a common worldview and common relations less and less link social groups. Their daily social reality is more defined by abstract systems, values and symbols (Schuerkens 2003, 210-211). Even in the family domain, which still is one of the most important domains for the reproduction and the transmission of traditions, "external influences appear due to processes of globalization" (ibid., 216). This undermines a transgenerational continuity of attitudes, beliefs, worldviews and – as one could add in the case of language minorities – the endangered minority language. The process of localisation and 'Vergemeinschaftung' as Fishman proposes it, seems to have as its first main goal to counteract or even totally reverse these actual trends of globalisation. This would practically come

⁷ Fishman agrees that there are also positive influences related to globalisation. He calls it "both a constructive and a destructive phenomenon, both a unifying and a divisive one" and "definitely not a culturally neutral or impartial one" (Fishman 2001, 6). In the context of language minorities the negative aspects prevail since globalisation according to Fishman is "the motor of language shift" (ibid.).

down to convincing language minorities to continue their existence totally aloof from mainstream society and with an even stronger determination than, e.g., the Old Order Amish (Clyne 2003, 64). This could easily make some language minority members consider the theory of Fishman as isolated from their own world (Baker/Prys Jones 1998, 194) or even as somewhat naive. Sociologists and contact linguists nowadays do not share the emphasis on localisation as a mechanism to improve the situation of language minorities. They rather stress the necessity to ‘attune’ globalisation and localisation.

The interplay of globalisation and localisation is known as ‘new localism’ (Strassoldo 1992) or, more commonly, as ‘glocalisation’. Glocalisation involves the translation of traditional cultural forms into modern media of expression and the selection and adaptation of what is valuable in the old culture to the mainstream (Strassoldo 1992, 42). This resembles in a way what Fishman means when he pleads for a ‘mining’ of the past as an inspiration to meet the challenges of the future. Contrary to what Fishman seems to suggest, however, this effective translation or adaptation of traditional cultural forms to mainstream society does not have to result in a strong focus on the family and its close surroundings nor does it have to result in enforcing the impermeability of the cultural boundaries. On the contrary: it implies a linking-up of activities across regional, national or even international borders and thus stresses the permeability of cultural boundaries in both directions rather than their impermeability⁸. Glocalisation in the case of language minorities encourages them to try and position themselves amidst other, possibly stronger, communities by pragmatically reshaping the driving mechanisms of globalisation to their own advantage. Not only the family but also the school, the (new) media, the (local) economy, etc., are important factors in this process.

It might not be impossible to ‘attune’ the concept of glocalisation with the conceptual core of Fishman’s RLS model provided that it is separated from Fishman’s accompanying worldview and his view on social change (Darquennes 2005). Rather than trying to adapt Fishman’s RLS model the choice proposed here is to go into a possible alternative developed by the Catalan sociolinguist Miquel Strubell. With his *Catherine Wheel* Strubell (1999, 237) tries to depict the social dynamics of languages and language change and to contribute to the development of possible language planning and language revitalisation measures (cf. also Strubell 2001, 279-280).

4. The Catherine Wheel

Following Strubell (1999, 239) the basic principle of the *Catherine Wheel*⁹ is the existence of a functional relationship between (1) language competence, (2) the social use of a language, (3) the presence and demand for products

⁸ As Fishman (1994, 97) himself expresses it, “language planning must also more frequently and more obviously aim at changing the majority and its establishment, rather than only at changing the minorities/subjugatees and their ethnolinguistic patterns”.

⁹ The term *Catherine Wheel* is used here in a metaphorical sense. In reality a *Catherine Wheel* is „a wheel to which fireworks are attached around the perimeter and which rotates when they are lit“ (Strubell 1999, 239).

and services in/through that language, and (4) the motivation to learn and use that language.

