colloquium: new philologies

Narratives of Emancipation through Language Learning: The Case of Refugees and Migrants from Former Yugoslavia in Multilingual South Tyrol

Marta Lupica Spagnolo
University of Potsdam (Germany)

Abstract

This paper investigates how thirty-eight people who emigrated from the former Yugoslavian countries to trilingual South Tyrol represent and negotiate language power relationships in their narratives of language learning and use. Power relationships are strictly mediated through language competencies at both the community (i.e., with regard to the institutional distribution of resources) and individual levels (i.e., with regard to how individuals can get access to them) in the province of Bolzano/Bozen. As for our dataset, several participants declare having at least low competencies in both Italian and German, while a few of them also understand a local Austro-Bavarian dialect. Specifically, four types of stories are identified in the interviewees' language biographies. These are labeled as narratives of i) exclusion, ii) assimilation, iii) empowerment, and iv) emancipation. In the first two types of stories, narrators mainly reproduce master narratives concerning newcomers' language learning habits and outcomes in South Tyrol. By contrast, narratives of empowerment and emancipation are 'contesting' strategies (e.g., Fairclough 1989/2001; Pennycook 2001). However, they differ in terms of their underlying conception of power – i.e., as a property vs. as emerging from social relations – and in terms of the linguistic and textual strategies employed by tellers to convey their moral position (also: moral agency) and align their interlocutors to it.

Keywords: *multilingualism*, *language learning*, *language power relationships*, *narrative analysis*, *acts of positioning*, *agency*, *South Tyrol*

Colloquium: New Philologies, Volume 7, Issue 1 (2022), published online: November 2022
doi: 10.23963/cnp.2022.7.1.4
Stable URL: https://colloquium.aau.at/index.php/Colloquium/article/view/177

1 Introduction

This paper investigates how thirty-eight people who moved from the former Yugoslavian countries to trilingual South Tyrol depict and negotiate language power relationships in narratives of language learning and use, which we collected through biographical narrative interviews (e.g., Franceschini & Miecznikowski 2004).

South Tyrol (also: province of Bolzano/Bozen) is an autonomous province in northern Italy with three legally recognized languages: German, Italian, and Ladin. In comparison to other institutionally multilingual areas, South Tyrol shows some peculiarities in terms of how recent mobility processes have interacted with the local 'language regime(s)' (see Kroskrity, 2000; Busch 2013, 134–149 for this concept). This is in response to the language policies and measures in force in the province to regulate multilingualism, as well as the resulting distribution of resources and power in different institutional spaces, such as at schools, workplaces, public offices, and healthcare facilities, but also in everyday life, like among friends or in chance encounters on the street.

In particular, power relationships across different institutions and social actors are closely mediated through language at both the community and individual levels in South Tyrol.

At the community level, the educational and administrative systems of the autonomous province are based on the so-called 'ethnic-linguistic proportionality,' where job positions in public offices and public resources in many sectors, ranging from education to welfare, are proportionally distributed according to the number of people belonging to each of the three local language groups, i.e., German, Italian, and Ladin. This system was developed to protect historical minorities in South Tyrol (e.g., Veronesi 2008, 124–130). However, its application has currently had some unexpected effects on new, migration-related language minorities. As a matter of fact, since newcomers must officially adhere to only one local language group after obtaining Italian citizenship, migration is sometimes represented – for instance, by some local mass media and political parties – as a phenomenon that can modify the proportions and, therefore, the power relationships between local language groups (Carlà 2015; see Section 3 for more details).

At the individual level, alloglot[1] citizens in South Tyrol need to grasp a very complex sociolinguistic situation. In addition to the three legally recognized languages, local Austro-Bavarian dialects are often used by the German-speaking population in informal, but also semi-formal language domains. In this respect, previous studies have shown that different factors, such as the first place of residence (Medda-Windischer et al. 2011,

[1] In this paper, the attribute 'alloglot' is used to refer to people who speak as a first or heritage language other codes than the institutionally recognized local ones, i.e., German, Italian, Ladin.

71–78), the type of work (ASTAT 2012, 84–85), or migratory chains and individual mobility goals (Cortinovis 2011, 46–48) may affect newcomers' language choices and skills in the province of Bolzano/Bozen.[2] Nevertheless, as far as we know, little attention has been paid so far to how collective representations of power and power relationships among languages and their speakers – widespread in the South Tyrolean society, for instance, as 'master narratives,' i.e., dominant discourses that circulate in a community in the form of typical stories (see, e.g., Bamberg & Georgeakopoulos 2008 and Section 2 for more details) – impact individual language learning strategies and uses after migration.

In this paper, we reframe the language learning experiences of alloglot speakers in South Tyrol within the framework of language education and power (e.g., Fairclough 1989/2001, 233–247; Pennycook 2001, 114–140; Ives & Rana 2018, 64–74). Our aim is to identify types of learning behaviors and recurring interpretative models for making sense of them that emerge and are negotiated through acts of positioning across the conversations under scrutiny (e.g., Bamberg 1997; Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann 2004; Deppermann 2013). As a result, we discuss how one's own and others' learning experiences may impact speakers' individual language-learning trajectories. Moreover, we argue whether these learning experiences are related to different ways of conceiving alloglot citizens' access (or lack thereof) to local language regimes, that is, i) separation/marginalization, ii) assimilation, iii) integration, and iv) inclusion (e.g., Houtkamp 2015).

This paper is structured as follows. In Section 2, we explain why we chose a narrative approach to investigate language learning and power. Sections 3 and 4 briefly introduce the sociolinguistic situation in South Tyrol and the participants in this research. Section 5 illustrates four types of narratives of language learning and use identified in our corpus, namely, narratives of i) exclusion, ii) assimilation, iii) empowerment, and iv) emancipation. In this section, we discuss similarities and differences between stories in terms of both content and form, that is, with regard to their underlying conceptions of power and the discursive means narrators employ to take a position toward them. Finally, Section 6 provides some conclusions that could possibly apply beyond our case study as well.

2 Narrative approach to language learning and power

Following Barkhuizen (2014), we may identify three main foci of interest in narrative research in language teaching and learning (see also Pomerantz 2012 for an overview).

[2] These factors are often interwoven. Thus, weak or strong ties between newcomers migrating from the same town and sharing a common language may, for example, influence their chosen (first) place of residence and occupation in South Tyrol and, therefore, the first local language they will acquire after arrival.

The first group of studies analyzes narratives as a pedagogical tool to be used, for example, in classrooms to engage students and teach languages or other topics in a more effective way. Second, scholars have focused on teachers' stories, that is, on how educators account for their professional development and teaching practices, for instance. Lastly, the third body of research – which also inspired this study – investigates learners' narratives. These include written or oral memories about experiences learning and using foreign languages in educational settings and/or, as in the case of this paper, second (or further) languages in migratory contexts (e.g., Barkhuizen 2013; Relaño Pastor & De Fina 2005). In the next sections, we provide a definition of narratives and discuss why stories can help us to better understand how the participants in this research make sense of their language-learning and, more generally, biographical trajectories.

2.1 Narratives, acts of positioning, and agency

Following Labov & Waletzky's (1976) pioneering definition, we mainly distinguish narratives[3] from other text types, such as descriptions or argumentations, based on a formal criterion: The events referred to in a story are temporally ordered. Thus, a minimal narrative contains at least one 'temporal juncture,' i.e., two clauses reporting two distinct and subsequent events whose order cannot be reversed without changing the story's meaning (ibid., 21; see also Labov 1997; 2013).

