

*Agnes Grond, Angelika Heiling, Oana Hergenröther  
and Daniela Unger-Ullmann*

## Editors' Foreword

“To be a nation, the individuals who make up that nation have got to be able, among other things, to communicate with one another. They need not, however, do so in any specific language. All that is necessary is that they be able to switch to the most appropriate language demanded by a particular situation. [...] If we want to fight against racial prejudice and racism then we have, among other things, to break down the language barriers.”

Neville Alexander

“A mind is like a parachute. It doesn't work if it is not open.”

Frank Zappa

This book is devoted to celebrating the retirement of Dieter W. Halwachs from his post at the University of Graz and to marking another steppingstone in a career that spans over four decades. Over this time, the focus topics of his study and engagement have been the sociolinguistic areas of language policy and politics, minority and marginalized languages, language contact, historical sociolinguistics, and, markedly, pioneer work on Romani language and culture, especially Romani dialects in Austria.

Halwachs served, between 2009 and 2022, as Head of the Plurilingualism Research Unit at *treffpunkt sprachen* – Centre for Language, Plurilingualism and Didactics of the University of Graz, and as Deputy Head of *treffpunkt sprachen*. The Plurilingualism Research Unit (PRU) was designed as a project rooted in sociolinguistics, aiming for social cohesion, human rights, and a politics of plurality. The activities undertaken here over the years of Halwachs' supervision and guidance ranged from (minority) language documentation to counselling in language politics. Usually, the PRU consisted of around ten employees – administrators, junior and senior researchers – and up to ten affiliated researchers. The structure of the PRU did fluctuate and change over the years, not only in numbers, but also in the disciplinary orientation of Dieter's co-workers, so that he worked alongside linguists, historians, anthropologists, cultural studies- and literary scholars, gender studies scholars, and others.

Born in 1956 in the Pannonian idyll that is Burgenland, Dieter Halwachs earned his Master's (1991) and PhD degree (1996) in Linguistics at the University of Graz. Starting

with 1991, he worked at the Linguistics Department of the University of Graz, where he taught courses on Sociolinguistics, Linguistic Plurality, Language Policy and Planning, Minority Linguistics, Romani Studies, Linguistic Pragmatics, Semiotics and Communication. An invested teacher and one who appreciated engagement and encouraged discussion in his classes, he will be remembered by his students as practicing teaching in an organic and innovative way, where many of his didactic techniques would, today, almost be taken for granted; his personal teaching style might have, at an earlier time, been characterized as unorthodox and free because it was interactive and encouraged students to approach linguistics in a matter-of-fact and hands-on manner, to think about language as the living and breathing phenomenon that it is, and to understand the complex ways in which it relates to our lived experiences.

Halwachs has given talks, presentations and keynote speeches the list of which would take up too much space to enumerate here; suffice it to say they have taken place across cities as diverse as Changsha; Paris; Bautzen; Lecce; Tetovo; Berlin; Stockholm; Manchester; Barcelona and many others.

He has published extensively on his topics of research, tens of articles in English and German, but also, among others, the monographs: *Burgenland-Romani*; *Lang ist der Tag, kurz die Nacht - Märchen und Erzählungen der Kalderaš*; *Romani. Education, Segregation and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*; *The World Atlas of Languages Framework*. He has led third-party-funded projects such as: ROMLEX – The Lexical Database of Romani (2008-2013); ROMIDENT – The Role of Language in the Transnational Formation of Romani Identity (2010-2013); QUALIROM – Quality Education for Romani in Europe (2012-2013); the UNESCO World Report on Languages (2018-2019) and the Preparation of the UNESCO World Atlas of Languages (2020-2021); as well as the long-running projects based at the University of Graz: Romani [projekt] (since 1993); Multilingual Graz (since 2009); and Multilingual Styria (2019-2021).

Outside the university context, Halwachs has held several prominent functions in the field of policy-making in terms of linguistic rights: for the Council of Europe, as Austria's long-standing representative on the Committee of Experts of the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*; for the Austrian Academy of Sciences, as a member of the commission *Vanishing Languages and Cultural Heritage* (VLACH); for UNESCO, as Advisor and Head of the Working Group for the Development of the *World Atlas of Languages*; for the EU, as Resident Twinning Advisor of the IPA/Twinning Project for the Integration of Ethnic Minorities in North Macedonia.

