

Jiménez-Salcedo, J., Hélot, C. & Camilleri-Grima, A. (Eds.) (2020). *Small is multilingual: Language and identity in micro-territories*. Berlin, Germany: Peter Lang. 248pp. Hbk. ISBN: 978-3631-83341-4.

This book collects a variety of highly interesting case studies that cast light on the sociolinguistic situation in eleven so-called ‘micro-territories’. Five chapters address islands (Balearic Islands, Gozo, Malta and Grenada compared, Sardinia, Taiwan) and five address landlocked territories (Andorra, Aosta, Aragon, Aran Valley, Luxembourg). One instantly notes the extreme variety of the cases at stake: in terms of size, population, legal status, history, geography and linguistic structure. Moreover, the editors’ choice for the term ‘micro-territories’ is rather original: ‘territory’ is a term that includes all possible variations of legal/constitutional status; ‘micro’, on the other hand, evokes an even tinier size than the more common ‘small’ and it does not seem to fit all cases in the book: Taiwan, Sardinia, the Balearic Islands are certainly not ‘micro’ in terms of size and population. However, the book’s introduction cites the established literature on small jurisdictions, and considers different terminological options. In the end, useful criteria are presented to defend the use of the term ‘micro-territories’: on one hand, the dependence – direct or indirect, to some degree – of such territories on foreign countries or on the states that they belong to; on the other, the sociolinguistic reality of the weaker languages spoken in the territories.

As an edited volume, the book does not present a specific thesis. However, the rich introduction provides several useful hints for reflection. In particular, it shows that, in spite of deep differences in terms of size, population and history, one element common to all micro-territories, however defined, is multilingualism. For this reason, it is striking that sociolinguistic studies on small territories are less numerous than research in other areas, where commonalities among such territories are far more difficult to identify.

Against this background, the deep diversity of the case studies mainly enriches the research. Cases focus on linguistic policies and practices at different levels (from families to education, from media to the public space) in territories which: enjoy a degree of self-government; manifest a (sea or land) border; and are culturally, politically or economically impacted by (or depend on) relations with neighbouring (or former colonial) states or central authorities of the state to which they belong. The way such dependence plays out varies from case to case and is not always explained: the chapters review different aspects of the sociolinguistic kaleidoscope of the eleven selected micro-territories.

The analysis results in a bilingual book (six chapters are in French and five in English), collecting essays about the sociolinguistic reality of the respective territory, thus also assuring a disciplinary coherence. There is, of course, a strong degree of discretion in the selection of the cases. The methodological problem pops up in essentially all collections of case studies and is a constant ingredient for disagreement in all comparative works, but is more acute when it comes to research on micro-territories, due to the definitional variance highlighted in the introduction. Also in this book, one may question the comparability between, say, Taiwan and Grenada or the Catalan-speaking municipalities of Aragon, including by asking whether the former can be deemed small. However, in this case, the author of the Taiwan chapter provides sufficient elements supporting the thesis that it is; and, more crucially, possible divergences do not affect the methodological soundness of the text. Its main aim, after all, is to describe the impact of territorial size and other factors typical of such territories on sociolinguistic realities, as well as their linguistic and identity policies. These goals are perfectly achieved.

The distinction between islands and landlocked territories is relevant; though probably another criterion should have been included: the different status of the territories. Four of the territories under scrutiny are sovereign states (Malta, Grenada, Luxembourg, *de facto* Taiwan), one is a semi-sovereign country (Andorra), three are special (Sardinia and Aosta Valley/Valle d'Aosta in Italy; Balearic Islands/Illes Balears in Spain) or 'normal' autonomous subnational entities of compound states (Aragon, Spain), two are territories within, respectively, an autonomous community (Aran Valley / Val d'Aran, Spain) or what is itself a small state (the island of Gozo, Malta). The link between legal status and sociolinguistic reality is, at least indirectly, considered in some chapters, as it is the background for designing linguistic policies and for determining their level of implementation. The topic deserves further scrutiny.

Furthermore, from a sociological point of view, the different degree of isolation of the eleven analysed territories could be a factor that strongly influences language policies: both in case of highly internationalised and cosmopolitan places (and their globally current languages), as well as more remote and isolated areas (and their local and minor languages and dialects), small territories have strong and compelling reasons for being multilingual. If small territories are highly internationalised, multilingualism is a logical consequence, although the dominance of international languages might endanger local ones (as in Luxembourg). In more isolated and remote territories, local languages coexist with the stronger languages of the state majority and/or with international languages. In both cases, minor and local languages and dialects need special protection and active policies of promotion, especially in the official domain. Therefore, as asserted in the introduction, smaller territories tend to be more multilingual than larger ones.

The different domains in which languages are used and where they are regulated generate an interesting multilevel linguistic map of the small territories concerned. The interplay between domestic/private use of local languages and their dialects or variations and the official use of the same languages, together with stronger (majority, international) languages, suggests that different sociolinguistic realities can dovetail with linguistic policies. While not making such conclusion explicit, the book provides sufficient evidence of the structural difference between 'small-size multilingualism' and other forms of multilingualism in larger territories. Whether the difference is structural or contingent and what the distinctive elements could be, however, remains unclear. For example, is bi-, tri- or multi-lingualism in a Swiss canton like Graubünden, or in a Canadian province like New Brunswick, fundamentally different from that in the cases analysed in this book? What indicators may help construct a more general theory of the influence of territory (and especially of its size) on multilingualism?

This commendable book shows how much more sociolinguistic research is needed on how multilingualism has been and can be influenced from geographical, demographic, territorial (fragmentation, size, isolation) as well as by the legal status of the territories concerned. Reading this book satisfies the curiosity about the sociolinguistic situation in the analysed territories; while it raises further questions about other jurisdictions and lays the ground for further methodological research. A second volume is strongly advisable.

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