However, unlike the first studies conducted by Labov and colleagues, this paper does not only focus on prototypical narratives of personal experience, also called 'big stories'. This term refers to narratives that recapitulate extraordinary past events that happened to the teller as the story protagonist and whose structure is organized around a strongly evaluated narrative climax, in Labov's (1997) terminology the 'most reportable event.'[4] Rather, we also investigate 'small stories' (e.g., Bamberg & Georgakopoulou 2008, De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012, 108–124), meaning short(er) narratives or sequences with a narrative orientation embedded in conversations or, as in the case of this study, in longer biographical interviews. Small stories may concern, for instance, habitual everyday episodes that repeatedly happened to figures other than the narrator (e.g., Baynham 2005; Linde 2009). Crucially, their investigation has shown how narratives – apart from being formed in accordance with principles of temporal organization – are shaped and co-constructed in terms of their content, language, and textual structure by tellers' and

[3] The terms 'narrative,' 'tale,' and 'story' are used interchangeably in this paper. Nevertheless, some researchers reserve the last label only for prototypical narratives of personal experience (De Fina 2003, 14).

[4] According to Labov & Waletzky (1976) and Labov (1997; 2013), prototypical narratives of personal experience are moreover structured into six different sections: 'abstract,' 'orientation,' 'complication,' 'evaluation,' 'resolution,' and 'coda.' These labels are also used to refer to narrative subunits in this paper. However, the examined stories do not always contain all sections.

audiences' interactional goals and (dis)alignment strategies in the *hic et nunc* of a specific conversation.

More specifically, to analyze the participants' stories, we mainly refer in this paper to narrative research approaches that investigate how tellers and their audiences carry out identity work while performing the activity of oral storytelling.[5] Central to these approaches is the concept of 'positioning' (Bamberg 1997; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou 2008; Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann 2004; Deppermann 2013). Positionings (or acts of positioning) generally design all discursive practices interaction partners employ to attribute and negotiate identity categories for themselves and others in communicative exchanges (Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann 2004, 168).[6] Self- and other-positionings may be more or less explicit. Furthermore, positioning has to be understood as a dynamic, interactionally embedded process: A single act of positioning may be ratified, refused, or specified in the next turn(s) of talk by addressees or by speakers themselves (ibid., 168–172).

Oral narratives are a privileged site for identity work, since acts of positioning may take place on at least three different levels (see Bamberg 1997 for this tripartite model).[7] This is a consequence of narratives' 'double temporal indexicality' (Deppermann 2013) and interdiscursivity. As a matter of fact, by telling a story, narrators report events – usually occurring in the past, but sometimes also future or imagined events – that constitute what is called the 'story world,' i.e., the fictional world where the episode took place (POSITIONING LEVEL 1; henceforth PL 1). Simultaneously, they co-construct the narrated episode *vis-à-vis* the interlocutors in the here and now of a specific interaction, thereby evaluating, for instance, their own or others' past experiences emotionally and socially and thus conveying their current interpretations of what happened (POSITIONING LEVEL 2; henceforth PL 2). Eventually, tellers and audiences also position themselves toward 'master narratives,' meaning dominant discourses in narrative form (Bamberg & Georgeakopoulos 2008) or conventional ways of narrating (Andrews 2002) that circulate in the socio-historical macro-context in which they live (POSITIONING LEVEL 3; henceforth PL 3). By interdiscursively referring to and negotiating their position toward this pre-existing set of collective representations and normative expectations, narrators claim a more general sense of themselves as social and moral actors (Bamberg 1997, 337).

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[5] For an overview of different approaches in narrative analysis, ranging from biographical to conversation and position analysis, see De Fina & Georgakopoulou (2012).

[6] In line with Deppermann (2013, 9), the notion of 'positioning' is here understood as an overarching concept encompassing that of 'stance.'

[7] Bamberg & Georgakopoulou (2008) and Deppermann (2013) add new positioning sublevels to the model theorized in Bamberg (1997). Nevertheless, the original idea is maintained in its essential features.

In this study, we are especially interested in one dimension of identity co-construction in narratives of language learning and use, namely the co-construction of discursive 'agency.' Agency can be broadly defined as "the represented degree of activity and initiative that narrators attribute to themselves as characters in particular story worlds" (De Fina 2003, 22–23). At the same time, agency – in this specific sense, here also called 'moral agency' – encompasses the current moral positions that tellers convey toward their own and others' reported actions, as well as master narratives in the interactional situation (see also Relaño Pastor & De Fina 2005; Evans Davies 2007; Baynham 2005; Deppermann 2015).

Agency is related to power (see Section 2.2) and can be displayed differently at each of the three positioning levels in narratives described above. More precisely, this paper aims to answer three main research questions concerning positioning and identity as agency in narratives of language learning and use:

1. Which character(s) acts on whom within the story world (PL 1)? And, in particular, how is the figure of the narrator represented: as an active/powerful agent or as a passive/powerless experiencer of the reported events?
2. How do narrators convey their moral position toward the reported episodes and manage to align interlocutors to it within the interactional situation (PL 2)?
3. How do narrators position themselves toward master narratives, in our case, concerning newcomers' language learning choices and habits in South Tyrol (PL 3)? Do they mainly reproduce or resist them?

It is important to emphasize that acts of positioning co-constructed by narrators and their audiences in the stories we discuss in Section 5 should not be understood as fixed. Rather, they may be re-negotiated by the participants in subsequent conversations or also in later sequences of the same interview. Nevertheless, since they recur across different speakers' language biographies, they may be regarded as indexing interpretative models and schemes (e.g., Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann 2004; Deppermann 2013) that are commonly used, at least within the South Tyrolean society, to give meaning to language learning experiences following migration. As we will argue in the next section, these collective representations and ways of narrating may be either internalized or challenged by individual participants. In any case, they inform the interviewees' 'subjective' perspective of their language-learning paths (Busch 2013, 13–79) and may eventually have an impact on their subsequent language-learning trajectories.

2.2 Representations and negotiation of power in narratives

Some research on narrative power is based on the main assumption – taken from Pierre Bourdieu's (1982/2005) work – that power relationships are established and perpetuated not only through material-economic means, but also through symbolic-discursive practices, among which language and, in particular, stories play a crucial role (see De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012, 125–154 for an overview). According to this framework, the interplay between narratives and power is manifold: Stories are products of, and contribute to shaping and passing on shared interpretations, in our case, of (socio)linguistic facts. They do this as privileged instruments to create authenticity and empathy, at least in contemporary western societies (ibid., 137–141). Simultaneously, even if individuals' narratives often refer to and are (re)framed into collectively widespread master tales, the former are not completely determined by the latter. Thus, for instance, through the fine turning of agency at the three positioning levels described in the previous section (modulation that can be achieved in terms of content, language, and/or textual structures), participants may situationally challenge prevailing plots and, for example, advocate new meanings for their learning experiences. These contesting interpretations may range from negotiating a legitimation for one's own individual perspective inside the socially dominant mainstream to developing 'counter-narratives' (e.g., Andrews 2002) that transgressively overturn the very assumptions of pre-existing dominant discourses and power relationships.

As for our dataset, in line with the literature (Fairclough 1989/2001, 233–247; Pennycook 2001, 27–29; Siegel 2006, 29–32), we distinguish between two broad conceptions of what power is and how individual people or groups may become (more) powerful.

First, power may be conceived by our interviewees as a 'property,' that is, as an object or feature belonging to certain individuals or social groups which, in the case of South Tyrol, are usually language groups.[8] According to this view, to be more powerful a person must acquire more of a specific property connected with power; for example, she or he has to master the language spoken by the group perceived as dominant.

Participants who share this conception of power usually have, consciously or unconsciously, internalized hegemonic representations of how newcomers learn and use local language varieties in the province of Bolzano/Bozen. However, some differences can be found in their stories. Specifically, participants may simply reproduce master narratives about alloglot speakers' learning habits and outcomes without opposing them. This is the case in the stories we labeled as 'narratives of exclusion' and 'narratives of assimilation.'

[8] For a detailed discussion on why languages play a crucial role in defining group memberships in South Tyrol, see for instance Veronesi (2008).

