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The notion of 'community' within multi-ethnic societies has attracted the focus of sociolinguistic research since Fishman's pilot work on language loyalty in the United States in the 1960s. Thirty years later the international debate has been enriched by the European experience of immigration. Here too the communities have provided the main vehicle of language transmission across generations. Today new immigration flows are affecting many countries in the south of Europe and different patterns of settlement and interaction are beginning to emerge involving both the majority and the minority groups. In this new scenario the questions to be asked are (1) whether sociolinguistics has learnt from previous patterns and is now able to predict the effects of current ethnic relations on language loss and maintenance, and (2) whether education can draw useful conclusions from these new trends. This chapter begins with a discussion on the evolution of attitudes for language maintenance in different contexts of immigration, then it moves on to explore the mechanism of language transmission and finally it narrows down to focus on language maintenance in the European context. Here the aggregative patterns of old immigration are contrasted with the dispersive patterns of new immigration, and a model is suggested to match individual reactions with their linguistic outcome.

Language loyalty in the ethnic community

Group cohesiveness and heterogeneity

The notion of community is not at all easy to define in general terms. Doughty and Doughty (1974) say that a community is "a group of people who live in geographical proximity to each other and who, through their work, or worship, or way of life, or any combination of these three, feel a sense of 'usness' when they compare themselves with any other group of people". The meaning of ethnic community is more complicated than that of an indigenous community, but some of the same principles still apply, i.e., that proximity alone does not generate a community (Boissevain, 1976) and that the individuals must have some common social purposes such as improvement of

living conditions, protection from social and economic pressure or mutual assistance (Fishman, 1966).

Apart from geographical proximity and common purposes, another major component which makes an ethnic group into a community is the ability to share the same beliefs beyond the same neighbourhood and organisations. This explains why most of the investigations into ethnic cohesiveness in multi-ethnic societies have paid so much attention to the role of parishes and parochial schools in the lives of their communities (see the work of Fishman and Boissevain in North America and that of Clyne, 1982 in Australia). Sharing beliefs, however, is not the same as sharing a religion, although the notions are often used interchangeably. The former involves individuals sharing a whole range of attitudes and assumptions about everyday life, which are related not only to the traditions inherited from the old country, but also to the habits and behaviour acquired in the new one. Accordingly, not only can the same ethnic group be divided by different religions, but the same religion is not per se a guarantee of similarity of beliefs, perceptions and moral attitudes across different national or ethnic groups.

Interaction between the diverse sections of a minority community exists even if there are inter-group conflicts. These sometimes derive from hostility between individual family groups, but often also between the ethnic organisations and their leaders. The reason for this segmentation is not only social and economic, it is also more specifically cultural, since it reflects the diverse degree of assimilation and 'acculturation' of the different groups and individuals within the majority community. Accordingly, it should not surprise us to find, within the same community, a complex social structure involving different degrees of ethnic participation which is reflected also by the amount of time people spend with other members of the same ethnic group.

On the one extreme there are older members who may speak only the language of the country of origin. Their young relations meet them for family and kinship obligations and for national or religious celebrations, although they might have a different degree of involvement in ethnic cultural activities which is, of course, mediated by their participation in local life and indigenous institutions. On the other extreme many people of ethnic descent, but born in the new country, pass their entire time within the indigenous group, except for brief excursions into the ethnic community on the occasion of events which gather the whole family together. Even these people, who are considered peripheral to the community by those who are most loyal to its traditions and values, tend to be regarded as 'ethnic' by persons of different descent, as their surname or physiognomy or both act as ethnic labels.

Although these persons often have little ability to use the community language, they are perceived as ethnic by local institutions. In consequence, they can play an important part in ethnic organisations as they are appreciated by indigenous politicians for their fluency in the majority language, their ability to understand the local environment and their competence to operate within its institutions.

It is within this dynamic of the concept of ethnicity that we can explain why the internal segmentation, conflicts and diversity of the community tend to be seen less as factors in de-ethnicisation today than they were in the past.