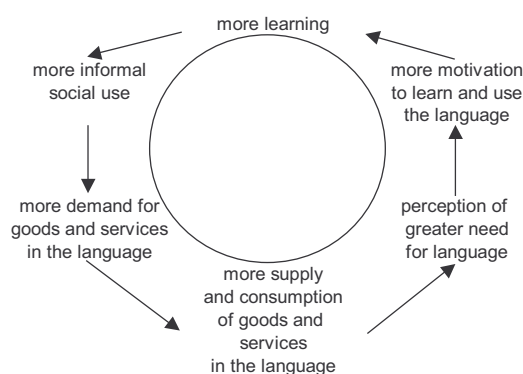
The relationship between the different components of the *Catherine Wheel* (Fig 3) that is specifically oriented towards situations of asymmetrical multilingualism, has to be interpreted as follows (cf. Strubell 1999, 240-241): If the number of persons who are competent in a language (a minority language) increases, then it is fair to assume that the number of people actually using that language will increase as well. In turn one can expect that, all other things being equal, an increase in the persons actually using the language will lead to an increase of the demand for goods and services through that language. With an increase in the demand for goods and services through that language it is reasonable to suppose that the supply and consumption of such goods and services will grow, too. This in turn will foreseeably have positive effects on the collective perception of the usefulness of the language as well as on the need to use it. This improved perception will supposedly motivate people further to learn the language and will possibly also motivate families to ensure that all members will learn it. Subsequently more people will turn to educational services in order to learn the language. Finally, it can be assumed that an increase in persons who can speak (and read) a language will lead to an increase in people actually using that language in everyday life. As the circle closes an increase in people actually using the language will positively influence the demand for goods and services through that language. According to Strubell (ibid., 241), there is no reason *per se* to suppose that the wheel will stop turning since „a positive feedback will in principle continue to fuel the process“.

Strubell (ibid., 239) includes some warnings in his description of the *Catherine Wheel*. He makes quite clear that he is portraying the relationship between the elements of the wheel in an idealised way. He points out that an increase in people with competence in a language (as a second language) does not necessarily lead to an extended use of that language in those people's everyday lives (ibid., 241). Furthermore, it does not necessarily follow that the mere availability of cultural products (e.g. mass media) has a positive impact on the reproduction of that language (ibid., 242). But despite of this self-criticism, the *Catherine Wheel* should facilitate language policy or language planning measures in those parts of the wheel „where the positive reinforcement is being counteracted by opposing trends or forces, which tend to either hold up the process or, just as likely, to actually reverse it [...]“ (ibid., 240). For a future re-design of the *Catherine Wheel* it could be of interest to visualise the interaction of the model with the interfering social reality and above all to link the wheel to a diagnosis of the language community. This diagnosis is indispensable to locate and clearly identify such societal forces and trends counteracting the cadence of the wheel. Besides these two rather small points of criticism another suggestion can be added:

Strubell presents the *Catherine Wheel* as a dynamic model. The dynamics of the model are linked to its circular form (the wheel keeps on turning) and the described interrelation between the different components of the model. Looking at the wheel now, it seems that there only is a relation between

“more informal social use” and “perception of greater need for the language”, after the two intermediate stages have been run through. And this despite the (theoretical) possibility that an increase in the informal use of language could in itself also lead to an increase in the perception of the language as useful without necessarily having to go through the two intermediate stages. As a point of criticism it could be argued that Strubell’s model gives the impression that the different components of the model always have to follow the same order and that therefore the model, at least from the point of view of its circular conception, does not seem to be able to sufficiently visualise the previously described and announced interrelation between its different components.

Figure 3: Catherine Wheel (Strubell 1999, 241)



Even though Strubell’s model shows some ‘conceptual deficits’ and the author himself points out that the model is an idealised theoretical presentation of the dynamics of social reality, it cannot be denied that the thoughts underlying the model give an interesting stimulus to the development of recommendations on language revitalisation. Strubell makes clear that the functional relationship between (1) language competence, (2) the social use of a language, (3) the presence and demand for products and services in/through that language, and (4) the motivation to learn and use that language needs to be considered when conceptualising language revitalisation measures. In presenting things this way, Strubell avoids a rigid, cumulative and evolutionary description of social change that is inherent in Fishman’s GIDS. Strubell finds himself on the side of, e.g., Bereznak/Campbell (1996, 663-665), Baldauf/Kaplan (1997, 9), Campbell (2000, 252-268) Gruffudd (2000, 176-204) and Nelde (2002, 2), who advocate the elaboration of a comprehensive, multidisciplinary conceived and multidimensionally oriented total concept that is intertwined with social reality as a prerequisite for successful language revitalisation.