It was Romani and Dieter's deep, almost personal, interest in its development, history, and lived reality that made Romani Studies a Unique Selling Point of *treffpunkt sprachen* and, on a larger scale, of the University of Graz in the whole of Austria. In this sense, the breadth and depth of his contribution to the international academic community, to the pool of knowledge, but also to various (minority) communities in Europe and their lived realities, will probably only be grasped in its entirety in the generations of scholars to come.

With this Festschrift, we as Editors and as Dieter Halwachs' colleagues hope to shed light on at least one aspect of his intellectual capital by offering the readership a selection of

essays by his friends and collaborators from all over the world, the sum of which showcases the palette of topics that Dieter has directly and indirectly been involved with.

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The essays in this volume were written by Dieter Halwachs' former colleagues, students and co-workers; they reflect the intersectionality that a scientific career is and should aim for. To describe oneself in strict terms of a single discipline is not only inaccurate but seen as plain impossible in today's understanding of academic work, its relations to the living labs of academic research, as well as to the world outside academia.

They also reflect two unalienable and inseparable sides to Halwachs' career at the university: research and teaching, both of which he tried to use as venues of understanding and explaining sociolinguistic phenomena, which, although they stood at the basis of his interests, were not phenomena that could be studied in an isolated manner. As a result, the essays in this volume cover topics as diverse as: language policy, language documentation and dialectal distinctions; the study of age/ing and cognitive processes of bilingualism; minority literatures and language ideology; Kurdish linguistics and sign language biographies; etc.

Appropriate to the format and intention of this volume, some of the essays come from a perspective other than the strictly academic one, which will be visible to readers from the content and format of the texts. Some of Halwachs' long-standing collaborators come from other professional areas and have chosen the format of discussion papers or anecdotal notes on shared experiences, all with the aim of bringing multilingualism to the forefront of public and political debate.

The authors also come from and out of different contexts of academic and non-academic life that Dieter Halwachs pursued his career in: from universities in Austria, Serbia, Germany, the United States, North Macedonia, as well as from The Austrian Academy of Sciences.

In Part I – The Plurilingualism Research Unit: An Introduction – **Daniela Unger-Ullmann** in “Who Are We? What Do We Want? – An Insight into an Academic Language Center” describes the process of the Center's development and its contribution to the promotion of languages by providing a brief insight into the establishment of specific fields of teaching and research. The key to a modern language society is its comprehensive understanding of language, which includes the promotion of plurality and plurilingualism on several levels. In order to provide a scope for the natural conditions associated with international multiculturalism and the associated plurilingualism, the language center of the University of Graz, which was originally conceived of as a service institution, consciously focuses on central activities in the fields of language teaching, language didactics, language teaching and learning research, language documentation, and language policy.

An important focus area at the Unit, since 2015, has been Kurdish Linguistics. **Agnes Grond** in her contribution “Kurdish Linguistics at the Plurilingualism Research Unit 2015–2022” delineates the development of this field. The Kurdish language group belongs to North-West Iranian languages. The best-known language of this group – Kurmanji – is

a frequently spoken language in Austria and often equated with the entire language family. However, the Kurdish group also includes lesser-known languages such as Sorani, Kelhuri, or Laki. The contribution gives an overview of completed and ongoing research and publication projects on the Kurdish diaspora in Austria (*From the Taurus to the Tauern* and *From the Tigris to the Danube*), of completed and ongoing publication projects (*Mountains as Frontier Arenas*, *Linguistic Diversity in Central Anatolia*, *Current Issues in Kurdish Linguistics II*), as well as the cooperation project *Description, documentation et vitalité linguistique de la variété Kurde şexbizinî en diaspora*. The article concludes with an outlook on future projects.

The second part of the volume – The Plurilingualism Research Unit: Language Ideologies and Politics – opens with a contribution by **Ranko Bugarski** on the “Ideology of the Nation State Language”. The article starts with a brief definition of the key terms appearing in the title: ideology is a set of ideas, attitudes, beliefs, and values in human societies, concerning politics, economy, culture, etc. Depending on the context, ideologies may be evaluated as negative or, more rarely, positive. A national language is, first, a politically defined language of the dominant nation in the nation state or, second, an ethnically defined language of all speakers residing in different states. A standard language is a regulated supraregional variety designed for general use in administration, education, culture, etc. The national language and the standard language are then linked to ideology. The ideology of the national language upholds this idiom as an essential marker and symbol of the nation, at the expense of all other languages spoken in the given state and is hence restrictive; furthermore, the ambiguity of the term gives rise to manipulation in its use. The ideology of the standard language construes this variety as the best, most precise, and the only correct one, thus being restrictive with respect to all the other, non-standard varieties. The article deals specifically with the effects of these ideologies in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Montenegro.

