Introduction

Humans love to play with language. Re-arranging sound and sense, we pun and riff, alliterate and rhyme, as children playing house or as adults writing poems, ads, or chants. We create new codes (Pig latin, Esperanto . . . ) and mix old codes in new ways (Chinglish, Franglais . . . ). We craft new voices, styles, and registers, produce new genres, and construct new media for channeling our thoughts, emotions, and persuasions. Sometimes we transform language just for fun, sometimes our linguistic play has ulterior motives, and sometimes linguistic procreation erupts out of bare necessity.

Other chapters in this volume address some of the social, political, and cultural forces that promote communicative creativity and heterogeneity: nationalism, globalization, immigration, socialization, education, and technology. These authors also discuss some of the same new communicative effects of these sociocultural conditions: verbal performance, pidgins and creoles, language revitalization . . . . The goal of this chapter, however, is to look more generally at the forms, functions, meanings, contexts, and consequences of new systems of communication, especially those that have been developing in recent years.

Thus, I begin by presenting a brief overview of traditional perspectives on language change, then probe a number of the newer models used to understand emergent modes of communicating, and finally examine a couple of key research approaches and tantalizing topics for future study. Throughout this survey, I reflect on issues of disciplinary presumption and ideology, explore an array of research methods, and dwell here and there on particularly intriguing findings.

Historical Perspectives: Older Views on How New Languages Emerge

Beginning this section with the Biblical story of Babel seems hopelessly clichéd and yet how else to begin the story of the development of Western understanding of why humans have produced so many different ways of speaking? Once “we” (or most of us) came to accept that all humans are human, then the next Darwinian trend was to imagine that our species originally produced one way of speaking (as did Adam under orders from God), which generated over time, in Stammbaum fashion (unlike all at once as in the Bible), a multitude of languages. That is, we
came to understand that communities of speakers, whether in isolation or in contact, over space and time produce new means of communicating. Historical-comparative linguistics (e.g., Bopp 1862) is the field of study that grew out of this basic assumption, with dialectology (e.g., Wright 1961) and linguistic anthropology (e.g., Boas 1911) not far behind.

These early scholars were less interested in the messy processes by which multiple codes come into being in specific settings among particular speakers around the world, preferring instead to identify homogeneous communities of speakers whose languages, presumably fixed at present, could be studied as evidence of some neatly chartable moments of isolation and transformation in the past. But, in reality, all language change has probably occurred in the past much as it does now, through idiosyncratic moments of creation and exchange constrained by social, cultural, and political forces that are not always easy to trace or categorize (see Lightfoot 2006 for a new approach to historical linguistics along these lines). That these transformations are now more apt to occur via Facebook than around water holes is no reason to assume that what we are doing at present is astronomically more complex or chaotic (or, depending on one’s teleological perspective, more or less barbarous). We simply need to expand our understanding of the modes by which humans interact rather than assume we have evolved into qualitatively different sorts of communicators. And to do so, we need to interrogate some of the old terminology, and open our ears to new and emergent terms and the models they articulate. In the next section, I will do the latter, but first I wish to examine one deeply embedded communication model, based on containers and contents, that continues to influence our understanding of how new languages emerge.

Social scientists and linguists have long presumed that human communication is spatially, temporally, socially, and cognitively con(s)t(r)ained by various metaphorical vessels: contexts (Malinowski), communities (Saussure), domains (Fishman), settings (Hymes), frames (Goffman), chronotopes (Bakhtin), fields (Bourdieu), situations (Jakobson), and grammars (Chomsky). The communicative codes associated with these containers are variously called languages (Boas), dialects (Labov), pidgins and creoles (Mufwene), koines (Weinreich), styles (Irvine), registers (Ferguson), genres (Bakhtin), voices (Keane), and semiotic systems (Peirce).

Many of the older terms are useful and worth preserving, if only as shorthand, in order to facilitate the construction of more dynamic models of how new communicative modes are produced. It is worth remembering, however, that words sometimes shape our thinking and to question some of the presumptions hidden within them – for example, that nation-states are intrinsically linked to a single code (e.g., French is and ought to be spoken by citizens of France). Antidotes to the static notion of the vessel have been sought for some time by a number of scholars – for example, Duranti and Goodwin (1992) emphasize the fact that contexts do not simply shape the social texts found within them but are also shaped by on-going interactions among situated individuals and the meanings they produce. Additionally, to discuss the constrained agency of the human interlocutors, who create and use codes within communicative contexts, scholars have come to employ a range of terms: not simply speakers and listeners, but also agents, social actors, positions, positionalities, roles, principals/authors/animators/figures, identities, and subjectivities. Finally, to focus on the dynamism of the codes themselves, scholars have coined or newly re-visioned other terms: heteroglossia, polyphony, styling, hybridity, syncretism, multimodality, dialogism, bivalence, enregisterment, intertextuality . . . (see below for more about these).