Alternatively, tellers can also highlight the inequalities underlying and reproduced by these master tales and contest them, but nevertheless consider the resulting distribution of resources as natural and immutable. We define these latter stories as 'narratives of empowerment.' As a matter of fact, according to Fairclough (1989/2001, 39), empowerment is an individual's ability to self-develop by acquiring more awareness, such as around how linguistic discrimination, or 'linguicism' (Skutnabb-Kangas 2015), works. However, even if in doing so participants may (re)negotiate a high moral agentivity for themselves in the *hic et nunc* of a specific interaction (PL 2), this happens without critically questioning existing inequitable power structures and master narratives at their core (PL 3), and thus ultimately taking for granted some of their underlying assumptions, such as, in our case, an instrumental conception of language and language skills (Fairclough 1989/2001, 217).

According to the second perspective, power is instead regarded by our interviewees as a 'social relation.' This means that, in line with Michel Foucault's view, power is not something someone possesses, but rather emerges from the relationships between individuals or groups as they are produced and mediated by both discursive and non-discursive practices (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012, 127). In this framework, to be more powerful means to transform, also discursively, pre-existing limiting relationships in such a way that they will open up, rather than eliminate possibilities (Siegel 2006, 31). An example in the field of language learning and use may be to (re)negotiate an alternative identity for multilingual alloglot speakers and show its advantages compared to the mainly monolingual local ones, precisely in the new place of residence.

In this paper, we refer to stories that feature this conception of power as 'narratives of emancipation.' Analogously to the definition of emancipation in Fairclough (1989/2001, 40–41), by telling these stories the participants succeed in proposing collective identities that work as alternatives to the dominant ones and are valid not only for themselves but also for others, both alloglot and local speakers. In doing so, interviewees show high agentivity at PL 2, as well as manage to tell counter-stories that constitute a (first) endorsement of a counter-representation of reality at PL 3.

3 The sociolinguistic situation in South Tyrol

According to the most recent available census in 2011 (ASTAT 2021, 119), 69.4% of about 500,000 residents in the province of Bolzano/Bozen declare themselves to be German-speakers, while 26.1% of the population affiliate themselves with the Italian-speaking

group. The remaining inhabitants (4.5%) aggregate to the Ladin language minority.[9] In 2014, when the interviews for this research were conducted, the population with a foreign passport in South Tyrol was 8.9% of the total, or 46,045 residents (ASTAT 2015). After arriving in South Tyrol, newcomers have to face a complex sociolinguistic situation. Three main issues and the corresponding master narratives are highlighted in this section as a background for the subsequent analysis.

First, for historical reasons, the distribution of the three language groups is not homogenous across the territory. Simplifying the situation, the population living in Bolzano/Bozen and the South Tyrolean Unterland mainly speaks Italian (ASTAT 2021, 120–123). By contrast, the residents in rural and mountainous areas are for the most part German-speakers (ibid.). For this reason, new arrivals' first town of residence in South Tyrol is regarded in the literature as a factor that may play a role in determining which language(s) newcomers will initially learn (e.g., Medda-Windischer et al. 2011, 71–81; Cortinovis 2011). Those who move to a mostly German-speaking locality will have less contact with Italian speakers and vice versa. Eventually, the Ladin-speaking population became concentrated in two valleys, Gherdëina/Val Gardena/Grödnertal and Val Badia/Gadertal. Since none of our participants entered in lasting contact with Ladin speakers or acquired the Ladin language, the sociolinguistic situation of this code is not further discussed in this paper.

Second, the language repertoire of the German-speaking population in South Tyrol is 'medial diglottic' (Lanthaler 1990). That means that the 'medium' (written vs. oral) – more than the formality of the communicative situation – determines the selection of a German variety. Specifically, German-speakers write and learn *Hochdeutsch* 'High German' (also: Standard German) or a regional variety of this code (i.e., *Südtiroler Hochdeutsch* 'South Tyrolean Standard German') at school. However, they usually communicate in informal and semi-formal domains, such as at the workplace or in public offices, in a local Austro-Bavarian dialect (ibid., 63–65). Thus, for instance, a survey conducted by ASTAT (2006, 72–73) in 2004 revealed that 80.5% of the interviewees spoke and heard an

[9] The declarations of linguistic affiliation or aggregation to the German, Italian, or Ladin language group are collected in the province of Bolzano/Bozen every ten years in conjunction with the population census. Italian and EU citizens over the age of fourteen must indicate to which language groups they belong. Since 1991, residents may also select the affiliation category 'other.' However, they still have to choose a group to which they want to be aggregated in order to benefit from some local rights. As a matter of fact, this census serves to calculate the respective strength of each group and, therefore, to regulate the system of ethnic-linguistic proportionality. Residents with a non-EU passport are initially not included in the statistics, but have to submit the declaration after acquiring Italian citizenship.

Austro-Bavarian dialect at work as opposed to 40.5% and 64.3% of the participants who were addressed in or used High German or Italian, respectively, during working hours.[10]

This diffusion of the local Austro-Bavarian dialects – along with their high covert linguistic prestige[11] among local German-speakers – may cause some difficulties for newcomers. In particular, similar to the local Italian-speaking population (Franceschini 2011, 143–144), alloglot citizens may underestimate the importance of these varieties and/or do not know how to learn them. By contrast, Italo-Romance dialects are scarcely employed in public domains, while their use in private situations is decreasing among younger generations (ASTAT 2006, 32–36). In connection with this, (Standard or regional) Italian is often represented, at least according to master narratives, as the most commonly selected language for 'intergroup' communication in the province. This means that it is used as a sort of vehicular language for interactions between local German and Italian speakers (Lanthaler 1990, 73–77; ASTAT 2006, 280; Veronesi 2008), as well as between local and alloglot citizens (Lupica Spagnolo 2019, 356–359 and Section 5 for further details).

Finally, South Tyrolean society is generally regarded as an inclusive rather than exclusive one. Thus, the degree of 'integration' of alloglot citizens in the province of Bolzano, for example, is one of the highest in Italy as of 2008 according to CNEL (Medda-Windischer 2011, 25). This may be partially explained by the fact that, owing to the historical regional multilingualism, institutions like schools and public offices, as well as the general public, are well prepared to deal with new minority languages and may additionally show positive attitudes toward learner varieties, code-mixing, language maintenance, and multilingual identities, among others. However, as mentioned in Section 1, the language first learned by newcomers is frequently a matter of debate in South Tyrol. One reason lies in the fact that – due to master narratives that circulated, for instance, in local newspapers and blogs during the political campaign and legislature preceding the data collection (i.e., 2008–2013) – newcomers generally learn only Italian after their arrival in the autonomous province (e.g., Medda-Windischer 2011; Carlà 2015; Lupica Spagnolo 2019, 74–78). Therefore, they are regarded as more likely to affiliate themselves with the latter language group after acquiring Italian citizenship, thereby modifying the proportions of the historical language minorities in the region.[12]

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[10] The participants could give more answers to this question. Other languages heard at the workplace were: 11.1% Italian dialects; 5.8% Ladin; 5% English.

[11] Linguistic prestige is 'covert' when it is attributed to non-standard varieties (e.g., Franceschini 2011, 144).

[12] The discussion around which language(s) alloglot citizens have to learn also raises issues between the autonomous province and the national government (Carlà 2015, 75–76). An example is the proposal – which was not approved, however – to introduce a German language test (level A2) as an alternative

4 The SüBalk corpus

My dataset, the SüBalk corpus, consists of (single or couple) interviews with thirty-eight refugees and/or economic migrants who arrived in South Tyrol from the different countries of (former) Yugoslavia between 1990 and 2010. At the time of our conversations, the participants – 24 women and 14 men – were between the ages of 18 and 59 years (for a detailed description of the SüBalk corpus, see Lupica Spagnolo 2019, 109–126).

The interviews were collected following the models of language biographies, that is, in-depth narrative interviews that elicit stories of language acquisition, use, and loss over time from an emic perspective (e.g., Franceschini & Miecznikowski 2004; Busch 2013). The total duration of the interviews is approximately 28 hours, while their average duration amounts to 43 minutes. Before starting the recording, the participants were invited to choose which language they wanted to use for the interview: Italian (27), German (9), or English (2).

