

ETHNIC AND LINGUISTIC IDENTITY: PRESENT AND PAST

The author reflects on the different ways of understanding the concept of identity and the relationships that identity has with the different language paradigms (structuralism and chomskyan formalism versus the approach of those who consider language as inseparable from the speakers and their agencies). In the light of the initial theoretical considerations, the author evaluates how the sense of ethnic belonging has been used in different historical moments to reinforce linguistic groups’ identity function. In fact, the ethnic arguments of authors of the archaic and classical Greece, as, e.g., Herodotus, were then taken over the course of history up to the time of modern nationalisms. Language attitudes brought on the scene by Aristophanes in some comedies are analyzed as a case study suitable to show the linguistic means employed to represent the Athenian identity on the scene at the end of the 5th century BC. Finally, the author draws on the results of an international survey just ended to show the means most frequently used to represent the personal identity in discourse level.

Keywords: personal identity, ethnic identity, attitude, discourse, repertoire, historical sociolinguistics.

1. Introduction

The fact that language, in its social dimension, is a suitable tool not simply for communicating something or representing the external world verbally but also for externalising a speaker’s identity is now a fact generally recognized in the modern sociolinguistic research panorama ².

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2 On this subject a reference to the historic work by Le Page/Tabouret Keller (1985) will suffice. The so-called “act of identity model” can be reduced to its essentials in the well-known formula: “the individual creates for himself [/herself] the patterns of his [/her] linguistic behavior so as to resemble those of the groups with

If then, following the principle cited above of language as 'act of identity', we take into account the fact that individual personal identities and those of their reference group or groups engage in a relationship which is not only two-way but also dynamic and sometimes changing, the importance of returning to a consideration of diverse aspects of this issue seems evident. Of primary interest are the reciprocal bonds between personal and collective reference identities, and secondly consideration of the motives which have been placed at the core of individual identity with a group and lastly, the constants which have characterized the history of the construction of these theories to the extent of transforming them in some way into objective, concrete facts and sometimes exploiting them for the purposes of hegemony and violence.

Since as far back as one of the oldest and most discussed group identity statements, that which Herodotus puts in the mouth of the Athenians in Book VIII of his Histories (Hdt. VIII, 144, 2), linguistic and ethnic factors have been put on the same plane and at the forefront in definitions of Hellenic group identity. This is just the first episode in an ongoing revisionism relating to a duality which found especially fertile ground in the Romantic period and the nationalist era (Consani 1997: 63-66). This nexus has triggered a fervent debate whose diverse approaches, and some of the theories used in them, are of interest here.

Furthermore, given that expression of language's identity-building function finds especially fertile ground in situations characterized by complex linguistic repertoires on both community and individual levels, it would seem to be of primary importance to reflect on both means and strategies used by speakers in bi- or pluri-linguist contexts to express their identities both at discourse and system levels.

The issues raised here will be the subject of each of the following work sections.

which from time to time he [/she] wishes to be identified or so as to be unlike those from whom he [/she] wishes to be distinguished." (Le Page / Tabouret-Keller 1985: 181).

2. Individual identity and collective identity

The concept of identity - both in itself and in reference to language - has been much examined in recent scholarly work and is as multi-faceted as it ultimately escapes all general definition. As is well known, the concept of identity in modern research has origins which can be traced to psychology and psychoanalysis starting with Erikson's classic work (1950) which analyzed the identity principle in relation to individuals and linked to the values this takes on in the various stages of human development. Now it is certainly true as P. Cuzzolin has recently underlined in an essay which is packed with insights on this theme that "[è] solo con l'estensione del concetto a discipline intrinsecamente focalizzate su gruppi di individui, a cominciare dalla psicologia sociale, che il concetto di identità si è venuto riferendo meglio in relazione a situazioni che trascendono il singolo individuo" (Cuzzolin 2015: 346). The reference to Fearon's very frequently cited essay (1999) by this Italian scholar supports this hypothesis and confirms its overall accuracy. Despite this it would seem to be useful to underline that, parallel with social psychology studies and at a slightly earlier date than the latter, classical socio-linguistics had already opened up significantly in this sense in the 1960s. It should not be forgotten that certain classic definitions of linguistic community drawn up in the 1960s and early 1970s, like those by Gumperz³ and Le Page⁴, even without mentioning Labov⁵, had already made clear the centrality of the

3 "Any human aggregate characterized by regular and frequent interaction by means of a shared body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language usage." (Gumperz 1968: 381). To place Gumperz's thought in the contemporary socio-linguistic debate, see Patrick (2003).

