

Multilingualism and the Creation of New Languages: The Case of Camfranglais Spoken in Italy and Germany

Authors : Jocelyne Kenne Kenne

Abstract : Previous works in the field of sociolinguistics have explored the various outcomes of linguistic pluralism. One of these outcomes is the creation of new languages. The presentation will focus on one of such languages, Camfranglais, a hybrid language spoken by Cameroonians. It appeared in the 1970s in the francophone area in Cameroon and developed as a result of interactions between French, English, Cameroonian Pidgin English and local Cameroonian languages, all languages spoken in Cameroon. With the migration of Cameroonians to Europe, researches have been conducted to analyze the sociolinguistic profile of Cameroonians in their new environment. The emphasis on this presentation will be on two recent studies that have been conducted to analyze the peculiarity of Camfranglais in two European countries: Germany and Italy. The research involved 59 Cameroonians living in Italy and 49 Cameroonians residing in Germany. The respondents were composed of participants from different linguistic background, students and workers, married and single. A combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods was employed. The field study was divided into three parts. The first part was focused on observing the Cameroonians interact in different places such as in canteens, in the university halls of residence, lecture theatres, at homes, at various Cameroonian meetings. Those observations were accompanied by audio-recordings of the various interactions. The aim was to study communication between Cameroonians to see whether they use Camfranglais or not; if yes, in which domains and what were the speakers' linguistic profiles. Additionally, questionnaires of different lengths were used to collect biographical information concerning the participants and their sociolinguistic profile and finally, in-depth interviews with Cameroonians were conducted to inquire about the use, the functions and the importance of this language in the migratory context. The results of the research demonstrate how a widespread use of Camfranglais by Cameroonians in Germany and Italy reveal a longing for home on the one hand and a sign of belonging on the other. It also shows the differences that exist between the profiles of Camfranglais speakers in Europe and the speakers in Cameroon notably in terms of age and social class. Finally, it points out some differences in the use, the structure and the functions of this hybrid language in the migratory setting. This study is a contribution to existing research in the field of contact languages and can serve as a comparison for other situations of multilingualism and the creation of mixed languages. Furthermore, with globalization, the study of migrant languages and the contact of these languages with new languages are topics that might be productive for further research in the field of sociolinguistics.

Keywords : interaction, migrants language, multilingualism, mixed languages

Conference Title : ICM 2017 : International Conference on Multilingualism

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : October 19-20, 2017