Factors in de-ethnicisation

Although the work of Fishman (1966) analysed ethnic interaction in the US almost thirty years ago, it is still the most carefully documented description of community dynamics and their relation to language maintenance. It begins by explaining that all immigrant groups, whether made up of political refugees with previous urban experience or people from rural backgrounds, once they have settled in the new country, show a marked tendency to establish and join ethnic organisations. This original network of family relations, co-villagers or compatriots provides a cushion against the shock of acculturation and the sense of isolation in the new environment. When individuals of the same ethnic, religious or linguistic background come together for leisure, for more relaxed social interaction or even for mutual support, their similarities linked to a common purpose are sufficient to define the group as a community.

From his social perspective, however, Fishman emphasises that these communities and their organisations tend to be patterned on local institutions rather than on ethnic models exported by fellow countrymen with urban rather than rural experience. The reason is that increasingly conscious cultural maintenance activities involve dynamics within a political context which require an understanding of the local politics rather than those of the country of origin. A consequence of this is that after the initial role of introduction to new customs, a new language and unknown social and economic pressure, gradually ethnic organisations help 'the retreat from authentic or nationalistic ethnicity' and they develop a progressively more 'transmuted and marginal ethnicity'.

According to Fishman those ethnic organisations which preserve their exclusive orientation towards language and cultural maintenance are destined to remain smaller and weaker than those which make certain adaptations to ensure the continuity of their activities. Looking at ethnic communities in the

US context, Fishman concludes that either their organisations help adjustment and consequent de-ethnicisation or they are bound to be discontinued. Moreover, since commitment to language maintenance is found amongst the less de-ethnicised groups, his conclusion is that "an interest in language maintenance does not augur well for the longevity of an ethnic cultural organisation" (Fishman and Nahirny, 1966).

Boissevain (1976), who studied the social adjustment of Italians in Montreal ten years after Fishman looked at a variety of different ethnic groups in the US, does not identify a negative correlation between language maintenance and ethnic continuity. However, he finds that in Canada, too, leadership of ethnic organisations depends more on people's ability to move within the local politics and their institutions than on the ability to function culturally and linguistically within the ethnic framework. It is interesting that if Boissevain uses the notion of community in a narrow way ("all persons of Italian descent are not necessarily members of the Italian community"), Fishman too seems to associate the idea of community with some special sense shared by individuals beyond their different degree of ethnicity. The ethnic organisation has increasingly replaced the ethnic community in the United States, rather than being either its servant or its reflection (Fishman and Nahirny, 1966, emphasis of the authors).

Implications for language maintenance

In community language use and organisational community activities, Fishman and Nahirny find that 'informal gatherings' and 'formal programs' constitute the areas in which the ethnic language is least frequently used, while 'committee meetings' constitute the areas in which it is most frequently used. This would imply that "the core membership and leadership are more likely to use the mother tongue than are either the general membership or the surrounding public" and that "... beyond the circles of organisational elites and activists functioning in their original capacity, use of the mother tongue tends to fall off". Accordingly they conclude: "A language which is no longer appropriate or natural for informal gatherings and interpersonal contacts is evolving from the status of active mother tongue to that of ethnic (or historical) mother tongue".

Fishman's findings on organisational and leadership interest among various ethnic groups in the US, obtained from data collected before 1966, is one which might not be confirmed by a study of language maintenance and community use in countries with a more recent immigration and newer ethnic organisations such as Canada and Australia, if not Europe. This may be

because the positive attitudes developed in those countries towards the private use of the community language now tend to be interpreted as a factor in cultural and educational advantage, rather than an expression of ethnic conservatism such as that which was still widespread at the time when Fishman was describing the US situation: "As the second generation itself reaches middle adulthood and acquires security in Americanism, it provides a meeting ground between the now attenuated and transmuted behavioural ethnicity of the first generation and the generalised, intellectualised, selective ethnicity of the third generation." (Fishman and Nahirny, 1966).

Although the domains and the aspirations for community language use are obviously different between the US of the 1960s and Canada and Australia in the 1980s, Fishman's evaluation of the role of ethnic cultural leaders still holds true in many contexts: "It prompts us to conclude that native-born leaders far from being ethnic cultural leaders should be more properly considered ethnic organisational leaders" (Fishman and Nahirny, 1966). However, the US study reveals that although ethnic leaders, especially the native-born among them, do not oppose language maintenance efforts, they tend to belittle the importance of language for the future of ethnic life. This certainly does not hold true in the case of today's activities for cultural and ethnic maintenance in Europe, Canada and Australia. In all these contexts of more recent immigration, in fact, language maintenance has become one of the most valid instruments for ethnic affirmation, although its utilisation can vary from one context to another.