The point of this emergent jargon is not to obfuscate but to examine with more precision how new forms of communicating escape through the cracks in the old metaphoric vessels, through practice, interaction, and co-construction. The next section considers some of these new models and the terminology that accompanies them, while providing a few key examples of the developing systems of communication under examination.
Critical Issues: Emergent Models of Language Emergence

New modes of communicating emerge because creatures capable of semiosis (i.e., sign-usage) interact within the semiotic (i.e., sign-invested) vessels into which they are born. However, these semiotic vessels would not exist had no prior semiotic individuals constructed the semiotic vessels using some prior means of semiosis. Given this particular chicken and egg dilemma, I have chosen to move back and forth somewhat arbitrarily between the egg (the semiotic vessel) and the chicken (the semiotic individual). I will also start out by employing somewhat conventional terminology in referring to the semiotic vessel as a multilingual society and the semiotic creature as a multilingual individual. However, at some point I will turn to using the terminology inspired by Bakhtin (heteroglossia, dialogism, multivocality, etc.) to discuss the dynamism of individuals and vessels. This is because my goal in this section is to lay out the emergent models for understanding how new semiotic codes emerge from this chicken and egg feedback loop.

Multilingual Practices and Shifting Languages

Since the inception of multilingual studies in the 1950s (in particular with the work of Haugen 1953 and Weinreich 1953), it has been standard operating procedure to distinguish between individual and societal multilingualism, while also investigating some of the new linguistic forms that materialize as a result of language contact. Thus, many volumes that cover the field (e.g., Auer and Li 2007; Bhatia and Ritchie 2012; Myers-Scotton 2006; Romaine 1989) begin with chapters on how individuals acquire and use more than one language in their lives, move on to chapters that examine how and why societies produce and maintain more than one language, and throughout provide some analysis of the meanings, forms, and functions of the new textual results. Zentella has articulated this three-part model in the following terms: “on the spot, in the head, and out of the mouth.” “On the spot” refers to the social-cultural-political forces that impinge on the immediate speech situation; “in the head” to the communicative knowledge that the participants bring to the speech event; and “out of the mouth” to the communicative practices (systemic or not) that emerge from the interaction (1997: 82–83). Here, I begin with “the head,” move on to “the spot,” while always emphasizing how both individual agency and sociocultural structuration contribute to the emergence of new systems of communication “out of the mouth.”

Psycho-neuro-cognitive approaches are designed to understand how multilingual individuals acquire, maintain, and employ their multiple languages (see Grosjean 1982 for a good introduction). To do so, research has been conducted on early and late bilingualism, simultaneous and sequential bilingualism, as well as fully functioning and aphasic multilinguals. Much of this research is grounded in the Chomskyan axiom that human brains are hard-wired for the acquisition and generation of language(s). While Chomsky himself was primarily interested in how language functions as an ideal and autonomous code, a number of psycholinguists became interested in how Universal Grammar shapes not only how we acquire and generate creative sentences in one language but also how we learn, store, and use multiple languages, thus sometimes mixing and producing new ones.

Most researchers in this field seem now to concur that the multilingual brain, in the process of acquiring and processing more than one set of phonological, morpho-syntactic, and/or pragmatic systems, manifests interlingual effects in how it generates new utterances. Additionally, researchers within this field sometimes explore the notion that multilinguals’ “knowledge” of how languages are used and perceived in the world around them also affects when, where, how, and why they use their available codes (see the articles in the first section of Bhatia and Ritchie 2012).
Within (or at least influenced by) this cognitive approach, several models have been proposed for the examination of how and why speakers engage in code-mixing and code-switching. Heavily influenced by formal linguistics, Poplack (1980) formulated a series of grammatical constraints on when and where multilinguals switch codes within an utterance. Attempting to incorporate more of the social factors affecting “bilingual speech,” Myers-Scotton (2006) proposed two models (first the Matrix Language Frame, followed by the 4M model), which both still primarily focus on the structural constraints governing multilingual usage, including not only strategic but also “proficiency-based” factors. Another key player in these debates is the psycholinguist Genesee (2001), who demonstrates that the code-mixing patterns of young bilinguals prove their growing linguistic proficiency rather than their incompetence.