In what follows an attempt is made to develop a language revitalisation framework based on the contact linguistic socioprofile method that could be of assistance in the formation of such a total concept. The positive asset of the *Catherine Wheel* as a contribution to language revitalisation theory will not be renounced. On the contrary: The *Catherine Wheel* will be an integrative part of the newly designed framework.

5. Language revitalisation based on the socioprofile method

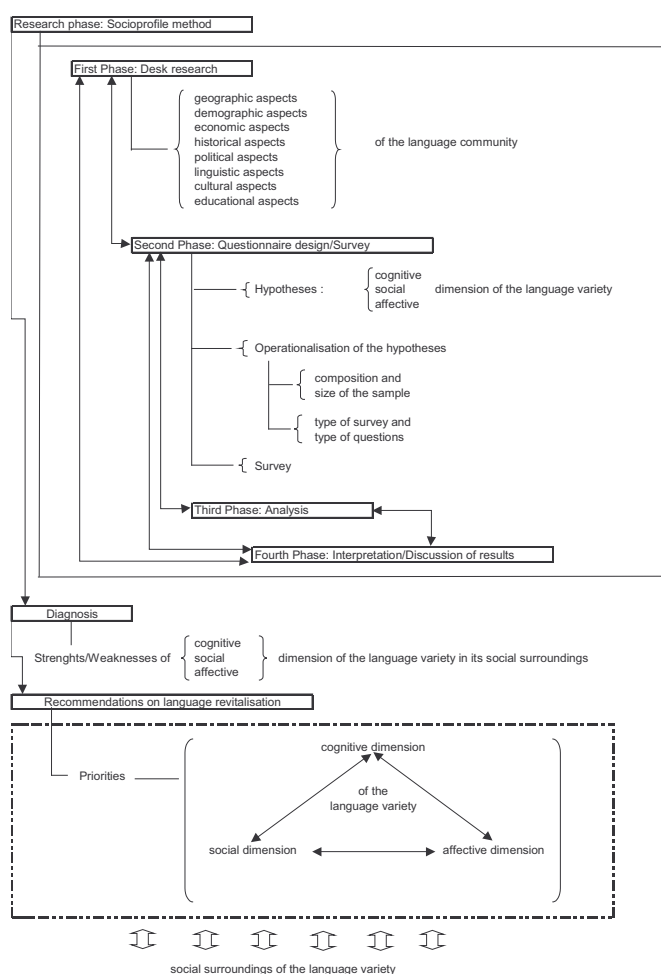
Socioprofiles developed out of empirical contact linguistic research. They were first used in the early 1980s in field research of the Brussels RCM in the non-officially recognized German speaking parts of Belgium (known as Old Belgium in the linguistic literature). In their basic structure, the socioprofiles closely resemble the community profiles as they were developed by Wolf Wölck to investigate language contact settings in the Peruvian Andes as well as in the North-American city of Buffalo (cf. Wölck 1976, 1985 & 2004 and Labrie/Vandermeeren 1996 for an overview).