The first part of each interview is usually dedicated to the language varieties spoken by the participants in their countries of birth, i.e., mainly Serbia (16) and Kosovo (10), but also Montenegro (4), Republic of North Macedonia (4), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2), and Croatia (2). Due to the multilingualism of these areas, the interviewees' linguistic repertoires are usually highly diverse even before moving abroad and encompass codes with official, minority, or unrecognized status.

The second part of each interview features the narratives – analyzed in this paper – accounting for language learning and use in South Tyrol. The examined stories are told by newcomers who have permanently settled in South Tyrol (as opposed to language students who have temporarily moved abroad) and relate their narrators' language learning strategies especially in informal settings (that is, not necessarily in language classes). Furthermore, the SüBalk corpus comprises experiences of people who have lived in South Tyrolean localities characterized by different linguistic compositions of the local population. More specifically, fifteen participants settled in mostly Italian-speaking towns, such as Bolzano/Bozen or Laives/Leifers. Fifteen interviewees initially lived in a mainly German-speaking locality, especially Brunico/Bruneck and its surroundings. Eventually, eight interviewees moved to Merano/Meran, where the German- and Italian-speaking populations are nearly equal (ASTAT 2021, 120–122)

Figure 1 summarizes the competencies in Italian, German, and/or one of the local Austro-Bavarian dialects declared by the participants during their interviews.[13] Since we

to the Italian one that became mandatory in 2010 for non-EU citizens in order to apply for a long-term residence permit in the peninsula (ASTAT 2012, 199).

[13] No interviewee reported proficiency in Ladin.

are dealing with self-assessments, these data cannot simply be equated with the participants' actual language skills. However, they give us some preliminary insight into how the interviewees conceive languages and language relationships in their new areas of residence.

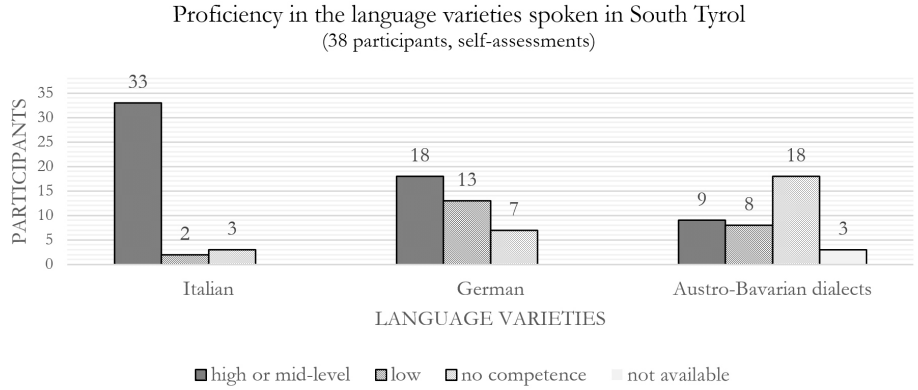

Figure 1: Participants' declared language skills.

Figure 1 shows that almost the totality of the participants of the SüBalk corpus claims to have high or mid-level competency in Italian, while only three interviewees do not speak this language at all. The majority of participants also report having middle-high or at least low competency in German. In contrast, despite its diffusion in several language domains in South Tyrol (see Section 3), skills in a local Austro-Bavarian dialect are less common across the interviewees.

Moreover, several participants have not stopped learning after having acquired one local code: More than one-third of the interviewees (i.e., 17 *vs*. 21) can communicate well or quite well in two or three language varieties historically spoken in the province.[14] In particular, the preferred language combination is Standard Italian and Standard German (8 participants), followed by six people who have additionally acquired a local Austro-Bavarian dialect. The remaining three interviewees speak German and an Austro-Bavarian dialect (2) or Italian and an Austro-Bavarian dialect (1). No participant in the SüBalk corpus only speaks a local Austro-Bavarian dialect. Rather, this code is always acquired after another local language has been mastered; in most of the cases, this is German (8) and, in only one case, Italian.

Based on these data, we may conclude that, at least if we look at the SüBalk corpus, the master narratives regarding newcomers' language competencies in South Tyrol (see Section 3) are not accurate: Alloglot citizens in the province of Bolzano/Bozen do not just

[14] 30 participants have at least passive competencies in two or more local languages.

learn Italian, nor do they usually stop after learning one of the local languages. However, the self-evaluations reported in Figure 1 also suggest that the participants tend to be more confident with their Italian skills than those of the two German varieties (and this holds even if they are talking with an Italian-speaking interviewer). In addition, by crossing the data on the interviewees' first places of residence and their declared language skills,[15] we observe that Italian tends to be acquired first not only by all participants who initially move to a mainly Italian-speaking locality, but also by many of those who first settle in Merano/Meran (5 out of 6) or a mostly German-speaking town (3 out of 7). To better understand why this happens, we examine in the next sections how the interviewees talk about their experiences with learning and using local codes in South Tyrol.

5 Narratives of language learning and use

5.1 Narratives of exclusion

An example of narratives of exclusion is reported in (1). This short story was told by NJ, a man from the Republic of North Macedonia who moved to South Tyrol in 1993 and who, at the time of the interview, had competencies in Italian and a little bit in German.[16]

(1)

1 NJ: quando si sapeva che io vengo qua compro licenza [[di tassista]]
when it was known that I come here I buy a [[taxi driver's]] license
2 NJ: quello che era presidente lì (-) [[...]] lui i primi giorni
the guy who was president there (-) [[...]] he the first days
3 NJ: non so prime due tre settimane non era molto contento
I don't know the first two three weeks he was not very happy
4 NJ: e parlava solo tedesco con me °no?°
and spoke only German with me °no?°
5 NJ: [[...]] sai era un po' (-) <<all> un po' furioso non era contento
[[...]] you know he was a bit (-) <<all> a bit furious he wasn't happy

[15] For this overview, we only consider the 20 speakers who directly moved to South Tyrol without living previously in a German-speaking country or in other Italian regions, and without having learned German or Italian in their countries of birth.

[16] The examples are transcribed according to the transcription conventions GAT2 (Selting et al. 2009), listed in Appendix 1, and provided with a literal interlinear English translation. At the bottom of each example, we report the participant's declared biological sex, country of birth, year of migration, linguistic composition of the town of first residence in South Tyrol (i.e., mainly Italian-speaking, mainly German-speaking, or bilingual locality), as well as declared competencies in the local languages.

6 NJ: si vedeva che viene uno straniero a fare il tassista>
you could see that a foreigner is coming to be a taxi driver>
7 NJ: perché io sono primo (-) tassista straniero diciamo
because I'm the first (-) foreign taxi driver let's say

NJ; M; Republic of North Macedonia; 1993; bilingual locality; Italian and a little German

In (1), NJ tells a story of exclusion and discrimination at the workplace through the use of language, in this case, through the use of German. As for its content, the narrative in (1) illustrates well the intricate relationships between language learning, language use, and power in South Tyrol. In particular, it shows how local codes may be – at least perceived as being – strategically used by the local population to exclude alloglot citizens in specific conversations and, more generally, to delegitimize them as economic and social actors in the destination society.

However, it should be noted that, in (1) as well as in other narratives of exclusion found in the SüBalk corpus, the degree of agency of the narrator as a figure – that is, his/her capability to act in the story world (PL 1) – is low. As a matter of fact, even though NJ reports an episode he personally experienced, he scarcely uses verbs in the first-person singular. Rather, he mainly employs verbs in the third-person singular with an impersonal subject (*si sapeva* lit. 'it was known', *si vedeva* lit. 'it was seen/visible' in lines 1 and 6, respectively) or whose subject/agent is another figure, i.e., the president of the local taxi drivers' association (lines 3, 4, 5). As a consequence, the narrator represents himself as an interlocutor and passive experiencer of the episode of linguistic discrimination (or: 'linguistic mobbing'), perpetuated by the story's antagonist.