Whether the multilingual practices that result from lexical borrowing, phonological and grammatical interference, and code-switching by individuals converge into new systems shared (more or less) by a speech community depends upon many variables but is by no means infrequent (Muysken 2012). These new systems may develop into recognizable linguistic varieties, as in the case of dialects (Labov 1972), koines (Siegel 1985), or creoles (see Mufwene’s chapter in this volume). They may take the form of mixed codes with linguonyms such as Spanglish (Zentella 1997) and Nouchi (Newell 2009). They may take the form of unnamed but relatively systematic ways of code-switching, which sociolinguists have sought models to analyze (e.g., Blom and Gumperz’s (1972) metaphorical Vs. situational code-switching; Auer’s (1984) code-alternation; or Woolard’s (1998) bivalency). They may also take the form of newly enregistered heteroglossic systems generated by particular communities of practice to index new identities and meanings – e.g., HipHop (Alim 2006). However, the story of the formation of these new systems is not simply a matter of cognitive structuring or individual competence and agency, but is the result of complex ethnohistories of contact and the social-cultural-political institutions and ideologies governing that contact.

Thus, for some time now scholars have been conducting research into the socio-cultural-political causes and consequences of the multilingual construction of new systems of communicating. Working inwards from the macro context, they have modeled the forms that multilingual societies take, e.g., Ferguson’s (1959) diglossic societies (Haiti, Switzerland . . . ), Bourdieu’s (1991) linguistic marketplace (Béarn Vs. Paris), and Irvine and Gal’s (2000) formulation of fractal recursivity in contested nationalist settings (nineteenth-century Senegal and twentieth-century Macedonia). What has become clear is that in order to avoid hypostasizing both codes and communities of speakers, we need to take an ethnohistorical linguistic approach that contextualizes all present-day research with “ethnohistories of communication,” i.e., careful analyses of how “communities of contact” (Silverstein 1997) have produced “language shift” in the broadest sense of the term (Errington 1998), i.e., transformations in how multiple languages are structured and used. In order to understand these processes, we must focus not only on the large-scale (large D) Discourses generated within formal, institutional domains (schools, courts, and temples), but also the everyday (small d) discourses in more intimate and informal domains (homes, streets, and playgrounds). In other words, we must focus on how macro-institutional forces and language ideologies (see Krokskry’s chapter in this volume) are indexed and negotiated through interactions on the ground and how these in turn affect or reflect the emergence of new discursive systems. In short, while we need to acknowledge both centripetal forces that contribute to homogeneous ways of communicating, we must also bear in mind the centrifugal forces that disrupt homogeneity and generate heterogeneity.

Many of the scholars interested in this approach have built on the classic contrast between power and solidarity (first formulated by Brown and Gilman 1960), and the metapragmatic signaling of identity and relationship. On the one hand, it is understood that prestige dialects are
constructed via standardization and other institutional discourses as a way to project and impose the power of the elite, e.g., Parisian French (Riley 2011a) and Bahasa Indonesian (Errington 1998) – or, as in the case of the construction of Japanese women’s language (Inoue 2006), submit to the power of the patriarchy. By contrast, nonstandard varieties have been forged as tools of resistance to mark and communicate comfort and solidarity in the face of elite domination, e.g., New York Puerto Ricans’ self-regulating use of Spanish-English code-switching (Urciuoli 1996). A particularly large number of code-switching code studies have been undertaken in Africa, with Spitulnik’s (1999) study of Town Bemba (a mix of Bemba, English, and other local languages) in Zambia and Swigart’s (2001) study of Urban Wolof (a mix of Wolof and French) in Senegal. The phrase “acts of identity,” which has been very influential in formulating how language intersects with identity politics, comes from LePage and Tabouret-Keller’s (1985) study of Jamaicans’ use of patois in London.

Such a straightforward power-solidarity axis has proven to be a relatively blunt tool, however, when faced with the real-world complexities of emergent modes of code-switching and style-shifting. Instead, new models have been framed that highlight the ways in which hybrid communicative systems emerge out of identity-indexing practices. Working with Bakhtin’s (1981) notions of heteroglossia and dialogism, translinguistics and voice, Hill and Hill (1986) explored how individuals have contributed – code-switching utterance by code-switching utterance – to the construction of a “syncretic” language system in Mexico (a mix of Mexicano and Spanish), a system that was, however, beginning to give way at that time to the encroaching power of Spanish. Other scholars have been influenced by this work; for example, Makihara (2009) examined the heterogeneous practices and construction of a syncretic (Spanish and Rapanui) style on Easter Island, and Riley (2001) analyzed dialogic code-switching and language shift in the Marquesas. And a number of newer volumes contain research exploring the construction of new hybrid codes and heteroglossic practices by multilingual speakers in multilingual contexts (Auer and Li 2009; Bhatia and Ritchie 2012; Heller 2007; Martin-Jones et al. 2012).