4 "We can only behave according to the behavioral patterns of groups we find it desirable to identify with to the extent that:
i. we can identify the groups
ii. we have both adequate access to the groups and the ability to analyse their behavioral patterns
iii. the motivation to join the groups is sufficiently powerful, and is either reinforced or reversed by feedback from the groups we have the ability to modify our behavior". (Le Page / Tabouret-Keller (1985: 182).

5 The following dates to the same years as the two previous definitions: "The speech community is not defined by any marked agreement in the use of language ele-

individual/group dynamic to determining linguistic behaviours and the processes of identification or otherness of individuals in relation to both small or large groups.

Moving from the historic perspective to the contemporary debate, a glance at some of the work which has come out over the last ten years will suffice to show the diversity in approaches and solutions put forward on the subject of linguistic and ethnic identity: from the markedly personal approach taken by John Joseph (2004) to John Edwards's classic synthesis (Edwards 2009) to the multi-faceted essay collection recently edited by David Evans (ed. 2015).

An overview of the work cited above shows clearly that two very different, if not conflicting, approaches to the nature of identity can be identified in the panorama of studies on this theme, approaches which ultimately depend on two different ways of theorizing human language.

On one hand, in fact, there is the argument that unites the theoretical approaches of structuralism and chomskyan formalism. In these paradigms language and its structures are external to the behaviours of individual speakers and attributed, respectively, to man's rational mind (Chomsky), or the supra-individual plane of the linguistic system at the 'langue' level (structuralism). In this way language, located externally to the individual, can be used to represent an external pre-existing world independent of the speaker according to the representational or ideational function of linguistic activities (Joseph 2004: 3-4).

On the other hand, there is the approach of those who consider language as inseparable from the speaker and his or her communication and relationship needs. The consequences of this are twofold: firstly, language is not a neutral and rational tool distinct from the individual but rather an intrinsic part of the ideologies and power relationships into which speakers are necessarily integrated; secondly meanings are not objective language contents but fruit of speakers themselves and their *agencies* (Halliday & Martin 1993, Kilpert 2003).

ments, so much as by participation in a set of shared norms: these norms may be observed in overt types of evaluative behavior, and by the uniformity of abstract patterns of variation which are invariant in respect to particular levels of usage" (Labov 1972: 120-121).

These two ways of conceiving language and linguistic activities have extremely profound implications in the concept of linguistic identity too. As a matter of fact, in the former perspective, expressions of identity are created and analyzed simply in relation to the structure of language (forms of address, person relations in verbs, subjectivity expressions). In the latter, on the other hand, expressions of identity take on a totalizing function which affects not only structures internal to the linguistic code but also all the other message building strategies and also the choices adopted within the codices co-existing in the repertory. From this latter perspective, moreover, it would appear to be evident that speakers do not always have single, monolithic identities used for eternity but are rather bearers of multiple, complex, multi-faceted identities which are negotiated and re-negotiated in accordance with the situations, interlocutors and power relationships which characterize them.

3. Ethnic and linguistic components in identity definition

In the previous section we reached the conclusion that, depending on the extent to which identity functions are seen as more or less closely connected with the speaker's linguistic activities, important consequences for linguistic analysis itself are to be located. In this section we will take a step further by assessing the role that a component typically external to language - as a sense of ethnic belonging is - has been used in profoundly different historical moments to reinforce linguistic groups' identity function.

3.1. As we have seen, one of the oldest and most complete definitions of linguistic community which refers to the ethnic and linguistic components as starting point is Herodotus's well-known affirmation in which he maintains the Athenians say that a separate peace with the Persian enemy at the expense of the Spartans and other Greeks was to be ruled out "... on the basis of the fact that Greekness (*tò Hellenikón*) is shared blood (*homáimon*) and shared language (*homóglosson*) and common temples of the gods and sacred rituals and similar customs ..." (Hdt. VIII, 144, 2).