The mechanism of language transmission

Language in the household

Recent investigations of conditions of language maintenance, which have piloted or refined useful and transferable research techniques, have focused on the language in use between children and parents, between children and peers, the role of overseas-born interactors, of inter-ethnic marriages, and the presence of grandparents (all reported in Clyne, 1982).

It is significant that many of these investigations were brought about in Australia by the debate on community language education. There, in the absence of a bilingual education reform, since the early 1980s substantial efforts have been made to monitor and guide, through research and provision, the maintenance and development of minority communities' languages. Administrators' consideration for these 'ecological' issues in language

maintenance (using Clyne's 1982 term adopted from Haugen, 1971) is crucial for the planning of community language education in that it ensures compatibility of goals between schools and communities. Once these are established, subsequent sociolinguistic investigations sensitive to the cultural and linguistic orientations of smaller settings can help teachers to diagnose the learners' bilingual background in relation to the conditions of natural acquisition of the minority language in the home and community.

Since the early 1980s there also seems to be a growing awareness of the importance of parental competence and confidence as factors governing intervention and guidance in the child's bilingual development (see the appearance of the quarterly Bilingual Family Newsletter, 1984). In the majority of cases (i.e., not in middle-class families) this crucial factor seems to depend on two conditions: (1) household membership and life cycle, and (2) home and community communication needs.

(1) *Household membership and life cycle*

The competence in the community language of the child's caretakers, and their confidence in intervening in his/her language development, may vary in the same household according to changes affecting its members, their social role, their duties and their activities even within a short span of life cycle. Clyne (1982) reports that the presence of grandparents and other aged relatives is positively correlated with language maintenance, whilst that of older siblings with language shift. Also, in the case of inter-ethnic marriages, second generation language shift in Australia is found to be greater when the community language is that of the father rather than the mother. Afendras (1981) indicates that these conditions vary chronologically, for example, with the birth of each child, the entry into school and the death of a parent or grandparent(s). However, children's loss of interest in early adolescence can often be regained in their late teens (Clyne, 1982).

(2) *Home and community communication needs*

The communication needs of parents and caretakers may no longer be adequately met by their native language when referring to experiences developed in the new environment. This situation is particularly noticeable when the home language repertoire draws upon speakers' rural background and traditions. Experiences in the urban environment may require a new repertoire which is easier to transfer from the majority language especially when the standard variety of the community language is not available in the new country. Situations of rapid standardisation in the country of origin may

also have an effect on home and community language maintenance according to people's early or late departure.

My own investigations show that these conditions run counter to the widespread belief that high concentration automatically implies high levels of language maintenance. In the case of dialectophone communities (e.g., Italians), this correlation leads to opposite interpretations of findings, depending on whether 'language maintenance' means 'retention of the original dialect' (viz. Sicilian) or 'access to the national language' (standard Italian) (Tosi, 1984 and 1992).

Environmental positive, negative and ambivalent factors

Like standardisation of the home and neighbourhood language, other developments affecting language maintenance have causes and effects which concern the community at large. As these developments are related to the characteristics of the settlement and its social organisation, they need to be examined in relation to the community demographic infrastructure.

The first two comprehensive efforts to identify the factors which promote language maintenance have been made in the US (Haugen, 1953; Fishman, 1966). Kloss (1966) used the American situation to assess which factors act with a positive influence and which others function ambivalently. Ten years later Clyne (1976, 1982) reviewed Kloss's typology to make it relevant to the Australian context. He eventually identified two definite positive factors (the persistence of an extended *versus* a nuclear family structure, and the status and usefulness of its language in educational and worldwide communication). He found that all other conditions can act, within the Australian context, either as positive or negative factors depending on their combination. Lower educational levels and alienation from the dominant language may encourage a wide range of cultural and social activities in the minority language. However, a good knowledge of the dominant language can also encourage people to devote more time and effort to maintaining the community language. Numerical strength may also act as a positive factor in extending community language maintenance efforts; but more closely-knit groups may make better use of their efforts depending on patterns of dispersion. Linguistic and cultural similarity can also play the ambivalent role of reinforcing or discouraging ethno-centrism via culture and language maintenance; so can the attitude of the majority group and the role of language in reinforcing socio-cultural characteristics, e.g., for family cohesion amongst Italians, for religious purposes amongst Greeks and for ideology-based solidarity amongst Eastern European groups or other political refugees (Clyne, 1982).