Finally, emergent languages also arise out of the sociopolitical conditions that lead to language endangerment (see the chapter by Brittain and MacKenzie in this volume). That is, in reaction to the threat of language loss, some languages (most famously Hebrew) are not simply reclaimed and revitalized by their communities, but also (re)created: new vocabularies and genres are generated for use in new communicative domains, while dialectal variants are leveled in order to construct orthographies, standardized grammars, and/or new literacy practices. These in turn are used to teach the language, sometimes in the face of the elders’ objections as they do not agree that this thing being learned is actually their language (Nevins 2013). In fact, prescriptivist language ideologies about what a language is and is not (e.g., the purist notion that no borrowing, calquing, or code-switching should be allowed) sometimes obstruct the maintenance of the language and contribute to language shift, i.e., the construction of a “new,” mixed-up language such as Charabia in the Marquesas (Riley 2007).

**Heteroglossic Play and Intertextual Performance**

Play has traditionally been considered the small-scale, informal version of performance – the contexts are usually grander in performance, the audiences larger, the means more scripted, and the content more significant than in play. This is a very conventional reading of those two terms, however. In this section, I examine: how performance functions impromptu in everyday interactions (by chickens); how play can have a powerful impact on the public stage (the egg); and how both playful performance and performative play indexically reflect and implement emergent communicative systems. I look, first, at purposely invented codes (their forms, functions, and
metapragmatic meanings); second, at various “cool” styles, registers, and voices and how these are used for the sake of humor and other forms of powerful stance-taking; and third, at various new communicative genres. In all of these, the role of heteroglossia (as discussed above) will be considered.

Invented languages abound: Gibberish, Verlan, Klingon . . . (see Okrent 2009 for a survey). Some inventors say they create codes simply for their own private amusement (a number of websites exist for teaching people to create languages for fun). Indeed, Tolkien devised Elvish to give voice to an invented world he could not know would go so public. However, codes are also frequently invented at least in part for political reasons, e.g., on the one hand, to exclude others (peers, parents, the police, neighboring tribes . . .) or, on the other hand, to be purposefully, sometimes globally, inclusive (e.g., Esperanto). Either way, the play code becomes emblem, index, and channel for those who use it to bond through performance – sometimes in everyday, goofy ways (e.g., children using Ubbi Dubbi at school) and sometimes for starkly ritual effect (e.g., Pentecostals speaking in tongues). And just as new media technologies and standardized codes were key to the emergence of nation-states (Anderson 2006), so have imagined or constructed languages (conlangs) been key to the emergence of imagined virtual communities (Manning 2009: 314–15).

New ways of expressing oneself, however, are not always so purposefully or consciously invented; in fact, speakers may only sometimes be aware that they are playing and performing. Individuals construct personal styles through complex interactive means: taking stances, interpellating their interlocutors, aligning themselves (or not) with others, indexing their affiliations, cueing how they feel about specific stuff, and generally engaging in acts of identity; and yet they may not intend to be “performing.” For instance, Johnstone (2009) traces how the Texas politician Barbara Jordan constructed through a variety of stance-taking discursive strategies the “Barbara Jordan style,” i.e., a way of speaking for which she became well known and that indexed her informational truthfulness and “moral authority.” Apparently she was unaware of having acquired and composed this style out of a mix of her mother’s insistence on “correct English,” her father’s African-American preaching genre, her engagement in the college debate team, or her apprenticeship in legal discourse. Nevertheless, the stylistic features of influential individuals may shape the construction of whole dialects, e.g., Labov’s (2001) analysis of vowel shift in Philadelphia.

Youth in particular are known for enregistering various new styles (or registers) – sometimes referred to as youthspeak or slang – i.e., age-based vernaculars that unite a generation in its vision, its feel, its sense of what’s meaningful and relevant (i.e., cool). “Cool codes” seem to be made and acquired on the fly, through the air, among peers, by the media, or somehow else just come to be . . . cool. The users, nonetheless, are constantly playing with and performing them, recycling and disseminating them, with various intentions and sometimes unexpected consequences. Two excellent examples are the kogul: adolescent Japanese girls who perform and disseminate their bad girl identities using syncretic orthographies and anti-establishment dress-styles (Miller 2004). Similarly, in a Midwestern suburb working-class high school girls construct new vowel variants to project their “burnout” identities (Eckert 1999).