**Jelena Filipović**’s article “Language Management and Language Leadership in Serbian Language Policy and Planning” analyzes the same geographical context, by illustrating the mechanisms operative in the design and implementation of the decision-making process at the level of institutionalized language policy and planning in Serbia. Language policy and planning is described and accounted for as an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary field of research which has to take into account numerous factors that impact decisions made about language status, its structure and its use in different communicative domains, such as identity (social, ethnic, racial, national), history, culture, epistemology, social hierarchies, discursive constructions of public and private spheres, as well as geography, economy, and politics. The model of language leadership (Filipović, 2015), developed within the framework of complexity theory leadership (Uhl-Bien et al, 2007), is applied in combination with the sociocultural linguistic framework of collective identity construction through interpersonal relations (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

**Daniela Waldburger**’s contribution “Fragments on Multilingual (In)competence” can be described as an anecdotal disquisition on issues related to language use and ideology in academic contexts, here mainly the scientific linguistics community. The anecdotes are characterized by self-reflection, especially in relation to language choice and the role of the

researcher, and expose – even in contexts that value multilingualism – a persistent monolingual habitus when it comes to academic textual production.

**Daphne Reitingers** article “Bilingualismus – sein Einfluss auf Kognition und kognitive Prozesse” on bilingualism shows how ideologies on language have changed over time. Research on bilingualism has passed through many stages. Its effects on bilingual speakers could not have been judged more contrarily: from describing bilingual speakers as inferior and “mentally confused” (Saer 1923), to bilingualism having significant positive effects (Peal and Lambert 1962), to the postulation of the *bilingual advantage* (e.g. Singh et al. 2015). This article reviews both neuro-anatomical and functional evidence with the aim of outlining a comprehensive overview of the effects that bilingualism has on cognitive processing and cognition.

In her contribution “Graz, die ‚deutscheste Stadt‘ der Habsburger Monarchie revisited: Verdrängte sprachliche Vielfalt in Graz in den Operaten der Volkszählungen ab 1880”, **Elke Murlasits** discusses aspects of historical research on Graz. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Graz developed into an important center of social change and was characterized by immigration and expansion. From the 1880 census onwards, the citizens’ vernacular languages were recorded and subsequently manipulated, as they did not correspond to the idea of a monolingual (German) Graz. Source material from original census forms shows interventions such as the deletion of non-German languages. The analysis of the original and manipulated census data shows the engineering of a homogeneous population that never existed in Graz by making invisible all elements, such as multilingualism, which contradicted the emerging nation-state ideology.

The third part of the volume – The Plurilingualism Research Unit: Minority Languages – includes contributions by **Victor Friedman**, **Mozes F. Heinschink** and **Petra Cech**, all of whom focus on the Roma and Romani varieties. Friedman, taking as a corpus Cech, Heinschink, and Halwachs (2009), examines in his article “The Problem of Long versus Short Present Tense Forms in Balkan Romani” the discourse functions of the opposition between long and short indicative presents in those Arli dialects where the short form predominates, choosing examples from *Momelja hem limonja* ‘Candles and lemons’, a collection of Arli folk tales from Serbia, Kosovo, and North Macedonia. Although Arli has been described as having a strict division between the long form indicative present in *-a* and the short form subjunctive present in *-Ø*, in fact, while some sub-dialects of Arli observe this distinction, others do not. One of the two forms tends to predominate for any given dialect or even speaker. In general, short indicatives predominate in the north and long ones in the south. Long forms tend to be used in narrative at moments of scene setting, juncture, and in some conditional clauses, where the meaning has a reference to futurity. It is possible that these patterns are influenced by earlier contacts with South Vlax Romani, where short form indicatives are the norm.

Heinschink und Cech present in their contribution “*I mindžasar i bul ko mehanes* oder Die Moral der Schweinereien” several unpublished erotic narrations of Sepečides-Roma (former basket weavers, Izmir) in comparison to Southern Slavic folk tales documented by the ethnologist Salomon F. Krauss in the early 20th century. Narrators of

the Sepeçides used an inventory of tales and motifs including narrations of the Turkish Karagöz shadow play, most of which were well known in the countries of the Ottoman Empire. Roma told the stories for fun, for ‘educational’ purposes, to teach the listeners basic rules of social behavior, and to give advice – at least to those listeners who were willing to learn.