But the clarity of this judgement should not lead to too easy conclusion that the bond between the ethnic and linguistic factors represents an objective fact any more than it means that the Greeks themselves were of this belief. Analyzing, in fact, both the various internal accounts and the external data on the subject from a diachronic point of view ⁶ brings up various considerations.

In the first place it would appear to be evident that the sense of ethno-linguistic identification felt by the Greeks corresponds to a progressive and gradual construction based on the myth of the heroic genealogies taking on, from the Hellenistic era onwards, the connotations of a multiple identity which encompasses a first level of community citizenship, a second level of sub-Hellenic unities on the basis of the eponyms of the three great Ionic, Doric and Aeolian groups and, lastly, the even more abstract level of Greekness corresponding to the hypostasis of the first Hellenic progenitor. Only much later were attempts made to supply a rational and objective foundation to this construction observing that everything which fitted into this classification framework was actually mutually comprehensible and could thus be considered a 'dialect' while the barbarian varieties were excluded from this and for this reason were worthy of consideration as different 'languages' ⁷.

Secondly the shift from an 'aggregational' type of identity, like that which characterized the whole archaic period in Greek history, to an 'oppositional' type of the kind which was disseminated during the Persian Wars, whatever interpretation is given to this ⁸, corresponds precisely and in a way which is unlikely to be a coincidence, with the linguistic history of ancient Greece in which a long and well documented phase of dialectal plurality preceded the formation of a unitary norm which occurred only in the Hellenistic era with the dissemination of the Ionian-Attic koinè. From this point of view it appears entirely natural that, in the face of the

6 For an in-depth analysis of these aspects see Consani (2007) with additional bibliographical references.

7 See, for example, Clemente Alessandrino's definition of dialect, for which analysis see Consani (1991: 21-23).

8 On this subject see Hall 1997 and Moggi 1998 and my comments (Consani 2007: 62).

dialect multiplicity of the Archaic period up to the early 5th century, the Greek sense of identity was motivated by its external borders, in relation to 'barbarian' linguistic confusion and incomprehensibility, and thus the principle of otherness took chronological and logic precedence in relation to identity building in a positive sense, however composite (Consani 2007: 57-62).

Lastly, widening our horizons to the considerations of Greek speakers not involved in ideological reflections, and thus from a strictly 'emic' perspective, we find less ethno-centric opinions than those set out above. Just think of the curiosity and sometimes open friendliness which characterized Herodotus's approach to foreign peoples and some of them in particular - those who enjoyed special prestige in the eyes of the Greeks, such as the Egyptians. What comes across in Herodotus is, in fact, an expression of full-blown cultural relativism such as that which emerges from statements that "... the Egyptians call all those who do not speak their language Barbarians" (Hdt. II, 158, 5), in which prejudices relating to the centrality of one's own language and culture are evidently being transferred from the Greeks to the Egyptians. But naïve and artless Greek speakers such as the Greek mercenaries at the service of Pharaoh Psamtik II can also be seen as demonstrating full-blown linguistic relativism, for example in their self-identification as 'alloglots' in relation to the country which was hosting them at the time for professional reasons (Consani 2007: 59-60).

3.2. The use of the ethno-linguistic component in defining one's own identity, which we have come across in the Greek tradition, would appear to be more Greek culture-specific than mechanically transferable to other linguistic traditions of the Indo-European family. If a comparison with other Indo-European linguistic groups such as the Celts, recently analyzed from an identity attitude perspective (Cuzzolin 2015), is attempted, more differences than analogies emerge. In fact if the perception of internal diversity which juxtaposes the British and Gaelic varieties, for example, would appear to have been susceptible to interesting meta-linguistic reflections from the Middle Ages onwards, on the other hand it emerges that the weight of the linguistic component in defining Celtic identity has progressively diminished with other, more openly cultural - either real or

invented - motives gaining ground (Cuzzolin 2015: 352-356). Latin is even more complex as in the perceptions of its speakers it has always had to contend with a sense of inferiority compared to Greek culture and has been incapable of elaborating an ethno-centric vision which is anywhere near comparable with the Greek one⁹. On the other hand, the territorial dissemination of Latin outside its original confines to the whole of the Italian peninsula and the huge expansion of the Roman Empire was less the consequence of an explicit imperialist linguistic policy than a reflection of the perceived advantages of the Latinophone status quo (Kaimio 1979, Dubuisson 1982).