The linguistic impact of these independent factors depends on their combination within a sizeable environment, whether a locality in a metropolitan area or an isolated rural community. Concentrated neighbourhoods, for example, and their monolingual schools which discourage parents and children from speaking the minority language, are normally two common factors which counteract each other. Extra-curricular voluntary ethnic classes may also have an ambivalent impact on the second generation's motivation when they are confined by the monolingual school to impossible hours and conditions. Religion is an ambivalent factor as well, as it can be closely linked with language for certain groups (e.g., the Greeks), while other cults may have a non-language-specific denomination (e.g., Roman Catholic before the Mass in vernacular). Whilst language maintenance is positively correlated with denomination when the vernacular is used for its services (e.g., Roman Catholic after the Mass in vernacular), it may have a neutral to negative effect when the language of the religious scripture is totally dissimilar from that of the community (e.g., Arabic for Pakistani speakers of Urdu). The trend, however, seems to be that when a group has a language-specific religion, familiarity with the community language will be increased by religious attendance (e.g., Greek Orthodox Church), whilst the latter will no longer act as a positive factor when religious services (e.g., Roman Catholic) are available in the dominant language (Lewins, 1978).

The evaluation of the impact of these channels of language use on community language maintenance should not be done in isolation from the features of the group's demographic distribution and internal organisation (Clyne, 1981). Accordingly, homogeneity of the original rural dialect within an isolated community is not per se a more favourable condition of community language maintenance than dialectal heterogeneity of speakers dispersed in a metropolitan area. In the rural isolated situation (but with industrial occupations) speakers tend to create transfers from the dominant language more freely as they are cut off from rich and consistent models of the community language (Bettoni, 1981). Moreover, the chances for its development into standardised forms to elicit inter-dialectal communication are practically non-existent: thus motivation to use competently and confidently the community language for ethnic affirmation appears to be a privilege of people living within the better developed social framework of a community in a metropolitan area.

Individual reactions and their linguistic outcome

Many studies on ethnic communities throughout the world have analysed the hybrid of second generations, as an interim group, who would neither be like the parents nor totally assimilated in the new environment (Child, 1943). In all cases, whether multi-ethnic communities/societies accept the new cultural and ethnic dimension and the 'hyphenated' identity of their members (e.g., Italian-American), or seem to exclude co-existence thus aggravating the new generation's transitional conflicts (either Italian or English), many of their 'problems' used to be discussed in terms of tensions between two languages and two cultures: that of the country of origin and that of the new society. The same question, fashioned as an opposition between two national cultures and identities, affects all second-generation immigrants at some point of their lives. But the nature of this conflict often shows that the tension is not so much produced by the contrast between the features of two irreconcilable cultures, as by different and contrasting attempts at emancipation by people who have been forced on to the margins of these cultures. The new generation then learns that the challenge and the privilege of living with two cultures involve more than a struggle to preserve and practise two languages simultaneously. The achievement of bilingualism and biculturalism is also subordinate to access to, and control of, higher-level and high-status linguistic and role repertoires inherent in the social and cultural diversity of their country of origin.

Kinship loyalty, family-centrism and obligations, as well as rivalry between individual groups - all of which provide structure and maintain the traditional values among the first generation, and within which the new generation is expected to grow and later operate - provide the first barrier to understanding and tolerance between parents and children. In particular the second generation, educated in the new country's school of civic cooperation and urban individualism, finds it difficult to accept that kinship links must govern the freedom, taste and aspiration of each individual. Political rivalry between groups and associations, which segments the community while reorganising regional divisions and jealousies under new ideological labels, is also regarded as self-destructive. They prefer to stay away from such groups, as they see this philosophy as alien to their own beliefs and aims, perpetuating the older generation's nostalgia and isolation rather than encouraging community social participation and integration. Moreover, the younger generations who have enjoyed a better education find themselves socially more articulate and more aggressive than their parents. Their experiences in the fast-moving industrial world and their ignorance of the

immobility of rural life cannot help them to appreciate the sacrifices made by their parents in the struggle to escape a powerless existence in the village to secure better opportunities and more economic stability for the family. This conservative attitude of the first generation in relation to the habits and values of the original traditions, and their consequent introversion in their own community, can provoke a deep conflict with the second generation which has grown up in a mixed group and been exposed to the pressure of a wider context.

