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***Hétköznapi kétnyelvűség. Nyelvhasználat,
iskolai nyelvi tájkép és nyelvi én a romániai
magyar iskolákban***

*(Everyday Bilingualism. Language Use, Schoolscape,
and Linguistic Self in Hungarian Minority
Language Schools in Romania)* Budapest:

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Review by

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Bilingualism as a research topic has a great history. Early studies on bilingualism started at around the 1930s (see Saer 1923, Goodenough 1926, Bloomfield 1933), and since then research on bilingualism has expanded enormously. However, each context, community and every individual represents a different case. Therefore, exploring the bilingualism of a certain community or looking at individual cases can always add a new layer, a new perspective to the already existing research and contribute to a better understanding of the concept. The book presented in this review enriches the line of studies that argue for a holistic approach towards bilingual or multilingual language behaviour. The volume presents the results of several empirical inquiries carried out between 2013 and 2017 aiming to provide a deeper insight into the individual's multilingual reality.

The present volume relies on theoretical frameworks embedded in sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and language pedagogy, highlighting the need for an interdisciplinary perspective in order to discuss bi- or multilingual language behaviour, language practices, and communicative contexts.

As the title suggests, the main focus of the book lies on the “linguistic self” reflected in the self-narratives of the subjects, recollecting individual and collective memories on their language socialization and everyday communicative experiences.

The chapters of the book are well organized. Starting with a chapter on defining and explaining theoretical concepts, such as linguistic landscape, schoolscape, and bilingualism, the volume creates a solid ground and provides readers with the necessary background knowledge to be able to interpret and understand the research findings.

The next chapter presents the results of a multiphase research on schoolscape and language use carried out in Hungarian minority schools in Romania. The research adopted a multidimensional approach relying on multiple methods of data collection, including participatory observation, photographing schoolscape elements, questionnaires, interviews, and focus-group discussions. Schoolscape elements are analysed and discussed from different perspectives – linguistic, socio-cultural, and educational – to raise readers' awareness of the complexity of the situation. A historical perspective is achieved by the display of a photo collection and participants' narratives, which set us back in a time predating the Romanian Revolution of 1989. Looking at the schoolscape of the past helps us better understand current trends and attitudes, implicit and explicit intentions.

Heading from the general towards the specific, from the external, visible to the internal, self-reported aspects of language behaviour and linguistic practices, the book presents the concept of the linguistic self. Adopting a holistic approach, the description of language use goes beyond language knowledge and language as a structure so as to reflect on the speaker, on his/her communicative experiences, communicative context, and language background, understanding language as social practices “in interrelationship to the sociohistorical, political and economic conditions that produce them” (García et al. 2017: 5).

The final chapter of the book provides some hands-on, practical solutions on how to implement research findings in educational practices and development. This is an invaluable tool for language teachers on how to adopt and use linguistic landscape as well as oral and written language productions as language teaching instruments. Studying and analysing linguistic landscape elements not only offers a great context for language and cultural socialization (Laihonen and Szabó 2017) but also creates a context for informal language learning and developing language awareness (Cenoz and Gorter 2008).

One of the strengths of this volume is that it provides sufficient scientific background, a rigorous description of the data collection methods, and a detailed, systematic analysis of the results so as to offer researchers a well-grounded study of language use within the Hungarian minority schools in Romania. Furthermore, by offering practical guidance and instructional activities on how to implement certain parts of the study in the language teaching and learning process, it can serve as a useful educational resource for language teachers as well.

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