4. Some theoretical issues

4.1 Recent developments in the debate on the nature of the ethnic component in Hellenic identity, sponsored by London University's Institute of Classical Studies and appearing in Bulletin 58/2 (2015), have triggered an extremely interesting debate between the approaches of two scholars such Jonathan Hall (2015) and Kostas Vlassopoulos (2015).

In brief the criticisms of Hall by the latter scholar can be summarized in three points: first, an absent or insufficient consideration of the type of collectivity to which the 'ethnicity' concept can be applied; second, the type of relationship which exists between the ethnic principle in defining groups in ancient Greece and, on the other, modern nationalisms; thirdly, from a strictly methodological point of view, the correctness of a procedure which starts from general theoretical arguments before measuring the reality of the facts analyzed in the light of these arguments.

The very nature of these arguments requires brief consideration. There is, in fact, an evident disproportion between the first two issues raised, on one hand, relating to concrete data and their interpretation and the third which, on the other hand, impacts on a much more general methodological issue.

On the subject of this latter issue - which touches on an extremely delicate point in scientific research, that of the relationship between data

9 On this issue see the considerations developed by Moggi (1998: 113-117).

and methods/models - I believe that this is very difficult to resolve in drastic or absolute terms. Given that if, on one hand, it is obvious that adopting a given paradigm must not and cannot condition the objectivity of the data to be interpreted, on the other, it is equally true that rarely does the data present itself to the eye of the observer in a natural, neutral way, ready to be interpreted. Quite the contrary: in some cases the data itself would escape observation if methods suitable to bringing it out were not used as a starting point. Contributions serving, if not to resolve, then at least to shed appropriate light on this complex relationship have been collected into the first part of a recent volume edited by P. Molinelli and I. Putzu (2015). Returning now to the debate between the two Greek historians mentioned above, I would argue that whilst it is true that both approaches contain elements which can be shared and that the issue cannot be resolved in absolute terms, there is a notable correspondence - and in some ways an explanation - as regards the diversity of viewpoints expressed in the very biographies of the two scholars involved: that of the mature scholar, Hall, who has made a significant contribution to the creation of paradigms adopted as models, as against the young Greek scholar's reference to facts which encompass a certain degree of challenge to such models and masters.

The first two issues raised in the recent debate, on the other hand, require more in-depth consideration. Firstly it should be observed that these issues are strictly linked in one important respect: the transferring of modern sociological and linguistics notions as well as historic categories to an analysis of past situations according to a *modus operandi* which very much resembles the so-called 'uniformitarian principle'¹⁰. As I tried to show in a recent work, it is certainly true that a-critically applying such an assumption is a dangerous source of problems for the interpretation of linguistic data and perhaps even more so for the socio- linguistics data (Consani, forth.TN). However, adopting for the languages of the past documented entirely by means of written texts a suitable model of language functioning which encompasses the principles of variability, characteristic of every natural language, and, as far as the socio-linguistics framework of

10 For a recent overview of such issues see Bergs (2012).

an external nature is concerned, an accurate direct and first hand examination of the available data can suffice to avoid the risk of a mechanical projection into the past of modern data.

4.2. An eloquent case study of this is the reconstruction of the late Classical period Athenian identity. In fact Athens is universally considered to be the best prototype of the polis type community characteristic of ancient Greece which became the centre of a maritime empire at the apex of its success. The work which A. Willi has dedicated to this issue is a good starting point in that it combines the assumptions and principles of modern socio-linguistics - and not applied mechanically - with a thoroughgoing and accurate evaluation of the data supplied by the comedies of Aristophanes, as a database for analysis, in a happy synthesis. Over the last decade, in fact, extensive use has been made of the language of Old Comedy and that of Aristophanes in particular to reconstruct the variability typical of Attic in the late 5th century BC (Colvin 1999, Willi (ed.) 2002, Willi 2003). The thesis which was the starting point of this is twofold: on one hand, as the comic genre is closer to spoken language we might expect to find a series of colloquial register data, for the most part outside the constraints of writing; on the other, given that the greatest exponent of Old Comedy explicitly staged linguistic diversity, in both non-Greek language and other dialect forms and in linguistic forms varying from the standard Attic used for individual characters, typically comic genre figures or professional categories.