Many new “cool” ways of speaking depend on borrowing contrastive codes (i.e., heteroglossia). As discussed above with respect to the emergence of code-switching codes, speakers may induct multiple codes in order to index ethnic identity, but these code-switching codes can also be used to performatively construct not only ethnicity, but also age, gender, class, urbanity, modernity, and cosmopolitanism (e.g., Gaudio’s (2011) study of the use of “Broken English” to project global “Blackness” in Nigeria, and Mendoza-Denton’s (2008) study of Chicanas’ use of Spanish-accented English to affiliate appropriately as homegirls). Sometimes these youth codes signal urbanity and cosmopolitanism, whether or not the speakers actually live in cosmopolitan, urban centers: e.g., Marquesan youth on the island of Nuku Hiva in the middle of the Pacific
Ocean are as apt to play with multiple languages (French, Marquesan, English, Tahitian) as are multilingual youth in Montreal (Riley 2011b).

Depending on one’s perspective, this heteroglossic borrowing can be considered an act of illicit appropriation or fun and games. Rampton (1995) coined the term “crossing” to explore the dynamics involved in taking on an “other’s” voice or style. In his study of British youth groups who were constructing new codes out of bits and pieces from the repertoires of their friends of other ethnicities, bits to which they had no “natural” right, the rationale and interpersonal consequences were not necessarily negative. However, although the act of appropriating linguistic material may seem “cool” to those inside the frame, the very same moves may appear dumb or racist to those on the outside. Hill (1998) has initiated a large number of studies of the racializing impact of Euro-Americans’ uses of various “mock” ethnic registers (Mock Spanish, Mock Chinese, etc.).

One final contribution to the study of how performance and play contribute to the development of new communicative systems is the research that has been done on emergent genres. Several excellent examples are the work of Hoffman in Morocco, Kuipers in Indonesia, and Ahearn in rural Nepal. Hoffman (2008) explains how Ishelin (Berber) women living on the plains of Morocco performed traditional Tashelhit songs in Arabic in formal settings for life-cycle rituals, while in informal rehearsal spaces they used both codes (Tashelhit and Arabic) constructing heteroglossic events and hybrid identities. On the island of Sumba in Indonesia, Kuipers (1998) analyzes how ritual speech has transformed not only the languages used, but also the forms, contexts, meanings, and acquisition of the genres in the larger postcolonial context; as the old forms no longer held the same power, new ways of performing were constructed. Ahearn (2001) has examined the development and impact of literacy in rural Nepal as young people have applied this new technology to the genre of “love letters” to explore changing notions of romantic love and life aspirations associated with modernity.

One more emergent genre emanating from the center of modernity is stand-up comedy. In the West, “humorous” ethnolinguistic play has been around for centuries (e.g., see Bakhtin (1984) on Rabelais), creating variously denigrating or resistant effects. However, the linguistic anthropological study of the heteroglossic voices and performative style of stand-up comedians in particular has begun to proliferate in the last twenty years, beginning with Woolard’s (1987) work on code-switching comedians in Barcelona, Barrett’s (1999) writing on the polyphony of African-American drag queens doing “white lady” talk, and Chun’s (2009) work on Cho, a stand-up comic who has constructed her own heteroglossic performance style by mixing a consciously critical use of Mock Asian with voices from her own personal biography.

In my own analysis (Riley 2012) of the political polyphony of some of the comedy (e.g., Key and Peele) found on the global airwaves, I find that the boundary between formal and informal spaces and genres is growing more porous, that the mind is rediscovering intelligence in the body, and that some comedians are using embodied voices to question the structures and ideologies of our present lives. Sometimes, through the use of politically incorrect or offensive language (remember George Carlin?), these humorists construct a stance that metapragmatically communicates (like Bateson’s playful kittens): “Though I’m biting you, this is not a bite. It is not real; it’s truer than that.” Through this humor, “we the people” (as opposed to Bakhtin’s “folk”) are exploring how signs refer, how interpretants remake intentions, and how agents weigh the impact of utterances through subtle interplay with an audience, sometimes producing new and regenerative ritual forms.

