

# Constructing Multilingual Europe? Micro and Macro Perspectives

Workshop at Sociolinguistics Symposium 17, Amsterdam, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008

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## Rationale:

The workshop explores a range of multilingualism-related practices and policies in different European settings. The main goal of the workshop is to debate how planning, regulating as well as practicing multilingualism in diverse European (micro and macro) contexts could/should/would construct a '*multilingual Europe*'. We understand the latter as a space in which different languages and cultures can potentially and fruitfully co-exist and interact with each other and thus contribute to create multicultural and diversity-driven societies, institutions and political organisations.

The in-depth analysis of the opportunities for creating a multilingual Europe has never been timelier. As is illustrated by recent political and economic developments (incl., *inter alia* the subsequent 2004 and 2007 Enlargements of the EU, or the change of political landscapes in different national settings in Europe) and changes of a socio-demographic nature (enhanced human mobility and migration from outside and within Europe, questions about the core principles of multiculturalism in diverse European societies), issues about the true 'nature' of a multilingual European space must now be taken under closer consideration and scrutiny. However, while ultimately proposing *future scenarios*, the workshop focuses on the *current state of the art* of different (macro) policies and (micro) practices of multilingualism from a *critical perspective*. Such an approach, we believe, allows emphasising that, at present, multilingualism in Europe is frequently observed as an 'obstacle' rather than an 'opportunity' in both public and private spheres.

The *micro-macro perspective* of the workshop (proposed inline with the general theme of SS17 – 'Micro and Macro Connections') contributes to several dimensions. First, it investigates if *individual multilingual practices* 'on the ground' (e.g. in everyday interactions

in schools, institutions etc.) are determined by macro regional, national and supranational language and education policies and ideologies which regulate how members of different linguistic communities should interact with one another; and in which way. Secondly, this workshop analyses how *multilingual settings are influenced by perceptions of multilingualism* in different private, semi-public and public spheres (ranging from the micro individual ideas to those disseminated in politics and the media). Finally, the integrated micro-macro perspective allows determining how regional and national (i.e. *local*) contexts in which multilingual practices occur on a daily basis can be informed by *specific multilingual practices and policies which are (partially) implemented in supranational settings* (e.g. within the EU-institutions, or, at even more *global* levels).