The apathetic reaction

The apathetic reaction involves a predominance in the individuals of the tendency to submit to the pressure of the wider social context and accept the values of the majority group. Attainment of this goal requires that the individuals rid themselves of most habits, values and associations that mark them as ethnic and become as naturalised as possible. A clear break from the ethnic background and connotations seems almost impossible, but the apathetic reaction develops when the individual feels unable to cope with the conflicting values of the two opposing environments, and naturally slides towards acceptance of one - the one from which the stronger pressure comes. Often the individuals become dependent on the obsessive idea of conforming with the environment but, while declaring themselves totally naturalised, they may still retain a certain amount of ethnic background.

The linguistic outcome of this attitude is often a sharp tendency of monolingualism in the majority language after a transitional state of bilingualism with the ethnic mother tongue. This is also evidenced by rejection of the learning of this language in ethnic mother tongue classes made available by the school and/or the community.

The in-group reaction

The in-group reaction is similar to the apathetic reaction in that it represents the dominance of the tendency to approach a single one of the two incompatible goals. But in the in-group reaction, the goal is affiliation with the ethnic instead of the indigenous portion of the wider community. The individuals strive to identify themselves with the ethnic group, its traditions and aspirations and they seem more inclined to solve their conflict by a determination to please the members of the ethnic community (parents, relatives and kinfolk) rather than to win favour with the indigenous group. In conditions of enormous social pressure from the majority groups and the lack

of significant social roles and values provided by the ethnic group as a concrete and appealing alternative, the reaction develops mainly in individuals who feel close to the family group. This attitude accounts for the strong unity among the members of the minority community: in those cases unity does not mean lack of conflict between the generations, but rather testifies to an attempt to find refuge in the family's values and habits as an alternative to those observed and experienced in the indigenous group.

Also in these cases one can observe an extension of the transitional state of bilingualism. But, unlike individuals developing an apathetic reaction, they are exposed to and tend to accept two sets of 'compartmentalised' roles and the linguistic repertoires related to them. However, since the social roles requested from the majority language are restricted purely to survival functions (work and occasional contacts outside the community) by a personal choice, the chances that these individuals will acquire new roles in that medium and therefore develop linguistic and social emancipation remain limited.

The rebel reaction

The last major attitude among the second generation observed in immigration contexts can be defined as the 'rebel' reaction, but it represents the position of a minority of young people. Unlike the reaction, the individuals who have been seen developing a rebel attitude towards both communities have not indulged in the temptation to escape either group to gain favour and security in the other. Here the conflicting values attributed to the two communities have produced in them a strong interest in investigating both, for their personal and social implications. In consequence they have made an attempt to approach and understand the two 'compartmentalised' sets of roles and values by means of personal experience, refusing the conflicting presentation of them provided by either group. These individuals are found among those who benefited from close parental guidance, stronger motivation in their studies, from personal contacts with the country of origin and from higher education. In particular, one compartment that undoubtedly has favoured awareness of their cultural conflict has been access to new sets of role repertoires related to the language of their parents, the standard language of their country of origin and the cultural values expressed there. This is particularly relevant, since it shows that the voluntary language provision offered outside the school, with limited resources by community organisations, cannot produce among the second generation an awareness and understanding of sets of role and value repertoires differing from those

developed and provided by the families themselves. Such provision does not appear to be stimulating, and it seldom succeeds in helping the children overcome negative associations in their overall social and linguistic behaviour.

A reaction to the influence of either quarter develops when second-generation individuals become capable of considering and evaluating from outside the background and the role of their families. This seems to be achieved when they succeed in placing them in a wider social and linguistic context: the social context that accounts for the parents' uprooting, and their opposition to the new environment; and the linguistic context that clarifies the relationship between inadequate values and restricted linguistic repertoires, as developed by the community language. Such awareness involves, and indeed seems to require a familiarisation with both societies, as well as fluency and literacy skills in both languages. In consequence, it produces bilingual individuals who, apart from the dialect spoken at home, can command and function equally well both in the new country's language and the standard language of their parents' country of origin.