Current Contributions: Newer and Still Emergent Approaches

This section presents a brief introduction to two significant emergent approaches to studying how new languages develop out of dynamic ethnohistorical linguistic contexts on the one hand
and complex semiotic interactions on the other. First is the study of language socialization, i.e., how new languages emerge from the mouths of babes (and other novices), and second, the study of transidiomatic practices, i.e., how new codes emerge from translocal interactions. Both involve multimodal discourse analysis, so I will begin with a brief overview of this methodology as practiced by linguistic anthropologists.

Discourse analysis refers to a range of methods involving the collection and analysis of “natural” discourse (the definition of “natural” has expanded to mean any form of communication that happens: formal or informal, purposely performative or not, even if constructed by the research process, just so long as the constraining contextual forces are taken into analytic account). It is related to textual analysis (i.e., the study of written texts, originally literary), conversation analysis (i.e., the study of how everyday conversational moves are accomplished), and critical discourse analysis (i.e., the study of how everyday (little d) discourse reflects and affects the dominant (big D) discourses by which societies run). Linguistic anthropologists who practice discourse analysis (almost all do in one way or another) take both content and style into account (as do literary analysts), analyze minute discursive moves in real time (as do conversation analysts), and attend to the ideological forces that shape the discourse (as do critical discourse analysts). One aspect of discourse that is of particular interest is intertextuality, i.e., the ways in which bits of discourse may be decontextualized from their original contexts, and recontextualized in new contexts, resulting in recycled resonances that allow the politics and emotion of the original utterance to bleed into the new interaction. One other aspect of discourse analysis to be noted here is that discourse is now understood to involve many modes, so that more and more analysts may record and analyze not only language and speech but also writing, audio-visual material, embodied moves, and objects, for their communicative functions and values. Multimodal discourse analysis is at the heart of studying language socialization, transidiomatic practices, and the new codes they produce.

Language socialization is the study of how social practices and cultural knowledge (including language itself) are developed via social interaction (see the chapters on language socialization by Paugh and Stoll, in this volume). One of the key principles of this paradigm is that children and other novices do not merely reproduce the knowledge and practices of those worldly others with whom they interact. To the contrary, each generation works dialogically with the resources they are offered and the sanctions to which they are submitted, adds its own distinctive flavor to the values, voices, and behaviors being transmitted, creates new slangs, generates creoles, etc. In other words, the paradigm is particularly generative when applied to the study of multilingual situations and speakers because it synthesizes individual and societal approaches (see Baquedano-López and Garrett (2002) for a survey, and the collection edited by Bayley and Schecter (2003) for examples).

The oldest and most influential of these studies is Zentella’s (1997) longitudinal, multigenerational examination of how and why New York Puerto Rican children learn to be more or less multilingual in varieties of Spanish and varieties of English, and how through the acquisition of code-switching practices they contribute to the variety of Spanglish spoken in their neighborhood. Similarly, Riley’s (2001, 2007) language socialization study in the Marquesas has documented the construction of a code-switching code that mixes French and Marquesan (and some Tahitian and English), even in the midst of a movement to revitalize the “pure” form of Marquesan. Fader (2009) has studied the production of Yiddish English among Hasidim women in Brooklyn, focusing on how community beliefs (e.g., about gender roles, modernity, and the chosen people) affect the socialization process and thus the form these new variants take.

Several important studies of language socialization have been conducted in areas where creoles and creole continuums are still in the course of being generated. For example, Paugh (2012)
looks carefully at how the peer socialization that occurs during children’s play performances (as teachers, bus drivers, field laborers . . . ) contributes to the construction of code-switching registers between the creole (Patwa) and the locally produced form of English. By contrast, Garrett’s (2005) work in St Lucia has focused on the socialization practices that produce new heteroglossic registers such as swearing, and Kulick (1992) looks at the language ideologies in the village of Gapun, Papua New Guinea, that propel women in particular to engage in an emergent code-switching (Taiap and Tok Pisin) genre known as kros, a kind of angry, neighborly rant. By contrast, Schieffelin (1993) has reported the production of a multilingual caregiver register among Haitians in New York City, involving the instrumental use of English, French, and Kreyol, to promote comprehension and acquisition.