The same holds for the teller's moral agency, that is, his/her capability or will to convey a moral position toward the narrated events and align the interlocutor to it in the interactional situation (PL 2). Thus, for instance, the use of 'hedges,'[17] such as the discourse marker *diciamo* 'let's say' (line 7), the degree adverbial *un po'* in *un po' un po' furioso* 'a little bit a little bit furious' (line 5), the litotes *non era (molto) contento* 'he was not (very) happy' (lines 3, 5), and the question tag *no?* 'no?' (line 4), shows that the participant is negotiating *vis-à-vis* the interlocutor his evaluation of the reported episode and prefers not to take a strong moral position against it, at least at the time of the interview.

Finally, the participant's agentivity is also relatively low at PL 3. As a matter of fact, in neither (1) nor any other interview sequence does the interviewee explicitly recall or take

[17] Hedges are linguistic items that indicate to what extent and/or in which sense an object or person belongs to a certain category (Lakoff 1973). They are often used as a politeness strategy to mitigate the communicative force of a negative affirmation and/or reduce the speaker's commitment toward it.

an overt position toward the master narrative that underlies the behavior of the story's antagonist and makes it discriminating. This is the widespread opinion according to which foreign citizens cannot learn or speak German properly. By contrast, this prejudice is assumed to be part of the common ground of knowledge already shared with the interviewer: See, for instance, the question tag *no?* 'no?' in line 4, possibly employed to both keep the addressee's attention and check her understanding. In doing so, the narrator reproduces (fragments of) that specific master tale and – even unwittingly – contributes to its transmission without challenging its veracity.

This or similar experiences – and their interpretations mediated by master narratives – may strongly impact subsequent language-learning trajectories of the participants in the SüBalk corpus. Thus, some interviewees report, for instance, having abandoned their initial plan to acquire German because they feel "mentally" unable to learn this code. Analogously, other interviewees remember having decided to attend an Italian-speaking school as children – despite living in a German-speaking locality – out of fear they could not learn German. In doing so, narrators tend to trace back, at least in these interview sequences, their refusal to learn German not to a lack of time or interest (as it sometimes happens for Italian), but to an inability described in psychophysical terms and, thus, internalized: They desire(d) to acquire this code because of its intrinsic powerfulness, but have failed to do so and feel therefore excluded.

5.2 Narratives of assimilation

In narratives of assimilation, narrators say that they adopt(ed) different strategies – from practicing pronunciation to inventing an imaginary place of birth that sounds Italian, such as "Camicino" in ex. (2), – in order to no longer be identified as foreign citizens.[18]

(2)

1 TF: mi ricordo che mi colpiva molto dico il fatto che
I remember that it affected me a lot I mean the fact that
2 TF: la gente no? capiva (pausa) che io non: insomma
the people no? they understood (pause) that I not: in short
3 TF: non ero italiana non ero romana perché infatti io poi
I was not Italian I was not Roman because indeed I then

[18] The story in (2) refers to a period of time spent by the participant in Rome before moving to South Tyrol. In the SüBalk corpus, we also found a few narratives of assimilation, particularly ones reporting others' experiences, set in the province of Bolzano/Bozen.

4 TF: quel °h insomma modo di parlare romano
that °h in short Roman way of speaking
5 TF: n- non l'ho MAI assimilato insomma
n- I have NEVER assimilated it in short
6 INT: mh:
7 TF: [[…]] e quindi mi ero inventata un posto da dove venivo
[[…]] and therefore I had invented a place where I came from
8 TF: che era <<nome di luogo inventato> Camicino> (pausa)
which was <<invented place name> Camicino>
9 INT: °mh mh°
10 TF: °h <<sorridendo> e quindi dicevo no? ma da dove vieni tu?>
°h <<smiling> and then I said no? but where do you come from?>
11 TF: di- dico da Camicino
I sa- say from Camicino

TF; F; Serbia; 1994; mainly German-speaking locality; Italian, German, and Austro-Bavarian dialect

Similar to what happens in exclusion narratives (Section 5.1), tellers of assimilation narratives tend to attribute low agency to their characters in the story world (PL 1). Thus, for instance, in (re)constructing a dialogue (Tannen 1989/2007, 102–119), TF does not represent herself in (2) as initiating the conversation. Rather, she reacts to a question about her origin formulated by an indefinite interlocutor (lines 10–11; see also De Fina 2003, 93–138 for analogous examples).

The same holds if we examine the narrators' agency in the interactional situation. At PL 2, tellers of assimilation narratives usually do not take a clear moral position toward their own or others' reported behavior(s). Thus, for example, there is no explicit evaluation section in (2). Rather, the narrator suspends her judgment about her past language choices and the circumstances that motivated them. Moreover, by telling her story, she explicitly requires confirmations from the interviewer. See, for instance, the frequent use of speech management strategies, such as the reformulation markers *insomma* 'in short' (lines 2, 4, 5) or *dico* 'I mean' (line 1), as well as the repetition of the question tag *no?* 'no?' for engaging the addressee and verifying her understanding and approval (lines 2, 10).

Finally, at PL 3, TF does not contest in (2) the dominant master narrative according to which high language competency correlates with the speaker's place of birth and thus 'autochthonousness.' Rather, she assumes this correlation as necessarily true. In this regard, the shame of speaking a language with an accent and, therefore, of being recognized as an alloglot speaker – in the case of TF, as a Serbian speaker – recurs in the language

biographies of the SüBalk corpus as well as in those of other minority or foreign language speakers (see, e.g., Busch 2013, 26–27). In our dataset, this feeling often leads to language shift: The participants focus on learning the (perceived) most powerful local variety(ies) in their new linguistic environment and forsake the weaker one(s), which are often the languages spoken in their countries of birth.

Thus, for instance, TF says in her interview that she did not teach Serbian to her daughter since the identity indexed by this language was highly stigmatized during the nineties in Italy. Even if the woman has a different opinion on this topic at the moment of our conversation, her past feeling of shame is another example of how collectively widespread master narratives may strongly influence individual language biographies in migratory contexts. As a matter of fact, speakers are ashamed of their language skills or use when they consider them as violating or inadequate with regard to collective linguistic norms that they internalize as their own (see Lupica Spagnolo 2019, 201–237 for further details).

5.3 Narratives of empowerment

An example of a narrative of empowerment is provided in (3). This story is told by VM, a woman from Serbia who moved alone to South Tyrol in 2001 and was later joined by her husband and son.

(3)

1 VM: tedesco qua ho impara- cominciavo prima da par-
German here I lea- I started first to spe-
2 VM: impararlo perché (pausa) mi da:- fastidio
to learn it because (pause) I wa:- annoyed
3 VM: anche che: (-) è normale che: un straniero
also tha:t (-) it is normal tha:t a foreigner
4 VM: [co]mincia prima italiano
[st]arts first with Italian
5 INT: [°mh°]
6 VM: (-) perché
(-) because
7 INT: °mh mh° (pausa)
°mh mh° (pause)
8 VM: pareva come normale
it seemed normal

9 VM: °h <<all> non posso mai f- dimenticare la faccia da un
°h I cannot even f- forget the face of a
10 VM: collega quando è arrivato un ragazzo di africa che parlava>
colleague when a guy from Africa arrived who spoke>
11 VM: (-) tedesco PERfetto: [(-) M]A PERFETTO dialetti di valle
(-) PERfe:ct German [(-) B]UT PERFECT valley dialects
12 INT: [mh mh]
13 INT: mh mh
14 VM: (pausa) <<sospirando> lo ha guardato °h>
(pause) <<sighing> he looked at him °h>
15 VM: <<t> <<in tedesco> oh: so gut sprichst du deutsch?>>
<<t> <<in German> oh: how do you speak German so well?>
16 VM: <<in tedesco> warum nicht?>
<<in German> why not?>
17 INT: mh mh
18 VM: (pausa) ma è normale
(pause) but it is normal
19 INT: mh mh

VM; F; Serbia; 2001; bilingual locality; German and Italian

At the beginning of the sequence in (3), VM explains why she learned German first after arriving in South Tyrol: She wanted to disprove the master narrative (PL 3) that foreign citizens usually start learning Italian and thus mainly speak only Italian after settling in the province of Bolzano/Bozen (lines 3–8). Through the repetition of the adjective *normale* 'normal' (lines 3 and 8) and the use of the impersonal verb *pareva* 'it seemed' (line 8), the interviewee points out that prejudices concerning newcomers' language choices and competencies are widespread in the new place of residence.