Europe: old and new immigration in contrast

Aggregative patterns of old immigration

A feature of the old immigration that has become clear only in recent years is that attachment to traditional ethnic values and inclination to integrate within the new society are not in conflict, but the former is instrumental to the latter (Boudon, 1984). The solidity of the ethnic community is the prerequisite for an effective integration, which is not available when the ethnic families are disoriented and disorganised. These favourable conditions for integration in the host society are shown by the patterns of aggregation common to many ethnic communities of immigrants after the second world war. In those years, after wives and children joined the male labourers who were the first to be allowed into the host countries, the ethnic settlements were found in hostels and multiple occupation lodgings. Later the overcrowding gave way to a gradual departure from the original settlements, and this break in concentration was facilitated by the new aspirations of the second generation, which valued comfort and status over savings and ethnic contiguity. Once physical proximity had been lost, however, one element that maintained the internal cohesion within the minority community was the extended family. Being a central institution in all rural communities, which provides rights and obligations to its members, its main function is to maintain the traditional

values and to safeguard the present and future of new generations. This implied that every member of the community was automatically under someone's protection, and that the mechanism of mutual assistance perpetuates itself from one generation to another.

This traditional community structure provided a formidable cushion against the cultural shock and isolation which all immigrants - whether from former colonies or southern Europe - felt when they arrived in urban societies of northern and central Europe in the post-war years. In those early days of immigration, the concept of community was based on neighbourhood and physical proximity, whereas later it has lost the spatial connotation to emphasise merely social and cultural contents. The major vehicle of this transition was the ethnic organisation, which established and maintained intra-group cohesion and solidarity, beyond the boundaries of the neighbourhood. Thus, ethnic organisations were reliable expressions of community awareness. Another signal that ethnicity has set strong community and cultural foundations is when its organisations are patterned on local institutions.

This development has important consequences for intercultural education and language education in particular. Firstly, the minority ethnic group can refer to language maintenance not only as an individual aspiration, but as a natural process of its community that national education - not just the local school - must take notice of. Secondly, if ethnic families succeed in presenting themselves as an established minority community, the competence that new generations have in their ethnic mother tongue has two important features that must be taken into account in their language education. From an environmental perspective, their mother tongue is not an immigrants' language but an indigenous tongue which is transmitted locally from one generation to the next and has assumed emotional and cultural connotations to perceive and describe the local environment. From an educational perspective, the children who bring to school a fully developed ethnic mother tongue would feel that a great part of their everyday emotional and cultural experiences is denied, if a language they have learnt from birth in the local environment has no role in the classroom. Significantly, the competence in the community language of these children reflects the different aspirations of culturally diverse communities that share the same urban environment: aspirations which they were able to maintain outside the country of origin through prolonged commitment consolidated by local associations. The concept of a 'fully developed ethnic mother tongue' reported by ethnic minority observers in certain countries is a reflection of this experience. Accordingly, children develop a language repertoire of an established minority community different from the language repertoire of second generation children of new immigrants. In view of these

differences, the concept of 'community', when applied to recent immigrant settlements, needs to be made more explicit, both in terms of social fabric and in terms of cultural and linguistic interaction.

Dispersive patterns of new immigration

The new immigration began after the energy crisis and immediately showed some remarkably different features from the old immigration to northern and central European countries in the post-war reconstruction of the 1950s and in the great industrialisation of the 1960s. Historically, the new immigration originates in countries that have had no political ties with the host society from either a colonial past or a current partnership in Europe. Socially, the new arrivals from the poorest regions of the world, or the countries at war that are close to Europe, are often individual travellers without a stable job, family support or a community infrastructure to help them integrate into the host society. New immigrants seek access and citizenship in the southern European countries which seem to have less rigid immigration policies. In exchange for introduction and protection they are willing to accept irregular status and high-risk and semi-legal occupations that keep them in a prolonged state of obligation towards unscrupulous compatriots or local bosses. The combination of living in countries with less well developed social welfare structures and having to rely on an underground network, rather than family or community reception, increases the inclination of immigrants to seek individual and short term solutions. This in turn does not encourage communication and links with other persons of the same or other ethnic groups.