A number of multilingual socialization studies within school settings have also shed light on how multimodal socialization practices (the modes include embodied signs – posture, gestures, gaze – and technology-mediated forms – literacy, etc.) affect the process by which students influence the construction of new codes and genres. In California, Baquedana-López (1997) has examined how Mexican teachers have composed a narrative genre, called doctrina, to accomplish Catholic training in California. Moore (2006) compares two different forms of literacy produced among multilingual children in Cameroon studying Arabic at the mosque and French at the school. Several articles collected in Heller and Martin Jones’ volume (2001) explore the distinctions between teaching colonial lingua francas (English, French, and Spanish) to urban elites in Africa, South America, and Asia compared with the production of a “safetalk” register within rural classrooms, where children are never expected to acquire the prestige code and the classroom socializing rituals. Using “safetalk” ensures that this will be so. Finally, Heller (2003) and Blackledge and Crease (2010) explore multilingualism in Canadian and British schools, specifically how immigrant students construct new heteroglossic practices in the interstices of the hegemonic forms of communication imposed within the classroom.

The other burgeoning approach to the study of emergent communicative systems has to do with transidiomatic practices (Jacquemet 2005) – i.e., the new forms of communicating that stem from the fact that new forms of transportation and information technology are allowing humans to live translocal lives and seek new syncretic ways to stay bonded. Many of these are multimodal, technology-mediated forms (see, for example, the chapter by LeBlanc-Wories in this volume on the relationship of language to media and technology), while others are simply the result of old technologies put to work in new translocal contexts (see also the chapters by Pujolar, by Jacquemet, and by Van Dijk on the linguistic impact of globalization).

First of all, new information technologies have produced new mediaticized spaces (Skype, Facebook, Youtube . . . ), within which new codes have been developed to cross national and regional borders. One new set of registers includes the varieties of textese crafted for communication online or by cellphone – including not only acronyms and emoticons, but also emergent pragmatic rules for organizing interaction (e.g., Jones et al 2011). Another transidiomatic site for the creation of new languages is the world of virtual gaming – not only the “artificially” created codes needed to get started as a player, but also the codes that emerge naturally among players attempting to interact with each other outside the gaming platform (Boellstorff 2008). One new venue – the mini-video (6–7 seconds) of Vine – offers a brave new world for researching the construction of stereotyping memes across communities. And multimodal, multisited political action offers yet another instance of newly sprouted transidiomatic genres in need of investigation – from 350.org’s connect-the-dots art project to the twitter orchestrated rounds of die-in actions following Eric Garner’s murder.

By contrast, transidiomatic emergence may also be studied in somewhat traditionally local locales because the global world arrives wherever we are these days. For instance, Blommaert
New and Emergent Languages

(2013) looks at the effects of superdiversity but in a relocalized format by exploring the linguistic landscape of his own neighborhood in Belgium. In his case, emergent forms of heteroglossic signage index new relationships and channels of communication among new neighbors. Maryns (2006) studies how false narratives are constructed during multilingual asylum-seeking processes as a consequence of misreading and translation errors. Shankar (2009) studies how multilingual “Desi” youth in California use intertextual Bollywood references to index issues of gender and class. Spitulnik’s (1997) work on the playful recycling of radio talk in everyday discourse exemplifies how intertextuality operates as a performative strategy for braiding hybrid urban identities. Finally, many multilingual socialization studies contribute to our understanding of how children build new ways of communicating within new translocal settings (e.g., García-Sánchez (2012) examines the generation of communicative systems for excluding immigrant students in southern Spain).

As Jacquemet (2005) has suggested, the emergence of these new “transidiomatic practices” calls for the reimagining of “communicative environments” on a global scale, as well as new research paradigms and multisited fieldwork methods. In particular, it means abandoning a dystopic vision of globalism as a centripetal, homogenizing force spelling the end of linguistic creativity. This is not to ignore the fact that powerful people, forces, and ideologies oppress peoples in marginal positions, but that opportunities for dialogic resistance frequently exist in the interstices. Language socialization is a never-ending process, and new cross-linguistic contacts construct new multilingual vessels (in situ or in virtu) for the performative construction of new heteroglossic codes. Methods for the study of these productive performances and the platforms for action that they spawn continue to be developed.

Future Directions, or Just Some Final (Emergent) Words in That Direction

A growing number of scholars now follow Bakhtin in making the point that “languages” never fully exist, i.e., as neatly bounded and fixed systems consisting of grammatical rules and lexicons that can be completely learned and used to communicate in perfectly regulated ways (see, for example, Alvarez-Cáccamo (1998)). For these researchers (and I count myself among them), languages only ever “exist” as social constructs through the tensions of social practice; in that case, as systems, all languages are always “emergent.” That is, the sound contrasts, morphosyntactic formulations, semantic fields, and pragmatic strategies are constantly under negotiation in every site of interaction. Thus, what actually emerges over time within communities of practice is not really a full-fledged code per se but more concretely a set of thoughts and opinions (a language ideology) about the languages, registers, styles, genres, voices... being used – whether they are im/proper, in/effective, un/meaningful, aesthetically pleasing or not – and whether the people who use them are lazy, crazy, funny, cruel, or cool.