To support her thesis, VM tells a short story that therefore has an argumentative function (lines 9–18). Specifically, VM's narrative works as an *exemplum* in the sense of Günthner (1995). It reports a single episode with the function of illustrating a general behavior and substantiating a previously expressed moral judgment.

As opposed to the narratives of exclusion and assimilation discussed in Sections 5.1 and 5.2, VM's acts of positioning herself during the storytelling activity (PL 2) are explicit in (3). In particular, the narrator manages to align the interview partner with her position (see the several feedback signals of the latter at lines 12, 13, 17, 19) and to co-construct indignation by employing different involvement strategies at the levels of con-

tent, language, and story structure (see, again, Günthner 1995 and also Bamberg 1997; Relaño Pastor & De Fina 2005, 41–44).

First, in terms of content, VM categorizes, for instance, the story's protagonist as *un ragazzo di Africa* 'a guy from Africa' in line 10.[19] In this way, she reframes the reported episode of 'linguicism' (Skutnabb-Kangas 2015), i.e., linguistic discrimination, as a better-known form of ethnic discrimination or racism, therefore making its gravity more explicit. Second, linguistically, the teller involves the interlocutor by using emotionally overloaded language: See, for example, the prosodic changes in her voice's quality and volume (lines 11, 14, 15), the repetition of *perfetto* 'perfect' (line 11), the use of hyperbolic negative constructions and extreme case formulations, such as *non posso mai* 'I cannot even' (line 9) or *oh so gut* 'oh so well' (line 15), and the employment of a metonymy *la faccia* 'the face' to refer to a mood, i.e., the colleague's surprise (line 9). Third, at the textual level, VM inserts into the causal sequence of actions composing the narrative plot an event that is not strictly necessary, i.e., *lo ha guardato* 'he looked at him' (line 14). In doing so, she postpones the climax of the story (in Labov's terms, its 'most reportable event'), thereby increasing its suspense and chances of success (Labov 2013, 29). At the end of the sequence, VM repeats the adjective *normale* 'normal' (line 18). She thus gives the sequence a circular structure, typical for argumentations in which exemplary stories are embedded (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012, 98).

Emotionally overloaded language also characterizes other narratives of empowerment in the SüBalk corpus: Specifically, the more intense their indignation, the more narrators aim to achieve the interlocutor's affiliation through involvement strategies at different levels (see Appendix 2, ex. (5), for another example).

By contrast, similar to narratives of exclusion and assimilation, the agency of VM's figure in the story world, i.e., at PL 1, is quite ambiguous in (3). As a matter of fact, VM is not the main character of the episode she recounts. Rather she is the bystander observing a conversation between two other figures. The latter characters are, moreover, only briefly sketched. In particular, VM does not say anything about the antagonist colleague in the story orientation. She instead only quotes his words in direct speech and in German at the story's climax: *oh so gut sprichst du Deutsch* 'oh: how do you speak German so well?' (line 15).

The use of code-switching to mark another voice in a constructed dialogue – independently of the language spoken when the episode happened – is a very common staging technique in multilingual people's storytelling (e.g., Auer 1984, 62–67; Koven 2001; Hansen et al. 2010). Specifically, in ex. (3), the first switch into German in line 15 is

[19] Ethnic categorizations are very common in exemplary stories about racism (Günthner 1995, 156).

'consequential' (Hansen et al. 2010, 61), insofar as it works as a membership categorization device for 'doing elite' (see also Myers-Scotton 2006). As a matter of fact, the language alternation is the only clue that indexes – without stating explicitly – that the story's figure is a German-speaker and, therefore, belongs to a powerful language group in South Tyrol.[20] The following utterance *warum nicht?* 'Why not?' is, however, also in German (line 16). As a consequence, it is not clear whether this question constitutes a reaction of the narrator figure to the antagonist's surprised comment in the story world (PL 1) or whether it expresses her current moral evaluative position in the interactional situation (PL 2). Thus, the maintenance of German at line 16 creates (more or less deliberately) ambiguity around the more or less active role played by VM in the reported episode. Other narratives of empowerment in our corpus also feature an ambiguous or low degree of agency of the narrator figure in the story world (PL 1). In particular, these stories are often 'third-person narratives' (Linde 2009, 72–88), meaning that they report events that were not directly experienced by the narrators or the addressees, but by other people (see also Appendix 2, ex. (5)).

Given the above, we may conclude that narratives of empowerment show a 'contesting' orientation (Fairclough 1989/2001; Pennycook 2001; Siegel 2006). Unlike in stories of exclusion and assimilation, their tellers explicitly take a position against widespread master narratives stereotyping newcomers' language-learning experiences at PL 3. However, power and, in particular, powerful languages – i.e., in our corpus, usually German and in some cases also the local Austro-Bavarian dialects[21] – are still conceived and represented as a property (albeit an acquired property) in these stories. This is suggested, for instance, by the above-mentioned use of code-switching as a membership categorization device for 'doing elite' in ex. (3) (Hansen et al. 2010; Myers-Scotton 2006). This strategy only works if 'speaking in German' is assumed to be a category-bound activity indexing membership in a powerful language group in the new region of residence.

Analogously, the teller of the narrative of empowerment in Appendix (2), ex. (5), contests the master narrative according to which (individual) newcomers are not able to learn the local Austro-Bavarian dialect. Nonetheless, she simultaneously takes for granted some of its underlying assumptions. Specifically, representing competencies in a German dialect as being indispensable for a successful career in South Tyrol, the partic-

[20] At the interactional level, the switch into German may have the additional function of pointing out the speaker's linguistic competencies in this language, thereby indirectly contesting again the above-mentioned master narratives concerning the lack of German language skills by alloglot citizens.

[21] In (3), VM qualifies both German and the valley dialects, for instance, as perfect ways of speaking (line 9). In doing so, she takes a positive position toward the acquisition of different German varieties. The same holds in the story told by BV in Appendix 2, ex. (5).

ipant assumes and reproduces the dominant view of language skills as instruments to be acquired to gain specific material and symbolic benefits in the destination society.

Thus, to sum up, the contesting strategy employed in narratives of empowerment is highly effective from an individual perspective: Given the fact that learning German as a second language is considered an extremely difficult task, by telling stories about its acquisition the participants manage to represent themselves through their figures or alter egos as successful learners. In doing so, they succeed in re-evaluating their own or others' individual learning and biographical-migratory experience *vis-à-vis* the interviewer as standing out from that of the majority of newcomers. Nevertheless, this re-evaluation happens within pre-existing inequitable structures and repressive power relationships, which are represented as natural and immutable.

5.4 Narratives of emancipation

In our dataset, we identified another strategy used by participants to contest episodes of linguicism in their new place of residence. This fourth type of story – which we label as narratives of emancipation – is exemplified by the sequence in (4). The narrator is a man from Kosovo who arrived in South Tyrol after having lived in another Italian region, thus having already acquired competencies in Italian.