**Agnes Grond’s** contribution “Kurdish Soundscapes. A Sketch on Sonic Environments and Multilingual Language Use” investigates binaural sound recordings that have been proposed as sonic boundary objects to help participants reconnect with their experiences and facilitate participant-researcher conversations leading to a participatory creation of knowledge anchored in first-person perspectives. Binaural recordings have the property of ensuring an immersive reproduction over headphones. The recorded languagescapes as spoken and heard conversations are embedded in specific soundscapes. Binaural recordings can help negotiate between internalized language ideologies and potentially divergent linguistic behavior as well as between the speaker’s and the researcher’s perspectives. They also offer a unique autoethnographic approach. Critical enquiry into language use and postulations of hypotheses become, thus, a shared endeavor.

**Marina Vinogorova’s** article “Plurilinguale Repertoires russischstämmiger Grazerinnen” investigates language use, language attitudes, and language transmission of Russian migrants in Graz. It is based on the assumption of a repertoire with a wide range of linguistic varieties. These varieties cover the communicative needs of a person in conversational situations. The language use profiles created are the starting point for a discussion of the communicative behavior of four interviewees. The use and functionality of individual languages in the repertoires are analyzed, the speakers’ attitudes towards the respective languages, and their ideas and concerns about future language transmission.

Concluding part three, **Julia Gspandl** presents a preliminary study of her sign language research. The contribution “ÖGS Linguaging of a Deaf Signer Raised in Hungary” discusses the languaging practices and signing style of a Deaf signer born and raised in Hungary who migrated to Austria, focusing on his languaging in Austrian Sign Language (ÖGS). Based on the framework of *semiotic repertoires* introduced by Kusters et al. (2017) and influenced by Gumperz (1965), the chapter combines information about his reported language use in the past and present with an analysis of an interview situation between him and an experienced Austrian Deaf signer of ÖGS and this serves as an introduction to the extensive communicative resources of Deaf migrant signers.

**Angelika Heiling’s** contribution “Multilocal Voices in Chimamanda N. Adichie’s *Americanah*, Sefi Atta’s *A Bit of Difference*, Taiye Selasi’s *Ghana Must Go*, and NoViolet Bulawayo’s *We Need New Names*” offers a glimpse into the contemporary African diaspora and explores issues and experiences of identity and belonging by discussing four novels by writers who are often termed *Afropolitan* (as a mélange between “African” and “Cosmopolitan”). Of particular interest are space and language and their role in identity-formation processes. An interesting feature which all four novels share is a perspective of plurality, non-fixedness, and fluidity when it comes to the constructions of identities, language, and the spaces which their characters inhabit. The characters’ experiences are not limited to life in the



country of immigration but include the process of returning to their own or their parents' place of origin.

Oana Hergenröther's article "Age, Home, and the Aging Homeless Woman in Woody Allen's *Blue Jasmine*" looks at the space/age intersection, where specific questions are raised about class, gender, and internalized notions of the "double standards of aging" (Sontag 1978). The important intersection of old age and space is diversely narrated in contemporary Anglophone American culture, often showcasing the understanding, prejudice, and set criteria regarding who ages where and in what way. The spatial paradigms and, specifically, the loss of the notion of home, are analyzed in the article as metaphors for the (seemingly) stock character of the unmarried and destitute woman stripped of her social position, often encountered in representations stemming in U.S. American imagination.

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The editors would hereby like to thank the contributors of this volume, who have written their contributions with Dieter Halwachs in mind and informed our effort to celebrate the event of his retirement. We would also like to thank our colleague, Ernedina Muminović, for proofreading the volume and reflecting with us on its format and content.

What looks like a potpourri of topics and disciplines, does, in fact, reflect the focus on interdisciplinarity and openness that has always been characteristic of the Plurilingualism Research Unit. It has always been defined by Dieter Halwachs as an *applied* research unit that uses approaches from sociolinguistics (but also other, connected, disciplines) to tackle important societal and political issues.

The red thread binding all the essays in this volume is therefore – Dieter Halwachs. As his academic career at the University of Graz has come to an end – meaning not, however, that his scientific and pedagogical activity will stop – the team at *treffpunkt sprachen* would like to pay honor to the years and decades of collaboration and friendship that imbibe the offices of Villa Malwine in Johann-Fux-Gasse 30 in the 3rd district of Graz, giving a nod to Dieter with an appropriate line from the Grateful Dead song "Touch of Grey" – one that was often heard from his office on the ground floor in the Villa: "light a candle, curse the glare!"