Having clearly stated my bias here at the end, one may well wonder how I could have said yes to Nancy Bonvillain’s kind invitation to write a chapter on “new and emergent languages”. Yet I don’t think it was foolhardy. In effect, if linguistic anthropologists are to have an object of study at all, we must identify that object and identify how it develops. Just as cultural anthropologists have wrung their hands for decades over “culture,” so must we at least closely examine the notion of “language?” In effect, this chapter has allowed my ideas to emerge and take shape not only over the object itself (language), but also over all the ways in which new ones (or their simulacra) emerge and take shape.

While I disagree that distinctly bounded languages ever emerge from anyone’s head (fully armed like Athena from Zeus’), I do believe that humans are language-making creatures. Sometimes we do it just for fun, other times to facilitate market exchange; sometimes to
engender intimacy, other times to instantiate boundaries; sometimes to reach our gods, other times to master our servants; sometimes to resist arrest, other times to idolize pop stars. The list is endless and our research has only just begun.

What is clear is that all emergent codes and the emergent ideologies concerning them have human histories, social contexts, and moments in the sun (or the abyss) where others respond (or don’t) as if they understand (or don’t) and transmit aspects of these codes and ideologies about them (or don’t). Languages created in a vacuum without any attempt made to use them with others (real or fictional) are not languages; they are just lists of words and rules. The ones that make it out into the light of day (actual or virtual) to play, if only for a moment, are the newly emergent languages.

Related Topics
6 Being in the Cloud (LeBlanc–Wories); 20 Language, Immigration, and the Nation-State (Pujolar); 22 Language in the Age of Globalization (Jacquemet); 24 Racism in the Press (Van Dijk).

Notes
1 See Riley (2013) for more about the ideological construction of this spatial metaphor and the need to explore the permeability of the community vessel. See also Blommaert et al.’s attempt to transform the notion of “scale” from a spatio-temporal context into a “qualitative feature of meaning making” (2015: 126).
2 Jourdan (2006) makes this clear in her discussion of how pidgins and creoles were created within particular, historically situated, work-based communities of practice (i.e., plantations in the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans), in which both the cultures and the languages that gave voice to those cultures emerged (a process she calls “enlanguagement” (2006: 135)). This was the result of plantation workers’ and overseers’ prior language-culture systems, hegemonic structuring by plantation society, and specific interactions among individual agents in the interstices.
3 See Irvine’s (2001) use of Bourdieu’s (1979) notions of distinction, Goffman’s (1981) ideas about footing and frames, and Silverstein’s (1979) notions of language ideology in order to analyze how styles are semiotically produced; Agha (2005) took similar ideas about footing and style to develop his notion of enregisterment.
4 Auer and Pfänder (2011) offer a good summary of the difference between “emerging” and “emergent” grammars, the former being an artifact of Chomsky’s models and the latter the product of the sort of thinking I am propounding here, i.e., that “grammar” constrains but does not determine usage because it is ever-transforming as a function of interaction. In doing so, they use the term “languaging” to discuss the process in which we are all always engaged in the course of producing new codes, which are never complete and autonomous (except in hindsight).

References


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Riley, Kathleen (2011b) Learning to Code-Switch in the 21st century: Towards an Understanding of Global Ideologies of Youthful Cosmopolitan Cool. AAA, Montreal, QC.


Wright, Joseph (1961) *The English Dialect Dictionary: Being the Complete Vocabulary of All Dialect Words Still in Use, or Known to Have been in Use during the Last Two Hundred Years*. London: Oxford University Press.


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**Further Reading**


*This handbook provides an introduction to how multilingualism, both social and individual, generates new systems of communicating.*


*This seminal set of essays by seasoned sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists sheds light on how new “styles” are produced.*
This text draws on theoretical linguistics to formulate a new historical linguistic approach to understanding how new languages emerge out of the tension between incremental changes in individuals’ I-languages and society’s “ambient” E-languages (E for external).

This collection offers a range of studies that illustrate how immigration and language socialization (in this case of Asian peoples in North America) produce new transidiomatic practices (e.g., racial stereotyping and bilingual strategies) and new heteroglossic performance genres (from narratives to stand-up comedy).

This volume provides a great selection of studies of the emergent effects of new media on how we communicate, many of which provide insight into both the theory and methods needed for this new enterprise.