Often, contacts with compatriots are discouraged by political or religious rivalries, which might have been at the very root of the decision to migrate to avoid discrimination or even persecution. In many cases, the sudden breaking of links with the home community, as well as no community structure in the new country to help with an often traumatic integration process, reinforces the isolation and solitude of individuals. This contrasts with the great sense of solidarity and support in the rural and patriarchal communities reconstructed in the new countries with the older flow of immigration. Still today low housing costs in urban crisis areas attract the new migrants. They are the monofunctional housing areas, within the city or in its periphery, or run-down and very densely populated historical centres of cities, or hostels hastily built on vacant land with poor traffic infrastructures and often few municipal services. Overcrowding is common in all these types of accommodation, and the presence of a high number of poor people from diverse ethnic back-

grounds has worsened the status of such neighbourhoods, and their image as critical areas deserving urgent municipal attention. Moreover, the presence of migrants often creates in the local residents a rising feeling of insecurity, leading to an increase in racial tension and intolerance towards ethnic minorities. Although many such 'difficult districts' have become priority areas with a series of social and educational initiatives - such as programmes to counter illiteracy and projects to discourage pupils from leaving school early and to tackle absenteeism from school - the social isolation of the immigrants and the lack of solidarity with a non-ethnic group can lead to explosive situations. This can happen especially when some members of the majority group feel that their neighbourhood has developed the problems of a priority area, because it has attracted individuals of diverse origins who have worsened further its living conditions.

Some European countries have undergone a process of integration of ethnic minority groups in the past decades following earlier immigration flows, and in some cities a successful partnership with the non-ethnic group has developed. In such cities over the years some neighbourhoods have accepted the existence of the immigrants' diversity, including their languages, social practices, the way in which they raise their children, culinary and clothing habits and domestic traditions. The improvement of ethnic relations and the development of infrastructures for contacts and collaboration require both commitment from the indigenous population and participation of the ethnic group. The difference between new and old immigration in terms of ethnic relations is twofold. On the one hand, old settlements were more ethnocentric because of the immigrants' anxiety to preserve through the family network the traditional values; but once the group's solidarity was recreated, this was able to support the individual efforts that integration demands. On the other hand, today's individual immigrants and young families of refugees may appear more inclined to forget the difficult past and seek a quicker adaptation to the new environment. The increasing isolation, however, that in the host country is imposed by the new conditions of migration, tends to promote individual disorientation rather than group aggregation. This unfortunate situation raises the question of what institution could function, in the absence of a family network and group solidarity, as the alternative social ingredient that could facilitate a less traumatic transition from the old identity to a new European identity.

Certainly language is another issue that needs to be distinguished in the education of children from well established ethnic minority communities, with or without physical proximity, and new immigrants sometimes crowded in multi-ethnic urban enclaves, with little or no community infrastructure. In

the former case, if children have developed bilingualism because of the home-school switch, it is important to consider that competence in the ethnic mother tongue is built on experiences that go beyond those of interaction with the parent. They are often types of communication in a rich cultural environment that has been established in the new country by the community efforts of several generations. In the latter case, however, not only do the new arrivals often lack a community life, which can preserve the linguistic and cultural traditions of the country of origin; but competence in the ethnic mother tongue of the new generations is restricted to no more than an exchange of everyday basic information with the parents. These factors have phenomenal consequences for both policy of pedagogy of mother tongue teaching for children of migrants, and by implication for the best language curriculum for acquiring the other language.