(4)

1 AC: però qua quello che ho scoperto nella provinza °h
but here what I discovered in the province °h
2 AC: [[…]] °h che quelli che parlano madre lingua tedeʃca
[[…]] °h that those who speak German as a mother tongue
3 AC: non vogliono che ti insegnano la loro lingua (pausa)
do not want to teach you their language (pause)
4 INT: perché?
why?
5 AC: <<all> perché vogliono loro parlare con te italiano
<<all> because they want to speak with you in Italian
6 AC: che loro non vogliono dimenticare la lingua italiana>
'cause they don't want to forget the Italian language>
7 INT: ah: okay
ah: okay
8 AC: qui (pausa) io lo rispondo nel tedesco e lui nell'italiano
here (pause) I answer him in German and he in Italian

9 AC: eh: ma parli tu: (–) non parli <<in tedesco> deutsch>?
eh: but do you speak do you not speak <<in German> German>?
10 AC: è meglio italiano se no io dimentico [[…]]
it is better Italian if not I forget [[…]]
11 AC: e loro sono lo ho visto
and they are I saw it
12 AC: mi è capitato a Brunico qua
it happened to me in Brunico here
13 AC: ah: son contento che tu parli italiano °h perché così IO
ah I'm glad you speak Italian °h because so I
14 AC: ogni tanto ti chiedo qualcosa che non so in italiano (pausa)
sometimes ask you something that I don't know in Italian (pause)
15 INT: ah ah
16 AC: (–) che mi insegn-
(–) who you teach- me
17 AC: (–) praticamente un un straniero che va insegnare
(–) practically a a foreigner who is going to teach
18 AC: <<ridendo> un italiano come si parla italiano>
<<laughing> an Italian how one speaks Italian>
19 INT: <<laughing> ah ah>

AC; M; Kosovo; 1994; mainly German-speaking locality; Italian and German

In this sequence, AC refers to a master narrative widespread in South Tyrol, according to which the German-speaking population does not want to speak German with foreign citizens, but prefers to switch to Italian (lines 2–3; see also Section 3). This alternation into Italian is often evaluated by the participants of the SüBalk corpus negatively, since it is understood as a way of implicitly suggesting the lack or insufficiency of their German skills.[22] By contrast, AC reinterprets this language switch more favorably in (4) (PL 3): German-speakers want to talk in Italian with newcomers because they do not want to forget the Italian language (lines 5–6).

To support his point, AC tells two short stories with an argumentative function. In the first narrative, the teller stages an interaction, presented as typical, between himself and a generic German-speaking interlocutor (lines 8–10). To report his own question, AC switches into German: *ma [[...]] non parli «in tedesco» deutsch»?* 'but [[...]] do you

[22] For analogous negative interpretations of this code alternation in the language biographies of local Italian speakers, see Veronesi (2008).

not speak «in German> German>?'. As opposed to VM, the interviewee, however, does not use this code-switching as a membership categorization device for indexing the elite group. Rather, the narrator figure himself switches to German possibly to demonstrate his availability to accommodate the interlocutor's first language in the story world.

As for the second narrative (lines 11–18), the setting and characters are described in a very elliptical way. AC only mentions where the episode took place, namely in the town of Bruneck/Brunico (line 12) where the population is mainly German-speaking, but he does not provide information about other story figures. In addition, the teller's character is not in the foreground in (4): Even though he is the ratified recipient of a constructed dialogue, he does not speak. By contrast, the narrator only reports the interlocutor's direct speech in lines 13 and 14, while he previously used the impersonal verb *mi è capitato* 'it happens to me' to introduce his story (line 12). Thus, similar to other narratives examined in this paper, stories of emancipation are also characterized by a mid- to low degree of agency on the part of the teller's character in the story world (PL 1): The reported events are usually represented as initiated by other figures or by external fortuitous circumstances (see Appendix 3, ex. (6), for another example).

Nevertheless, like narratives of empowerment, stories of emancipation have a contesting orientation. In connection with this, narrators show a high degree of moral agency in the interactional situation (PL 2). In (4), for instance, AC clearly expresses his current moral position in the story coda (lines 17–18). The strategy usually employed by tellers to make their point and achieve the interlocutor's affiliation is not with emotionally overloaded language, however, as is the case with narratives of empowerment (see Section 5.3). Rather, similar to the 'generic' or 'habitual' stories investigated by Baynham (2005), in emancipation narratives, participants tend to enhance the story's argumentative force mainly through the use of depersonalization and/or detemporalization strategies, that is, by presenting the reported events as generally valid for an indefinite group of people and/or as recurring over time (see also De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012, 113).

Thus, in (4), for example, AC categorizes himself by means of the indefinite nominal phrase *un straniero* 'a foreigner' (line 17). In doing so, he generalizes his personal experience beyond his isolated case and makes its interpretation less questionable. Simultaneously, the narrator attributes to himself an identity category usually conceived as an unfavorable one, at least in his new place of residence (see VM, by contrast, who said at the beginning of ex. (3) in Section 5.3 that she did not want to be like all other foreigners). This act of self-positioning is possible because the narrator – in and through his story – has overturned the teacher-pupil relationship assumed to hold true between local and alloglot citizens, thereby proposing an alternative identity for newcomers in South Tyrol as teachers of Italian to German-speaking "Italians" (lines 17–18). As in the

case of VM, AC manages to align the interviewer to his moral evaluation, who laughs (line 19).

As a result, unlike in narratives of empowerment, power is conceived as emerging from social relations – and not as a property that immutably belongs to one language group – in stories of emancipation. In particular, in these narratives, tellers tend to claim for themselves unfavorable, if not stigmatized, identity categories (usually attributed to them at the community level), such as 'being a foreigner' or 'being a non-native language speaker.' This also happens, for instance, in the story of emancipation in Appendix 3, ex. (6), where the narrator reports having acquired Standard German better than local children precisely because she and her family come from abroad and therefore do not speak a local Austro-Bavarian dialect at home (see Evans Davies 2007, 86–87 for similar examples in another context).[23] In doing so, narrators not only affiliate themselves with groups of people usually thought of as 'powerless,' but also reinterpret these attributes as positive ones, if not as strengths, at least in the specific South Tyrolean context they live in. As a consequence, they manage to create counter-narratives that promote interpretations of newcomers' experiences outside of the mainstream ones at PL 3.

6 Conclusions

This research has shown that multilingualism – at least in certain local language combinations (typically, Standard Italian and Standard German) – is quite widespread among the participants of the SüBalk corpus. However, language power relationships and master narratives around newcomers' learning choices and outcomes may negatively or positively impact on the participants' declared language competencies and learning trajectories.

In particular, based on their content, we identified four types of narratives accounting for language learning and use in our dataset, which also correspond to two main strategies for coping with language power relationships in the new region of residence, i.e., 'reproducing' vs. 'contesting' strategies. These stories, moreover, may be related to four general ways of understanding the relationships between alloglot and local populations in the destination societies also beyond our case study, namely i) separation/marginalization, ii) assimilation, iii) integration, and iv) inclusion (Houtkamp 2015). Table 1 summa-

[23] It should be noted that the story of DK in Appendix 3, ex. (6), is also a generic, habitual story where the degree of agency of the narrator's character in the story world is quite low. As a matter of fact, the teller herself describes her character as having no specific merit for her current advantageous situation, but rather she was "lucky" not to grow up speaking an Austro-Bavarian dialect (line 2). Similarly, another young woman from Bosnia (AF) tells me that she passed an exam and subsequently got a job as a German teacher in a South Tyrolean public school precisely because she, as an alloglot citizen, happens to speak German without dialectal shades.

rizes the main features of the examined stories along with the acculturation model they implicitly refer to:

Differences / Similarities	**Reproducing strategies (PL 3), low moral agency (PL 2)**	**Contesting strategies (PL 3), high moral agency (PL 2)**
Low agency (PL 1), ellipticity	Narratives of exclusion (separation/marginalization)	Narratives of empowerment (integration)
	Narratives of assimilation (assimilation)	Narratives of emancipation (inclusion)

Table 1: Types of narratives of language learning and use in the SüBalk corpus.

In all four story types, the teller's character tends to show low initiative in the story worlds. This lack of agency at PL 1 – which has already been noticed in migrants' stories collected in other settings (De Fina 2003, 93–138; Baynham 2005) – is possibly related to the general circumstances that have caused the participants' migration or escape to South Tyrol. The majority of them did not decide to move abroad freely, but were more or less strongly forced to because of wars and/or economic crises in their countries of birth.

Moreover, the examined stories tend to be very elliptical, while some details, such as characters' constructed dialogues, are reported meticulously. This ellipticity and condensation are not determined by the fact that – analogous to what happens in 'share stories' among friends (Georgakopoulou 2005) – the particular episodes were repeatedly narrated in previous conversations that occurred between the two interaction partners. Rather, they are based on – and, simultaneously, point to – the presence of master narratives around newcomers' language learning and use that are widespread in the South Tyrolean society and are therefore shared by teller and interlocutor, even if they never met before the interview.