A. Willi thus succeeded in reconstructing what might be defined as a full-blown strategy representing identity and linguistic otherness and their respective grading by Aristophanes. To reduce the matter to its essentials, the centre of the identity circle is represented by the narrowest level of the Athenian population (the *astoi* and *métoikoi*) and the citizenship range which takes on progressively more positive values as a result of Athenian policies within the Delio-Attic League (Willi 2002: 126-127)¹¹; a second circle is represented by the building of a pan-Hellenic WE which encompassed speakers of dialects other than Attic pursued by Aristophanes with linguistic strategies which are different in the Acharnians as compared to the Megar-

11 On the Athenian imposition of its own dialect in the 5th century see Crespo (2006).

ian and Boeotian (Willi 2002: 128-131) and in *Lysistrata* as compared to Laconian (Willi 2002: 138-141). It is evident that precisely in this conscientiously pursued pan-Hellenic perspective the dialects differing from Attic, including Laconian, traditional rival as the language of the enemy *par excellence*, could not be the subject of linguistic discrimination (Colvin 1999: 296-308, Consani 2014a). The third and wider circle - which contributes with its otherness implications to defining the identity of the previous two - is that represented by traditional OTHERS, the Barbarians¹².

Within this representational strategy relating to linguistic/dialect otherness it is interesting to note that the Scythian archer's language, as constructed by Aristophanes, corresponds only partially to that which modern pidgin type studies tell us¹³. In fact, elements of simplification and neutralization effectively appear on the phonological and morphological levels whilst the syntax and lexis planes, which are equally substantially affected by pidginization phenomena, appear generally immune with full lexis, presence of particles, correct construction of conditionals¹⁴.

This latter finding confirms that Aristophanes' language - like any other literary language - is a construction created deliberately by the author, in this specific case for theatrical purposes relating to a specific public. However, any supposed closeness to colloquial language of the comic genre notwithstanding, it is important to bear in mind that in the case of Aristophanes' comic language what we are dealing with is a *Kunstsprache*, not the language of real speakers¹⁵. In other words it is not possible to use Aristophanes as a source for the direct reconstruction of diastratic and diaphasic variability in contemporary Attic.

12 In this case too, however, it is not a question of an entirely oppositional and undifferentiated otherness but of various degrees of social acceptability and possible integration into the Hellenic world: greater in the case of the Persian ambassador who is represented while he pronounces a phrase in his own language - a veritable challenge to the Athenian popular audience which was the comedy's public - lesser in the case of the Scythian, in line with an image of this ethnic group which must have been widespread in 5th century Athens (Willi 2002: 143-148).

13 For an overview of this, see Holm (2000).

14 Willi (2002: 144-146).

15 This aspect has been insightfully sustained and illustrated with extremely sophisticated and profound analysis by Willi (2002: 114-121).

4.3. It has been demonstrated by many data from modern situations that linguistic variability and repertoires characterized by a plurality of codes in themselves foster meta-linguistic reflection and the development of opinions, attitudes and bias by speakers in relation to this or that variety in accordance with the positive or negative associations which these enjoy within the linguistic community affected ¹⁶. Thus basing our conclusions on the use that Aristophanes makes of dialects which differ from Attic and judgements on Attic and its variants as far as the hypothesis that 5th century Attic must have been differentiated on the geographical, social and situational planes, is not mistaken. Significant in this respect is the well-known and much commented on extract attributed to Aristophanes is of use: [...] *diálektion ékhonta mésēn póleōs /oút'asteían hupothēlytēran / oút'aneleútheron hupagroikotēran*, “who displayed the median dialect of the city neither the refined and effeminate accent nor the slavish and rustic talk” ¹⁷.

The varieties different from the ‘median’ city dialect which, as such, must have been the most commonly spoken, are not stigmatized but presented only with the connotations which must have marked them out in the perceptions of the speakers who populated the streets of Athens and who were Aristophanes’ audience. This attitude is consistent with what we might call the ‘democratic’ and anti-imperialist spirit which was a feature of the Hellenic identity operated in the Acharnians and in Lysistrata (second identity circle, see above).