Like community profiles socioprofiles have mostly been used in clearly defined contact situations between dominant and dominated language communities (Weber/Melis 1997, 490). Both methods aim at (1) discovering major social distinctions and structural divisions in a community and (2) identifying a subset of the population that represents such distinctions or structural features. They want to show how these divisions or structural features are paralleled by or correlate with linguistic features or differences in language use (Wölck 1985, 33). Therefore a broad description of the investigated community is necessary whereby such sectors of society that influence language use and language attitudes are of primary interest. A description of the investigated language community based on the ecology of language and on rural anthropology is the first of four interacting phases of the socioprofile approach. As Wölck (1976, 53) puts it, this first phase is the necessary prerequisite for intelligent questionnaire design (cf. also Hippeler/Schwarz 1996, 727). On the basis of the first phase, hypotheses can be generated and operationalised in the second phase of the socioprofile method (cf. Weber 1997 on technical details). In practice the hypotheses address the cognitive, social and affective dimension of language use (Labrie/Nelde/Weber 1994, 69). The hypotheses in the cognitive dimension generally concentrate on language knowledge and language competence. The hypotheses in the social dimension concentrate on the social and functional range of the language(s) used. The hypotheses in the affective dimension try to shed light on the attitudes and beliefs of certain speakers and non-speakers towards certain languages, certain speakers and/or language policy and language planning measures (Fasold 1987, 148). Like the first phase the three dimensions featuring prominently in the second phase of the socioprofile method also compile insights that have long been present in socio- and contact linguistic research. The cognitive and social dimensions of languages feature prominently in the work of Mackey (1962) as well as in the famous Fishman quote „Who speaks what language to whom and when?“ (Fishman 1965). The affective dimension has taken a prominent place in socio- and contact linguistic research ever since the psychologically oriented research of Wallace Lambert in the sixties. In general a sociodemographic dimension is added to the three discussed dimensions. It is the aim of this sociodemographic dimension to provide sociodemographic background information needed to enable the description of the possible correlation between (1) social and structural characteristics of society and (2) linguistic features and language use patterns. The data obtained through the empirical research in the second phase are coded, entered into a database and analysed

in the third phase of the socioprofile method (cf. Weber 1997, 19-22 for details on possible analytical procedures). The fourth phase concentrates on the interpretation of the data.

Until now the socioprofile method has mainly been used to describe situations of language shift on an empirical basis and has led to new insights into the phenomenon as, e.g., the empirically based notion of the non-linearity of language shift (Nelde 1982 & Nelde/Weber 2002). If the socioprofile method now wants to be used for language revitalisation purposes it seems necessary to deduce a diagnosis of the investigated language minority on the basis of the third and fourth phase. This diagnosis could link Weber's portfolio analysis that is used to describe the strengths and weaknesses of minority languages (cf. Weber 1996) to the three dimensions of the socioprofile. The empirically founded diagnosis of the strengths and weaknesses of the cognitive, social and affective dimension of the minority language could then serve as the necessary basis to develop language revitalisation measures that take into account the social dynamics of the minority language within the language minority setting. In order to conceptualise language revitalisation measures Strubell's formerly discussed *Catherine Wheel* can be linked to the principles of the socioprofile method.

Figure 4:
Language revitalization on the basis of the socioprofile method



Looking at the components of Strubell's Catherine Wheel one notices that they can easily be reconciled with the three 'pillars' of the socioprofile method. Those parts of the wheel dealing with language competence and language learning can be considered as part of the cognitive dimension of the socioprofiles. Those parts of the wheel dealing with language use and the demand and supply for goods and services in the language can be considered as part of the social dimension. The motivation to learn and use the language as well as the perception of greater need for the language can be considered as part of the affective dimension. In reconciling the parts of Strubell's *Catherine Wheel* with the three dimensions of the socioprofile method it is now possible to come to a consistent model of language revitalisation. What remains to be done is the elaboration of an alternative visualisation of the interrelation between the three dimensions, since the circular form used by Strubell in the original *Catherine Wheel* is not suited for that.

The alternative presented here in the lower part of Figure 4 is a triangle in which each vortex represents one dimension and interactively relates to the two other remaining vortexes thus visualising the interrelation between the cognitive, social and affective dimension. Because the new model also provides a clear basis for diagnosis and links the interrelated three dimension to social reality also the other two points of criticism, the lack of a method towards a diagnosis and the failing visualisation of the link between the wheel and social reality, have been tackled. The newly formed language revitalisation framework (Fig. 4) now entails and envisions that (1) a situation of language shift is descriptively and empirically investigated on the basis of the socioprofile method whereby emphasis is put on the context dependent interplay between language and diverse aspects of the social life in which the language functions; (2) an empirically founded diagnosis of the language shift situation in the language community is made considering both strengths and weaknesses in the three dimensions of the minority language; and (3) on the basis of a diagnosis tailor-made measures towards language revitalisation are developed as a total concept considering the social dynamics of the minority language (cf. Darquennes 2005 for a practical example).