Different attitudes towards language diversity

Almost everywhere in Europe minority settlements are found in crisis areas, whether the immigrants are new arrivals, or families with a long stay in the neighbourhood. At first sight, it could be inferred that there is a natural relationship between social and educational disadvantage and the living conditions of minority communities. This generalisation can be strongly rejected by some countries, whilst it is clear that in others the local authorities feel differently. Their view is that, since migrants' socio-economic emancipation is adversely affected by their poor living conditions, the priority to be addressed is their poverty. This compensatory therapy is often no different from the measures taken for the poor sectors of the majority population. This initiative might not find a favourable response in other national and urban contexts, where both educators and social operators would strongly object to any approach suggesting a correlation between ethnicity and sociocultural disadvantage, on the grounds that in their city minority-majority relations have developed differently. The argument heard in these cities is: culturally diverse people enjoy less access in society, because the decision-making institutions are still controlled by the cultural majority; thus their poverty is not due to substandard conditions inherent in their culture, but to a persisting discrimination in schools and society that makes their cultural diversity a disadvantage in their life. This perspective appears to be more common in countries of old immigration, where multi-level urban cooperation has taken place to improve minority-majority relations: above all the break of the segregation of immigrants in 'difficult districts' to facilitate the organisation of a community infrastructure based on cultural maintenance and

group solidarity. In national contexts, where these developments have been common in urban situations, a stronger sense of awareness of ethnic relations has emerged both in the majority and the minority communities. Initially the impact of immigration on an indigenous, ethnocentric community, which is not equipped to integrate alien people and their diverse habits and traditions, is that discrimination can operate explicitly, and the effect of national legislation can produce overt social exclusion. Once the national community has made some basic adjustments to accommodate immigrant communities and facilitate their integration in an alien society, inequality may still persist, but it may operate less visibly and explicitly (Tosi, 1996).

Today it is possible to observe a clear difference in people's attitudes between the city areas that have undergone this change and those that have not. It is in connection with the education of the third or fourth generations, who were born and brought up in the new country, that certain urban environments show a positive attitude towards the ethnic identity and culture. Indeed when this is welcomed and promoted by the school, high levels of respect are achieved in both majority and minority groups. This evolution and the attitudes that are preliminary conditions for change, can be summarised as follows.

In the first phase the attitude of the majority may reflect a reaction against culturally diverse people who may find it difficult to adjust to the civil and social organisation of the national community. The latter, on the other hand, may not contemplate ways of dealing with alien populations and cultural diversity. In this case the outcome may be explicit discrimination against the immigrants, who could be in favour of equal treatment, precisely to secure basic equality with the native population. In a subsequent phase, which develops once the immigrants have achieved the civil rights that secure basic equality, the group may reinforce its ethnic cohesion and solidarity to be able to promote the status of its diverse culture by opposing measures of cultural homogenisation and conformism.

In this evolution language plays an important role, and diverse educational needs and aspirations in immigrant communities need to be understood in the context of ethnic relations and urban cooperation. It would be wrong to generalise language solutions and curricula applicable in all urban multi-ethnic environments. Probably the most important issue to address in the language education of minorities is whether the role of the ethnic language is (a) to overcome communication inadequacies of individuals, whose concentration in the neighbourhood facilitates language maintenance but prevents socio-economic integration; or (b) to function as a vehicle of cultural identification and maintenance by a well-established community desirous of trans-

mitting to the new generations the diverse values and habits of their ethnic traditions.

Several criteria can lead to a careful evaluation of the use and currency of the ethnic language in the urban environment of the new country: (1) the success of efforts for natural language maintenance through the generations; (2) the sociocultural organisation adopted by the ethnic minorities to support their community infrastructure, once the conditions of spatial segregation in the neighbourhood have been broken; and (3) the involvement of ethnic minority groups in the public life of the local community and in its schools, with a view to influencing decisions relevant to the use of education to maintain cultural and linguistic diversity.

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period of non-use, level of education, attitudes towards different varieties and so on. Taxonomies of sociolinguistic factors influencing language loss have been presented by Kloss (1966), Wardhaugh (1987), Fishman (1991) and Paulston (1994).

Far less attention has been paid so far to psycholinguistic aspects of language loss, in particular what changes in linguistic processing occur in a language loss situation. This will be the main focus in this chapter. The following aspects will be discussed:

- the definition of what constitutes a language loss situation;
- non-acquisition versus attrition of knowledge;
- loss of knowledge versus availability.

These issues will be discussed within the framework of a processing model in which the various types of change can be explained.

The definition of language loss

Here we will use the term 'language loss' as a general term for all processes of a decline of linguistic skills, while language attrition refers to individual, intragenerational language loss and language shift to language loss between generations. In Figure 1 the two processes are presented. The main difference between attrition and shift is that in language attrition individual language users have lost some (part) of their language skills, while in a language shift situation these skills were never there.