The narrators' acts of positioning themselves with respect to these master narratives at PL 3 and PL 2 differ, nevertheless, across stories (see Table 1). In narratives of exclusion and assimilation, participants reproduce dominant and repressive master narratives concerning newcomers' language learning choices and strategies in South Tyrol without contesting them. In particular, narrators usually report experiences in which local speakers' linguistic behaviors – especially in semi-formal settings, such as at the workplace or school – delegitimize theirs or other characters as learners/speakers of a local code and, in doing so, as economic and social actors in the new region of residence. These

episodes of discrimination through language(s) often have a negative impact on interviewees' language skills and learning trajectories. In some cases, participants who undergo linguicism refuse to acquire the discriminatory code(s), thereby experiencing separation or marginalization in the destination society.[24] In other cases, they try to learn it so well that no differences between their competencies and those of local people can be found. This behavior may lead to forms of linguistic assimilation, often toward only one local language group.

As for the narratives of empowerment and emancipation, they show some similarities as well as differences. Specifically, both narratives have a contesting orientation (Fairclough 1989/2001; Pennycook 2001; Siegel 2006): This means that, at PL 3, participants spell out and take a clear position against the master narratives underlying language acquisition processes in South Tyrol. In connection with this, these stories usually have an argumentative function and are also characterized by narrators' high moral agency at PL 2. However, tellers tend to implement different strategies at the levels of content, language, and story structure to make their point and align interlocutors to their moral positions. On the one hand, participants use emotionally overloaded language to involve the audience and co-construct indignation in narratives of empowerment (see the 'exemplary' story in Günthner 1995). On the other hand, in narratives of emancipation, tellers manage to gain the interlocutors' alignment by generalizing their personal experiences through depersonalization or detemporalization strategies, such as employing indefinite nominal phrases or pronouns, as well as the habitual present and repeated frequency adverbials (see the 'generic' or 'habitual' stories in Baynham 2005).

Finally, another important difference concerns the conceptions of power – as a property vs. as emerging from social relations – underlying the examined stories and, therefore, the strategies played out by the participants to improve their condition in the destination society. Narratives of empowerment are stories about individual self-development within pre-existing power structures and relationships that are regarded as naturally given and unchangeable. The relations between local people and newcomers represented in these stories are in line with those that underly integration models (Houtkamp 2015, 76–77). In terms of language learning and use, that means that alloglot citizens can preserve and express their own linguistic identity. However, they have the individual responsibility to acquire the language(s) spoken by the historical majority group(s) to gain access to the local language regimes and be integrated into the new place of residence. In

[24] According to Houtkamp (2015, 76), separation and marginalization occur when newcomers do not come into contact with members of local group(s) in the new places of residence, thereby orienting themselves toward their heritage language(s) and culture(s) ('separation') or abandoning the latter and conducting a linguistically and culturally isolated life ('marginalization').

this acquisition process, languages are regarded as instruments, powerful or powerless in themselves, whose acquisition allows newcomers to obtain both material and symbolic benefits, i.e., economic resources and social recognition, in the destination societies (Fairclough 1989/2001, 217).

By contrast, in narratives of emancipation, interviewees challenge the assumptions underlying language power relationships in South Tyrol and propose alternative identities not only for alloglot citizens, but also for local people. In doing so, their underlying acculturation model is more similar to that of inclusion (Houtkamp 2015, 80). That means a community-centered process of mutual adaptation that not only involves newcomers, but also requires that the local population remodel its linguistic habits and master narratives to accommodate those of alloglot speakers.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to everyone who participated in this research project and shared their language biographies. I would also like to thank Gabriele Iannàccaro and the participants at the Workshop *Integration, Inclusion, Assimilation and Ghettoisation in a framework of Mobility* (University of Stockholm, 09.–10.02.2017) for their comments on an earlier version of this paper, the organizers and participants at the Conference *Old and new forms of multilingualism in the Alps-Adriatic region – descriptive models, challenges and possible solutions* (University Klagenfurt, 25.–26.03.2021) for the inspiring discussions, and the anonymous reviewers for their valuable remarks.

All remaining errors are of course my own.

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Appendix 1

Transcription conventions, adapted from Selting et al. (2009)

Symbol	Significance
`[ ]`	Overlapping speech
`(-)`	Pause less than one-tenth of a second
`(pause)`	Pause more than one-tenth of a second
`°h`	In-breaths (number of h's corresponds to length)
`:, ::, :::`	Prolongation of the preceding sound (number of colons corresponds to length)
`CAPITALS`	Louder speech than the surrounding talk
`° °`	Quieter speech than the surrounding talk
`<<all> >`	Allegro, fast
`<<len> >`	Lento, slow
`<<t> >`	Low pitch register
`f- false`	False starts and interruptions
`<<in German> >`	Transcriber's descriptions, comments or other contextual information
`[[…]]`	Omitted transcription
`[[added information]]`	Information added to transcription to facilitate understanding
`(xxx)`	Unintelligible word(s)

Appendix 2

Narratives of empowerment

(5)

1 INT: [[intervier's question about the importance of learning an Austro-Bavarian dialect in South Tyrol]]
2 BV: that's of a cru:cial meaning °h
3 BV: because we met a a man from serbia who lived in
4 BV: frankfurt °h and he: eventually he has just
5 BV: high school (-) he is here CHIEF (-) CHIEF in
6 BV: technical firm
7 INT: mh mh
8 BV: so with the high school
9 INT: mh mh
10 BV: but he knows ONly dialect[a]nd a bad italia[n]
11 INT: [mh:] [mh mh]
12 BV: so he told us (-) okay when I (-) came to that firm (-)
13 BV: I just said (pause) let's speak dialect I must
14 BV: learn that it's it is important (pause)
15 BV: and (pause) he speaks dialect
16 BV: so he he also explains us some situations as
17 BV: <<all> you know> (-) help care institution where °h
18 BV: (pause) eh there are some problems with: some:
19 BV: numbers in his ID
20 BV: I don't know <<all> because our country changing>
21 BV: NAme every two three years [so:] we change also
22 INT: [mh mh]
23 BV: codes so: °[al]ways some problems° °h (-)
24 INT: [mh mh]
25 BV: he said I was speaking you know
26 BV: in a hard dialect and
27 BV: uoh <<all> it's okay okay we are making something (xxx)>
28 INT: mh mh
29 BV: they respect quite
30 BV: I mean I: I can understand that

BV; F; Serbia; 2010; mainly Italian-speaking locality; German and a little Italian

Appendix 3

Narratives of emancipation

(6)

1 DK: in der schule musste ich ja hochdeutsch sprechen (–)
I had to speak High German at school so (–)
2 DK: und ich hatte das glück dass: (–) ich seit klein auf
and I was lucky that: (–) as a child
3 DK: nicht mit südtirolerischen aufgewachsen bin (–)
I didn't grow up with South Tyrolean [dialect] (–)
4 DK: das heisst (–) weil (–) ich merk bei den kindern hier (pause)
that means (–) because (–) I notice with the children here (pause)
5 DK: das erste was sie hören ist zum beispiel
the first thing that they hear for example
6 DK: wenn sie deutsche eltern habe ist es südtirolerisch
if they have German parents is South Tyrolean [[dialect]]
7 DK: dann gehen zur schule und haben immer noch diesen
then they go to school and always still have this
8 DK: südtirolerischen hintergrund (–) °h sie tuen sich auch schwer
South Tyrolean background (–) °h they also find it difficult
9 DK: dann die grammatik ein bisschen zu lernen
to learn the grammar a little bit
10 DK: [[…]] für mich war's gut
[[…]] for me it was good
11 DK: ich hab von anfang an hochdeutsch gesprochen °h
I have spoken in High German from the beginning °h

DK; F; Kosovo; 1998–99; mainly German-speaking locality; German, Austro-Bavarian dialect, and Italian