6. Summary and prospects

This article questioned the road to language revitalisation as proposed by Joshua Fishman. It was argued that Fishman's cumulative and evolutionary approach to social change and his heavy reliance on 'localisation' as an answer to 'globalisation' distort the RLS theory that in its core promises an 'open approach' to language revitalisation. Following the critique of Fishman's RLS theory, Miquel Strubell's *Catherine Wheel* was presented as a possible alternative. The *Catherine Wheel* stresses the social dynamics of languages and aims at providing a basis for language planning and language revitalisation measures. Discussing the *Catherine Wheel* it was argued that this model shows some conceptual shortcomings. The Wheel turns out to be linear in its circularity since it fails to visualise the postulated interdependency between (1) language competence, (2) the social use of a language, (3) the presence and demand for products and services in/through

that language, and (4) the motivation to learn and use that language. To overcome the conceptual shortcomings of the *Catherine Wheel* its underlying ideas were linked to the socioprofile method that has already proved its usefulness in the study of language shift situations. Based on the principles of the ecology of language the socioprofile method starts from a thorough study of the social context of the discussed minority language in the chosen language minority setting and subsequently generates hypotheses for empirical research. In general the research hypotheses are directed to the cognitive, social and affective dimension of language use. The analysis and interpretation of the empirically obtained research results lead to a diagnosis of the strengths and weaknesses of the cognitive, social and affective dimension of the minority language in its social setting. The diagnosis forms the basis of tailor-made and highly context-dependent language revitalisation recommendations that are again centred on cognitive, social and affective dimensions related to the minority language.

The newly developed language revitalisation framework has an integrative character in that it not only takes Fishman's and Strubell's models as stimulating starting points. Through its heavy reliance on the socioprofile method the framework also incorporates longstanding views of the ecology of, e.g., language, sociolinguistics, social psychology and rural anthropology. Notwithstanding the repeatedly proved quality of the socioprofile method the language revitalisation framework as it is presented here, however, remains largely theoretical. It therefore is in need both of constructive theoretical criticism and of a thorough empirical application in the field of minority languages. Only then it will be possible to decide whether the presented framework can be a useful tool that has the potential to assist in maintaining the worldwide language mosaic.

Bibliography

- Baker, Colin/Prys Jones, Sylvia (1998): *Encyclopedia of bilingualism and bilingual education*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Baldauf, Richard B. Jr./Kaplan, Robert (1997): *Language Planning. From Practice to Theory*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Bentahila, Abdelâli/Davies, Eirlys E. (1993): "Language Revival: Restoration or Transformation?". In: *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 14 (5), 355-374.
- Bereznak, Catherine/Campbell, Lyle (1996): "Defense strategies for endangered languages". In: Goebel, H. et al. (eds.), 659-666.
- Campbell, Cefin (2000): "Menter Cmw Gwendraeth: A case-study in Community Language Planning". In: Williams, Colin H. (ed.), 247-291.
- Clyne, Michael G (2001): "Can the Shift from Immigrant Languages be Reversed in Australia?". In: Fishman, J.A. (ed.), 364-390.
- (2003): *Dynamics of Language Contact. English and Immigrant Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Darquennes, Jeroen (2005): *Sprachrevitalisierung. Theorie und Praxis am Beispiel Altbelgien-Süds* (Plurilingua XXIX). St-Augustin: Asgard.
- Darquennes, Jeroen/Weber, Peter J. (1999): „Streiflichter zur Sprachrevitalisierung im europäischen Kontext“. In: Nelde, Peter H./Rindler Schjerve, Rosita (eds.), *Minorities and Language Policy*. St-Augustin: Asgard, 103-112.
- Ellis, Peter B./Mac a'Ghobhainn, Seumas (1971): *The Problem of Language Revival: Examples of Language Survival*. Inverness: Club Leabhar.
- Enninger, Werner/Haynes, Lilith M. (1984): *Studies in language ecology*. Wiesbaden: Steiner.
- Evas, Jeremy (2000): "Declining Density: A Danger for the Language?". In: Williams, Colin H. (ed.), 292-310.