On the other hand, however, if we analyze the linguistic choices made by Aristophanes in extracts not featuring an explicit desire to give his characters a linguistic personality, the impression given is entirely different and in marked contrast to the attitudes examined above. In fact, reconstructing what might be called the grammar of Aristophanes as an Attic speaker shows us that he was an ultra-strict observer of conservative

¹⁶ For an overview of these aspects, see Bubenik-Crespo (2014).

¹⁷ On interpretations of this extract, see Colvin (2014: 109-111), Willi (2003: 160-162), Consani (2014b: 290). All this confirms that in looking at the data offered by the ancient literary tradition through the eyes and for the purposes of modern linguistics, sociolinguistics and dialectology it is indispensable to distinguish clearly between linguistic attitudes expressed or used for artistic or political purposes and the objective linguistic choices made by the authors referred to above.

and purist Attic¹⁸ with characteristics which were no more recent or precursors of forms of koiné than was the language of other contemporary writers. A paradigmatic case like Aristophanes', who was to become one of the greatest models of Atticism in the imperial age, gives a clear view of the gap between his personal linguistic choices - rigorously adhering to purist and conservative standard Attic - and attitudes regarding linguistic variability and pluri-linguism staged by means of creating characters for literary and political purposes.

I would thus argue that this case study is exemplary in terms of any attempts to respond to some of the issues raised in defining group identity. In the first place there is a need to distinguish the linguistic behaviours of the subjects observed from their respective attitudes to language and its varieties. In other words 'emic' and 'etic' must be kept carefully distinct, but both are indispensable in any attempt to reconstruct the linguistic identity framework of the groups observed.

Furthermore, use of the conceptual and definition-building apparatus of modern socio-linguistics is an indispensable reference point on condition that data relating to past societies are not subjected to a mechanical application of these, but rather that the latter are verified on the basis of explicit and reliable external evidence.

5. Discourse level identity

The last aspect which I would like briefly to look at concerns expressions of identity at the level of speaker discourse in particular in situations characterized by complex repertoires. Naturally, taking on these themes implies adopting a paradigm according to which language is intrinsically integrated into the ideologies and power relations in which the speaker plays a part and thus meanings too are not objective contents of the linguistic structure but fruit of the speaker and the related agency (see above § 1). This also involves

18 For a reconstruction of the linguistic system used by Aristophanes, see Willi (2003: 232-269): the latter has noted that the most conservative aspect of Aristophanes' language is explicit above all on the phonological plane and, secondly, on the morphological level while his syntax remains ambiguous as a result of the colloquial nature of the language of comedy.

returning discourse practices to the foreground and, on the written documentation level, corresponding textual genres, giving the term ‘discourse’ all the values that around this key-word crystallized in the research approach inaugurated by Foucault and Halliday in the 1970s¹⁹.

5.1. A great deal could be said about the means by which linguistic identity is expressed on a discourse level²⁰. However, from the perspective of assessing the projection of modern (socio) linguistic paradigms onto exclusively written linguistic documentation belonging to linguistic phases which may or may not be distant from the present (see above § 3), I would like to synthetically report certain data drawn from a recent international scope research project which seems to me to be highly significant from this perspective.

The purpose of the project in question, entitled “Rappresentazioni linguistiche dell’identità: modelli sociolinguistici e linguistica storica” (Linguistic representations of identity: socio-linguistic and historical linguistic models)²¹ was precisely to assess the heuristic potential of applying certain modern socio- linguistic research paradigms to past situations. The research dedicated to the study of identity expression by means of discourse generated a considerable volume of work from which a series of interesting generalisations on the means of expression of identity at the level of the discourse of individual speakers emerged²².

First and foremost, all the research carried out dealt with both contemporary linguistic variety (standard Italian, dialects of Italian, different varieties of the Romance diasystem) and linguistic variety or stages testified to by written sources alone (Classic and Hellenistic Greece, Classi-

19 For a detailed analysis of this line of thought and its links to expressions of identity see Evans (2015: 22-28).

20 See, for example, Macaulay 2013 as regards the strictly linguistic approach and Kiesling 2013 as regards the aspect of the construction of identity.

21 This three year PRIN [National interest research project], which has just finished, was co-ordinated by P. Molinelli from the University of Bergamo. I coordinated the University of Chieti & Pescara research unit, which was part of the project together with units from the University of Siena Stranieri, Roma “La Sapienza”, Tuscia, Pisa and Cagliari.