- Fasold, Ralph (1987): *The Sociolinguistics of Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Fishman, J.A. (1965): "Who speaks what language to whom and when?". In: *La Linguistique* II, 67-88.
- (1968): *Bilingualism in the Barrio*. U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Office of Education. Bureau of Research.
- (1989): *Language and Ethnicity in Minority Sociolinguistic Perspective*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- (1991): *Reversing Language Shift. Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- (1994): "Critiques of Language Planning: A Minority Language Perspective". In: *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 15 (2&3), 91-99.
- (1996): "Language revitalization". In: Goebel, H. et al. (eds.), 902-906.
- (ed.) (2001a): *Can threatened languages be saved? Reversing Language Shift, Revisited: A 21st Century Perspective*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- (2001b): "From theory to practice (and vice versa)". In: Fishman, J.A. (ed.), 451-483.
- Goebel, Hans (1986): „Mundart, Maß und Meinung“. In: Gendron, Jean-Denis/Nelde, Peter H. (eds.), *Plurilinguisme en Europe et au Canada*. Bonn: Dümmler, 9-26.
- Goebel, Hans/Nelde, Peter H./Stary, Zdenek/Wölck, Wolfgang (eds.) (1996): *Kontaktlinguistik. Ein internationales Handbuch zeitgenössischer Forschung. Bd. 1*. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.
- Grin, François (1997): "Gérer le plurilinguisme européen: approche économique au problème de choix". In: Nelde, Peter H. (ed.), *Einsprachigkeit ist heilbar* (Sociolinguistica 11). Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1-15.
- Grin, François/Moring, Tom et al. (2002): *Support for Minority Languages in Europe*. European Commission (Contract Nr. 2000-1288/001-001 EDU-MLCEV).
- Grin, François/Vaillancourt, François (1997a): "La langue comme capital humain". In : *Policy Options* July/August 1997, 69-72.
- (1997b): "The economics of multilingualism: overview and analytical framework". In: *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 17, 43-65.
- Gruffudd, H. (2000): "Planning for the Use of Welsh by Young People". In: Williams, Colin H. (ed.), 173-207.
- Henrion, Armand (1996): "Le bilinguisme est-il un mythe belge?". In: *Bulletin de l'Association des Germanistes de Louvain-la-Neuve* 23, 7-8.
- Hinton, Leanne (2003): "Language Revitalization". In: *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 23, 44-57.
- Hinton, Leanne/Hale, Ken (eds.) (2001): *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Hippler, Hans-J./Schwarz, Norbert (1996): "Umfragen". In: Goebel, H. et al. (eds.), 726-733.
- Hornberger, Nancy/King, Kendall A. (2001): "Reversing Quechua Language Shift in South America". In: Fishman, J.A. (ed.), 166-194.
- Huss, Leena (1999): *Reversing Language Shift in the Far North: Linguistic Revitalization on Northern Scandinavia and Finland*. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Uralica Upsaliensia 31.
- Hyltenstam, Kenneth/Stroud, Christopher (1996): "Language Maintenance". In: Goebel, H. et al. (eds.), 567-578.
- King, Kendall A. (2001): *Language Revitalization Processes and Prospects. Quichua in the Ecuadorian Andes*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Kloss, Heinz (1966): "German-American language maintenance efforts". In: Fishman, Joshua A. (ed.), *Language Loyalty in the United States*. The Hague: Mouton, 206-256.
- Krauss, Michael (1992): "The world's languages in crisis". In: *Language*, 68 (1), 4-10.
- Labrie, Normand/Nelde, Peter H./Weber, Peter J. (1994): "Projet d'étude sur les langues moins répandues dans l'UE". In: *Europa Ethnica* 2, 67-70.
- Labrie, Normand/Vandermeeren, Sonja (1996): "L'analyse du profil de la communauté". In: Goebel, Hans et al. (eds.), 764-770.
- Mackey, William F. (1962): "The description of bilingualism". In: *Canadian Journal of Linguistics* 7 (2), 51-85.
- Myhill, John (1999): "Identity, Territoriality and Minority Language Survival". In: *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 20 (1), 34-50.
- Nelde, Peter H. (1982): "Sprachökologische Überlegungen am Beispiel Altbelgiens". In: *Germanistische Mitteilungen* 15, 81-92.

- (1997): “Vorwort”. In: Nelde, Peter H. (ed.) *Einsprachigkeit ist heilbar* (Sociolinguistica 11). Tübingen: Niemeyer, vii-ix.
- (2002): “Vorwort”. In: Nelde, Peter H./Weber, Peter J./Wölck, Wolfgang (eds.), *Mehrsprachigkeit – Voraussetzung und Chance für das Überleben kleiner Sprachgemeinschaften*. Bautzen: WITAJ-Sprachzentrum, 2-3.
- Nelde, Peter H./Strubell, Miquel/Williams, Glyn (1996): *Euromosaic. Produktion und Reproduktion der Minderheiten-Sprachgemeinschaften in der Europäischen Union*. Luxemburg: Amt für amtliche Veröffentlichungen der Europäischen Gemeinschaften.
- Nelde, Peter H./Weber, Peter J. (1998): “Die Euromosaic-Studie als Element einer europäischen Sprachpolitik”. In: *Sozialrecht in Deutschland und Europa* (ZFSH/SGB) 2, 67-91.
- (2002): “The Non-Linearity of Language Maintenance and Language Shift: Survey Data from European Language Boundaries”. In: Wei, i et al. (eds) *Opportunities and Challenges of Bilingualism*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 105-124.
- Paulston, Christina Bratt et al. (1993): “Language Regeneration: a conceptual overview of language revival, revitalisation and reversal”. In: *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 14 (4), 275-286.
- Schuerkens, Ulrike (2003): “The Sociological and Anthropological Study of Globalization and Localization”. In: *Current Sociology* 51 (3&4), 209-222.
- Strassoldo, Raimondo (1992): “Globalism and Localism: Theoretical Reflection and Some Evidence”. In: Mlinar, Z. (ed.), *Globalization and Territorial Identities*. Aldershot: Avebury, 35-59.
- Stroud, Christopher (2004): “Revisiting reversing language shift: African languages in high modernity”. In: Bromber, Katrin/Smieja, Birgit (eds.), *Globalisation and African Languages. Risks and Benefits*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 85-101.
- Strubell, Miquel (1999): “From language planning to language policies and language politics”. In: Weber, Peter J. (ed.), *Contact + Confli(c)t. Language planning and minorities*. Bonn: Dümmler, 237-248.
- (2001): “Catalan a Decade Later”. In: Fishman, Joshua A. (ed.), 260-283.
- Weber, Peter J. (1996): *Die multilinguale und multikulturelle Gesellschaft: eine Utopie?* (Plurilingua XV). Bonn: Dümmler.
- (1997): “Methodische Fragestellungen bei der Sprachdatenerhebung. Die Empirie der Sozialwissenschaft in der Minderheitenforschung”. In: Kattenbusch, Dieter (ed.), *Kulturkontakt und Sprachkonflikt in der Romania* (Ethnos 50). Wien: Braunmüller, 11-30.
- Weber, Peter J./Melis, Anne (1997): “Zur Geschichte der Sozioprofile: ein Forschungsstellenprofil”. In: Moelleken, Wolfgang W./Weber, Peter J. (eds.), *Neue Forschungsarbeiten zur Kontaktlinguistik*. Bonn: Dümmler, 487-495.
- Wei, Li (2000): “Towards a Critical Evaluation of Language Maintenance and Language Shift”. In: Ammon, Ulrich/Mattheier, Klaus J./Nelde, Peter H. (eds.), *The Future of European Sociolinguistics*. (Sociolinguistica 14). Tübingen: Niemeyer, 142-147.
- Williams, C.H. (ed.) (2000): *Language Revitalization. Policy and Planning in Wales*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Williams, G. (1992): *Sociolinguistics. A Sociological Critique*. London: Routledge.
- Wölck, W. (1976): “Community Profiles: An Alternative Approach to Linguistic Informant Selection”. In: *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 9, 45-57.
- (1985): “Beyond Community Profiles: A Three-level Approach to Sociolinguistic Sampling”. In: Nelde, Peter H. (ed.) *Methoden der Kontaktlinguistik* (Plurilingua V). Bonn: Dümmler, 31-43.
- (2004): “Sampling and Interviewing: Community Profiles Revisited”. In: Nelde, Peter H. (ed.), *Mehrsprachigkeit, Minderheiten und Sprachwandel* (Plurilingua XXVIII) St-Augustin: Asgard, 167-171.
- (2007): “Endangered Languages”. In: Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia (go.grolier.com)