22 For more detailed information on this see Consani/Cuzzolin, (forth.).

cal and late Latin, Latin marked in socio- linguistic terms, diverse chronological phases of the Romance diasystem). In the second place, the levels of analysis: alongside the diverse levels of linguistic articulation and particularly the morpho-syntactic level above all in relation to categories/features of the verbal system, special attention was paid to analyzing pragmatic factors as an element capable of influencing discourse organization in relation, also, to the semantic and syntax planes. Other aspects connected with this are the expression of subjectivity, above all in the epistolary genre, and the evolution of the pronoun system in forms of address from Latin to the Romance diasystem and Italian, overcoming the traditional structural discourse/system and synchrony/diachrony barriers. Applying these analysis perspectives to Latin, Greek and to diverse periods in the Romance language diachrony confirms the potential for applying pragmatic, social psychology and sociolinguistic approaches to *corpus-Sprachen* with heuristically positive outcomes such as the linguistic reflexes of positive and negative courtesy techniques.

Coming now to the aspect which interests us most directly here, i.e. the means of expression of linguistic identity by speakers in the diverse situations examined, we find that fairly clearly identifiable constants can be detected which appear in very different linguistic situations. Firstly of all the choices made by speakers in their individual and community repertoires which can be either marked or non-marked in relation to the scale of values which characterize the linguistic communities examined from time to time. This strategy takes on a character which might be called pervasive and is traceable in contemporary situations (the Apulia Franco-Provençal communities) both at moments of Romance diachrony (Sardinia in the 15th and 16th centuries) and in the ancient Greek diasystem in the Classical and, above all, Hellenistic ages. Alongside code choices, traditional phenomena such as code-switching and code mixing are also functional to marking out the composite identity which characterizes, for example, certain past situations such as Hellenistic Greece. A further strategy often pursued is the organization of discourse, also including pragmatic and discourse markers, to show the positive or negative orientation of the speaker to the person he is talking to. In this sense the use of forms of address and elements which indicate the type of relationship between those taking part in the linguistic act are above all a feature of the epistolary genre, analyzed here in the Classical language context.

5.2. As is shown by this necessarily synthetic overview which, though not generalizable, is highly representative, the studies in this research are confirmed by the theoretical arguments referred to progressively in this paper. Firstly the identity component cannot be separated from language if it is seen in the perspective of its use by speakers.

Secondly, the aspect highlighted above requires adopting a suitable model of language functioning in which linguistic activity linked to speakers, situations and communicative purposes is central, rather than an abstract idea of the competence of the ideal speaker.

Lastly, both the work referred to in this paragraph and the case study analysed in section 3 show how productive using the models developed by modern linguistic and socio-linguistic research can be in analysing past situations on condition that the basis of this analysis is always direct verification of the available linguistic data.

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IDENTIDAD ÉTNICA Y LINGÜÍSTICA: PRESENTE Y PASADO

Resumen

El autor analiza las diferentes formas de interpretar el concepto de identidad y reflexiona sobre las relaciones entre la identidad y las diferentes teorías lingüísticas modernas: en particular, el estructuralismo y el formalismo chomskiano frente al enfoque de las teorías que consideran que el lenguaje no puede separarse de los hablantes y sus intenciones. A la luz de las consideraciones teóricas iniciales, el autor analiza cómo el sentido de la etnicidad se ha utilizado en diferentes momentos históricos para reforzar la identidad de los grupos lingüísticos y de las comunidades lingüísticas. De hecho, los argumentos étnicos y lingüísticos de los autores de la antigua Grecia, como, por ejemplo, Heródoto, se han utilizado de forma continua a lo largo de la historia, hasta la época de los nacionalismos modernos. Se toman como estudio de caso ejemplar, las actitudes lingüísticas de los diferentes personajes representados por Aristófanes en algunas comedias para analizar los recursos lingüísticos utilizados para la representación de la identidad en Atenas a finales del siglo V a. C. En la parte final de la obra, sobre la base de una investigación científica internacional que acaba de terminar, el autor describe las estrategias más frecuentemente utilizadas por los hablantes para representar su identidad lingüística en el nivel del discurso.

Palabras clave: identidad personal, identidad étnica, actitudes lingüísticas, discurso, repertorio del lenguaje, sociolingüística histórica