Metodi statistici per la misurazione del plurilinguismo sociale e dei rapporti tra i codici

Vittorio Dell'Aquila (Vasa) & Gabriele Iannàccaro (Milano)

Lo scopo di questo articolo sarà quello di introdurre un possibile modello di analisi linguistica dei dati quantitativi in vista di una discussione sui rapporti fra i codici all'interno della comunità esaminate che sia contemporaneamente attento alle condizioni reali del territorio ai quali i dati si riferiscono e che apporti qualche riflessione utile per la messa a fuoco di categorie di importanza primaria nell'analisi sociolinguistica. In particolare cercheremo di mostrare come una migliore comprensione della situazione linguistica di alcune località plurilingui d'Europa, così come emerge dai dati presi in considerazione, possa portare anche a un rilettura critica dei concetti di ambito d'uso e repertorio.

I dati che verranno analizzati sono tratti dalle inchieste sociolinguistiche condotte dal Centre d'Études Linguistiques pour l'Europe nelle Valli Ladin delle Dolomiti (Tirolo), in Valle d'Aosta, presso le comunità Walser del Piemonte, in Latgalia (Lettonia orientale)¹ e in alcuni villaggi della Liguria, durante le quali sono state intervistate più di 20'000 persone. È evidente che per avere un'idea non impressionistica sulle situazioni rappresentate da questa massa di numeri, i dati di inchieste così grosse non possono essere considerati e analizzati tutti insieme, bensì dividendoli in problemi e singole situazioni linguistiche che vanno di volta in volta approfonditi. In quest'ottica vogliamo qui proporre un esperimento di analisi che prende in considerazione un *set* specifico di domande, da un lato utili ad avvicinare una parte almeno della complessità sociolinguistica delle aree indagate tra loro disomogenee, e dall'altro adatte a costituire momento di riflessione per una proposta di riconsiderazione teorica dei concetti di ambiti d'uso, repertorio e rapporti tra i codici. Per far questo ci si è avvalsi di una metodologia che prevede l'analisi statistico-matematica che restituisce informazioni interamente interpretabili mediante le categorie anche qualitative tradizionali della sociolinguistica.

¹ *Survey Ladins*: 3000 intervistati nei 18 comuni della Ladinia storica. In collaborazione con l'Università degli Studi dell'Aquila, il Forschungsstelle für Mehrsprachigkeit di Bruxelles e l'Istitut Cultural Ladin "Majon di Fascegn" e il patrocinio dell'Union Generela di Ladins dla Dolomites, dell'Istitut Cultural Ladin "Micurà de Rü", dell'Istitut Pedagogich Ladin e della Regione Autonoma Trentino-Alto Adige.

Plurilinguismo amministrativo e scolastico in Valle d'Aosta: 7250 intervistati in tutti i comuni della regione. In collaborazione con l'Università di Torino, l'Université Stendhal di Grenoble, l'Università di Salisburgo, il Forschungsstelle für Mehrsprachigkeit di Bruxelles, con il supporto logistico della Fondation E. Chanoux di Aosta, il sostegno finanziario della Commissione Europea (DG Cultura e educazione) e con il patrocinio della Giunta Regionale della Valle d'Aosta.

Walser in Piemonte: 1000 intervistati nelle comunità walser del Piemonte. Con l'Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale e il sostegno della Regione Piemonte.

Valodu lietojums Austrumlatvijā, 12000 intervistati in un centinaio di unità territoriali della Latgalia. In collaborazione con l'Università degli studi di Milano-Bicocca e la Rēzeknes Augstskola di Rēzekne.